



unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Matthew

Version 58

[en]

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Date: 2022-03-19

Version: 58

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Literal Text

Date: 2022-03-18

Version: 33

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Hebrew Bible

Date: 2021-09-07

Version: 2.1.23

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Greek New Testament

Date: 2022-03-19

Version: 0.23

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Translation Academy

Date: 2022-03-16

Version: 25

Published by: unfoldingWord®

unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Date: 2022-03-16

Version: 28

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Translation Words Links

Date: 2022-03-19

Version: 10

Published by: unfoldingWord

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Matthew

Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Matthew

The birth of Jesus Christ and the beginning of his ministry (1:1-4:25)
Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:28)
Jesus illustrates the kingdom of God through acts of healing (8:1-9:34)
Jesus' teaching about mission and the kingdom (9:35-10:42)
Jesus' teaching about the gospel of the kingdom of God. The beginning of opposition to Jesus. (11:1-12:50)
Jesus' parables about the kingdom of God (13:1-52)
Further opposition to Jesus and misunderstanding of the kingdom of God (13:53-17:57)
Jesus' teaching about life in the kingdom of God (18:1-35)
Jesus ministers in Judea (19:1-22:46)
Jesus' teaching about the final judgment and salvation (23:1-25:46)
The crucifixion of Jesus, his death and resurrection (26:1-28:19)

What is the book of Matthew about?

The Gospel of Matthew is one of four books in the New Testament that describe some of the life of Jesus Christ. The authors of the gospels wrote about different aspects of who Jesus was and what he did. Matthew showed that Jesus was the Messiah, and God would save Israel through him. Matthew often explained that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. This may indicate that he expected most of his first readers to be Jewish. (See: [Christ, Messiah](#))

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "The Gospel of Matthew," or "The Gospel according to Matthew." Or they may choose a title that may be clearer, such as, "The Good News about Jesus that Matthew wrote." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Who wrote the Book of Matthew?

The book does not give the name of the author. However, since early Christian times, most Christians have thought that the author was the Apostle Matthew.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the "kingdom of heaven?"

Matthew spoke of the kingdom of heaven in the same way that other gospel writers spoke of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of heaven represents God ruling over all people and all creation everywhere. Those whom God accepts into his kingdom will be blessed. They will live with God forever.

What were Jesus' teaching methods?

The people regarded Jesus as a rabbi. A rabbi is a teacher of God's law. Jesus taught in similar ways as other religious teachers in Israel. He had students who followed him wherever he went. These students were called

disciples. He often told parables. Parables are stories that teach moral lessons. (See: [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#) and [disciple](#) and [parable](#))

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What are the Synoptic Gospels?

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels because they have many similar passages. The word “synoptic” means to “see together.”

The texts are considered “parallel” when they are the same or almost the same among two or three gospels. When translating parallel passages, translators should use the same wording and make them as similar as possible.

Why does Jesus refer to himself as the “Son of Man”?

In the gospels, Jesus calls himself the “Son of Man.” It is a reference to Daniel 7:13-14. In this passage there is a person described as a “son of man.” That means the person was someone who looked like a human being. God gave authority to the son of man to rule over the nations forever. And all the people will worship him forever.

Jews of Jesus’ time did not use “Son of Man” as a title for anyone. Therefore, Jesus used it for himself to help them understand who he truly was. (See: [Son of Man](#), [son of man](#))

Translating the title “Son of Man” can be difficult in many languages. Readers may misunderstand a literal translation. Translators can consider alternatives, such as “The Human One.” It may also be helpful to include a footnote to explain the title.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Matthew?

The following verses are found in older versions of the Bible but are not included in most modern versions: * “Bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you” (5:44) * “For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (6:13) * “But this kind of demon does not go out except with prayer and fasting” (17:21) * “For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost” (18:11) * “Many are called, but few are chosen” (20:16) * “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you devour widows’ houses, while you make a show of long prayers. You will therefore receive greater condemnation.” (23:14)

Translators are advised not to include these passages. However, if in the translators’ region, there are older versions of the Bible that include one or more of these passages, the translators can include them. If they are included, they should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that they were probably not original to Matthew’s Gospel. (See: [Textual Variants](#))

Matthew 1

Matthew 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set a quotation from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULT does this for the quoted material in 1:23.

Special concepts in this chapter

Genealogy

A genealogy is a list that records a person's ancestors or descendants. Jews used genealogies to choose the right man to become king. They did this because only a son of a king could become king. Most important people had records of their genealogies.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Use of the passive voice

Matthew uses the passive voice very purposefully in this chapter to indicate that Mary did not have a sexual relationship with anyone. She became pregnant with Jesus because the Holy Spirit performed a miracle. Many languages do not have a passive voice, so translators in those languages must find other ways to present the same truths. (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 1:1

General Information:

The author begins with Jesus' genealogy in order to show that he is a descendant of King David and of Abraham. The genealogy continues through [Matthew 1:17](#).

ULT

¹ The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ (ULT)

You could translate this as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "This is the list of the ancestors of Jesus Christ"

of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham

There were many generations between Jesus, David, and Abraham. Here the word **son** means "descendant." Alternate translation: "Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, who was a descendant of Abraham"

son of David (ULT)

Sometimes the phrase **son of David** is used as a title, but here it seems to be used only to identify Jesus' ancestry.

Matthew 1:2

Abraham fathered Isaac (ULT)

There are different ways you could translate this. Whichever way you translate it here, it would be best to translate it the same way throughout the list of Jesus' ancestors. Alternate translation: "Abraham had a son Isaac" or "Abraham had a son named Isaac"

ULT

² Abraham fathered Isaac, and Isaac fathered Jacob, and Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers,

Matthew 1:3

Perez...Zerah...Hezron...Ram (ULT)

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

ULT

³ and Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez fathered Hezron, and Hezron fathered Ram,

Matthew 1:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ and Ram fathered Amminadab, and
Amminadab fathered Nahshon, and
Nahshon fathered Salmon,

Matthew 1:5

Boaz became the father of Obed by Ruth

Alternate translation: "Boaz was the father of Obed, and Obed's mother was Ruth" or "Boaz and Ruth were the parents of Obed"

ULT

⁵ and Salmon fathered Boaz by Rahab,
and Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth, and
Obed fathered Jesse,

Matthew 1:6

the {wife} of Uriah (ULT)

Solomon was born after Uriah died. Alternate translation: “the widow of Uriah”

ULT

⁶ and Jesse fathered David the king, and David fathered Solomon by the {wife} of Uriah,

Matthew 1:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ and Solomon fathered Rehoboam, and
Rehoboam fathered Abijah, and Abijah
fathered Asa,

Matthew 1:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ and Asa fathered Jehoshaphat, and
Jehoshaphat fathered Joram, and Joram
fathered Uzziah,

Matthew 1:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ and Uzziah fathered Jotham, and
Jotham fathered Ahaz, and Ahaz
fathered Hezekiah,

Matthew 1:10

Manasseh...Amon (ULT)

Sometimes **Amon** is translated as “Amos.”

ULT

¹⁰ and Hezekiah fathered Manasseh,
and Manasseh fathered Amon, and
Amon fathered Josiah,

Matthew 1:11

at the Babylonian deportation (ULT)

If your language needs to specify who went to **Babylon**, you could say “the Israelites” or “the Israelites who lived in Judah.” Alternate translation: “when they were forced to move to Babylon” or “when the Babylonians conquered them and made them go live in Babylon”

ULT

11 and Josiah fathered Jechoniah and his brothers at the Babylonian deportation,

Babylonian (ULT)

Here, **Babylonian** refers to the country of Babylon, not just the city of Babylon.

Matthew 1:12

after...the Babylonian deportation (ULT)

Use the same wording you used in [Matthew 1:11](#).

Shealtiel...fathered Shealtiel...Zerubbabel (ULT)

Shealtiel was Zerubbabel's grandfather.

ULT

¹² and after the Babylonian deportation, Jechoniah fathered Shealtiel, and Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel,

Matthew 1:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹³ and Zerubbabel fathered Abiud, and
Abiud fathered Eliakim, and Eliakim
fathered Azor,

Matthew 1:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁴ and Azor fathered Zadok, and Zadok fathered Achim, and Achim fathered Eliud,

Matthew 1:15

Connecting Statement:

The author concludes Jesus' genealogy, which began in [Matthew 1:1](#).

ULT

¹⁵ and Eliud fathered Eleazar, and
Eleazar fathered Matthan, and Matthan
fathered Jacob,

Matthew 1:16

of Mary, by whom Jesus was born (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “Mary, who gave birth to Jesus” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁶ and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

who is called Christ (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “whom people call Christ” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 1:17

the Babylonian deportation (ULT)

Use the same wording you used in [Matthew 1:11](#).

ULT

17 Therefore, all the generations from Abraham until David {were} 14 generations, and from David until the Babylonian deportation {were} 14 generations, and from the Babylonian deportation until the Christ {were} 14 generations.

Matthew 1:18

General Information:

This begins a new part of the story in which the author describes the events leading up to the birth of Jesus.

His mother, Mary, having been engaged to marry Joseph (ULT)

Parents normally arranged the marriages of their children. Alternate translation: "The parents of Mary, the mother of Jesus, had promised her in marriage to Joseph" or "His mother, Mary, was going to marry Joseph" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

His mother, Mary, having been engaged to marry (ULT)

Translate in a way that makes it clear that Jesus was not already born when **Mary** was engaged to Joseph. Alternate translation: "Mary, who would be the mother of Jesus, was engaged" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

before...they came together (ULT)

This may refer to Mary and Joseph sleeping together. Alternate translation: "before they had slept together" or "before they got married" (See: [Euphemism](#))

was found having in the womb (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "they realized that she was going to have a baby" or "it happened that she was pregnant" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

by the Holy Spirit (ULT)

The power of the **Holy Spirit** had enabled Mary to have a baby before she had slept with a man.

ULT

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was thus: His mother, Mary, having been engaged to marry Joseph, before they came together, was found having in the womb by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 1:19

Joseph...her husband (ULT)

Joseph had not married Mary yet, but when a man and woman promised to marry each other, Jews considered them **husband** and wife though they did not live together. Alternate translation: "Joseph, who was supposed to marry Mary" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

19 Now Joseph her husband was righteous, and not wanting to publicly disgrace her, he intended to divorce her secretly.

to divorce her (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to cancel their plans to get married"

Matthew 1:20

when he had reflected on (ULT)

Alternate translation: "after Joseph thought"

appeared to him by way of a dream (ULT)

Alternate translation: "came to Joseph while he was dreaming"

son of David (ULT)

Here, **son** means "descendant."

the one...having been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit caused Mary to become pregnant with this child" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ But when he had reflected on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him by way of a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, you should not fear to take Mary as your wife, because the one having been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."

Matthew 1:21

she will bear...a son (ULT)

Because God sent the angel, the angel knew the baby was a boy.

you will call his name (ULT)

This is a command. Alternate translation: “you must name him” or “you must give him the name”

for he will save (ULT)

Translator may add a footnote that says “The name ‘Jesus’ means ‘the Lord saves.’”

his...people (ULT)

Here, **his people** refers to the Jews.

ULT

²¹ And she will bear a son, and you will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

Matthew 1:22

General Information:

The author quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that Jesus' birth was according to scripture. (See: [Background Information](#))

this...all...happened (ULT)

The angel is no longer speaking. Matthew is now explaining the importance of what the angel said.

what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "what the Lord told the prophet to write long ago" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the prophet (ULT)

There were many prophets. Matthew was speaking specifically of Isaiah. Alternate translation: "the prophet Isaiah" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²² Now all this happened so that it might be fulfilled what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

Matthew 1:23

Behold, the virgin will have in her womb and bear a son, and they will call his name Immanuel

Here Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah.

ULT

²³ “Behold, the virgin will have in {her} womb and bear a son, and they will call his name Immanuel”—which is translated, “God with us.”

Behold, the virgin (ULT)

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

Immanuel (ULT)

Immanuel is a male name. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

which is translated, “God with us (ULT)

This is not in the book of Isaiah. Matthew is explaining the meaning of the name “Immanuel.” You could translate it as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: “This name means ‘God with us.’”

Matthew 1:24

Connecting Statement:

The author concludes his description of the events leading up to the birth of Jesus.

as...commanded...Joseph...angel of the Lord (ULT)

The **angel** had told Joseph to take Mary as his wife and to name the child Jesus.

took her {as} his wife (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he married Mary"

ULT

²⁴ And Joseph, having been awakened from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took her {as} his wife.

Matthew 1:25

he did not know her (ULT)

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "he did not have sexual relations with her" (See: [Euphemism](#))

a son (ULT)

Make sure it is clear that Joseph is not portrayed as the actual father. Alternate translation: "a male baby" or "her son"

And...he called his name Jesus (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And Joseph named the child Jesus"

ULT

²⁵ And he did not know her until she bore a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Matthew 2

Matthew 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 verses 6 and 18, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

“His star”

These words probably refer to a star that the learned men believed to be the sign of a new king of Israel. (See: [sign](#), [proof](#), [reminder](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“Learned men”

English translations use many different words to translate this phrase. These words include “magi” and “wise men.” These men could have been scientists or astrologers. If you can, you should translate this with the general word “learned men.”

Matthew 2:1

General Information:

A new part of the story begins here and continues through the end of the chapter. Matthew tells about Herod's attempt to kill the new King of the Jews.

Bethlehem of Judea (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the town of Bethlehem in the province of Judea"

in the days of Herod the king

Alternate translation: "when Herod was king there"

of Herod (ULT)

There was more than one **Herod**. This refers to **Herod** the Great.

learned men from the east (ULT)

Alternate translation: "men from the east who studied the stars"

from the east (ULT)

Alternate translation: "from a country far east of Judea"

ULT

¹ Now when Jesus had been born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, learned men from the east arrived in Jerusalem,

Matthew 2:2

Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews (ULT)

The men knew from studying the stars that the one who would become king had been **born**. They were trying to learn where he was. Alternate translation: “A baby who will become the king of the Jews has been born. Where is he?”

ULT

² saying, “Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east and came to worship him.”

his star (ULT)

They were not saying that the baby was the rightful owner of the **star**. Alternate translation: “the star that tells about him” or “the star that is associated with his birth”

in the east (ULT)

Alternate translation: “as it came up in the east” or “while we were in our country”

to worship (ULT)

This could mean: (1) they intended to **worship** the baby as divine. (2) they wanted to honor him as a human king. If your language has a word that includes both meanings, you should consider using it here.

Matthew 2:3

became troubled (ULT)

Herod was worried that this baby would replace him as king.
Alternate translation: "he was worried"

all Jerusalem (ULT)

Here, **Jerusalem** refers to the people. Alternate translation: "all the people in Jerusalem" (See: [Metonymy](#))

all Jerusalem (ULT)

Here, **all** means "many." Matthew is exaggerating to emphasize how many people were worried. Alternate translation: "many of the people in Jerusalem" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

³ But having heard this, Herod the king became troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Matthew 2:4

General Information:

In verse 6, the chief priests and scribes of the people quote the prophet Micah to show that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem.

ULT

⁴ And having brought together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired from them, "Where is the Christ being born?"

Matthew 2:5

In Bethlehem of Judea (ULT)

Alternate translation: "In the town of Bethlehem in the province of Judea"

thus...it has been written through the prophet (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "this is what the prophet wrote long ago" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ And they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet,

Matthew 2:6

you, Bethlehem (ULT)

Micah was speaking to the people of **Bethlehem** as if they were with him but they were not. Alternate translation: “you, people of Bethlehem” (See: [Apostrophe](#))

are by no means the least among the leaders of Judah (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the phrase **are by no means the least**, you can translate it with a positive phrase. Alternate translation: “your town is among the most important towns in Judah” (See: [Litotes](#))

who will shepherd my people Israel (ULT)

Micah speaks of this ruler as one who will **shepherd Israel**. This means he will lead and care for the people. Alternate translation: “who will lead my people Israel as a shepherd leads his sheep” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means the least among the leaders of Judah, for from you will come out a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

Matthew 2:7

Herod, having secretly called the learned men (ULT)

This means that **Herod** talked to **the learned men** without other people knowing.

ULT

⁷ Then Herod, having secretly called the learned men, inquired from them the time of the appearing of the star.

inquired from them the time of the appearing of the star (ULT)

You can translate this indirect quotation as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: “men, and he asked them, ‘When exactly did this star appear?’” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

the time of the appearing of the star (ULT)

It is implied that the learned men told him when **the star** appeared. Alternate translation: “what time the star had appeared. The learned men told Herod when the star first appeared” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 2:8

the young child (ULT)

The **young child** refers to Jesus.

report to me (ULT)

Alternate translation: "let me know" or "tell me" or "report back to me"

might worship him (ULT)

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

ULT

⁸ And having sent them to Bethlehem, he said, "Having gone, search carefully for the young child, and after you have found him, report to me so that I also, having come, might worship him."

Matthew 2:9

And they, having heard (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And the learned men, after they heard"

they saw in the east (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they had seen come up in the east" or "they had seen in their country"

was going before them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "guided them" or "led them"

it stood over (ULT)

Alternate translation: "it stopped over"

where the young child was (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the place where the young child was staying"

ULT

⁹ And they, having heard the king, went on their way, and behold, the star that they saw in the east was going before them until, having come, it stood over where the young child was.

Matthew 2:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁰ And having seen the star, they rejoiced with very great joy.

Matthew 2:11

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to the house where Mary, Joseph, and the young Jesus were living.

having gone (ULT)

Alternate translation: “after he learned men went”

having fallen down, they worshiped him (ULT)

They did this to honor Jesus. Alternate translation: “they knelt down and put their faces close to the ground” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

their treasures (ULT)

Here, **their treasures** refers to the boxes or bags they used to carry their treasures. Alternate translation: “the containers that held their treasures” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 And having gone into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother. And having fallen down, they worshiped him, and having opened their treasures, they offered him gifts: gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2:12

having been warned (ULT)

God knew that Herod wanted to harm the child. Alternate translation: "when God warned the learned men"

through a dream not to return to Herod (ULT)

You can translate this indirect quotation as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "through a dream, saying, 'Do not go back to King Herod'" (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

¹² And having been warned through a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Matthew 2:13

General Information:

In verse 15, Matthew quotes the prophet Hosea to show that the Christ would spend time in Egypt.

after...had departed...they (ULT)

Alternate translation: "when the learned men had departed"

appears to Joseph by means of a dream (ULT)

Alternate translation: "came to Joseph while he was dreaming"

Get up, take...flee...remain...you (ULT)

God is speaking to Joseph, so these should all be singular forms. (See: [Forms of You](#))

until I tell you (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this phrase, you can make the full meaning of this statement explicit.

Alternate translation: "until I tell you it is safe to come back" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

I tell you (ULT)

Here, **I** refers to God. The angel is speaking for God.

ULT

13 Now after they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph by means of a dream, saying, "Get up, take the young child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is going to seek the young child to kill him."

Matthew 2:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁴ And he, having gotten up, took the young child and his mother at night and departed for Egypt,

Matthew 2:15

he was (ULT)

It is implied that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus remained in Egypt.
Alternate translation: "they remained" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

until the death of Herod (ULT)

Herod does not die until [Matthew 2:19](#). This statement describes the length of their stay in Egypt, and it does not say that Herod died at this time.

Out of Egypt I called my son (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I have called my son out of Egypt"

my son (ULT)

In Hosea this refers to the people of Israel. Matthew quoted it to say that this was true of God's Son, Jesus. Translate it using a word for son that could refer to the only **son** or the first son.

ULT

15 and he was there until the death of Herod, in order that might be fulfilled what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Matthew 2:16

General Information:

These events happen before Herod's death, which Matthew mentioned in [Matthew 2:15](#). (See: [Order of Events](#))

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts back to Herod and tells what he did when he learned that the learned men had deceived him.

he had been mocked by the learned men (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "the learned men had embarrassed him by tricking him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

having sent forth, he killed all the male children (ULT)

Herod did not kill the **children** himself. Alternate translation: "he gave orders for his soldiers to kill all the boys" or "he sent soldiers there to kill all the boy babies" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

according to the time (ULT)

Alternate translation: "based on the time"

ULT

16 Then Herod, having seen that he had been mocked by the learned men, was very angry, and having sent forth, he killed all the male children who {were} in Bethlehem and in all its region, from two years and under, according to the time that he had determined exactly from the learned men.

Matthew 2:17

General Information:

Matthew quotes the prophet Jeremiah to show that the death of all of the male children in the region of Bethlehem was according to scripture.

ULT

17 Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

Then was fulfilled (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "This fulfilled" or "Herod's actions fulfilled" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "what the Lord spoke long ago through the prophet Jeremiah" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 2:18

A voice...was heard...not...they are (ULT)

Matthew is quoting the prophet Jeremiah.

A voice...was heard (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "People heard a voice" or "There was a loud sound" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and not willing to be comforted, because they are no more."

Rachel weeping for her children (ULT)

Rachel lived many years before this time. This prophecy shows Rachel, who has died, weeping for her descendants.

not willing to be comforted (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "no one could comfort her" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

because they are no more (ULT)

Here, **are no more** is a mild way of saying they are dead. Alternate translation: "because they were dead" or "because the children were gone and would never return" (See: [Euphemism](#))

Matthew 2:19

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to Egypt, where Joseph, Mary, and the young Jesus are living.

behold (ULT)

The word **behold** marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of doing this.

ULT

19 Now Herod having died, behold, an angel of the Lord appears through a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

Matthew 2:20

those who are seeking the life of the child (ULT)

Here, **seeking the life of the child** is a way of saying they wanted to kill the child. Alternate translation: “those who were looking for the child in order to kill him” (See: [Euphemism](#))

those who are seeking (ULT)

This phrase refers to King Herod and his advisors.

ULT

²⁰ saying, “Having gotten up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who are seeking the life of the child have died.”

Matthew 2:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ And he, having gotten up, took the child and his mother, and entered into the land of Israel.

Matthew 2:22

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story that began in [Matthew 2:1](#) about Herod's attempt to kill the new King of the Jews.

But having heard (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But when Joseph heard"

Archelaus (ULT)

Archelaus is the name of Herod's son. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

he was afraid (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Joseph was afraid"

ULT

²² But having heard that Archelaus is reigning over Judea in the place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. But having been warned by means of a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee,

Matthew 2:23

what had been spoken through the prophets (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “what the Lord spoke long ago through the prophets” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

he will be called a Nazarene (ULT)

Here, **he** refers to Jesus. The prophets before the time of Jesus would have referred to him as the Messiah or the Christ. Alternate translation: “people would say that the Christ is a Nazarene” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²³ and having gone there, he lived in a city called Nazareth, so that it might be fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophets, that he will be called a Nazarene.

Matthew 3

Matthew 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULT does this with the quoted material in verse 3.

Special concepts in this chapter

“Bear fruit worthy of repentance”

Fruit is a common picture word in the scriptures. Writers use it to describe the results of either good or bad behavior. In this chapter, good fruit is the result of living as God commands. (See: [fruit](#), [fruitful](#), [unfruitful](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“The kingdom of heaven is near”

No one knows for sure whether the “kingdom of heaven” was present or still coming when John spoke these words. English translations often use the phrase “at hand,” but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phrases “is coming near” and “has come near.”

Matthew 3:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story where Matthew tells of the ministry of John the Baptist. In verse 3, Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that John the Baptist was God's appointed messenger to prepare for Jesus' ministry.

ULT

¹ Now in those days, John the Baptist comes preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

in...those days (ULT)

The events of this chapter occurred many years after Joseph and his family left Egypt and went to Nazareth. This is probably near the time that Jesus begins his ministry. Alternate translation: "some time later" or "some years later"

Matthew 3:2

Repent (ULT)

The verb **Repent** is plural in form. John is speaking to the crowds.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

² saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is near."

is near...the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

The phrase **the kingdom of the heavens** refers to God ruling as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use the word "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "our God in heaven will soon show himself to be king" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 3:3

For this is he who has been spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "For Isaiah the prophet was speaking of John the Baptist when he said" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ For this is he who has been spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "The voice of one calling out in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"

The voice of one calling out in the wilderness (ULT)

This can be expressed as a sentence. Alternate translation: "The voice of one calling out in the wilderness is heard" or "They hear the sound of someone calling out in the wilderness"

Make ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight (ULT)

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

Make ready the way of the Lord (ULT)

Doing this represents being prepared to hear the Lord's message when he comes. Alternate translation: "Prepare to hear the Lord's message when he comes" or "Get the road ready for the Lord" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Make ready the way of the Lord (ULT)

People prepare for the Lord by repenting of their sins. Alternate translation: "Repent and be ready for the Lord to come" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 3:4

Now this John had his clothing from the hair of a camel and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey (ULT)

The word **Now** is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew tells background information about John the Baptist. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

⁴ Now this John had his clothing from the hair of a camel and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

had his clothing from the hair of a camel and a leather belt around his waist (ULT)

This **clothing** symbolizes that John is a prophet like the prophets from long ago. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

had his clothing from the hair of a camel and a leather belt around his waist (ULT)

John dressed in a similar way to the prophet Elijah. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 3:5

Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region around (ULT)

The words **Jerusalem**, **Judea**, and **the region** are metonyms for the people from those areas. Alternate translation: “people from Jerusalem, Judea, and that region” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ Then were going out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan,

Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region around (ULT)

The word “all” is an exaggeration to emphasize that very many people went out. Alternate translation: “very many people from Jerusalem, Judea, and that region” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Matthew 3:6

being baptized...by him (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "as John baptized them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ and being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

being baptized (ULT)

This refers to the people coming from Jerusalem, Judea, and the region around the Jordan River.

Matthew 3:7

General Information:

John the Baptist begins to rebuke the Pharisees and Sadducees.

You offspring of vipers! Who (ULT)

This is a metaphor. Here, **offspring** means “having the characteristic of” and **vipers** are a kind of dangerous snakes and represent evil.

You can state this as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: “You evil poisonous snakes! Who” or “You are evil like poisonous snakes! Who” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ Now having seen many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”

Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath (ULT)

John uses a question to rebuke the Pharisees and Sadducees because they were asking him to baptize them so that God would not punish them, but they did not want to stop sinning. Alternate translation: “you cannot flee from God’s wrath like this.” or “do not think that you can escape God’s wrath just because I baptize you.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

to flee from the coming wrath (ULT)

The word **wrath** is being used to refer to God’s punishment because his wrath precedes it. Alternate translation: “run away from the punishment that is coming” or “escape because God is about to punish you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 3:8

Therefore, produce fruit worthy of repentance (ULT)

The phrase **produce fruit** is a metaphor referring to a person's actions. Alternate translation: "Let your actions show that you have truly repented" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ Therefore, produce fruit worthy of repentance.

Matthew 3:9

We have Abraham {as} father (ULT)

The Jewish leaders thought that God would not punish them since they were descendants of **Abraham**. Alternate translation: "Abraham is our ancestor" or "We are descendants of Abraham" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

For I say to you (ULT)

This phrase adds emphasis to what John is about to say.

Abraham...God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones (ULT)

Alternate translation: "God is able to make physical descendants even out of these stones and give them to Abraham"

ULT

⁹ And you should not think to say among yourselves, 'We have Abraham {as} father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

Matthew 3:10

But already the ax is placed against the root of the trees. So, every tree not producing good fruit is chopped down and is thrown into the fire (ULT)

This metaphor means God is ready to punish sinners. Alternate translation: "As a person gets his axe ready to cut down and burn a tree that grows bad fruit, God is ready to punish you for your sins" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁰ But already the ax is placed against the root of the trees. So, every tree not producing good fruit is chopped down and is thrown into the fire.

But already the ax is placed against the root of the trees. So, every tree not producing good fruit is chopped down and is thrown into the fire (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God has his axe and he is ready to cut down and burn any tree that grows bad fruit" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 3:11

for repentance (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to show that you have repented"

But the one coming after me (ULT)

Jesus is the person who comes after John.

is mightier than I (ULT)

Alternate translation: "is more important than I am"

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire (ULT)

This metaphor compares John's baptism with water to the future baptism with **fire**. This means John's baptism only symbolically cleanses people of their sins. The baptism by **Holy Spirit** and **fire** will truly cleanse people of their sins. If possible, use the word **baptize** in your translation to keep the comparison to John's baptism. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 I baptize you with water for repentance. But the one coming after me is mightier than I, of whom I am not worthy to carry {his} sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire;

Matthew 3:12

whose winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clear off his threshing floor (ULT)

This metaphor compares the way Christ will separate the righteous people from the unrighteous people to the way a man separates wheat grain from chaff. Alternate translation: “and Christ is like a man whose winnowing fork is in his hand” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² whose winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clear off his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the storehouse. But he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

whose winnowing fork is in his hand (ULT)

Here, **in his hand** means the person is ready to act. Alternate translation: “and Christ is holding a winnowing fork because he is ready” (See: [Idiom](#))

winnowing fork (ULT)

A **winnowing fork** is a tool for tossing wheat up into the air to separate the wheat grain from the chaff. The heavier grain falls back down and the unwanted chaff is blown away by the wind. It is similar in shape to a pitchfork but with wide tines made of wood. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

his...threshing floor (ULT)

Alternate translation: “his ground” or “the ground where he separates the grain from the chaff”

gather his wheat into the storehouse...the...he will burn up...chaff with unquenchable fire (ULT)

This is a metaphor showing how God will separate righteous people from evil people. The righteous will go to heaven like **wheat** into a farmer’s **storehouse**, and God will **burn up** the people who are like **chaff** with a **fire** that will never be put out. (See: [Metaphor](#))

with unquenchable fire (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “fire that will never burn out” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 3:13

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to a later time when John the Baptist baptizes Jesus.

to be baptized...by him (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “so John could baptize him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

13 Then Jesus comes from Galilee to the Jordan, to John, to be baptized by him.

Matthew 3:14

I have need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me (ULT)

John uses a question to show his surprise at Jesus' request. If your readers would misunderstand the question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are more important than I am. I should not baptize you. You should baptize me." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁴ But John was hindering him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?"

Matthew 3:15

for us (ULT)

Here, **us** refers to Jesus and John. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

ULT

15 But answering, Jesus said to him, "Permit it now, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permits him.

Matthew 3:16

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about John the Baptist. It describes what happened after he baptized Jesus.

Now having been baptized (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "But after John baptized Jesus" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

16 Now having been baptized, Jesus immediately came up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove, resting upon him,

behold (ULT)

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

the heavens were opened to him (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus saw the sky open" or "God opened the heavens to Jesus" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

coming down like a dove (ULT)

This could mean: (1) the Spirit was in the form of a **dove**. (2) this is a simile that compares the Spirit coming down upon Jesus gently, the way a **dove** would. (See: [Simile](#))

Matthew 3:17

a voice from the heavens, saying (ULT)

Here, **voice** refers to God speaking. Alternate translation: “God spoke from heaven saying” or “Jesus heard a voice from heaven saying” (See: [Metonymy](#))

my...Son (ULT)

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

17 and behold, a voice from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son. I am very pleased with him.”

Matthew 4

Matthew 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 verses 6, 15 and 16, which are words from the Old Testament.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULT does this with the quotation in verse 10.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“the kingdom of heaven has come near”

No one knows for use whether the “kingdom of heaven” was present or still coming when Jesus spoke these words. English translations often use the phrase “at hand,” but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phrase “is coming near” and “has come near.”

“If you are the Son of God”

The reader should not understand these words in verses 3 and 6 to mean that Satan did not know whether Jesus was the Son of God. God had already said that Jesus was his Son ([Matthew 3:17](#)), so Satan knew who Jesus was. He also knew that Jesus could make stones become bread and could throw himself off of high places and not be hurt. He was trying to make Jesus do these things and so disobey God and obey Satan. These words can be translated as “Because you are the Son of God” or “You are the Son of God. Show me what you can do.” (See: [Satan, devil, evil one](#) and [Son of God, the Son](#))

Matthew 4:1

General Information:

Here Matthew begins a new part of the story in which Jesus spends 40 days in the wilderness, where Satan tempts him. In verse 4, Jesus rebukes Satan with a quotation from Deuteronomy.

ULT

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Jesus was led up...by the Spirit (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the Spirit led Jesus” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to be tempted by the devil (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “so the devil could tempt Jesus” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 4:2

having fasted...he was hungry (ULT)

These refer to Jesus.

40 days and 40 nights (ULT)

This means he fasted continually with no breaks for a period of 40 days.

ULT

² And having fasted 40 days and 40 nights, afterwards, he was hungry.

Matthew 4:3

the tempter (ULT)

Here, **the tempter** refers to the same being as “the devil” (verse 1). You may have to use the same word to translate both.

If you are the Son of God, speak (ULT)

It is best to assume that Satan knew that Jesus is the **Son of God**. This could mean: (1) this is a temptation to do miracles for Jesus’ own benefit. Alternate translation: “You are the Son of God, so you can command” (2) this is a challenge or accusation. Alternate translation: “Prove that you are the Son of God by speaking”

ULT

³ And having approached, the tempter said to him, “If you are the Son of God, speak so that these stones might become bread.”

the Son...of God (ULT)

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

speak so that these stones might become bread (ULT)

You could translate this indirect quotation with a direct quotation. Alternate translation: “say to these stones, ‘Become bread.’” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

bread (ULT)

Here, **bread** refers to food in general. Alternate translation: “food” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Matthew 4:4

It is written (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "Moses wrote this in the scriptures long ago" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

he...Man...will not live by bread alone (ULT)

This implies that there is something more important to life than food.

but by every word coming through the mouth of God (ULT)

Here, **word** and **mouth** refer to what God says. Alternate translation: "but by listening to everything that God says" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ But he, answering, said, "It is written, 'Man will not live by bread alone, but by every word coming through the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:5

General Information:

In verse 6, Satan quotes from the Psalms in order to tempt Jesus.

ULT

⁵ Then the devil takes him into the holy city and set him on the highest point of the temple,

Matthew 4:6

If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down (ULT)

It is best to assume that Satan knew that Jesus is the **Son of God**. This could mean: (1) this is a temptation to do a miracle for Jesus' own benefit. Alternate translation: "Since you are truly the Son of God, you can throw yourself down" (2) this is a challenge or accusation. Alternate translation: "Prove that you are truly the Son of God by throwing yourself down"

ULT

⁶ and says to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and, 'They will lift you up in {their} hands, lest you might hit your foot against a stone.'"

the Son...of God (ULT)

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

throw yourself down (ULT)

Alternate translation: "let yourself fall to the ground" or "jump down"

for it is written (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "for the writer wrote in the scriptures" or "for it says in the scriptures" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

He will command his angels concerning you,' and (ULT)

You can translate this with a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "God will say to his angels, 'Take care of him,' and" (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

They will lift you up (ULT)

Alternate translation: "The angels will hold you"

Matthew 4:7

General Information:

In verse 7, Jesus rebukes Satan with another quotation from Deuteronomy.

ULT

⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You will not test the Lord your God.'"

Again it is written (ULT)

It is understood that Jesus is quoting scripture again. Alternate translation: "Again, it is written in the scriptures" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Again it is written (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "Again, I will tell you what Moses wrote in the scriptures" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

You will not test (ULT)

Here, **You** refers to anyone. Alternate translation: "One must not test" or "No person should test"

Matthew 4:8

Again...the devil (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Next, the devil"

ULT

⁸ Again, the devil takes him to a very high hill and shows him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

Matthew 4:9

he said to him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the devil said to Jesus"

All these things I will give you (ULT)

The tempter is emphasizing here that he will give **All these things**, not just some of them. Alternate translation: "I will give you all these things"

having fallen down (ULT)

This was a common action to show that a person was worshiping. Alternate translation: "putting your face near the ground" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁹ And he said to him, "All these things I will give you, if having fallen down, you would worship me."

Matthew 4:10

General Information:

In verse 10, Jesus rebukes Satan with another quotation from Deuteronomy.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about how Satan tempted Jesus.

For it is written (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “For Moses also wrote in the scriptures” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

You will worship...you will serve (ULT)

The instances of **You** and **you** are singular, a command to everyone who hears it. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

10 Then Jesus says to him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written, ‘You will worship the Lord your God, and you will serve only him.’”

Matthew 4:11

behold (ULT)

The word **behold** here alerts us to pay attention to the important new information that follows.

ULT

11 Then the devil leaves him, and behold, angels came and began to minister to him.

Matthew 4:12

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story in which Matthew describes the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. These verses explain how Jesus came to be in Galilee. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

12 Now having heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee.

Now (ULT)

The word **Now** is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

John had been arrested (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "the king had arrested John" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 4:13

in the territories of Zebulun and Naphtali (ULT)

Zebulun and **Naphtali** are the names of the tribes that lived in these territories many years earlier before foreigners took control of the land of Israel. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹³ And having left Nazareth, having come, he lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territories of Zebulun and Naphtali,

Matthew 4:14

General Information:

In verses 15 and 16, Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that Jesus' ministry in Galilee was a fulfillment of prophecy.

what was spoken (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "what God said" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁴ so that it might be fulfilled what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

Matthew 4:15

The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali ... Galilee of the Gentiles!

These phrases describe the same area.

toward the sea (ULT)

Here, **sea** refers to the Sea of Galilee.

ULT

¹⁵ "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—

Matthew 4:16

The people who are sitting

These words can be combined with the sentence beginning with "The land of Zebulun" (verse 15). Alternate translation: "In the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali ... where many Gentiles live, the people who are sitting"

ULT

16 the people who are sitting in darkness have seen a great light, and to those sitting in the region and shadow of death, upon them has a light arisen."

the people who are sitting in darkness have seen a great light (ULT)

Here, **darkness** is a metaphor for not knowing the truth about God. And **light** is a metaphor for God's true message that saves people from their sin. (See: [Metaphor](#))

to those sitting in the region and shadow of death, upon them has a light arisen (ULT)

This basically has the same meaning as the first part of the sentence. (See: [Parallelism](#))

to those sitting in the region and shadow of death, upon them has a light arisen (ULT)

Here, **those sitting in the region and shadow of death** is a metaphor. It represents those who did not know God. These people were in danger of dying and being separated from God forever. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 4:17

has come near...the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

The phrase **the kingdom of the heavens** refers to God ruling as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, include a word that means “heavens” in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 3:2](#). Alternate translation: “our God in the heavens will soon show himself to be king” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has come near.”

Matthew 4:18

General Information:

This begins a new scene within the part of the story about Jesus' ministry in Galilee. Here he begins to gather men to be his disciples.

casting a net into the sea (ULT)

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "throwing a net into the water to catch fish" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

18 Now walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

Matthew 4:19

Come after me (ULT)

Jesus invites Simon and Andrew to follow him, live with him, and become his disciples. Alternate translation: "Be my disciples"

ULT

19 And he says to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men."

I will make you fishers of men (ULT)

This metaphor means Simon and Andrew will teach people God's true message, so others will also follow Jesus. Alternate translation: "I will teach you to gather men to me like you used to gather fish" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 4:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ And immediately, they, having left
{their} nets, followed him.

Matthew 4:21

Connecting Statement:

Jesus calls more men to be his disciples.

he called them (ULT)

This phrase also means that Jesus invited them to follow him, live with him, and become his disciples. Alternate translation: "Jesus called John and James"

ULT

²¹ And having gone on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the {son} of Zebedee, and John his brother in the boat with Zebedee their father mending their nets, and he called them,

Matthew 4:22

they...immediately...having left (ULT)

Alternate translation: "at that moment they left"

having left the boat...followed him (ULT)

It should be clear that this is a life change. These men are no longer going to be fishermen and are leaving the family business to follow Jesus for the rest of their lives.

ULT

²² and immediately they, having left the boat and their father, followed him.

Matthew 4:23

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. These verses summarize what he did and how the people responded. (See: [End of Story](#))

in...teaching...their synagogues (ULT)

Alternate translation: "teaching in the synagogues of the Galileans" or "teaching in the synagogues of those people"

ULT

23 And he was going around in all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.

preaching the gospel of the kingdom (ULT)

Here, **kingdom** refers to God's reign as king. Alternate translation: "preaching the good news that God will show himself as king" (See: [Metonymy](#))

every disease and every sickness

The words **disease** and **sickness** are closely related but should be translated as two different words if possible. A **disease** is what causes a person to be sick.

sickness (ULT)

This is the physical weakness or affliction that results from having a disease.

Matthew 4:24

being possessed by demons (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom demons controlled” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the epileptic (ULT)

This refers to anyone there who had epilepsy, not to a particular **epileptic**. Alternate translation: “those who sometimes have seizures” or “those who sometimes become unconscious and move uncontrollably” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

and the paralytic (ULT)

This refers to anyone there who was paralyzed, not to a particular **paralytic**. Alternate translation: “and any who are paralyzed” or “and those who can not walk” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

24 And the news of him went out into all Syria, and they brought to him all those having sickness. being afflicted by various diseases and pains, and being possessed by demons, and the epileptic and the paralytic, and he healed them.

Matthew 4:25

the Decapolis (ULT)

This name means “the Ten Towns.” This is the name of a region to the southeast of the Sea of Galilee. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²⁵ And large crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

Matthew 5

Matthew 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Many people call the words in Matthew 5-7 the Sermon on the Mount. This is one long lesson that Jesus taught. Bibles divide this lesson into three chapters, but this can sometimes confuse the reader. If your translation divides the text into sections, be sure that the reader understands that the whole sermon is one large section.

Matthew 5:3-10, known as the Beatitudes or Blessings, has been set apart by being set farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text, with each line beginning with the word “blessed.” This way of placing the words on the page highlights the poetic form of this teaching.

Jesus spoke about many different subjects in this sermon, so you may wish to help the reader by putting an empty line into the text whenever Jesus changed the subject.

Special concepts in this chapter

“His disciples”

It is possible to refer to anyone who followed Jesus as a follower or disciple. Jesus selected twelve of his followers to become his closest disciples, “the twelve disciples.” They would later become known as the apostles.

Matthew 5:1

General Information:

In verse 3, Jesus begins to describe the characteristics of people who are blessed.

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story in which Jesus begins to teach his disciples. This part continues through the end of chapter 7 and is frequently called the Sermon on the Mount.

ULT

¹ Now having seen the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he had sat down, his disciples came to him.

Matthew 5:2

having opened his mouth (ULT)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “when Jesus began to speak”
(See: [Idiom](#))

he taught them (ULT)

The word **them** refers to his disciples.

ULT

² And having opened his mouth, he taught them, saying,

Matthew 5:3

the poor in spirit (ULT)

The phrase **poor in spirit** refers to someone who is humble.
Alternate translation: “those who know they need God” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³ “Blessed {are} the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God’s rule as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep **heavens** in your translation. Alternate translation: “for God in the heavens will be their king” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 5:4

those who mourn (ULT)

This could mean: (1) they are sad for the sinfulness of the world. (2) They are sad for their own sins. (3) they are sad for the death of someone. Do not specify the reason for mourning unless your language requires it.

ULT

⁴ Blessed {are} those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

they will be comforted (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will comfort them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 5:5

the meek (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the gentle" or "those who do not rely on their own power"

they will inherit the earth (ULT)

Alternate translation: "God will give them the entire earth"

ULT

⁵ Blessed {are} the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Matthew 5:6

those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (ULT)

This metaphor describes people who strongly desire to do what is right. Alternate translation: “those who desire to live right as much as they desire food and drink” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ Blessed {are} those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

they will be filled (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God will fill them” or “God will satisfy them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 5:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ Blessed {are} the merciful, for they will obtain mercy.

Matthew 5:8

the pure in heart (ULT)

Here, **heart** is a metonym for a person's inner being or intentions. Alternate translation: "those who only want to serve God" Alternate translation: "people whose hearts are pure" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ Blessed {are} the pure in heart, for they will see God.

they will see God (ULT)

Here, **see** means they will be able to live in God's presence. Alternate translation: "God will allow them to live with him"

Matthew 5:9

the peacemakers (ULT)

The **peacemakers** are the people who help others to have peace with one another.

ULT

⁹ Blessed {are} the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

for they will be called sons of God (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “for God will call them his children” or “they will be children of God” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

sons of God (ULT)

It is best to translate **sons** with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to a human son or child.

Matthew 5:10

those who have been persecuted (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “those people whom others treat unfairly” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

for the sake of righteousness (ULT)

Alternate translation: “because they do what God wants them to do”

theirs is the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God’s rule as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep **heavens** in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 5:3](#). Alternate translation: “for God in heaven will be their king” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

10 Blessed {are} those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Matthew 5:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes describing the characteristics of people who are blessed.

Blessed are you (ULT)

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

may say every evil thing against you falsely (ULT)

Alternate translation: “may say all kinds of evil lies about you” or “may say bad things about you that are not true”

for my sake (ULT)

Alternate translation: “because you follow me” or “because you believe in me”

ULT

11 Blessed are you when they may insult you and may persecute you and may say every evil thing against you falsely for my sake.

Matthew 5:12

Rejoice and be very glad (ULT)

Here, **Rejoice** and **be very glad** mean almost the same thing. Jesus wanted his hearers not merely to rejoice but to do even more than rejoice if possible. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

12 Rejoice and be very glad, for great {is} your reward in the heavens, for in this way they persecuted the prophets who {were} before you.

Matthew 5:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach about how his disciples are like salt and light.

You are the salt of the earth (ULT)

This could mean: (1) just as **salt** makes food good, disciples of Jesus influence the people of the world so that they will be good. Alternate translation: "You are like salt for the people of the world" (2) just as **salt** preserves food, disciples of Jesus keep people from becoming totally corrupt. Alternate translation: "As salt is for food, you are for the world" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt may have lost its taste, with what might it be made salty again? It is good for nothing any longer, except having been thrown out, to be trampled by men.

if...the salt may have lost its taste (ULT)

This could mean: (1) the salt has lost its power to do things that salt does. (2) the salt has lost its flavor. (See: [Metaphor](#))

with what might it be made salty again (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to teach the disciples. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can state it as a fact. Alternate translation: "a person who stops following Jesus cannot be made useful again." (See: [Metaphor](#))

except having been thrown out, to be trampled by men (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "except for people to throw it out into the road and walk on it" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 5:14

You are the light of the world (ULT)

This means Jesus' followers bring the message of God's truth to all the people who do not know God. Alternate translation: "You are like a light for the people of the world" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 You are the light of the world. A city being set on top of a hill is not able to be hidden.

A city being set on top of a hill is not able to be hidden (ULT)

At night when it is dark, people can see the city lights shining. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

A city being set on top of a hill is not able to be hidden (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "During the night, no one can hide the lights that shine from a city on a hill" or "Everyone sees the lights of a city on a hill" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 5:15

Neither do they light a lamp (ULT)

Alternate translation: "People do not light a lamp"

put it under a basket (ULT)

This is saying it is foolish to create light only to hide it so people do not see the light of the lamp. Alternate translation: "place the lamp under a basket"

ULT

¹⁵ Neither do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but rather on the lampstand, and it shines for all those in the house.

Matthew 5:16

Let your light shine before men (ULT)

This means a disciple of Jesus should live in such a way that others can learn about God's truth. Alternate translation: "Let your lives be like a light that shines before people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

your Father who is in the heavens

It is best to translate **Father** with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to a human father.

ULT

16 Let your light shine before men in such a way so that they might see your good deeds and might glorify your Father who {is} in the heavens.

Matthew 5:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law.

the prophets (ULT)

This refers to what the **prophets** wrote in the scriptures. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

17 May you not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I came not to destroy them but to fulfill them.

Matthew 5:18

truly...I say to you (ULT)

This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next. Alternate translation: "I tell you the truth"

until the heaven and the earth may pass away (ULT)

Here, **heaven** and **earth** refer to the entire universe. Alternate translation: "as long as the universe lasts" (See: [Merism](#))

one jot or one tittle (ULT)

The **jot** was the smallest Hebrew letter, and the **tittle** was a small mark that was the difference between two Hebrew letters. Alternate translation: "the smallest written letter or the smallest part of a letter" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

all things...might be accomplished (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "all things have happened" or "God causes all things to happen" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

all things (ULT)

The phrase **all things** refers to everything in the law. Alternate translation: "everything in the law" or "all that is written in the law" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

18 For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth may pass away, one jot or one tittle may certainly not pass away from the law until all things might be accomplished.

Matthew 5:19

whoever...might break (ULT)

Alternate translation: "whoever disobeys" or "whoever ignores"

one of the least of these commandments

Alternate translation: "any of these commandments, even the least important one"

might teach men to do so...will be called (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "teaches others to do so, God will call that person" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

least...in the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is found only in Matthew. If possible use "heavens" in your translation. Alternate translation: "the least important in his heavenly kingdom" or "the least important under the rule of our God in the heavens" (See: [Metonymy](#))

and might teach...might do (ULT)

Alternate translation: "obeys all these commandments and teaches others to do the same"

great (ULT)

Alternate translation: "most important"

ULT

19 Therefore, whoever might break one of the least of these commandments and might teach men to do so will be called least in the kingdom of the heavens. But whoever might do and might teach them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of the heavens.

Matthew 5:20

For I say to you (ULT)

This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

to you...your (ULT)

The pronouns **you** and **your** are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²⁰ For I say to you that unless your righteousness might abound greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you may certainly not enter into the kingdom of the heavens.

that unless your righteousness might abound...you may certainly not enter (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this double negative, you can state it in a positive form. Alternate translation: "that your righteousness must exceed ... Pharisees in order to enter" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

Matthew 5:21

You have heard...Do not kill (ULT)

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The **You** is plural in **You have heard**. The imperative **Do not kill** is single, but in some languages it may need to be plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

21 You have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Do not kill,' and, 'Whoever might kill will be held for the judgment.'

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about murder and anger.

it was said to the ancients (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, it can be expressed with an active verb. Alternate translation: "God said to those who lived long ago" or "Moses said to your ancestors long ago" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Whoever...Whoever...might kill will be held for the judgment (ULT)

Here, **the judgment** implies that a judge will condemn the person to die. Alternate translation: "A judge will condemn anyone who kills another person" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Do not kill...might kill (ULT)

Both instances of the word **kill** refer to murder, not to all forms of killing.

will be held for the judgment (ULT)

It seems here Jesus is not referring to a human judge but rather to God condemning the person who is angry with his brother. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 5:22

But I say (ULT)

Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word. The **I** is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is equally important to the original commands from God. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis.

with his brother (ULT)

Here, **his brother** refers to a fellow believer, not to a literal brother or a neighbor.

Fool...You fool (ULT)

These are insults for people who cannot think correctly. A **fool** is one who disobeys God.

council (ULT)

This was likely a local **council**, not the main Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.

ULT

²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be held for the judgment. And whoever might say to his brother, 'Fool!' will be held for the council. And whoever might say, 'You fool!' will be held for the fire of Gehenna.

Matthew 5:23

you may be offering your gift at the altar and there may remember that your brother has something against you (ULT)

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of **you** and **your** are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²³ Therefore, if you may be offering your gift at the altar and there may remember that your brother has something against you,

you may be offering your gift (ULT)

Alternate translation: "you may be giving your gift" or "you may be bringing your gift"

at the altar (ULT)

It is implied that this is God's **altar** at the temple in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "to God at the altar in the temple" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

and there may remember (ULT)

Alternate translation: "and while you are standing at the altar you happen to remember"

your...brother has something against you (ULT)

Alternate translation: "another person is angry with you because of something you did"

Matthew 5:24

first be reconciled with your brother (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “first, make peace with that person” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar and go; first be reconciled with your brother, and then, having come, offer your gift.

Matthew 5:25

Be in agreement with your accuser quickly while you are with him on the way, lest your accuser might hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison (ULT)

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of **you** and **your** are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²⁵ Be in agreement with your accuser quickly while you are with him on the way, lest your accuser might hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison.

with your accuser (ULT)

An **accuser** is a person who blames someone for doing something wrong. He takes the wrongdoer to court to accuse him before a judge.

might hand you over...to the judge (ULT)

Here, **hand you over** means to give someone into the control of someone else. Alternate translation: “will let the judge deal with you” (See: [Idiom](#))

the judge to the officer (ULT)

Here “hand you over” is implied. Alternate translation: “the judge will give you over to the officer” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

with...accuser...to...officer (ULT)

Here, **the officer** is a person who has authority to carry out the decisions of a judge.

you will be thrown into prison (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the officer will put you in prison” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 5:26

Truly I say to you (ULT)

This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next. Alternate translation: "I tell you the truth"

from there (ULT)

Alternate translation: "from prison"

ULT

²⁶ Truly I say to you, you may certainly not come out from there until you would have paid the last quadrans.

Matthew 5:27

You have heard...Do not commit adultery (ULT)

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The **You** is plural in **You have heard**. The imperative **Do not commit adultery** is singular, but in some languages it may need to be plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²⁷ You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about adultery and lust.

that it was said (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "that God said" or "that Moses said" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Do not commit adultery (ULT)

The word **commit** means to act out or do something.

Matthew 5:28

But I say (ULT)

Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word. The **I** is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is equally important to the original commands from God. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis. See how you translated this in [Matthew 5:22](#).

ULT

28 But I say to you that everyone who looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

everyone who looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart (ULT)

This metaphor indicates that a man who lusts after a **woman** is as guilty of **adultery** as a man who actually commits the act of adultery. (See: [Metaphor](#))

to lust after her (ULT)

Alternate translation: "and lusts after her" or "and desires to sleep with her"

in his heart (ULT)

Here, **heart** is a metonym for a person's thoughts. Alternate translation: "in his mind" or "in his thoughts" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 5:29

But if your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you. For it is better for you that one of your members would perish and your whole body would not be thrown into Gehenna (ULT)

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All instances of **you** and **your** are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²⁹ But if your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you. For it is better for you that one of your members would perish and your whole body would not be thrown into Gehenna.

if...your right eye causes you to stumble (ULT)

Here, **eye** refers to what a person sees. Alternate translation: “if what you see causes you to stumble” (See: [Metonymy](#))

if...your right eye causes you to stumble (ULT)

Here, **to stumble** is a metaphor for “to sin.” Alternate translation: “if you want to sin because of what you see” (See: [Metaphor](#))

eye...right (ULT)

This means the most important **eye**, as opposed to the left eye. You may need to translate **right** as “better” or “stronger.” (See: [Idiom](#))

pluck it out (ULT)

This is an exaggerated command for a person to do whatever he needs to do to stop sinning. It means “forcefully remove it” or “destroy it.” If the right eye is not specifically mentioned, you may need to translate this “destroy your eyes.” If eyes have been mentioned, you may need to translate this “destroy them.” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

throw it away from you (ULT)

Alternate translation: “get rid of it”

your...one of...members would perish (ULT)

Alternate translation: “you should lose one part of your body”

and your whole body would not be thrown into Gehenna (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “than for God to throw your whole body into hell” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 5:30

if your right hand causes you to stumble (ULT)

In this metonymy, the **hand** stands for the actions of the whole person. (See: [Metonymy](#))

your right hand (ULT)

This means the most important **hand**, as opposed to the left hand. You may need to translate **right** as “better” or “stronger.” (See: [Idiom](#))

cut it off (ULT)

This is an exaggerated command for a person to do whatever he needs to do to stop sinning. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away from you. For it is better for you that one of your members would perish and your whole body would not go into Gehenna.

Matthew 5:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about divorce.

it has been said (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God also said" or "Moses also said" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

might send his wife away (ULT)

This phrase is a euphemism for divorce. (See: [Euphemism](#))

let him give (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he must give"

ULT

³¹ Now it has been said, 'Whoever might send his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'

Matthew 5:32

But I say (ULT)

Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word. The **I** is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is equally important to the original commands from God. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis. See how you translated this in [Matthew 5:22](#).

ULT

³² But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for a word of sexual immorality, makes her to commit adultery. And whoever might marry she who has been divorced commits adultery.

makes her to commit adultery (ULT)

It is the man who divorces the woman improperly who **makes her to commit adultery**. In many cultures it would be normal for her to remarry, but if the divorce is improper, such a remarriage is adultery.

she who has been divorced (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "her after her husband has divorced her" or "the divorced woman" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 5:33

you have heard...Do not break an oath...carry out (ULT)

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The **you** is plural in **you have heard**. The imperatives **Do not break** and **carry out** are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

³³ Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Do not break an oath, but carry out your oaths to the Lord.'

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about swearing oaths.

Again, you have heard (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Also, you have heard" or "Here is another example. You have heard"

it was said to the ancients (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God said to those who lived long ago" or "Moses said to your ancestors long ago" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Do not break an oath, but carry out your oaths to the Lord (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Do not swear that you will do something and then not do it. Instead do whatever you have sworn to the Lord that you will do"

Matthew 5:34

But I tell (ULT)

Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word. The **I** is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is equally important to the original commands from God. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis. See how you translated this in [Matthew 5:22](#).

ULT

³⁴ But I tell you not to swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God;

it is the throne of God (ULT)

Because God reigns from heaven, Jesus speaks of heaven as if it were a **throne**. Alternate translation: "it is from here that God rules" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 5:35

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes his words from verse 34, telling the people not to swear.

nor by the earth...it is the city of the great King (ULT)

Here Jesus means that when people make a promise or when they say that something is true, they must not swear by anything. Some people were teaching that if a person swears by God that he will do something, then he must do it, but if he swears by something else, such as by heaven or **earth**, then it is less offensive if he does not do what he swore to do. Jesus says that swearing by heaven or earth or Jerusalem is just as serious as swearing by God because those things all belong to God.

it is the footstool for his feet (ULT)

This metaphor means the earth also belongs to God. Alternate translation: "it is like a footstool where a king rests his feet" (See: [Metaphor](#))

for...it is the city of the great King (ULT)

Alternate translation: "for it is the city that belongs to God, the great King"

ULT

³⁵ nor by the earth, for it is the footstool for his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

Matthew 5:36

General Information:

Previously Jesus told his hearers that God's throne, footstool, and earthly home are not theirs to swear by. Here he says that they may not swear even by their own heads.

ULT

³⁶ Neither should you swear by your head, for you are not able to make one hair white or black.

Neither should you swear by your head, for you are not able to make one hair white or black (ULT)

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of the words **you** and **your** are singular, but you may have to translate them as plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

should you swear (ULT)

Here, swearing refers to taking an oath. See how you translated this in [Matthew 5:34](#).

Matthew 5:37

**let...be...your word...Yes, yes,' {or} 'No, no
(ULT)**

Alternate translation: "if you mean 'yes,' say 'yes,' and if you mean 'no,' say 'no.'"

ULT

³⁷ But let your word be 'Yes, yes,' {or} 'No, no.' But anything greater than this is from the evil one.

Matthew 5:38

You have heard (ULT)

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The **You** is plural in **You have heard**. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

38 You have heard that it was said, 'An eye in exchange for an eye, and a tooth in exchange for a tooth.'

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about retaliating against an enemy.

that it was said (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. See how you translated this in [Matthew 5:27](#). Alternate translation: "that God said" or "that Moses said" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

An eye in exchange for an eye, and a tooth in exchange for a tooth

The law of Moses allowed a person to harm a person in the same way he had harmed him, but he could not harm him worse.

Matthew 5:39

But I tell (ULT)

Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word. The **I** is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is equally important to the original commands from God. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis.

ULT

³⁹ But I tell you not to resist the evil person. Instead, whoever strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

the evil person (ULT)

Alternate translation: "an evil person" or "someone who harms you"

strikes you on the right cheek (ULT)

To strike the side of a man's face was an insult in Jesus' culture. As with the eye and the hand, the **right cheek** is the more important one, and striking that cheek was a terrible insult.

strikes (ULT)

Here, **strikes** means to hit with the back of an open hand.

the...turn to him...other also (ULT)

Alternate translation: "let him hit your other cheek also"

Matthew 5:40

with you...your...your} cloak (ULT)

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of **you** and **your** are singular. In some languages they may need to be plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

40 And to the one wanting to be judged with you and to take away your coat, let him also have {your} cloak.

coat...your} cloak (ULT)

The **coat** was worn close to the body, like a heavy shirt or a sweater. The **cloak**, the more valuable of the two, was worn over the **coat** for warmth and also used as a blanket for warmth at night.

And...let him...have {your} cloak (ULT)

Alternate translation: "give also to that person your cloak"

Matthew 5:41

whoever (ULT)

The context implies that he is speaking about a Roman soldier.
Alternate translation: "anyone who" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

41 And whoever will compel you to go one mile, go with him two.

one mile (ULT)

Here, **one mile** refers to the Roman mile, which was 1,000 paces. This was the distance a Roman soldier could legally force someone to carry something for him. If **mile** is confusing, it can be translated as "one kilometer" or "a distance."

with him (ULT)

Here, **him** refers to the one who compels you to go.

go with him two (ULT)

Alternate translation: "go the mile he forces you to go, and then go another mile." If "mile" is confusing, you can translate it as "two kilometers" or "twice as far."

Matthew 5:42

do not turn away from (ULT)

Alternate translation: "do not refuse to lend to." You can state this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "lend to"

ULT

⁴² Give to the one asking you, and do not turn away from the one wanting to borrow from you.

Matthew 5:43

You have heard...your...your (ULT)

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The **You** is plural in **You have heard**. The verb **Love** and both instances of **your** are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

43 You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about loving enemies.

that it was said (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. See how you translated this in [Matthew 5:27](#). Alternate translation: "that God said" or "that Moses said" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

your neighbor (ULT)

Here the word **neighbor** does not refer to a specific neighbor, but to any members of one's community or people group. These are people whom one usually desires to treat kindly or at least believes he ought to treat kindly. Alternate translation: "your countrymen" or "those who belong to your people group" (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

Matthew 5:44

But I say (ULT)

Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word. The **I** is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is equally important to the original commands from God. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis. See how you translated this in [Matthew 5:22](#).

ULT

44 But I say to you, love your enemies and pray on behalf of those who persecute you, ^[1]

Matthew 5:45

you might be sons of your Father (ULT)

It is best to translate **sons** with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to human sons or children.

of...your...Father (ULT)

Father is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

⁴⁵ so that you might be sons of your Father who {is} in the heavens. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust.

Matthew 5:46

you would love...you...do you have (ULT)

All instances of **you** are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes teaching about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. This section began in [Matthew 5:17](#).

what reward do you have (ULT)

Jesus uses this question to teach the people that loving those who love them is not something special that God will reward them for. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can translate it as a statement. Alternate translation: “you will get no reward.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Do not even the tax collectors do the same thing (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can translate it as a statement. Alternate translation: “Even the tax collectors do the same thing.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴⁶ For if you would love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same thing?

Matthew 5:47

what do you do more (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can translate it as a statement. Alternate translation: “you do nothing more than others.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

47 And if you would greet only your brothers, what do you do more? Do not even the Gentiles do the same thing?

you would greet (ULT)

Here, **greet** is a general term for showing a desire for the well-being of the hearer.

Do not even the Gentiles do the same thing (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can translate it as a statement. Alternate translation: “Even the Gentiles do the same thing.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Matthew 5:48

Father (ULT)

Father is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

48 Therefore, you shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 6

Matthew 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Matthew 6 continues Jesus' extended teaching known as "The Sermon on the Mount."

You may wish to set apart the prayer in 6:9-11 by placing it farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Jesus spoke about many different subjects in this sermon, so you may wish to help the reader by putting an empty line into the text whenever Jesus changed the subject.

Matthew 6:1

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of “you” and “your” are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples in his Sermon on the Mount, which began in [Matthew 5:3](#). In this section, Jesus addresses the “acts of righteousness” of alms, prayer, and fasting.

ULT

¹ Now take heed that you do not do your righteousness before men to be seen by them, but if not, you do not have a reward with your Father who {is} in the heavens.

before men to be seen by them (ULT)

It is implied that those who see the person will honor him. Alternate translation: “in front of people to be seen by them so they will give you honor for what you have done” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

before men to be seen by them (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “in front of people just so that they can see you and honor you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Matthew 6:2

do not sound a trumpet before yourself (ULT)

This metaphor means to do something that purposefully gets people's attention. Alternate translation: "do not draw attention to yourself like someone who plays a loud trumpet in a crowd" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

ULT

² So when you might give alms, do not sound a trumpet before yourself even as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

Matthew 6:3

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of “you” and “your” are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples about alms.

do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing (ULT)

This is a metaphor for total secrecy. Just as hands usually work together and each can be said to **know** what the other is **doing** at all times, you should not let even those closest to you know when you are giving to the poor. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ But you, giving alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

Matthew 6:4

your alms may be in secret (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “you can give to the poor without other people knowing” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ so that your alms may be in secret,
and your Father who sees in secret will
reward you.

Matthew 6:5

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of “you” and “your” in verses 5 and 7 are plural; in verse 6 they are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach about prayer.

so that they may be seen by men (ULT)

It is implied that those who see them will give them honor. Alternate translation: “so that they will be seen and people will honor them for what they do” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

so that they may be seen by men (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “so that people will see them and give them honor” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Truly I say to you (ULT)

“I tell you the truth.” This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

ULT

⁵ And when you might pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray, having stood in the synagogues and on the corners of the street, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

Matthew 6:6

enter into your inner chamber, and having shut your door

Alternate translation: “go to a private place” or “go where you can be alone”

to your Father who is in secret

This could mean: (1) no one can see God. Alternate translation: “to your Father, who is invisible” (2) God is in that private place with the praying person. Alternate translation: “to your Father, who is with you in private”

to your Father (ULT)

Father is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

your Father who sees in secret

Alternate translation: “your Father will see what you do in private and”

ULT

⁶ But you, when you might pray, enter into your inner chamber, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who {is} in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Matthew 6:7

do not make useless repetitions (ULT)

This could mean: (1) the **repetitions** are **useless**. Alternate translation: "do not keep uselessly saying things over and over again" (2) the words or sentences are meaningless. Alternate translation: "do not keep repeating meaningless words"

they will be heard (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "their false gods will hear them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ Now praying, do not make useless repetitions even as the Gentiles, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

Matthew 6:8

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about how they as individuals should pray. The words **you** and **your** are plural in the first sentence. Within the prayer, the words **you** and **your** are singular and refer to God, "Our Father in heaven." (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁸ Therefore, you should not be like them, for your Father knows what need you have before you ask him.

Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Matthew 6:9

Our Father who {is} in the heavens (ULT)

This is the beginning of the prayer and how Jesus teaches the people to address God.

let your name be sanctified (ULT)

Here, **your name** refers to God himself. Alternate translation: “make everyone honor you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ You, therefore, pray like this: ‘Our Father who {is} in the heavens, let your name be sanctified.’

Matthew 6:10

Let your kingdom come (ULT)

Here, **kingdom** refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "May you rule over everyone and everything completely" (See: [Metonymy](#))

let your will also be done on earth as {it is} in heaven (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "May everything on earth happen in accordance with your will just as everything in heaven does" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

10 Let your kingdom come, let your will also be done on earth as {it is} in heaven.

Matthew 6:11

General Information:

This is part of a prayer that Jesus was teaching the people. All instances of “we,” “us,” and “our” refer only to those who would pray this prayer. Those words do not also refer to God, to whom they would be praying. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

ULT

11 Give us today our daily bread;

bread...daily (ULT)

Here, **bread** refers to food in general. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Matthew 6:12

debts (ULT)

A debt is what one person owes another. This is a metaphor for sins.
(See: [Metaphor](#))

our debtors (ULT)

A **debtor** is a person who owes a debt to another person. This is a metaphor for those who have sinned against us.
(See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 and forgive us our debts, as we also
forgave our debtors;

Matthew 6:13

do not bring us into temptation (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **temptation**, you can express it as a verb. Alternate translation: “Do not let anything tempt us” or “Do not let anything cause us to desire to sin” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹³ and do not bring us into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.' ^[1]

Matthew 6:14

General Information:

All instances of “you” and “your” are plural. However, Jesus is telling them what will happen to them as individuals if each person does not forgive others. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

14 For if you would forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

their trespasses (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **trespasses**, you can express it as a verb. Alternate translation: “when they trespass against you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Matthew 6:15

those of men...your trespasses (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **trespasses**, you can express it as a verb. Alternate translation: “men when they trespass against you ... when you trespass against God” or “men when they do things that harm you ... when you do things that make your Father angry” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

15 But if you would not forgive those of men, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 6:16

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. In verse 16 all occurrences of “you” are plural. In verses 17 and 18 where Jesus teaches them how to behave when they fast, all occurrences of “you” and “your” are singular. In some languages those occurrences of “you” may also need to be plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

16 Now when you might fast, do not become mournful as the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so that they may appear to men as fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach about fasting.

they disfigure...their faces (ULT)

The hypocrites would not wash their faces or comb their hair. They did this purposely to draw attention to themselves so that people would see them and give them honor for fasting.

Truly I say to you (ULT)

“I tell you the truth.” This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

Matthew 6:17

anoint your head (ULT)

“put oil in your hair” or “groom your hair.” To **anoint** the **head** here is to take normal care of one’s hair. It has nothing to do with “Christ” meaning “anointed one.” Jesus means that people should look the same whether they are fasting or not.

ULT

17 But you, when fasting, anoint your head and wash your face,

Matthew 6:18

to your Father who is in secret

This could mean: (1) no one can see God. Alternate translation: "Father, who is invisible" (2) God is with that person who fasts secretly. Alternate translation: "Father, who is with you in private" See how you translated this in [Matthew 6:6](#).

ULT

¹⁸ so that you would not appear fasting to men, but only to your Father who {is} in secret; and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

to your Father (ULT)

Father is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

to...Father...in...secret...Father...who sees (ULT)

"who sees what you do in private." See how you translated this in [Matthew 6:6](#).

Matthew 6:19

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of “you” and “your” are plural, except in verse 21, where they are singular. In some languages these occurrences of “you” and “your” may also need to be plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

19 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach about money and possessions.

treasures (ULT)

riches, the things to which a person gives the most value

where moth and rust destroy (ULT)

Alternate translation: “where moth and rust ruin treasures”

moth (ULT)

a small, flying insect that destroys cloth

rust (ULT)

a brown substance that forms on metals

Matthew 6:20

store up...for yourselves treasures in heaven (ULT)

This is a metaphor that means do good things on earth so God will reward you in **heaven**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁰ Instead, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in nor steal.

Matthew 6:21

there will your heart be also (ULT)

Here, **heart** means a person's thoughts and interests. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Matthew 6:22

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. The instances of “you” and “your” are all singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²² The lamp of the body is the eye.
Therefore, if your eye is good, your
whole body is full of light.

The lamp of the body is the eye...is full of light (ULT)

This compares healthy eyes that allow a person to see to diseased eyes that cause a person to be blind. This is a metaphor referring to spiritual health. Often Jewish people used the phrase “bad eye” to refer to greed. The meaning is that if a person is completely devoted to God and sees or considers things the way God does, then he is doing what is right. If a person is greedy for more, then he is doing what is evil. (See: [Metaphor](#))

The lamp of the body is the eye (ULT)

This metaphor means the eyes allow a person to see just as a **lamp** helps a person see in the dark. Alternate translation: “Like a lamp, the eye allows you to see things clearly” (See: [Metaphor](#))

eye (ULT)

You may have to translate this as plural, “eyes.”

Matthew 6:23

But if your eye...how great {is} that darkness (ULT)

This compares healthy eyes that allow a person to see to diseased eyes that cause a person to be blind. This is a metaphor referring to spiritual health. Often Jewish people used the phrase “bad eye” to refer to greed. The meaning is that if a person is completely devoted to God and sees or considers things the way God does, then he is doing what is right. If a person is greedy for more, then he is doing what is evil. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²³ But if your eye is evil, your whole body is full of darkness. Therefore, if the light that {is} in you is darkness, how great {is} that darkness!

if...your eye is evil (ULT)

This does not refer to magic. Jewish people often used this as a metaphor for someone who is greedy. (See: [Metaphor](#))

if the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

Alternate translation: “if that which is supposed to cause light in your body causes darkness, then your body is in complete darkness”

Matthew 6:24

for either he will hate the one and will love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and will despise the other (ULT)

Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing. They emphasize that a person cannot love and be devoted both to God and money at the same time. (See: [Parallelism](#))

to serve...and...You are not able...God...wealth (ULT)

Alternate translation: "You cannot love God and money at the same time"

ULT

²⁴ No one is able to serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and will love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and will despise the other. You are not able to serve God and wealth.

Matthew 6:25

General Information:

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

I say to you (ULT)

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

to you (ULT)

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do.

Is not life more than food, and the body, {than} clothing (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Alternate translation: “Obviously life is more than what you eat, and your body is more than what you wear.” or “Clearly there are things in life that are more important than food, and there are things concerning the body that are more important than clothes.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁵ Because of this I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you might eat or what you might drink, nor about your body, what you might wear. Is not life more than food, and the body, {than} clothing?

Matthew 6:26

barns (ULT)

places to store crops

Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Are} you not more valuable than them (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Alternate translation: “Obviously you are more valuable than birds.”
(See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁶ Look at the birds of the sky, that they do not sow nor reap nor gather into barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them. {Are} you not more valuable than them?

Matthew 6:27

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All instances of “you” and “your” are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²⁷ But which one from you, being anxious, are able to add one cubit to his lifespan?

But which one from you, being anxious, are able to add one cubit to his lifespan (ULT)

Here to **add one cubit to his lifespan** is a metaphor for adding time to how long a person will live. (See: [Metaphor](#))

But which one from you, being anxious, are able to add one cubit to his lifespan (ULT)

Here to **add one cubit to his lifespan** is a metaphor for adding time to how long a person will live. Alternate translation: “None of you can, just by worrying, add years to your life. You cannot add even one minute to your life! So you should not worry about things you need.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

one cubit (ULT)

A **cubit** is a measure of a little less than half a meter. (See: [Biblical Distance](#))

Matthew 6:28

why are you anxious about clothing (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Alternate translation: “you should not be worried about what you will wear.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not toil, nor do they spin cloth.

the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not toil, nor do they spin cloth (ULT)

Jesus speaks about the **lilies** as if they were people who wore clothes. (See: [Personification](#))

the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not toil, nor do they spin cloth (ULT)

The **lilies** being clothed is a metaphor for the plants having beautiful and colorful flowers. (See: [Metaphor](#))

lilies (ULT)

A lily is a kind of wild flower. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

Matthew 6:29

not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these (ULT)

Jesus speaks about the lilies as if they were people who wore clothes. (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

²⁹ Yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these.

not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these (ULT)

The lilies being clothed is a metaphor for the plants having beautiful and colorful flowers. (See: [Metaphor](#))

I say...to you (ULT)

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

was clothed like one of these (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “did not wear clothes that are as beautiful as these lilies” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 6:30

the grass of the field...thus clothes (ULT)

Jesus continues to speak about the lilies as if they were people who wore clothes. (See: [Personification](#))

the grass of the field...thus clothes (ULT)

The lilies being clothed is a metaphor for the plants having beautiful and colorful flowers. (See: [Metaphor](#))

grass (ULT)

If your language has a word that includes **grass** and the word you used for “lilies” in the previous verse, you can use it here.

being thrown into the oven (ULT)

The Jews at that time used grass in their fires to cook their food. If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “someone throws it into a fire” or “someone burns it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

will he} not much more (ULT)

The verb **clothe** is implied from earlier in the sentence. (See: [Ellipsis](#))

will he} not much more, O you of little faith (ULT)

Jesus uses this question to teach the people that God will provide what they need. Alternate translation: “he will certainly clothe you even better, you of little faith.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

O you of little faith (ULT)

“you who have such little faith.” Jesus addresses the people this way because their anxiety about clothing shows they have little faith in God.

ULT

³⁰ But if God thus clothes the grass of the field, existing today and tomorrow being thrown into the oven, {will he} not much more, O you of little faith?

Matthew 6:31

Therefore (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Because of all of this"

What might we wear (ULT)

In this sentence, what people wear is a synecdoche for material possessions. Alternate translation: "What possessions will we have" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

³¹ Therefore, you should not be anxious, saying, 'What might we eat?' or, 'What might we drink?' or, 'What might we wear?'

Matthew 6:32

For the Gentiles seek all these things (ULT)

Alternate translation: "For the Gentiles are concerned about what they will eat, drink, and wear"

your heavenly Father knows that you need all of these things

Jesus is implying that God will make sure their basic needs are met.

Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

³² For the Gentiles seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all of these things.

Matthew 6:33

seek...first {his} kingdom and his righteousness (ULT)

Here, **kingdom** refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "concern yourselves with serving God, who is your king, and doing what is right" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³³ But seek first {his} kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

all these things will be added to you (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will provide all these things for you" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 6:34

Therefore (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Because of all this"

tomorrow...tomorrow...will be anxious for itself (ULT)

Jesus speaks of **tomorrow** as if it were a person who could worry. Jesus means that a person will have enough to worry about when the next day comes. (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

³⁴ Therefore, you should not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day {is} its evil.

Matthew 7

Matthew 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Jesus spoke about many different subjects in this sermon, so you may wish to help the reader by putting an empty line into the text whenever Jesus changed the subject.

Special concepts in this chapter

Matthew 5-7

Many people call the words in Matthew 5-7 the Sermon on the Mount. This is one long lesson that Jesus taught. Bibles divide this lesson into three chapters, but this can sometimes confuse the reader. If your translation divides the text into sections, be sure that the reader understands that the whole sermon is one large section.

“By their fruits you will know them”

Fruit is a common image in the scriptures. It is used to describe the results of either good or bad actions. In this chapter, good fruit is the result of living as God commands. (See: [fruit](#), [fruitful](#), [unfruitful](#))

Matthew 7:1

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The instances of “you” and the commands are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

¹ Do not judge, so that you may not be judged.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples in his Sermon on the Mount, which began in [Matthew 5:3](#).

Do not judge (ULT)

It is implied here that **judge** has the strong meaning of “condemn harshly” or “declare guilty.” Alternate translation: “Do not condemn people harshly” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

you may not be judged (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God will not condemn you harshly” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 7:2

For (ULT)

Be sure the reader understands the statement in 7:2 is based on what Jesus said in 7:1.

with the...judgment you judge, you will be judged (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will condemn you in the same way you condemn others" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the...measure (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) the amount of punishment given. (2) the standard used for judgment.

it will be measured to you (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will measure it out to you" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

² For with the judgment you judge, you will be judged, and with the measure you measure, it will be measured to you.

Matthew 7:3

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. The instances of “you” and “your” are all singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural.

ULT

³ Now why do you look at the speck that {is} in the eye of your brother, but you do not notice the log that {is} in your own eye?

Now why do you look at the speck...but you do not notice the log that {is} in your own eye (ULT)

Jesus uses this question to rebuke the people for paying attention to other people’s sins and ignoring their own. Alternate translation: “You look at the speck ... but you do not notice the log that is in your own eye.” or “Do not look at the speck ... and ignore the log that is in your own eye.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the speck that {is} in the eye of your brother (ULT)

This is a metaphor that refers to the less important faults of a fellow believer. (See: [Metaphor](#))

speck (ULT)

“splinter” or “bit of dust.” Use a word for the smallest thing that commonly falls into a person’s eyes.

of your brother (ULT)

All occurrences of **brother** in 7:3-5 refer to a fellow believer, not to a literal brother or a neighbor.

that {is}...the log...in your own eye (ULT)

This is a metaphor for a person’s most important faults. A **log** could not literally go into a person’s eye. (See: [Metaphor](#))

that {is}...the log...in your own eye (ULT)

Jesus is exaggerating to emphasize that a person should pay attention to his own more important faults before he deals with another person’s less important faults. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

the log (ULT)

the largest part of a tree that someone has cut down

Matthew 7:4

Or how will you say to your brother, 'Let me take out the speck from your eye,' while behold, the log {is} in your own eye (ULT)

Jesus asks this question to challenge the people to pay attention to their own sins before they pay attention to another person's sins.

Alternate translation: "You should not say to your brother, 'Let me take out the speck from your eye,' while behold, the log is in your own eye." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ Or how will you say to your brother, 'Let me take out the speck from your eye,' while behold, the log {is} in your own eye?

Matthew 7:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ You hypocrite! First take out the log from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck from the eye of your brother.

Matthew 7:6

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. The instances of “you” and “your” are all plural.

to the dogs...the pigs (ULT)

Jews considered these animals to be dirty, and God told the Jews not to eat them. They are metaphors for wicked people who do not value holy things. It would be best to translate these words literally. (See: [Metaphor](#))

pearls (ULT)

These are similar to round, valuable stones or beads. They are a metaphor for the knowledge of God or precious things in general. (See: [Metaphor](#))

they will trample (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the pigs will trample”

having turned, they might tear you to pieces (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the dogs may then turn and tear you apart”

ULT

¶ 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.

Matthew 7:7

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. The instances of “you” and “your” are all plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁷ Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you.

Ask...Seek...Knock (ULT)

These are metaphors for praying to God. The verb form shows that we are to keep praying until he answers. If your language has a form for continuing to do something over and over, use it here. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Ask (ULT)

request things from someone, in this case God

it will be given to you (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God will give you what you need” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Seek (ULT)

look for someone, in this case God

Knock (ULT)

To knock on a door was a polite way to request that the person inside the house or room open the door. If knocking on a door is impolite or not done in your culture, use the word that describes how people politely ask for doors to be opened. Alternate translation: “Tell God you want him to open the door”

it will be opened to you (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God will open it for you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 7:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ For everyone who asks, receives; and the one seeking, finds; and to the one knocking, it will be opened.

Matthew 7:9

Or what man is there from among you, of whom his son will ask for bread—he will not give him a stone, will he (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Alternate translation: “There is not one person among you, of whom his son will ask for bread, and he will give him a stone.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ Or what man is there from among you, of whom his son will ask for bread —he will not give him a stone, will he?

bread (ULT)

This refers to food in general. Alternate translation: “for some food” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

a stone (ULT)

This noun should be translated literally.

Matthew 7:10

a fish...a snake (ULT)

These nouns should be translated literally.

Or he will also ask for a fish—he will not give him a snake, will he (ULT)

It is understood that Jesus is still referring to a man and his son. (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Or he will also ask for a fish—he will not give him a snake, will he (ULT)

Jesus asks another question to teach the people. Alternate translation: “And there is not one person among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Or he will also ask for a fish—he will not give him a snake, will he?

Matthew 7:11

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. The instances of “you” and “your” are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

how much more will your Father who {is} in the heavens give good things to those asking him (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Alternate translation: “then your Father in heaven will most certainly give good things to those who ask him.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

11 Therefore, if you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who {is} in the heavens give good things to those asking him?

Matthew 7:12

whatever you might want that men would do to you (ULT)

Alternate translation: "whatever way you want others to act toward you"

for this is the law and the prophets (ULT)

Here, **law** and **prophets** refer to what Moses and the prophets wrote. Alternate translation: "for this is what Moses and the prophets teach in the scriptures" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹² In everything, therefore, whatever you might want that men would do to you, in this manner also, you do to them, for this is the law and the prophets.

Matthew 7:13

General Information:

This image of walking through a wide gate to destruction or a narrow gate to life represents how people live and the results of how they live. When you translate, use appropriate words for “wide” and “broad” that are as different as possible from “narrow” in order to emphasize the differences between the two sets of gates and ways.

ULT

13 Enter through the narrow gate. For wide {is} the gate and broad {is} the way that is leading to destruction, and there are many who are entering through it.

Enter through the narrow gate...there are many who are entering through it (ULT)

This is an image of people traveling on a road and going through a **gate** into a kingdom. One kingdom is easy to enter; the other is hard to enter. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Enter through the narrow gate (ULT)

You may need to move this to the end of verse 14: “Therefore, enter through the narrow gate.”

the narrow gate...the...is...way (ULT)

This could mean: (1) the **way** refers to the road that leads to the **gate** of a kingdom. (2) the **gate** and **way** both refer to the entrance to the kingdom.

to destruction (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **destruction**, you can express it as a verb. Alternate translation: “to the place where people die” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Matthew 7:14

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to speak of people choosing how they are going to live as if they are choosing whether to go on one path or another.

to life (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **life**, you can express it with the verb “live.” Alternate translation: “to the place where people live” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

14 For the gate {is} narrow and the way has been made narrow that is leading to life, and there are few who are finding it.

Matthew 7:15

Beware of (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Be on guard against"

who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves (ULT)

This metaphor means that false prophets will pretend they are good and want to help people, but they are really evil and will do people harm. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

Matthew 7:16

By their fruits you will know them (ULT)

This metaphor refers to a person's actions. Alternate translation: "Just as you know a tree by the fruit that grows on it, you will know false prophets by how they act" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 By their fruits you will know them.
They do not gather grapes from a
thornbush or figs from thistles, do they?

They do not gather grapes from a thornbush or figs from thistles, do they (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. The people would have known that the answer is no. Alternate translation: "People do not gather grapes from a thornbush or figs from thistles." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Matthew 7:17

every good tree produces good fruit (ULT)

Jesus continues to use the metaphor of **fruit** to refer to good prophets who produce **good** works or words. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the...rotten tree produces bad fruit (ULT)

Jesus continues to use the metaphor of fruit to refer to bad prophets who produce evil works. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but the rotten tree produces bad fruit.

Matthew 7:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁸ A good tree is not able to produce bad fruit, nor a rotten tree to produce good fruit.

Matthew 7:19

Every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire (ULT)

Jesus continues to use **fruit** trees as a metaphor to refer to false prophets. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁹ Every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire (ULT)

Here, he only states what will happen to the bad trees. It is implied that the same thing will happen to the false prophets. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

is cut down and thrown into the fire (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "people cut down and burn" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 7:20

you will recognize them from their fruits (ULT)

The word **their** can refer to either the prophets or the trees. This metaphor implies that the fruit of trees and the deeds of prophets both reveal whether they are good or bad. If possible, translate this in a way so that it can refer to both trees and prophets. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁰ So then, you will recognize them from their fruits.

Matthew 7:21

will enter into the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heavens" in your translation. Alternate translation: "will live with God in the heavens when he shows himself to be king" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²¹ Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one who does the will of my Father who {is} in the heavens.

the one who does the will of my Father who is in the heavens

Alternate translation: "whoever does what my Father in the heavens desires"

of my Father (ULT)

Father is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Matthew 7:22

in that day (ULT)

Jesus said **that day** knowing his hearers would understand he was referring to the day of judgment. You should include “the day of judgment” only if your readers would not understand otherwise. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²² Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many mighty deeds?’

did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many mighty deeds (ULT)

The people use a question to emphasize that they did these things. Alternate translation: “we prophesied in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name did many mighty deeds.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

not...did we...prophesy (ULT)

This **we** does not include Jesus. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

in your name (ULT)

This could mean: (1) this refers to his authority or power. (2) they were doing what he wanted them to do. or (3) they were asking him for the power to do it. (See: [Metonymy](#))

mighty deeds (ULT)

Alternate translation: “miracles”

Matthew 7:23

I never knew you (ULT)

This means the person does not belong to Jesus. Alternate translation: "You are not my follower" or "I have nothing to do with you" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²³ And then I will publicly declare to them, 'I never knew you! Go away from me, you who are practicing lawlessness!'

Matthew 7:24

Therefore (ULT)

Alternate translation: "For that reason"

these words of mine (ULT)

Here, **words** refers to what Jesus says. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁴ Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be compared to a wise man who built his house upon the rock.

will be compared to a wise man who built his house upon the rock (ULT)

Jesus compares those who obey his words to a person who builds his **house** where nothing can harm it. (See: [Simile](#))

rock (ULT)

This is the bedrock below the topsoil and clay, not a large stone or boulder above the ground.

Matthew 7:25

it had been founded (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “he had built it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

25 And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew and struck against that house, but it did not fall down, for it had been founded on the rock.

Matthew 7:26

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, which began in [Matthew 5:3](#).

will be compared to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand (ULT)

Jesus continues the simile from the previous verse. He compares those who do not obey his words to **foolish** house-builders. Only a fool would build a **house** on a sandy place where rain, floods, and wind can sweep the sand away. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be compared to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.

Matthew 7:27

it fell (ULT)

Use the general word in your language that describes what happens when a house falls down.

the...its...destruction...was great (ULT)

The rain, floods, and wind completely destroyed the house.

ULT

27 And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew and struck against that house, and it fell, and its destruction was great.”

Matthew 7:28

General Information:

These verses describe how the people in the crowds reacted to Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. (See: [End of Story](#))

And it happened that when (ULT)

This phrase shifts the story from Jesus' teachings to what happened next. Alternate translation: "And when" or "Now after"

were astonished...by his teaching (ULT)

It is clear in 7:29 that they were amazed not just at what Jesus taught but also the way he taught it. Alternate translation: "were amazed by the way he taught"

ULT

28 And it happened that when Jesus finished speaking these words, the crowds were astonished by his teaching,

Matthew 7:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁹ for he was teaching them as having authority, and not as their scribes.

Matthew 8

Matthew 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins a new section.

Special concepts in this chapter

Miracles

Jesus performed miracles to show that he could control things that no other people could control. He also showed that it is proper to worship him because he performed miracles. (See: [authority](#))

Matthew 8:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story that contains several accounts of Jesus healing people. This theme continues through [Matthew 9:35](#). (See: [Introduction of a New Event](#))

ULT

¹ Now when he had come down from the hill, large crowds followed him.

Now when he had come down from the hill, large crowds followed him (ULT)

“After Jesus came down from the hill, a large crowd followed him.” The crowd may have included both people who had been with him on the mountain and people who had not been with him.

Matthew 8:2

behold (ULT)

The word **behold** alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

a leper (ULT)

Alternate translation: “a man who had leprosy” or “a man who had a skin disease”

bowed before him (ULT)

This is a sign of humble respect before Jesus. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

if you would be willing (ULT)

“if you want to” or “if you desire.” The leper knew that Jesus had the power to heal him, but he did not know if Jesus would want to touch him.

you are able to make me clean (ULT)

Here, **clean** means to be healed and to be able to live in the community again. Alternate translation: “you can heal me” or “please heal me” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

² And behold, a leper, having approached, bowed before him, saying, “Lord, if you would be willing, you are able to make me clean.”

Matthew 8:3

Be clean (ULT)

By saying this, Jesus healed the man. (See: [Imperatives — Other Uses](#))

immediately he was cleansed (ULT)

Alternate translation: “at that moment he was cleansed”

he was cleansed of his leprosy (ULT)

The result of Jesus saying “Be clean” was that the man was healed. If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “he was well” or “the leprosy left him” or “the leprosy ended” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ And having reached out {his} hand, he touched him, saying, “I am willing. Be clean.” And immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy.

Matthew 8:4

to him (ULT)

This refers to the man that Jesus just healed.

See that you may tell no one (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Do not say anything to anyone" or "Do not tell anyone I healed you"

ULT

⁴ And Jesus says to him, "See that you may tell no one, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."

show yourself to the priest (ULT)

Jewish law required that the person **show** his healed skin **to the priest**, who would then allow him or her to return to the community, to be with other people. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them (ULT)

The law of **Moses** required that someone healed of leprosy give a thanksgiving offering to the priest. When the priest accepted the gift, people would know that the man had been healed. Lepers were ostracized, banned from the community, until they had proof of their healing. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

to them (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) the priests. (2) all the people. (3) the critics of Jesus. If possible, use a pronoun that could refer to any of these groups. (See: [Pronouns](#))

Matthew 8:5

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to a different time and place and tells of Jesus healing another person.

came to him...begging him (ULT)

Here both instances of **him** refer to Jesus.

ULT

⁵ Now when he had entered into Capernaum, a centurion came to him, begging him

Matthew 8:6

paralyzed (ULT)

unable to move because of disease or stroke

ULT

⁶ and saying, "Lord, my servant has been lying in the house paralyzed, being tormented terribly."

Matthew 8:7

he says to him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Jesus said to the centurion"

I, when I have come, will heal him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I will come to your house and make your servant well"

ULT

⁷ And he says to him, "I, when I have come, will heal him."

Matthew 8:8

under my roof (ULT)

This is an idiom that refers to inside the house. Alternate translation: “into my house” (See: [Idiom](#))

speak a word (ULT)

Here, **word** represents a command. Alternate translation: “give the command” (See: [Metonymy](#))

will be healed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “will become well” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ And answering, the centurion said, “Lord, I am not worthy that you might enter under my roof, but only speak a word and my servant will be healed.”

Matthew 8:9

I...am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "I ... am a man who is under the authority of someone else, and I have been given authority over a group of soldiers" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

under authority...under me (ULT)

To be **under** someone means to be less important and to obey the commands of someone more important. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁹ For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another one, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

Matthew 8:10

Truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

I have found such great faith from no one in Israel (ULT)

Jesus' hearers would have thought that the Jews in **Israel**, who claim to be children of God, would have greater **faith** than anyone. Jesus is saying they are wrong and that the centurion's faith was greater. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

10 But having heard this, Jesus was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I say to you, I have found such great faith from no one in Israel."

Matthew 8:11

you (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural and refers to “those who were following him” in [Matthew 8:10](#). (See: [Forms of You](#))

from east and west (ULT)

Using the opposites **east** and **west** is a way of saying “everywhere.” Alternate translation: “from everywhere” or “from far away in every direction” (See: [Merism](#))

they will recline to eat (ULT)

People in that culture would lie down beside the **table** while eating. This phrase indicates that all those at the table are family and close friends. The joy in the kingdom of God is frequently spoken of as if the people there were feasting. Alternate translation: “live as family and friends” (See: [Metonymy](#))

in the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God’s rule as king. The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep “heavens” in your translation. Alternate translation: “when our God in the heavens shows that he is king” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 But I tell you that many will come from east and west, and they will recline to eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of the heavens.

Matthew 8:12

the...sons of the kingdom will be thrown out (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will throw out the sons of the kingdom" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and grinding of the teeth."

But the sons of the kingdom (ULT)

The phrase **sons of** is a metonym, referring to the unbelieving Jews of the kingdom of Judea. (See: [Metonymy](#))

But the sons of the kingdom (ULT)

There is irony here because the **sons** will be thrown out while the strangers will be welcomed. Alternate translation: "those who should have allowed God to rule over them" (See: [Irony](#))

the outer darkness (ULT)

Here, **outer darkness** is a metonym for the place where God sends those who reject them. This is a place that is completely separated from God forever. Alternate translation: "the dark place away from God" (See: [Metonymy](#))

weeping and grinding of the teeth (ULT)

Here, **grinding of teeth** is a symbolic act, representing extreme sadness and suffering. Alternate translation: "weeping and showing their extreme suffering" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

Matthew 8:13

let it be done for you (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "so I will do it for you" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the servant was healed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus healed the servant" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

at that very hour (ULT)

Alternate translation: "at the exact time Jesus said he would heal the servant"

ULT

13 And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! As you believed, let it be done for you." And the servant was healed at that very hour.

Matthew 8:14

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to a different time and place and tells of Jesus healing another person.

when Jesus had come (ULT)

The disciples were probably with Jesus, but the focus of the story is on what Jesus said and did, so introduce the disciples only if needed to avoid wrong meaning.

the...his...mother-in-law (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the mother of Peter's wife"

ULT

14 And when Jesus had come into the house of Peter, he saw his mother-in-law having been laid down and being sick with a fever.

Matthew 8:15

the fever left her (ULT)

If your language would understand this personification to mean that the fever could think and act on its own, You can translate this as “she became better” or “Jesus healed her.” (See: [Personification](#))

she got up (ULT)

Alternate translation: “she got out of bed”

ULT

15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him.

Matthew 8:16

General Information:

In verse 17, Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that Jesus' healing ministry was a fulfillment of prophecy.

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to later that evening and tells of Jesus healing more people and casting out demons.

ULT

16 Now evening having come, they brought to him many being possessed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all those having sickness,

Now evening having come (ULT)

Because Jews did not work or travel on the Sabbath, **evening** may imply after the Sabbath. They waited until evening to bring people to Jesus. You do not need to mention the Sabbath unless you need to avoid wrong meaning. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

many being possessed by demons (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "many people whom demons possessed" or "many people whom demons controlled" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

he cast out the spirits with a word (ULT)

Here, **word** stands for a command. Alternate translation: "he commanded the spirits to leave" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 8:17

might be fulfilled that which had been spoken by Isaiah the prophet (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus fulfilled the prophecy that the prophet Isaiah had spoken to the people of Israel" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁷ so that might be fulfilled that which had been spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "He himself took our weaknesses and bore our diseases."

He himself took our weaknesses and bore our diseases (ULT)

Matthew is quoting the prophet Isaiah. These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that he healed all of **our diseases**. Alternate translation: "healed those who were sick and made them well" (See: [Parallelism](#))

Matthew 8:18

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts and tells about Jesus' response to some people who wanted to follow him.

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

commanded (ULT)

Alternate translation: "told his disciples"

ULT

18 Now Jesus, having seen the crowd around him, commanded to depart to the other side.

Matthew 8:19

wherever (ULT)

to any place

ULT

19 And having approached, a scribe said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you might go."

Matthew 8:20

Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky, nests (ULT)

Jesus answers with this proverb. This means even wild animals have somewhere to rest. (See: [Proverbs](#))

ULT

²⁰ And Jesus says to him, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky, nests, but the Son of Man does not have where he might lay {his} head.”

Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky, nests (ULT)

Jesus assumes that his hearers know what **foxes** are and what they use the **holes** for. If your readers would misunderstand this, you could make this information explicit. Alternate translation: “Foxes have their holes in the ground to sleep in, and flying birds have their nests to sleep in” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Foxes (ULT)

Foxes are animals like dogs. They eat nesting birds and other small animals. If foxes are unknown in your area, use a general term for wild dog-like creatures that burrow in the ground. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

holes (ULT)

Foxes make **holes** in the ground to live in. Use the appropriate word for the place where the animal you use for “foxes” lives.

the birds of the sky, nests (ULT)

Jesus leaves out the verb “have” in this sentence. You can supply it. Alternate translation: “the birds of the sky have nests” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

the...Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

does not have where he might lay {his} head (ULT)

This refers to a place to sleep. Alternate translation: “has no place of his own to sleep” (See: [Idiom](#))

Matthew 8:21

permit me first to go away and to bury my father (ULT)

It is unclear whether the man's **father** has died and he will **bury** him immediately, or if the man wants to stay for a longer amount of time until his father dies so he can bury him then. The main point is that the man wants to do something else first before he follows Jesus.

ULT

²¹ Now another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, permit me first to go away and to bury my father."

Matthew 8:22

allow the dead to bury their own dead (ULT)

Jesus does not mean literally that dead people will bury other dead people. Here, **the dead** could be: (1) a metaphor for those who will soon die. (2) a metaphor for those who do not follow Jesus and are spiritually dead. The main point is that a disciple must not let anything delay him from following Jesus. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²² But Jesus says to him, "Follow me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead."

Matthew 8:23

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to the account of Jesus calming a storm as he and his disciples cross the Sea of Galilee.

ULT

23 And when he had entered into a boat, his disciples followed him.

And when he had entered into a boat (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And when he got into a boat"

he...his disciples followed (ULT)

Try to use the same words for **disciples** and **followed** that you used in ([Matthew 8:21-22](#)).

Matthew 8:24

behold (ULT)

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. Your language may have a way of showing this. Alternate translation: “suddenly” or “without warning”

ULT

24 And behold, a great storm happened on the sea, so that the boat was covered by the waves. But he was sleeping.

a great storm happened on the sea (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “a powerful storm arose on the sea” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

so that the boat was covered by the waves (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “so that the waves covered the boat” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 8:25

they woke him, saying, “Lord, save us; we are perishing (ULT)

This could mean: (1) they first woke Jesus and then they said, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing!” (2) as they were waking Jesus up, they were saying “Save us, Lord; we are perishing!”

ULT

²⁵ And having approached, they woke him, saying, “Lord, save us; we are perishing!”

Lord, save us; we are perishing (ULT)

If you need to translate these words as inclusive or exclusive, then inclusive is best. The disciples probably meant they wanted Jesus to save the disciples and himself from drowning. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

we are perishing (ULT)

Alternate translation: “we are about to die”

Matthew 8:26

to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to the disciples"

Why are you cowardly, you of little faith (ULT)

Jesus was rebuking the disciples with this rhetorical question.

Alternate translation: "You should not be cowardly, you of little faith!" or "There is nothing for you to be afraid of, you who have little faith!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

you of little faith (ULT)

"you who have such little faith." Jesus addresses his disciples this way because their anxiety about the storm shows they have little faith in him to control it. See how you translated this in [Matthew 6:30](#).

ULT

²⁶ And he says to them, "Why are you cowardly, you of little faith?" Then, having gotten up, he rebuked the winds and the sea, and a great calm happened.

Matthew 8:27

What sort of is he, that even the winds and the sea obey him (ULT)

“Even the winds and the sea obey him! What sort of man is this?”

This rhetorical question shows that the disciples were surprised.

Alternate translation: “This man is unlike any man we have ever seen! Even the wind and the waves obey him!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁷ But the men marveled, saying, “What sort of is he, that even the winds and the sea obey him?”

even the winds and the sea obey him (ULT)

For people or animals to obey or disobey is not surprising, but for wind and water to obey is very surprising. This personification describes the natural elements as being able to hear and respond like people. (See: [Personification](#))

Matthew 8:28

Connecting Statement:

Here the author returns to the theme of Jesus healing people. This begins an account of Jesus healing two demon-possessed men.

to the other side (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to the other side of the Sea of Galilee"

the country of the Gadarenes (ULT)

The **Gadarenes** were named after the town of Gadara. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

two men...being possessed by demons (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "two men ... whom demons possessed" or "two men ... whom demons were controlling" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

very violent, so that no one was strong enough to pass through that road (ULT)

The demons that were controlling these two men were so dangerous that no one could go through that area.

ULT

28 And when he had come to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two men met him, being possessed by demons, coming out of the tombs, very violent, so that no one was strong enough to pass through that road.

Matthew 8:29

behold (ULT)

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. Your language may have a way of showing this.

What to us and to you, Son of God (ULT)

The demons use a question but they are being hostile toward Jesus. Alternate translation: “Do not bother us, Son of God!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Son of God (ULT)

This is an important title for Jesus, which describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Have you come here to torment us before the set time (ULT)

Again, the demons use a question in a hostile way. Alternate translation: “You should not disobey God by punishing us before the specific time God has set when he will punish us!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

29 And behold, they cried out, saying,
“What to us and to you, Son of God?
Have you come here to torment us
before the set time?”

Matthew 8:30

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew tells background information about a herd of pigs that had been there before Jesus arrived. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

³⁰ Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at a distance from them.

Matthew 8:31

If you cast us out (ULT)

It is implied that the demons knew that Jesus was going to cast them out. Alternate translation: "Because you are going to cast us out" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

us (ULT)

This is exclusive, meaning the demons only. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

ULT

³¹ But the demons were begging him, saying, "If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of the pigs."

Matthew 8:32

to them (ULT)

This refers to the demons inside the men.

the demons...having come out, went away into the pigs (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the demons left the man and entered the pigs"

behold (ULT)

This alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

rushed...down the steep slope (ULT)

Alternate translation: "ran quickly down the steep slope"

they died in the water (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they fell into the water and drowned"

ULT

³² And he said to them, "Go!" And the demons, having come out, went away into the pigs; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep slope into the sea, and they died in the water.

Matthew 8:33

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the account of Jesus healing two demon-possessed men.

those...who had been feeding them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "those who had been taking care of the pigs"

ULT

33 Now those who had been feeding them ran away and, having gone away to the city, they reported everything, and the things concerning the men who were possessed by demons.

the things concerning the men who were possessed by demons (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "what Jesus did to help the men whom demons had controlled" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 8:34

behold (ULT)

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of showing this.

the whole city (ULT)

The word **city** is a metonym for the people of the city. (See: [Metonymy](#))

the whole city (ULT)

The word **whole** is probably an exaggeration to emphasize how very many people came out. Not necessarily every person came out. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

their region (ULT)

Alternate translation: "their region"

ULT

³⁴ And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And having seen him, they begged him that he would depart from their region.

Matthew 9

Matthew 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

“Sinners”

When the people of Jesus’ time spoke of “sinners,” they were talking about people who did not obey the law of Moses and instead committed sins like stealing or sexual sins. When Jesus said that he came to call “sinners,” he meant that only people who believe that they are sinners can be his followers. This is true even if they are not what most people think of as “sinners.” (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Passive voice

Many sentences in this chapter tell that a person had something happen to him without saying who caused that something to happen. You may have to translate the sentence so that it tells the reader who performed the action. (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Rhetorical questions

Speakers in this chapter asked questions to which they already knew the answer. They asked the questions to show that they were not happy with the hearers or to teach them or to get them to think. Your language may have another way of doing this. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Proverbs

Proverbs are very short sentences that use words that are easy to remember to tell about something that is generally true. People who understand proverbs usually have to know much about the language and culture of the speaker. When you translate the proverbs in this chapter, you may have to use many more words than the speakers used so that you can add information that the hearers knew but your reader do not know. (See: [Proverbs](#))

Matthew 9:1

Connecting Statement:

Matthew returns to the theme, which he began in [Matthew 8:1](#), of Jesus healing people. This begins an account of Jesus healing a paralyzed man.

ULT

¹ And having entered into a boat, he crossed over and came to his own city.

a boat (ULT)

This is probably the same boat as in [Matthew 8:23](#). You only need to specify this if needed to avoid confusion.

into...his own city (ULT)

“to the town where he lived.” This refers to Capernaum.

Matthew 9:2

behold (ULT)

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of showing this.

they were bringing (ULT)

Alternate translation: "some men from the city were bringing"

their faith (ULT)

This refers to the faith of the men and may also include the faith of the paralyzed man.

Child (ULT)

The man was not Jesus' real son. Jesus was speaking to him politely. If this is confusing, it can also be translated "My friend" or "Young man" or even omitted.

Your sins are forgiven (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "I have forgiven your sins" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

² And behold, they were bringing to him a paralytic lying on a mat. And when Jesus had seen their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, have courage. Your sins are forgiven."

Matthew 9:3

behold (ULT)

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of doing this.

ULT

³ And behold, some of the scribes said among themselves, "This man blasphemes."

among themselves (ULT)

This could mean: (1) each one was thinking to himself. (2) they were speaking among themselves.

blasphemes (ULT)

Jesus was claiming to be able to do things the scribes thought only God can do.

Matthew 9:4

having known...their thoughts (ULT)

Jesus knew what they were thinking either supernaturally or because he could see them talking to each other.

For what reason do you think evil in your hearts (ULT)

Jesus used this question to rebuke the scribes. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

evil (ULT)

This is moral evil or wickedness, not simply error in fact.

in your hearts (ULT)

Here, **hearts** refers to their minds or their thoughts. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ And Jesus, having known their thoughts, said, "For what reason do you think evil in your hearts?"

Matthew 9:5

For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk (ULT)

ULT

⁵ For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?

Jesus uses this question to make the scribes think about what might prove whether or not he could really forgive **sins**. Alternate

translation: “I just said ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ You may think that it is harder to say ‘Get up and walk,’ because the proof of whether or not I can heal the man will be shown by whether or not he gets up and walks.” or “You may think that it is easier to say ‘Your sins are forgiven’ than it is to say ‘Get up and walk.’” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

which...is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk (ULT)

The quotes can be translated as indirect quotes. Alternate translation: “which is easier, to tell someone that his sins are forgiven, or to tell him to get up and walk?” or “you may think that it is easier to tell someone that his sins are forgiven than to tell him to get up and walk.” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

Your sins have been forgiven (ULT)

Here, **Your** is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Your sins have been forgiven (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “I have forgiven your sins” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 9:6

But in order that you might know (ULT)

“But I will prove to you.” The “you” is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

your mat...your house (ULT)

Here, **you** and **your** are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

your...go to...house (ULT)

Jesus is not forbidding the man to go elsewhere. He is giving the man the opportunity to go home.

ULT

⁶ But in order that you might know that the Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins...” he then says to the paralytic, “Get up, pick up your mat, and go to your house.”

Matthew 9:7

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the account of Jesus healing a paralyzed man. Jesus then calls a tax collector to be one of his disciples.

ULT

⁷ And having gotten up, he went away to his house.

Matthew 9:8

God...who had given (ULT)

Alternate translation: "because he had given"

such authority (ULT)

This refers to the **authority** to declare sins forgiven.

ULT

⁸ Now when the crowds had seen this, they were afraid and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Matthew 9:9

And as Jesus is passing on from there (ULT)

This phrase marks the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

as...is passing on (ULT)

Alternate translation: "as ... was leaving" or "as ... was going"

Matthew...to him...he followed (ULT)

Church tradition says that this Matthew is the author of this Gospel, but the text gives no reason to change the pronouns from "him" and "he" to "me" and "I."

he says to him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Jesus says to Matthew"

to him...having gotten up, he followed (ULT)

"Matthew got up and followed Jesus." This means Matthew became Jesus' disciple.

ULT

⁹ And as Jesus is passing on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collection office, and he says to him, "Follow me." And having gotten up, he followed him.

Matthew 9:10

General Information:

These events occur at the house of Matthew the tax collector.

the house (ULT)

This is probably Matthew's **house**, but it could also be Jesus' house. Specify only if needed to avoid confusion.

ULT

10 And it happened that as he is reclining at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners, also having come, were dining with Jesus and his disciples.

behold (ULT)

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of doing this.

sinners (ULT)

people who did not obey the law of Moses but committed what others thought were very bad sins

Matthew 9:11

And the Pharisees, having seen this (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And the Pharisees, when they saw that Jesus was eating with the tax collectors and sinful people"

For what reason does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners (ULT)

The Pharisees use this question to criticize what Jesus is doing. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

11 And the Pharisees, having seen this, were saying to his disciples, "For what reason does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Matthew 9:12

General Information:

These events occur at the house of Matthew the tax collector.

But he, having heard this (ULT)

Here, **this** refers to the question the Pharisees asked about Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners.

ULT

12 But he, having heard this, said,
"Those who are strong in body do not
have need of a physician, but those who
have sickness."

Those who are strong in body do not have need of a physician, but those who have sickness (ULT)

Jesus answers with a proverb. He means that he eats with these kinds of people because he has come to help sinners. (See: [Proverbs](#))

Those who are strong in body (ULT)

Alternate translation: "People who are healthy"

of a physician (ULT)

a doctor

those who have sickness (ULT)

The phrase "need a physician" is understood. Alternate translation: "people who are sick need a physician" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Matthew 9:13

But having gone, learn what this is (ULT)

Jesus is about to quote the scriptures. Alternate translation: "You should go and learn the meaning of what God said in the scriptures"

I desire mercy and not sacrifice (ULT)

Jesus is quoting what the prophet Hosea wrote in the scriptures. Here, **I** refers to God.

not...For I did...come (ULT)

Here, **I** refers to Jesus.

the righteous (ULT)

Jesus is using irony. He does not think there are any people who are **righteous** and do not need to repent. Alternate translation: "those who think they are righteous" (See: [Irony](#))

ULT

13 But having gone, learn what this is: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Matthew 9:14

Connecting Statement:

The disciples of John the Baptist question the fact that Jesus' disciples do not fast.

do not fast (ULT)

Alternate translation: "continue to eat regularly"

ULT

14 Then the disciples of John come to him, saying, "For what reason do we and the Pharisees often fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

Matthew 9:15

The sons of the bridal chamber are not able to mourn while the bridegroom is still with them, are they (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to answer John's disciples. They all knew that people do not mourn and fast at a wedding celebration. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, "The sons of the bridal chamber are not able to mourn while the bridegroom is still with them, are they? But days will come when the bridegroom may be taken away from them, and then they will fast."

The sons of the bridal chamber are not able to mourn while the bridegroom is still with them, are they (ULT)

Jesus uses this proverb to show that his disciples do not **mourn** because he is still there with them. (See: [Proverbs](#))

But days will come when (ULT)

This is a way of referring to some time in the future. Alternate translation: "But the time will come when" or "But someday"

the bridegroom may be taken away from them (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "the bridegroom will not be able to be with them any longer" or "someone will take the bridegroom away from them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

may be taken away (ULT)

Jesus is probably referring to his own death, but this should not be made explicit here in the translation. To maintain the imagery of a wedding, it is best to just state that the bridegroom will not be there any longer.

Matthew 9:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to answer the question that the disciples of John had asked. He did this by giving two examples of old things and new things that people do not put together.

Now no one puts a patch of new cloth on an old garment (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But no one sews a piece of new cloth on an old garment" or "But people do not sew a piece of new cloth as a patch an old garment"

an old garment...the garment (ULT)

Alternate translation: "old clothing ... the clothing"

tears away...his patch...from the garment (ULT)

If someone were to wash the **garment**, the **patch** of new cloth would shrink, but the old garment would not shrink. This would tear the patch off the garment and leave a bigger hole.

his patch (ULT)

"the piece of new cloth." This is the piece of cloth used to cover a hole in the old garment.

a worse tear happens (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "this will make the tear worse" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

16 Now no one puts a patch of new cloth on an old garment, for his patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear happens.

Matthew 9:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to answer the question that disciples of John had asked.

Neither do they put new wine into old wineskins (ULT)

Jesus uses another proverb to answer John's disciples. This means the same as the proverb in [Matthew 9:16](#).

ULT

17 Neither do they put new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the skins are burst, and the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are destroyed. Instead, they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved."

Neither do they put (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Neither does anyone pour" or "People never put"

new wine (ULT)

This refers to **wine** that has not fermented yet. If grapes are unknown in your area, use the general term for fruit. Alternate translation: "grape juice" (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

old wineskins (ULT)

This refers to **wineskins** that have stretched and dried out because they were already used for fermenting wine.

wineskins (ULT)

"wine bags" or "skin bags." These were bags made out of animal skins.

the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are destroyed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "this will ruin the wineskins and spill the wine" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the skins are burst (ULT)

When the new wine ferments and expands, the skins tear open because they can no longer stretch out.

wineskins...fresh (ULT)

"new wineskins" or "new wine bags." This refers to **wineskins** that no one has used.

both are preserved (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "this will keep safe both the wineskins and the wine" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 9:18

Connecting Statement:

This begins an account of Jesus bringing to life the daughter of a Jewish official after she had died.

these things (ULT)

This refers to the answer Jesus gave John's disciples about fasting.

behold (ULT)

The word **behold** alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

bowed down to him (ULT)

This is a way someone would show respect in Jewish culture. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

having come, lay your hand on her, and she will live (ULT)

This shows that the Jewish official believed Jesus had the power to bring his daughter back to life.

ULT

18 While he is saying these things to them, behold, a certain official, having approached, bowed down to him, saying, "My daughter has just now died, but, having come, lay your hand on her, and she will live."

Matthew 9:19

his disciples (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Jesus' disciples"

ULT

19 And having gotten up, Jesus and his disciples followed him.

Matthew 9:20

Connecting Statement:

This describes how Jesus healed another woman while he was on the way to the Jewish official's house.

behold (ULT)

The word **behold** alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

suffering from a discharge of blood (ULT)

“who had been bleeding” or “who frequently had a flow of blood.” She was probably bleeding from her womb even when it was not the normal time for it. Some cultures may have a polite way of referring to this condition. (See: [Euphemism](#))

for 12 years (ULT)

“for twelve years” (See: [Numbers](#))

the...of...his...garment (ULT)

Alternate translation: “of his robe” or “of what he was wearing”

ULT

20 And behold, a woman suffering from a discharge of blood for 12 years, having come up behind him, touched the edge of his garment,

Matthew 9:21

for she was saying to herself, “If only I might touch his garments, I will be made well (ULT)

She said this to herself before she touched Jesus’ garment. This tells why she touched Jesus’ garment. (See: [Order of Events](#))

ULT

²¹ for she was saying to herself, “If only I might touch his garments, I will be made well.”

If only I might touch his garments (ULT)

According to Jewish law, because she was bleeding she was not supposed to **touch** anyone. She touches his clothes so that Jesus’ power would heal her and yet (she thought) he would not know that she touched him. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 9:22

But Jesus (ULT)

Alternate translation: "The woman was hoping she could touch him secretly, but Jesus"

Daughter (ULT)

The woman was not Jesus' real daughter. Jesus was speaking to her politely. If this is confusing, it can also be translated "Young woman" or even omitted.

your faith has saved you (ULT)

Alternate translation: "because you believed in me, I will heal you"

the woman was healed from that very hour (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus healed her at that moment" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²² But Jesus, having turned and having seen her, said, "Daughter, take courage; your faith has saved you." And the woman was healed from that very hour.

Matthew 9:23

Connecting Statement:

This returns to the account of Jesus bringing the daughter of the Jewish official back to life.

And...the flute players...the crowd being stirred up (ULT)

This was a common way to mourn for someone who has died.

the flute players (ULT)

Alternate translation: "people playing flutes"

ULT

23 And Jesus, having come into the house of the official and having seen the flute players and the crowd being stirred up,

Matthew 9:24

Go away (ULT)

Jesus was speaking to many people, so use the plural command form if your language has one.

not...the girl has...died, but sleeps (ULT)

Jesus is using a play on words. It was common in Jesus' day to refer to a dead person as one who **sleeps**. But here the dead girl will get up, as though she had only been sleeping. (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

²⁴ said, "Go away, for the girl has not died, but sleeps." But they laughed at him.

Matthew 9:25

General Information:

Verse 26 is a summary statement that describes the result of Jesus raising this girl from the dead.

Connecting Statement:

This completes the account of Jesus bringing the daughter of the Jewish official back to life.

ULT

²⁵ But when the crowd had been put outside, having entered, he took her hand, and the girl was raised up.

But when the crowd had been put outside (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “But after Jesus had sent the crowd outside” or “But after the family had sent the people outside” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

was raised up (ULT)

“got out of bed.” This is the same meaning as in [Matthew 8:15](#).

Matthew 9:26

And this report went out into all that region (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And the people of that whole region heard about it" or "And the people who saw that the girl was alive started telling everyone in the whole area about it"

ULT

²⁶ And this report went out into all that region.

Matthew 9:27

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus healing two blind men.

And when Jesus is departing from there (ULT)

As Jesus was leaving the region

when...is departing...Jesus (ULT)

Alternate translation: "when Jesus was leaving" or "as Jesus was going"

followed him (ULT)

This means they were walking behind Jesus, not necessarily that they had become his disciples.

Have mercy on us (ULT)

It is implied that they wanted Jesus to heal them. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Son of David (ULT)

Jesus was not David's literal son, so this may be translated as "Descendant of David." However, **Son of David** is also a title for the Messiah, and the men were probably calling Jesus by this title.

ULT

²⁷ And when Jesus is departing from there, two blind men followed him, crying out and saying, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

Matthew 9:28

Now when he had come into the house (ULT)

This could be either Jesus' own **house** or the house in [Matthew 9:10](#).

Yes, Lord (ULT)

The full content of their answer is not stated, but it is understood.
Alternate translation: "Yes, Lord, we believe you can heal us" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

28 Now when he had come into the house, the blind men came to him and Jesus says to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They say to him, "Yes, Lord."

Matthew 9:29

he touched their eyes, saying (ULT)

It is not clear whether **he touched** both men's eyes at the same time or used only his right hand to touch one then the other. As the left hand was customarily used for unclean purposes, it is most likely that he used only his right hand. It is also not clear whether he spoke as he was touching them or touched them first and then spoke to them.

ULT

²⁹ Then he touched their eyes, saying, "Let it happen to you according to your faith."

Let it happen to you according to your faith (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "I will do as you have believed" or "Because you believe, I will heal you" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 9:30

their eyes were opened (ULT)

This means they were able to see. (See: [Idiom](#))

their eyes were opened (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God healed their eyes" or "the two blind men were able to see" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁰ And their eyes were opened, and Jesus warned them, saying, "See that you let no one know about this."

See that you let no one know about this (ULT)

Here, **See** means "be sure." Alternate translation: "Be sure no one finds out about this" or "Do not tell anyone that I healed you" (See: [Idiom](#))

Matthew 9:31

But they (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But the two men did not do what Jesus told them to do. They"

reported it (ULT)

Alternate translation: "told many people what had happened to them"

ULT

³¹ But they, having gone out, reported it in all that land.

Matthew 9:32

Connecting Statement:

This is the account of Jesus healing a demon-possessed man who could not speak and how people responded.

behold (ULT)

The word **behold** alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

mute (ULT)

not able to talk

a mute, demon-possessed man (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “a man who was mute and whom a demon had possessed” or “a man whom a demon was controlling and making him mute” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³² Now as they are going away, behold, they brought to him a mute, demon-possessed man.

Matthew 9:33

when the demon had been cast out (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “after Jesus had forced the demon out” or “after Jesus had commanded the demon to leave” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³³ And when the demon had been cast out, the mute man spoke, and the crowds were astonished, saying, “Such as this has never been seen in Israel!”

the mute man spoke (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the mute man began to speak” or “the man who had been mute spoke” or “the man, who was no longer mute, spoke”

the crowds were astonished (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the people were amazed”

Such as this has never been seen (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “This has never happened before” or “No one has ever done anything like this before” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 9:34

he casts out the demons (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he forces demons to leave"

he casts out (ULT)

The pronoun **he** refers to Jesus.

ULT

³⁴ But the Pharisees were saying, "By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons."

Matthew 9:35

General Information:

Verse 36 begins a new part of the story where Jesus teaches his disciples and sends them to preach and heal as he has done.

Connecting Statement:

Verse 35 is the end of the part of the story that began in [Matthew 8:1](#) about Jesus' healing ministry in Galilee. (See: [End of Story](#))

ULT

³⁵ And Jesus was going around all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness.

all the cities (ULT)

The word **all** is an exaggeration to emphasize how very many cities Jesus went to. He did not necessarily go to every one of them. Alternate translation: "many of the cities" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

cities...villages (ULT)

Alternate translation: "large villages ... small villages" or "large towns ... small towns"

the gospel of the kingdom (ULT)

Here the abstract noun **kingdom** refers to God's rule as king. See how you translated this in [Matthew 4:23](#). Alternate translation: "preaching the good news that God will show himself as king" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

every disease and every sickness

"every disease and every sickness." The words **disease** and **sickness** are closely related but should be translated as two different words if possible. **Disease** is what causes a person to be sick. **Sickness** is the physical weakness or affliction that results from having a disease.

Matthew 9:36

like sheep not having a shepherd (ULT)

This simile means they did not have a leader to take care of them.
Alternate translation: "as people without a leader" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

³⁶ Now having seen the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were troubled and discouraged, like sheep not having a shepherd.

Matthew 9:37

General Information:

Jesus uses a proverb about harvesting to tell his disciples how they should respond to the needs of the crowds mentioned in the previous section.

ULT

37 Then he says to his disciples, “The harvest {is} plentiful, but the laborers {are} few.”

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few

Jesus uses a proverb to respond to what he is seeing. Jesus means there are a lot of people who are ready to believe God but only few people to teach them God’s truth. (See: [Proverbs](#))

The harvest is plentiful

Alternate translation: “There is plenty of ripe food for someone to collect”

laborers (ULT)

Alternate translation: “workers”

Matthew 9:38

beg the Lord of the harvest

Alternate translation: "pray to God, because he is in charge of the harvest"

ULT

38 Therefore, beg the Lord of the harvest, so that he might send out laborers into his harvest."

Matthew 10

Matthew 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The sending of the twelve disciples

Many verses in this chapter describe how Jesus sent the twelve disciples out. He sent them to tell his message about the kingdom of heaven. They were to tell his message only in Israel and not to share it with the Gentiles.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The twelve disciples

The following are the lists of the twelve disciples:

In Matthew:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

In Mark:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John the son of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

In Luke:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon (who was called the Zealot), Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

Thaddaeus is probably the same person as Jude, the son of James.

“The kingdom of heaven has come near”

No one knows for sure whether the “kingdom of heaven” was present or still coming when John spoke these words. English translations often use the phrase “at hand,” but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phrases “is coming near” and “has come near.”

Matthew 10:1

Connecting Statement:

This begins an account of Jesus sending out his twelve disciples to do his work.

having summoned his 12 disciples (ULT)

“having summoned his twelve disciples” (See: [Numbers](#))

he gave them authority (ULT)

Be sure that the text clearly communicates meaning of this **authority**: (1) Jesus gave it to them to drive out unclean spirits. (2) Jesus gave it to them to heal disease and sickness.

so as to cast them out (ULT)

Alternate translation: “in order to make the unclean spirits leave”

every disease and every sickness.

“every disease and every sickness.” The words **disease** and **sickness** are closely related but should be translated as two different words if possible. **Disease** is what causes a person to be sick. **Sickness** is the physical weakness or affliction that results from having a disease.

ULT

¹ And having summoned his 12 disciples, he gave them authority over unclean spirits, so as to cast them out and to heal every disease and every sickness.

Matthew 10:2

General Information:

Here the author provides the names of the twelve apostles as background information.

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew tells background information about the twelve apostles. (See: [Background Information](#))

the...of...12 apostles (ULT)

This is the same group as the “12 disciples” in [Matthew 10:1](#).

first (ULT)

This is first in order, not in rank. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

² Now the names of the 12 apostles are these: first, Simon (who is called Peter), and Andrew his brother; and James the {son} of Zebedee, and John his brother;

Matthew 10:3

Matthew the tax collector (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Matthew, who was a tax collector"

ULT

³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the {son} of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus;

Matthew 10:4

the Zealot (ULT)

The word **Zealot** could be: (1) a title that shows that he was part of the group of people who wanted to free the Jewish people from Roman rule. Alternate translation: “the patriot” or “the nationalist” (2) a description that shows that he was zealous for God to be honored. Alternate translation: “the zealous one” or “the passionate one”

ULT

⁴ Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

the...and...who...betrayed...him (ULT)

Alternate translation: “who would betray Jesus”

Matthew 10:5

General Information:

Although verse 5 begins by saying that he sent out the twelve, Jesus gave these instructions before he sent them out. (See: [Order of Events](#))

Connecting Statement:

Here Jesus begins to give instructions to his disciples about what they should do and expect when they go to preach.

ULT

⁵ These Twelve Jesus sent out, having instructed them, saying, “Do not go on the way to the Gentiles, and do not enter into any town of the Samaritans.

These Twelve Jesus sent out (ULT)

Alternate translation: “Jesus sent out these twelve men” or “It was these twelve men whom Jesus sent out”

sent out (ULT)

Jesus sent them out for a particular purpose.

having instructed them (ULT)

Alternate translation: “having told them what they needed to do” or “having commanded them”

Matthew 10:6

the lost sheep of the house of Israel (ULT)

This is a metaphor comparing the entire nation of **Israel** to **sheep** who have strayed from their shepherd. (See: [Metaphor](#))

of the house of Israel (ULT)

This refers to the nation of **Israel**. Alternate translation: “of the people of Israel” or “of the descendants of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ But go instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Matthew 10:7

as you are going (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural and refers to the twelve apostles. (See: [Forms of You](#))

The kingdom of the heavens has come near (ULT)

The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God ruling as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use the word **heavens** in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 3:2](#). Alternate translation: “Our God in the heavens will soon show himself to be king” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ Now as you are going, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of the heavens has come near.’

Matthew 10:8

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about what they should do when they go to preach.

Heal...raise...cleanse...and} cast out...you have received...give (ULT)

These verbs and pronouns are plural and refer to the twelve apostles. (See: [Forms of You](#))

raise the dead (ULT)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “cause the dead to live again” (See: [Idiom](#))

Freely you have received, freely give (ULT)

Jesus did not state what the disciples had received or were to give. Some languages may require this information in the sentence. Here, **Freely** means that there was no payment. Alternate translation: “Freely you have received these things, freely give them to others” or “You received these things without paying, so give them to others without making them pay” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Freely you have received, freely give (ULT)

Here, **received** is a metaphor that represents being made able to do things, and **give** is a metaphor that represents doing things for others. Alternate translation: “Freely you have received the ability to do these things, freely do them for others” or “Freely I have made you able to do these things, freely do them for others” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, {and} cast out demons.
Freely you have received, freely give.

Matthew 10:9

your (ULT)

This refers to the twelve apostles and so is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁹ Do not acquire gold or silver or copper in your purses,

gold or silver or copper (ULT)

These are metals out of which coins were made. This list is a metonym for money, so if the metals are unknown in your area, translate the list as “money.” (See: [Metonymy](#))

purses (ULT)

This means “belts” or “money belts,” but it can refer to whatever might be used to carry money. A belt is a long strip of cloth or leather worn around the waist. It was often wide enough that it could be folded and used to carry money.

Matthew 10:10

a bag (ULT)

This could either be any bag used to carry things on a journey, or a bag used by someone to collect food or money.

two tunics (ULT)

Use the same word you used for “tunic” in [Matthew 5:40](#).

the laborer (ULT)

a worker

of his food (ULT)

Here, **food** refers to anything a person needs. Alternate translation: “of what he needs” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

10 nor a bag for your journey nor two tunics nor sandals nor a staff, for the laborer {is} worthy of his food.

Matthew 10:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about what they should do when they go out to preach.

But whatever city or village you might enter into (ULT)

Alternate translation: “But whenever you enter a city or village” or “But when you go into any city or village”

city...village (ULT)

“large village ... small village” or “large town ... small town.” See how you translated this in [Matthew 9:35](#).

you might enter (ULT)

This is plural and refers to the twelve apostles. (See: [Forms of You](#))

worthy (ULT)

A **worthy** person is a person who is willing to welcome the disciples.

and stay there until you might leave (ULT)

The full meaning of the statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “and stay in that person’s house until you leave the town or village” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

11 But whatever city or village you might enter into, find someone who is worthy in it and stay there until you might leave.

Matthew 10:12

Now entering into the house, greet it (ULT)

The phrase **greet it** means greet the **house**. A common greeting in those days was "Peace be to this house!" Here, **house** represents the people who live in the house. Alternate translation: "As you enter the house, greet the people who live in it" (See: [Metonymy](#))

entering (ULT)

This is plural and refers to the twelve apostles. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

¹² Now entering into the house, greet it.

Matthew 10:13

your...your (ULT)

These are plural and refer to the twelve apostles. (See: [Forms of You](#))

the house might be worthy ... it might not be worthy

Here, **the house** represents those who live in the house. A **worthy** person is a person who is willing to welcome the disciples. Jesus compares this person to one who is not worthy, a person who does not welcome the disciples. Alternate translation: “the people who live in that house receive you well” or “the people who live in that house treat you well” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

13 And if the house might be worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it might not be worthy, let your peace be returned to you.

let your peace come upon it (ULT)

The word **it** refers to the house, which represents the people who live in the house. Alternate translation: “let them receive your peace” or “let them receive the peace that you greeted them with” (See: [Metonymy](#))

if...it might not be worthy (ULT)

The word **it** means the house, and “house” refers to the people who live in the house. Alternate translation: “if they do not receive you well” or “if they do not treat you well” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the...your...peace...let...be returned to you (ULT)

This could mean: (1) if the household was not worthy, then God would hold back peace or blessings from that household. (2) if the household was not worthy, then the apostles were supposed to do something, such as asking God not to honor their greeting of peace. If your language has a similar meaning of taking back a greeting or its effects, that should be used here.

Matthew 10:14

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about what they should do when they go to preach.

And whoever might not receive you nor listen to (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And if no people in that house or city will receive you or listen to"

you...your (ULT)

This is plural and refers to the twelve apostles. (See: [Forms of You](#))

listen to your words (ULT)

Here, **words** refers to what the disciples say. Alternate translation: "listen to your message" or "listen to what you have to say" (See: [Metonymy](#))

city (ULT)

You should translate this the same way you did in [Matthew 10:11](#).

shake off the dust from your feet (ULT)

"shake the dust off your feet as you leave." This is a sign that God has rejected the people of that house or city. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

14 And whoever might not receive you nor listen to your words, departing from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

Matthew 10:15

Truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

it will be more tolerable (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the suffering will be less"

for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah (ULT)

This refers to the people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah. Alternate translation: "the people who lived in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah" (See: [Metonymy](#))

for that city (ULT)

This refers to the people in the **city** that does not receive the apostles or listen to their message. Alternate translation: "for the people of the city that does not receive you" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

15 Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

Matthew 10:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples. Here he begins to tell them about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.

Behold (ULT)

The word **Behold** here adds emphasis to what follows. Alternate translation: “Look” or “Listen” or “Pay attention to what I am about to tell you.”

I send you out (ULT)

Jesus is sending them out for a particular purpose.

as sheep in the midst of wolves (ULT)

Sheep are defenseless animals that **wolves** often attack. Jesus is stating that people may harm the disciples. Alternate translation: “as sheep among people who are like dangerous wolves” or “as sheep among people who act the way dangerous animals act” (See: [Simile](#))

become...wise as the serpents and harmless as the doves (ULT)

Jesus is telling the disciples they must be cautious and harmless among the people. If comparing the disciples to **serpents** or **doves** is confusing, it might be better not to state the similes. Alternate translation: “act with understanding and caution, as well as with innocence and virtue” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

16 Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so become wise as the serpents and harmless as the doves.

Matthew 10:17

But beware of the men, for they will deliver you up (ULT)

You can translate with “because” to show how these two statements relate. Alternate translation: “But watch out for people because they will deliver you up” (See: [Connecting Words and Phrases](#))

ULT

¹⁷ But beware of the men, for they will deliver you up to councils, and they will whip you in their synagogues;

they will deliver...up...you...to (ULT)

Alternate translation: “they will put you under the control of”

councils (ULT)

local religious leaders or elders who together keep peace in the community

you...they will whip (ULT)

Alternate translation: “beat you with a whip”

Matthew 10:18

and...you will...be brought (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “they will even bring you” or “they will even drag you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 and you will even be brought before governors and kings for my sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

for my sake (ULT)

Alternate translation: “because you belong to me” or “because you follow me”

even...to them...to the Gentiles (ULT)

The pronoun **them** refers either to the “governors and kings” or to the Jewish accusers.

Matthew 10:19

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.

But when they might deliver you up (ULT)

“But when people take you to the councils.” Here, **they** are the same people as in [Matthew 10:17](#).

ULT

19 But when they might deliver you up, you should not be anxious about how or what you should speak, for what you should say will be given to you in that hour.

you...you should not be anxious about...you should speak...will be given...to you...you should say (ULT)

All instances of **you** are plural and refer to the twelve apostles. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you should not be anxious about (ULT)

Alternate translation: “you should not worry about”

how or what you should speak (ULT)

“how you are to speak or what you are to say.” The two ideas may be combined: “what you are to say” (See: [Hendiadys](#))

for what you should say will be given to you in that hour (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “for at that time, the Holy Spirit will tell you what to say” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

in that hour (ULT)

Here, **hour** means “right then.” Alternate translation: “right then” or “at that time” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 10:20

you...your...you (ULT)

These are plural and refer to the twelve apostles. (See: [Forms of You](#))

the Spirit of your Father (ULT)

If necessary, You can translate this as “the Spirit of God your heavenly Father” or a footnote can be added to make it clear that this refers to God the Holy Spirit and not to the spirit of an earthly father.

of your Father (ULT)

Father is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

in you (ULT)

Alternate translation: “through you”

ULT

²⁰ For it is not you who is speaking, but the Spirit of your Father who is speaking in you.

Matthew 10:21

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.

Now brother will deliver up brother to death (ULT)

ULT

²¹ Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father {his} child, and children will rise up against parents and put them to death.

“But a brother will deliver up his own brother to death” or “But brothers will deliver up their brothers to death.” Jesus speaks of something that will happen many times.

will deliver up...brother to death (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **death**, you can express it as a verb. Alternate translation: “hand brother over to authorities who will execute him” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

a father {his} child (ULT)

These words can be translated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: “fathers will deliver up their children to death” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

will rise up...against (ULT)

Alternate translation: “will rebel against” or “will turn against”

put them to death (ULT)

Alternate translation: “have them put to death” or “have the authorities execute them”

Matthew 10:22

you will be hated by everyone (ULT)

You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: “everyone will hate you” or “all people will hate you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

you will be (ULT)

This is plural and refers to the twelve disciples. (See: [Forms of You](#))

because of my name (ULT)

Here, **name** refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: “because of me” or “because you trust in me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the one...who endured (ULT)

Alternate translation: “whoever stays faithful”

to the end (ULT)

It is not clear whether the **end** means when a person dies, when the persecution ends, or the end of the age when God shows himself to be king. The main point is that they endure as long as necessary.

he will be saved (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God will deliver that person” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²² And you will be hated by everyone because of my name, but the one who endured to the end, he will be saved.

Matthew 10:23

in this city (ULT)

Here, **this** does not refer to a specific city. Alternate translation: “in one city”

flee to the next (ULT)

Alternate translation: “flee to the next city”

truly...I say to you (ULT)

“I tell you the truth.” This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

may come (ULT)

Alternate translation: “arrives”

ULT

23 But when they might persecute you in this city, flee to the next, for truly I say to you, you may certainly not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man may come.

Matthew 10:24

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.

ULT

²⁴ A disciple is not above {his} teacher, nor a slave above his master.

A disciple is not above {his} teacher, nor a slave above his master (ULT)

Jesus is using a proverb to teach his disciples a general truth. Jesus is emphasizing that the disciples should not expect people to treat them any better than the people treat Jesus. (See: [Proverbs](#))

A disciple is not above {his} teacher (ULT)

Alternate translation: "A disciple is always less important than his teacher" or "A teacher is always more important than his disciple"

above {his} teacher, nor a slave...his...master (ULT)

Alternate translation: "and a slave is always less important than his master" or "and a master is always more important than his slave"

Matthew 10:25

It is enough for the disciple that he might be like his teacher (ULT)

Alternate translation: "The disciple should be satisfied to become like his teacher"

he might be like his teacher (ULT)

If necessary, you can make explicit how the disciple becomes like the **teacher**. Alternate translation: "he might know as much as his teacher knows" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the slave like his master (ULT)

If necessary, you can make explicit how the slave becomes like the master. Alternate translation: "the slave should be satisfied to become only as important as his master" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

his...If they called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much worse the members of...household (ULT)

Again Jesus is emphasizing that since people have mistreated him, his disciples should expect people to treat them the same or worse.

his...how much worse the members of...household (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the names that they call the members of his household will certainly be much worse" or "they will certainly call the members of his household much worse names"

If...they called (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Since people have called"

the master of the house (ULT)

Jesus is using this as a metaphor for himself. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Beelzebul (ULT)

The name **Beelzebul** could be translated: (1) as "Beelzebul." (2) with its original, intended meaning of "Satan."

the members of his household (ULT)

This is a metaphor for Jesus' disciples. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁵ It is enough for the disciple that he might be like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much worse the members of his household!

Matthew 10:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.

not...do...fear them (ULT)

Here, **them** refers to the people who mistreat followers of Jesus.

nothing...there is...concealed that will not be revealed, and hidden, that will not be made known (ULT)

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

nothing...there is...concealed that will not be revealed, and hidden, that will not be made known (ULT)

Being concealed or hidden represents being kept secret, and being revealed represents being made known. (See: [Metaphor](#))

nothing...there is...concealed that will not be revealed, and hidden, that will not be made known (ULT)

Jesus is emphasizing that God will make all things known. If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will reveal the things that people hide" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

26 Therefore, do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, and hidden, that will not be made known.

Matthew 10:27

What I tell you in the darkness, say in the daylight, and what you hear in {your} ear, proclaim upon the housetops (ULT)

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Jesus is emphasizing that the disciples should tell everyone what he tells the disciples in private. Alternate translation: “Tell people in the daylight what I tell you in the darkness, and proclaim upon the housetops what you hear softly in your ear” (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²⁷ What I tell you in the darkness, say in the daylight, and what you hear in {your} ear, proclaim upon the housetops.

What I tell you in the darkness, say in the daylight (ULT)

Here, **darkness** is a metonym for “night” which is a metonym for “private.” Here, **daylight** is a metonym for “public.” Alternate translation: “What I tell you privately at night, say in public in the day light” (See: [Metonymy](#))

what you hear in {your} ear (ULT)

This is a way of referring to whispering. Alternate translation: “what I whisper to you” (See: [Idiom](#))

proclaim upon the housetops (ULT)

Housetops where Jesus lived were flat, and people far away could hear anyone speaking with a loud voice. Here, **housetops** refers to any place where all people can hear. Alternate translation: “speak loudly in a public place for all to hear” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 10:28

General Information:

Here Jesus also begins to give reasons why his disciples should not be afraid of the persecution they might experience.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go to preach.

ULT

28 And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul. But instead, fear the one who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.

do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul (ULT)

This is not distinguishing between people who cannot kill the soul and people who can **kill the soul**. No person can kill the soul. Alternate translation: “do not be afraid of people. They can kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul” (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

those who kill the body (ULT)

This means to cause physical death. If these words are awkward, they can be translated as “those who kill you” or “those who kill people.”

the body (ULT)

the part of a person that can be touched, as opposed to the soul or spirit

the...soul...to kill (ULT)

This means to harm people after they have physically died.

the...soul (ULT)

the part of a person that cannot be touched and that lives on after the physical body dies

But instead, fear the one who is able (ULT)

You can add “because” to clarify why people should fear God. Alternate translation: “But instead, fear God because he is able” (See: [Connecting Words and Phrases](#))

Matthew 10:29

Are not two sparrows sold for an assarion (ULT)

Jesus states this proverb. (See: [Proverbs](#))

Are not two sparrows sold for an assarion (ULT)

Jesus uses this question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: “Think about the sparrows. They have so little value that you can buy two of them for only one small coin.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

sparrows (ULT)

These are very small, seed-eating birds. Alternate translation: “small birds” (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

for an assarion (ULT)

This is often translated as the least valuable coin available in your country. It refers to a copper coin worth about one-sixteenth of a day’s wage for a laborer. Alternate translation: “very little money”

not one of them will fall to the ground without the knowledge of your Father (ULT)

You can state this in a positive form. Alternate translation: “your Father knows when even one sparrow dies and falls to the ground” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

of your Father (ULT)

Father is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for an assarion, and yet not one of them will fall to the ground without the knowledge of your Father.

Matthew 10:30

your...even the hairs of...head are all numbered (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God knows even how many hairs are on your head" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

numbered (ULT)

Alternate translation: "counted"

ULT

³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

Matthew 10:31

**you are more valuable than many sparrows
(ULT)**

Alternate translation: "God values you more than many sparrows"

ULT

³¹ Therefore, do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

Matthew 10:32

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the reasons why they should not be afraid of the persecution that they might experience.

everyone...who will confess in me...in...I will also confess...him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "whoever confesses me ... I will also confess" or "if anyone confesses me ... I will also confess him"

will confess in me before men (ULT)

Alternate translation: "tells others that he is my disciple" or "acknowledges before other people that he is loyal to me"

I will also confess in him before my Father who {is} in the heavens (ULT)

You can make explicit the information that is understood. Alternate translation: "I will also acknowledge before my Father who is in the heavens that that person belongs to me" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

my Father who is in the heavens

Alternate translation: "my heavenly Father"

my Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

³² Therefore, everyone who will confess in me before men, I will also confess in him before my Father who {is} in the heavens.

Matthew 10:33

whoever...would deny me...I will also deny him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "whoever denies me ... I will also deny" or "if anyone denies me ... I will also deny him"

ULT

³³ But whoever would deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who {is} in the heavens.

would deny me before men (ULT)

Alternate translation: "denies to other people that he is loyal to me" or "refuses to acknowledge to others that he is my disciple"

I will also deny him before my Father who {is} in the heavens (ULT)

You can make explicit the information that is understood. Alternate translation: "I will deny before my Father who is in the heavens that this person belongs to me" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Matthew 10:34

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the reasons why they should not be afraid of the persecution that they might experience.

Do not think (ULT)

Alternate translation: “Do not suppose” or “You must not think”

upon the earth (ULT)

This refers to the people who live on the earth. Alternate translation: “to the people of the earth” or “to people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

a sword (ULT)

This refers to division, fighting, and killing among people. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁴ Do not think that I came to put peace upon the earth. I did not come to put peace, but a sword.

Matthew 10:35

to set a man against (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to cause a man to fight against"

a man against his father (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a son against his father"

ULT

³⁵ For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

Matthew 10:36

the enemies of a man (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a person's enemies" or "a person's worst enemies"

will be those of his own household (ULT)

Alternate translation: "will be the members of his own family"

ULT

³⁶ and the enemies of a man will be those of his own household.

Matthew 10:37

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the reasons why they should not be afraid of the persecution that they might experience.

The one loving (ULT)

The word **loving** here refers to “brotherly love” or “love from a friend.” Alternate translation: “The one caring for” or “The one who is devoted to” or “The one who is fond of”

worthy of me (ULT)

Alternate translation: “deserve to belong to me” or “worthy to be my disciple”

ULT

37 The one loving father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and the one loving son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Matthew 10:38

does not take up his cross and follow after me (ULT)

“does not carry his cross and follow me.” The **cross** represents suffering and death. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁸ And the one who does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.

does not take up his cross and follow after me (ULT)

Taking up the cross represents being willing to suffer and die. Alternate translation: “obey me even to the point of suffering and dying” (See: [Metaphor](#))

does not take up (ULT)

Alternate translation: “does not pick up and carry”

Matthew 10:39

The one who found his life will lose it, and the one who lost his life for my sake will find it (ULT)

Jesus uses a proverb to teach his disciples. This should be translated with as few words as possible. Alternate translation: “Those who find their lives will lose them. But those who lose their lives for my sake will find them” or “If you find your life you will lose it. But if you lose your life because of me, you will find it” (See: [Proverbs](#))

ULT

³⁹ The one who found his life will lose it, and the one who lost his life for my sake will find it.

The one who found (ULT)

This is a metaphor for “keeps” or “saves.” Alternate translation: “The one who tried to keep” or “The one who tried to save” (See: [Metaphor](#))

will lose it (ULT)

This does not mean the person will die. It is a metaphor that means the person will not experience spiritual life with God. Alternate translation: “will not have true life” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the one who lost his life (ULT)

This does not mean to die. It is a metaphor that means a person considers obeying Jesus more important than his own life. Alternate translation: “the one who denied himself” (See: [Metaphor](#))

for my sake (ULT)

“because he trusts me” or “on my account” or “because of me.” This is the same idea as “for my sake” in [Matthew 10:18](#).

will find it (ULT)

This metaphor means the person will experience spiritual life with God. Alternate translation: “will find true life” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 10:40

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the reasons why they should not be afraid of the persecution that they might experience.

ULT

40 The one receiving you receives me, and the one receiving me receives the one who sent me.

The one receiving (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Whoever receives" or "Anyone who receives" or "The one who welcomes"

The one receiving (ULT)

This means to receive someone as a guest.

you (ULT)

This is plural and refers to the twelve apostles to whom Jesus is speaking. (See: [Forms of You](#))

The one receiving you receives me (ULT)

Jesus means that when someone receives you, it is like receiving him. Alternate translation: "When someone receives you, it is like he is receiving me" or "If someone welcomes you, it is as if he were welcoming me"

The one receiving...receives me...the one who sent me (ULT)

This means that when someone receives Jesus, it is like receiving God. Alternate translation: "when someone receives me, it is like he is receiving God the Father who sent me" or "if someone welcomes me, it is as if he were welcoming God the Father who sent me"

Matthew 10:41

in the name of a prophet (ULT)

Alternate translation: "because he is a prophet"

of a prophet...a reward (ULT)

This refers to the **reward** that God gives the **prophet**, not to the reward that a prophet gives to another person.

in the name...of a righteous man (ULT)

Alternate translation: "because he is a righteous man"

a reward...of a righteous man (ULT)

This refers to the **reward** God gives to **a righteous** person, not a reward that a righteous person gives to another person.

ULT

41 The one receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a reward of a prophet, and the one receiving a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive a reward of a righteous man.

Matthew 10:42

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes instructing his disciples about what they should do and expect when they go to preach.

whoever might give...to drink (ULT)

Alternate translation: "anyone who gives ... to drink"

to one of these little ones (ULT)

"to one of these lowly ones" or "to the least important of these." The phrase **one of these** here refers to one of Jesus' disciples.

in the name of a disciple (ULT)

Alternate translation: "because he is my disciple"

truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

he may certainly not lose his reward (ULT)

Here, **he** and **his** refer to the one who is giving.

he may certainly not lose (ULT)

Alternate translation: "God will not deny him." This has nothing to do with having a possession taken away. You can state this in positive form. Alternate translation: "God will certainly give him"

ULT

42 And whoever might give to one of these little ones a cup of cold water to drink only in the name of a disciple, truly I say to you, he may certainly not lose his reward."

Matthew 11

Matthew 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULT does this with the quoted material in 11:10.

Some scholars believe that [Matthew 11:20](#) begins a new stage in the ministry of Christ because of Israel's rejection of him.

Special concepts in this chapter

Hidden revelation

After [Matthew 11:20](#), Jesus begins to reveal information about himself and about the plans of God the Father, while hiding this information from those who reject him ([Matthew 11:25](#)).

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“The kingdom of heaven is near”

No one knows for sure whether the “kingdom of heaven” was present or still coming when John spoke these words. English translations often use the phrase **at hand**, but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phrases “is coming near” and “has come near.”

Matthew 11:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story where Matthew tells of how Jesus responded to disciples of John the Baptist. (See: [Introduction of a New Event](#))

ULT

¹ And it happened that when Jesus had finished giving orders to his 12 disciples, he departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

And it happened that when (ULT)

This phrase shifts the story from Jesus' teachings to what happened next. Alternate translation: "And when" or "After"

had finished...giving orders (ULT)

Alternate translation: "had finished teaching" or "had finished commanding"

to his 12 disciples (ULT)

This refers to the 12 chosen apostles of Jesus. (See: [Numbers](#))

in their cities (ULT)

Here, **their** refers to all the Jews in general.

Matthew 11:2

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

John...John...having heard in the prison about (ULT)

“John, who was in prison, heard about” or “someone told John, who was in prison, about.” Even though Matthew has not yet told the readers that King Herod put **John** the Baptist in jail, the original audience would have been familiar with the story and understood the implicit information here. Matthew will give more information later about John the Baptist, so it is probably best not to make it explicit here.

having sent through his disciples (ULT)

John the Baptist sent his own **disciples** with a message to Jesus.

ULT

² Now John, having heard in the prison about the deeds of the Christ, having sent through his disciples,

Matthew 11:3**said to him (ULT)**

The pronoun **him** refers to Jesus.

Are you the one coming (ULT)

"Are you the one whom we are expecting to come." This is another way to refer to the Messiah or Christ.

are we expecting another (ULT)

"should we be expecting someone else?" The pronoun **we** refers to all Jews, not only John's disciples.

ULT

³ said to him, "Are you the one coming, or are we expecting another?"

Matthew 11:4

report to John (ULT)

Alternate translation: "tell John"

ULT

⁴ And answering, Jesus said to them,
"Having gone, report to John what you
see and hear.

Matthew 11:5

lepers are cleansed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “I am healing lepers” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the dead are raised (ULT)

Here to raise is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: “people who have died are being caused to live again” (See: [Idiom](#))

the dead are raised (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “I am causing those who have died to become alive again” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the poor are being told the gospel (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “I am preaching good news to the poor” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the poor (ULT)

This nominalized adjective can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “poor people” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

⁵ The blind receive sight, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised, and the poor are being told the gospel.

Matthew 11:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ And blessed is whoever might not
have been offended by me.”

Matthew 11:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.

What did you go out in the wilderness to see— a reed being shaken by the wind (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to cause the people to think about what kind of person John the Baptist is. Alternate translation: “Surely you did not go out to the wilderness to see a reed being shaken by the wind!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁷ Now as these were going on their way, Jesus began to say to the crowds concerning John, “What did you go out in the wilderness to see—a reed being shaken by the wind?”

a reed being shaken by the wind (ULT)

This could mean: (1) Jesus be referring the literal plants by the Jordan River. (2) Jesus is using a metaphor to mean a kind of person. Alternate translation: “a man who easily changes his mind and is like a reed blowing back and forth in the wind” (See: [Metaphor](#))

being shaken by the wind (ULT)

You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: “swaying in the wind” or “blowing in the wind” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 11:8

But what did you go out to see—a man dressed in soft clothing (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to cause the people to think about what kind of person John the Baptist is. Alternate translation: “And, surely you did not go out to the desert to see a man dressed in soft clothing!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁸ But what did you go out to see—a man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those wearing soft clothing are in the houses of kings.

dressed in soft clothing (ULT)

“wearing expensive clothing.” Rich people wore this kind of **clothing**.

Behold (ULT)

This word adds emphasis to what follows. Alternate translation: “Indeed”

the houses of kings (ULT)

Alternate translation: “kings’ palaces”

Matthew 11:9

General Information:

In verse 10, Jesus quotes the prophet Malachi to show that the life and ministry of John the Baptist fulfilled prophecy.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.

ULT

⁹ But what did you go out to see—a prophet? Yes, I say to you, and much more than a prophet.

But what did you go out to see—a prophet (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to make the people think about what kind of man John the Baptist is. Alternate translation: “But surely you went out to the desert to see a prophet!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Yes, I say to you (ULT)

Alternate translation: “I say to you yes,”

much more than a prophet (ULT)

You can translate this as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: “he is not an ordinary prophet” or “he is more important than a normal prophet” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Matthew 11:10

This is he concerning whom it is written (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "This is what the prophet Malachi wrote long ago about John the Baptist" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

10 This is he concerning whom it is written, 'Behold, I am sending my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'

I am sending my messenger (ULT)

The pronouns **I** and **my** refer to God. Malachi is quoting what God said.

before your face (ULT)

Here, **your** is singular, because God was speaking to the Messiah in the quotation. (See: [Forms of You](#))

before your face (ULT)

Here, **face** refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "in front of you" or "to go ahead of you" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

will prepare your way before you (ULT)

This is a metaphor that means the messenger **will prepare** the people to receive the Messiah's message. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 11:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.

Truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

ULT

11 Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen one greater than John the Baptist, but the least important in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he.

among those born of women (ULT)

Even though Adam was not born of a women, this is a way of referring to all humans. Alternate translation: "out of all people who have ever lived" (See: [Idiom](#))

there has not arisen...one greater than John the Baptist (ULT)

You can state this in positive form. Alternate translation: "John the Baptist is the greatest" or "John the Baptist is the most important"

the...least important in the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** is used only in Matthew. If possible, try to keep "heavens" in your translation. Alternate translation: "the least important person under the rule of our God in the heavens" (See: [Metonymy](#))

one greater...is...he (ULT)

Alternate translation: "is more important than John is"

Matthew 11:12

But from the days of John the Baptist (ULT)

“But from the time John began preaching his message.” The word **days** probably refers here to a period of months or even years.

the...the kingdom of...heavens suffers violence, and violent men take it by force (ULT)

There are various possible interpretations of this verse. The UST assumes that it means that some people want to use God’s kingdom for their own selfish purposes, and that they are willing to use **force** against other people to accomplish this. Other versions assume a positive interpretation, that the call to enter the kingdom of God has become so urgent, that people must act in an extreme manner in order to answer that call and to resist the temptation to sin further. A third interpretation is that violent people are harming God’s people and trying to stop God from ruling.

ULT

12 But from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of the heavens suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.

Matthew 11:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.

all...the prophets and the law have prophesied until John (ULT)

ULT

13 For all the prophets and the law have prophesied until John;

Here, **the prophets and the law** refer to the things that the prophets and Moses wrote in scripture. Alternate translation: "these are the things that the prophets and Moses have prophesied through the scriptures until the time of John the Baptist" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 11:14

if you are willing (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural and refers to the crowd. (See: [Forms of You](#))

he is Elijah who is about to come (ULT)

The word **he** refers to John the Baptist. This does not mean John the Baptist is literally **Elijah**. Jesus means John the Baptist fulfills the prophecy about Elijah, “who is about to come” or the next Elijah. Alternate translation: “when the prophet Malachi said that Elijah would return, he was speaking about John the Baptist”

ULT

14 and if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is about to come.

Matthew 11:15

The one having ears to hear, let him hear (ULT)

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase

ears to hear here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. Alternate translation: “Let the one who is willing to listen, listen” or “The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁵ The one having ears to hear, let him hear.

The one having ears to hear, let him hear (ULT)

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. Alternate translation: “If you are willing to listen, listen” or “If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Matthew 11:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.

Now to what will I compare this generation (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to introduce a comparison between the people of that day and what children might say in the marketplace. Alternate translation: "But this is what this generation is like" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

16 Now to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplace, who are calling out to one another,

this generation (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the people living now" or "these people" or "you people of this generation"

the marketplace (ULT)

a large, open-air area where people buy and sell items

Matthew 11:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues the parable that begins with the words “It is like” in verse 16.

saying...you did not weep (ULT)

Jesus uses a parable to describe the people who were alive at that time. He compares them to a group of children who are trying to get the other children to play with them. However, no matter way they do, the other children will not join them. (See: [Parables](#))

saying...you did not weep (ULT)

Jesus means that it does not matter if God sends someone like John the Baptist, who lives in the desert and fasts, or someone like Jesus, who celebrates with sinners and does not fast. The people, most specifically the Pharisees and religious leaders, still remain stubborn and refuse to accept God’s truth. (See: [Simile](#))

We played a flute for you (ULT)

We refers to the children sitting in the marketplace. Here, **you** is plural and refers to the other group of children. (See: [Forms of You](#))

and you did not dance (ULT)

Alternate translation: “but you did not dance to the happy music”

We mourned (ULT)

This means they sang sad songs like women did at funerals. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

and...not...you did...weep (ULT)

Alternate translation: “but you did not cry with us”

ULT

17 saying, ‘We played a flute for you, and you did not dance. We mourned, and you did not weep.’

Matthew 11:18

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes talking to the crowds about John the Baptist.

neither eating nor drinking (ULT)

This does not mean that John never ate food. It means he fasted often, and when he ate, he did not eat good, expensive food. Alternate translation: “frequently fasting and not drinking alcohol” or “not eating fancy food and not drinking wine” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’

they say, ‘He has a demon (ULT)

You can translate this as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: “they say that he has a demon” or “they accuse him of having a demon” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

they say (ULT)

All occurrences of **they** refer to the people of that generation, and most specifically to the Pharisees and religious leaders.

Matthew 11:19

The Son of Man came (ULT)

Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, came" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

came...eating and drinking (ULT)

This is the opposite of John's behavior. This means more than just consuming the normal amount of food and drink. It means Jesus celebrated and enjoyed good food and drink like other people did.

ULT

19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold a man, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom has been justified by her children."

they say, 'Behold a man, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners (ULT)

You can translate this as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "they say that he is a gluttonous man and a drunkard and a friend of tax collectors and sinners." or "they accuse him of eating and drinking too much and of being a friends of tax collectors and sinners." Alternate translation: "they say that I am a gluttonous man and a drunkard and a friend of tax collectors and sinners." (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

they say, 'Behold a man, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners (ULT)

If you translated "The Son of Man" as "I, the Son of man," you can state this as an indirect statement and use the first person. Alternate translation: "they say that I am a gluttonous man and a drunkard and a friend of tax collectors and sinners." (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

a man, a glutton (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he is a greedy eater" or "he continually eats too much food"

a drunkard (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a drunk" or "he continually drinks too much alcohol"

But wisdom has been justified by her children (ULT)

This is a proverb that Jesus applies to this situation, because the people who rejected both him and John were not being wise. Jesus and John the Baptist are the wise ones, and the results of their deeds prove it. (See: [Proverbs](#))

wisdom has been justified by her children (ULT)

Here, **wisdom** is described as a woman who is proven to be right by what she does. (See: [Personification](#))

wisdom has been justified by her children (ULT)

Jesus means that the results of a wise person's actions prove that he is truly wise. If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "the results of a wise person's deeds prove that he is wise" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 11:20

General Information:

Jesus begins to rebuke the people of the cities where he previously did miracles.

to rebuke the cities (ULT)

Here, **the cities** refers to the people who live there. Alternate translation: “rebuke the people of the cities” (See: [Metonymy](#))

cities (ULT)

Alternate translation: “towns”

in which most of his miracles were done (ULT)

You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: “in which he did most of his miracles” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

miracles...his...miracles (ULT)

Alternate translation: “his mighty works” or “his works of power”

ULT

20 Then he began to rebuke the cities in which most of his miracles were done, because they had not repented.

Matthew 11:21

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida (ULT)

Jesus speaks as if the people of the cities of **Chorazin** and **Bethsaida** were there listening to him, but they were not. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

Woe to you (ULT)

“How terrible it will be for you.” Here, **you** is singular and refers to the city. If it is more natural to refer to the people instead of a city, you could translate with a plural “you.” (See: [Forms of You](#))

Chorazin...Bethsaida...Tyre...Sidon (ULT)

The names of these cities are used as metonyms for the people living in these cities. (See: [Metonymy](#))

if...the miracles...they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes (ULT)

Jesus is describing a hypothetical situation that could have happened in the past, but it did not. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

if the miracles had happened in Tyre and Sidon which happened in you (ULT)

You can translate this with active forms. Alternate translation: “if I had done the mighty deeds among the people of Tyre and Sidon that I have done among you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

which happened in you (ULT)

Here the **you** is plural and refers to Chorazin and Bethsaida. If it is more natural for your language, you could use a dual **you** to refer to the two cities, or a plural **you** to refer to the people of the cities. (See: [Forms of You](#))

long ago...they would have repented (ULT)

The pronoun **they** refers to the people of Tyre and Sidon.

they would have repented (ULT)

Alternate translation: “they would have shown they were sorry for their sins”

ULT

²¹ “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had happened in Tyre and Sidon which happened in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Matthew 11:22

it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you (ULT)

Here, **Tyre and Sidon** refers to the people who live there. Alternate translation: “God will show more mercy to the people of Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than to you” or “God will punish you more severely at the day of judgment than the people of Tyre and Sidon” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²² Nevertheless, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

than for you (ULT)

Here the **you** is plural and refers to Chorazin and Bethsaida. If it is more natural for your language, you could use a dual “you” to refer to the two cities, or a plural “you” to refer to the people of the cities. (See: [Forms of You](#))

than for you (ULT)

The implied information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “than for you, because you did not repent and believe in me, even though you saw me do miracles” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 11:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the people of the cities where he previously did miracles.

And you, Capernaum, you will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the miracles that happened in you had happened in Sodom, it would have remained until today (ULT)

ULT

²³ And you, Capernaum, you will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the miracles that happened in you had happened in Sodom, it would have remained until today.

The pronoun **you** is singular and refers to Capernaum throughout this verse and the next. If it is more natural to refer to the people of the city, you could translate with a plural “you.” (See: [Forms of You](#))

you, Capernaum (ULT)

Jesus now speaks to the people in the city of **Capernaum** as if they were listening to him, but they were not. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

Capernaum...Sodom (ULT)

The names of these cities refer to the people living in Capernaum and in Sodom. (See: [Metonymy](#))

you will not be exalted to heaven, will you (ULT)

“do you think you will be raised up to heaven?” You can state this in active form: Alternate translation: “God will not raise you up to heaven, will he?” or “the praise of other people will not raise you up to heaven, will it?” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

you will not be exalted to heaven, will you (ULT)

Jesus uses a rhetorical question to rebuke the people of Capernaum for their pride. You can state this in active form: Alternate translation: “God will not bring you up to heaven like you think he will!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

You will be brought down to Hades (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God will send you down to Hades” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

For if the miracles that happened in you had happened in Sodom, it would have remained until today (ULT)

Jesus is describing a hypothetical situation that could have happened in the past, but it did not. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

if the miracles that happened in you had happened in Sodom (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “if I had done the miracles among the people of Sodom that I have done among you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

miracles (ULT)

Alternate translation: “mighty works” or “works of power”

it would have remained (ULT)

The pronoun **it** refers to the city of Sodom.

Matthew 11:24

I say to you (ULT)

This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you (ULT)

Here, **land of Sodom** refer to the people who lived there. Alternate translation: “God will show more mercy to the people of Sodom in the day of judgment than to you” or “God will punish you more severely in the day of judgment than the people of Sodom” (See: [Metonymy](#))

than for you (ULT)

The implicit information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “than for you, because you did not repent and believe in me, even though you saw me do miracles” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁴ Nevertheless, I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.”

Matthew 11:25

General Information:

In verses 25 and 26, Jesus prays to his heavenly Father while still in the presence of the crowd. In verse 27, he begins to address the people again.

Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Lord of heaven and earth (ULT)

“Lord who rules over heaven and earth.” The phrase **heaven and earth** is a merism that refers to all people and things in the universe. Alternate translation: “Lord who rules over the whole universe” (See: [Merism](#))

you concealed these things...and...revealed them (ULT)

It is not clear what is meant by **these things**. If your language needs to specify what is meant, an alternative translation might be best. Alternate translation: “you concealed these truths ... and revealed them”

you concealed these things from (ULT)

Alternate translation: “you hid these things from” or “you have not made these things known to.” The verb **concealed** is the opposite of “revealed.”

from the wise and discerning (ULT)

These nominal adjectives can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “from people who are wise and who discern” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

the wise and discerning (ULT)

Jesus is using irony. He does not think these people are really **wise and discerning**. Alternate translation: “people who think they are wise and discerning” (See: [Irony](#))

revealed them (ULT)

“made them known.” The pronoun **them** refers to “these things” earlier in this verse.

to little children (ULT)

Jesus compares ignorant people to **little children**. Jesus is emphasizing that many of those who believe him either are not well educated or do not think of themselves as wise. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁵ At that time, answering, Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you concealed these things from the wise and discerning and revealed them to little children.

Matthew 11:26

for thus it became well-pleasing in your sight (ULT)

The phrase **in your sight** is a metonym that stands for how a person considers something. Alternate translation: “for you considered it good to do this” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁶ Yes, Father, for thus it became well-pleasing in your sight.

Matthew 11:27

All things have been entrusted to me from my Father (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “My Father has entrusted all things to me” or “My Father has given everything over to me” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁷ All things have been entrusted to me from my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son, and to whoever the Son would desire to reveal him.

All things (ULT)

This could mean: (1) God the Father has revealed everything about himself and his kingdom to Jesus. (2) God has given all authority to Jesus.

my Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

no one knows the Son except the Father (ULT)

Alternate translation: “only the Father knows the Son”

no one knows (ULT)

The word **knows** here means more than just being acquainted with someone. It means knowing someone intimately because of having a special relationship with him.

the Son (ULT)

Jesus was referring to himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

the Son (ULT)

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

knows the...except the...and no one...Father...Son (ULT)

Alternate translation: “only the Son knows the Father”

Matthew 11:28

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes speaking to the crowd.

**all who are laboring and are heavy burdened,
and I will give you rest (ULT)**

Both occurrences of **you** are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

who are laboring and are heavy burdened (ULT)

Jesus speaks of people being discouraged in their attempts to obey all the laws as if those laws were **heavy** burdens and the people were **laboring** to carry them. Alternate translation: “who are discouraged from trying so hard” or “who are discouraged from trying so hard to obey the laws perfectly” (See: [Metaphor](#))

and I will give you rest (ULT)

Alternate translation: “and I will allow you to rest from your labor and burden”

ULT

²⁸ Come to me, all who are laboring and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:29

Take my yoke on you (ULT)

Jesus continues the metaphor. Jesus is inviting the people to become his disciples and follow him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

I am gentle and humble in heart (ULT)

Here, **gentle** and **humble in heart** mean basically the same thing. Jesus combines them to emphasize that he will be much kinder than the religious leaders. Alternate translation: “I am gentle and humble” or “I am very gentle” (See: [Doublet](#))

humble in heart (ULT)

Here, **heart** is a metonym for a person’s inner being. (See: [Metonymy](#))

humble in heart (ULT)

The phrase **humble in heart** is an idiom that means “humble.” Alternate translation: “humble” (See: [Idiom](#))

you will find rest for your souls (ULT)

Here, **souls** refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: “you will find rest for yourselves” or “you will be able to rest” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁹ Take my yoke on you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Matthew 11:30

For my yoke {is} easy and my burden is light (ULT)

Both of these phrases mean the same thing. Jesus is emphasizing that it is easier to obey him than it is the Jewish law. Alternate translation: "For what I place on you, you will be able to carry because it is light" (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

³⁰ For my yoke {is} easy and my burden is light."

my...burden is light (ULT)

The word **light** here is the opposite of heavy, not the opposite of dark.

Matthew 12

Matthew 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 12:18-21, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The Sabbath

This chapter has much to say about how God's people are to obey the Sabbath. Jesus said that the rules that the Pharisees made up did not help people obey the Sabbath the way God wanted them to. (See: [Sabbath](#))

“Blasphemy against the Spirit”

No one knows for sure what actions people perform or what words they say when they commit this sin. However, they probably insult the Holy Spirit and his work. Part of the Holy Spirit's work is to make people understand that they are sinners and that they need to have God forgive them. Therefore, anyone who does not try to stop sinning is probably committing blasphemy against the Spirit. (See: [blasphemy](#), [blaspheme](#), [blasphemous](#) and [Holy Spirit](#), [Spirit of God](#), [Spirit of the Lord](#), [Spirit](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Brothers and sisters

Most people call those who have the same parents “brother” and “sister” and think of them as the most important people in their lives. Many people also call those with the same grandparents “brother” and “sister.” In this chapter Jesus says that the most important people to him are those who obey his Father in heaven. (See: [brother](#))

Matthew 12:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story where Matthew tells of growing opposition to Jesus' ministry. Here, the Pharisees criticize his disciples for picking grain on the Sabbath.

ULT

¹ At that time Jesus went on the Sabbaths through the grainfields, but his disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat them.

At that time (ULT)

This marks a new part of the story. Alternate translation: "A little later"

the grainfields (ULT)

This is a place to plant grain. If wheat is unknown and "grain" is too general, then you can use "fields of the plant they made bread from." (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

and...to pluck heads of grain...to eat them (ULT)

Picking grain in others' fields and eating it was not considered stealing. The question was whether one could do this otherwise lawful activity on the Sabbath.

and...to pluck heads of grain...to eat them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to pick some of the wheat and to eat it" or "to pick some of the grain and to eat it"

heads of grain (ULT)

This is the topmost part of the wheat plant. It holds the mature grain or seeds of the plant.

Matthew 12:2

do what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath (ULT)

Picking grain in others' fields and eating it was not considered stealing. The question was whether one could do this otherwise lawful activity on the Sabbath.

ULT

² But the Pharisees, having seen that, said to him, "Behold, your disciples do what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."

the...Pharisees (ULT)

This does not mean all of **the Pharisees**. Alternate translation: "some Pharisees"

the...Behold, your...disciples (ULT)

"Look, your disciples." The Pharisees use this word to draw attention to what the disciples are doing.

Matthew 12:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus responds to the Pharisees' criticism.

to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to the Pharisees"

ULT

³ But he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was hungry, and those {who were} with him —

Have you never read what David did when he was hungry, and those {who were} with him (ULT)

This begins a question that continues into the next verse. Jesus uses the question to respond to the criticism of the Pharisees. Jesus is challenging them to think about the meaning of the scriptures they have read. Alternate translation: "I know you have read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him—" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Matthew 12:4

the house of God (ULT)

During the time of David there was no temple yet. Alternate translation: "the tabernacle" or "the place for worshiping God"

the loaves of the presence (ULT)

This is sacred bread that priests placed before God in the tabernacle.

Alternate translation: "bread that the priest placed before God" or "the sacred bread" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

for those with him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "for the men who were with David"

for those...except only for...priests (ULT)

Alternate translation: "but, according to the law, only the priests could eat it"

ULT

⁴ how he went into the house of God and ate the loaves of the presence, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, except only for the priests?

Matthew 12:5

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

have you not read in the law that on the Sabbaths the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, but are innocent (ULT)

ULT

⁵ Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbaths the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, but are innocent?

Jesus uses a question to respond to the criticism of the Pharisees. Jesus is challenging them to think about the meaning of what they have read in the scriptures. Alternate translation: “Surely you have read in the law of Moses that on the Sabbaths the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, but are innocent.” or “You should know that the law teaches that on the Sabbaths the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, but are innocent.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

profane the Sabbath (ULT)

Alternate translation: “do on the Sabbath what they would do on any other day”

are innocent (ULT)

Alternate translation: “God will not punish them” or “God does not consider them guilty”

Matthew 12:6

I say...to you (ULT)

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

greater than the temple (ULT)

“someone who is more important than the temple.” Jesus was referring to himself as the one who is **greater**.
(See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

⁶ But I say to you that greater than the temple is here.

Matthew 12:7

General Information:

In verse 7, Jesus quotes the prophet Hosea to rebuke the Pharisees.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

ULT

⁷ But if you had known what this is, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent.

But if you had known what this is, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent (ULT)

Here Jesus quotes scripture. Alternate translation: "The prophet Hosea wrote this long ago: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' If you had understood what this meant, you would not have condemned the innocent" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

I desire mercy and not sacrifice (ULT)

In the law of Moses, God did command the Israelites to offer sacrifices. This means God considers **mercy** more important than the **sacrifice**.

I desire (ULT)

The pronoun **I** refers to God.

the innocent (ULT)

You can translate this as an adjective. Alternate translation: "those who are not guilty" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

Matthew 12:8

the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is referring to himself. (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

Lord...is...of the Sabbath (ULT)

Alternate translation: “rules over the Sabbath” or “makes the laws about what people can do on the Sabbath”

ULT

⁸ For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

Matthew 12:9

General Information:

Here the scene shifts to a later time when the Pharisees criticize Jesus for healing a man on the Sabbath.

ULT

⁹ And having departed from there, he went into their synagogue.

And having departed from there (ULT)

Alternate translation: "After Jesus left the grain fields" or "When Jesus left from there"

their synagogue (ULT)

The word **their** could refer to: (1) the Jews of that town. Alternate translation: "the synagogue" (2) the Pharisees that Jesus had just spoken to, and this was the synagogue that they and other Jews in that town attended. The word **their** does not mean that the Pharisees owned the synagogue. Alternate translation: "the synagogue that they attended"

Matthew 12:10

behold (ULT)

The word **behold** alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

there was a man having a withered hand (ULT)

Alternate translation: "there was a man who had a paralyzed hand" or "there was a man with a crippled hand"

they questioned him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbaths?" so that they might accuse him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the Pharisees wanted to accuse Jesus of sinning, so they asked him, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?'"

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbaths (ULT)

Alternate translation: "According to the law of Moses, may a person heal another person on the Sabbaths?"

so that they might accuse him (ULT)

They did not just want to **accuse** Jesus in front of the people. The Pharisees wanted Jesus to give an answer that contradicted the law of Moses so they could take him before a judge and legally charge him with breaking the law. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

10 And behold, there was a man having a withered hand, and they questioned him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbaths?" so that they might accuse him.

Matthew 12:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus responds to the Pharisees' criticism.

What man will there be among you who will have one sheep, and if it might fall into a pit on the Sabbaths, will not grasp hold of it and lift it out (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to respond to the Pharisees. He is challenging them to think about what kind of work they do on the Sabbath. Alternate translation: "Every one of you, if you only had one sheep, and if it might fall into a pit on the Sabbaths, would grab the sheep and lift it out." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

11 But he said to them, "What man will there be among you who will have one sheep, and if it might fall into a pit on the Sabbaths, will not grasp hold of it and lift it out?"

Matthew 12:12

How much more valuable, then, {is} a man than a sheep (ULT)

The phrase **How much more** adds emphasis to the statement.
Alternate translation: "Obviously, a man is much more valuable than a sheep!" or "Just think about how much more important a man is than a sheep."

ULT

¹² How much more valuable, then, {is} a man than a sheep? Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbaths."

it is lawful to do good on the Sabbaths (ULT)

Alternate translation: "those who do good on the Sabbaths are obeying the law"

Matthew 12:13

Then he says to the man, “Stretch out your hand (ULT)

You can translate this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “Then Jesus commanded the man to stretch out his hand” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

¹³ Then he says to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and it was restored to health, just like the other hand.

to the man (ULT)

Alternate translation: “to the man with the paralyzed hand” or “to the man with the crippled hand”

Stretch out your hand (ULT)

Alternate translation: “Hold out your hand” or “Extend your hand”

he stretched it out (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the man stretched it out”

it was restored to health (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “it was healthy again” or “it became well again” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 12:14

took counsel against him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "planned to harm Jesus"

so that they might put him to death (ULT)

Alternate translation: "in order to find a way to kill Jesus"

ULT

14 But having gone out, the Pharisees took counsel against him so that they might put him to death.

Matthew 12:15

General Information:

This account explains how the actions of Jesus fulfilled one of the prophecies of Isaiah.

But Jesus, having perceived this, withdrew (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But Jesus was aware of what the Pharisees were planning, so he withdrew"

withdrew from there (ULT)

Alternate translation: "departed from there" or "left that place"

ULT

15 But Jesus, having perceived this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all.

Matthew 12:16

they might not make him known (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they would not to tell anyone else about him"

ULT

16 And he commanded them that they might not make him known,

Matthew 12:17

so that what had been said...might be fulfilled (ULT)

You could start a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "This was so that what had been said"

ULT

¹⁷ so that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,

what had been said through Isaiah the prophet (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "what God had said long ago through the prophet Isaiah"

Matthew 12:18

Connecting Statement:

Here Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that Jesus' ministry fulfilled scripture.

Behold (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

ULT

18 "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will announce justice to the Gentiles.

my...I have chosen...my...my...I will put...my (ULT)

All occurrences of these words refer to God. Isaiah is quoting what God said to him.

my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased

Alternate translation: "he is my beloved one, and I am very pleased with him"

in whom my soul is well pleased (ULT)

Here, **soul** refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "with whom I am very pleased" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

he will announce justice to the Gentiles (ULT)

The means that God's servant will tell the **Gentiles** that there will be **justice**. You can state this clearly that God is the one who will bring about justice. Alternate translation: "he will announce to the nations that God give them justice" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

he will announce justice to the Gentiles (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **justice**, you can express it as "what is right." Alternate translation: "he will announce to the nations that God will do for them what is right" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Matthew 12:19

Connecting Statement:

Matthew continues to quote the prophet Isaiah.

neither will anyone hear...his voice (ULT)

Here people not hearing **his voice** represents him not speaking loudly. Alternate translation: “he will not speak loudly” (See: [Metonymy](#))

He will not strive...his (ULT)

Both **He** and **his** refer to God’s chosen servant.

in the streets (ULT)

This is an idiom that means “publicly.” Alternate translation: “in the cities and towns” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹⁹ He will not strive nor cry aloud;
neither will anyone hear his voice in the
streets.

Matthew 12:20

He will not break ... and he will not quench a smoking flax, until he may lead justice to victory

All occurrences of **He** and **he** refer to God's chosen servant.

ULT

²⁰ He will not break a bruised reed; and he will not quench a smoking flax, until he might lead justice to victory,

He will not break a bruised reed; and he will not quench a smoking flax (ULT)

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

He will not break a bruised reed; and he will not quench a smoking flax (ULT)

Both of these statements are metaphors emphasizing that God's servant will be gentle and kind. Both **bruised reed** and **smoking flax** represent weak and hurting people. If the metaphor is confusing, you could translate the literal meaning. Alternate translation: "He will be kind to weak people, and he will be gentle to those who are hurting" (See: [Metaphor](#))

a bruised reed (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a damaged plant"

not...he will...quench a smoking flax (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he will not put out any smoking flax" or "he will not stop any smoking flax from burning"

a smoking flax (ULT)

This refers to a lamp wick after the flame has gone out and when it is only smoking.

a smoking flax...until (ULT)

You can translate this with a new sentence: "a smoking flax. This is what he will do until"

he might lead justice to victory (ULT)

Leading someone to **victory** represents causing him to be victorious. Causing justice to be victorious represents making things right that had been wrong. Alternate translation: "he makes everything right" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Matthew 12:21

in his name (ULT)

Here, **name** refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “in him” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²¹ and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”

Matthew 12:22

General Information:

Here the scene shifts to a later time when the Pharisees accuse Jesus of healing a man by the power of Satan.

Then someone was brought to him, being demon-possessed, blind and mute (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "Then someone brought to Jesus a man who was blind and mute because a demon was controlling him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

someone was brought to him...blind and mute (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a person was brought to him who could not see and could not talk"

ULT

22 Then someone was brought to him, being demon-possessed, blind and mute, and he healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.

Matthew 12:23

all the crowds were amazed (ULT)

Alternate translation: "all the people who had seen Jesus heal the man were greatly surprised"

the Son of David (ULT)

This is a title for the Christ or Messiah.

Son (ULT)

Here this means "descendant of."

ULT

²³ And all the crowds were amazed and were saying, "Is this not the Son of David?"

Matthew 12:24

General Information:

In verse 25, Jesus begins to respond to the Pharisees' accusation that he healed the man by the power of Satan.

having heard this (ULT)

The word **this** refers to the miracle of the healing of a blind, deaf, and demon-possessed man.

He does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul (ULT)

You can state this in a positive form. "He is only able to cast out the demon because he is a servant of Beelzebul" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

He (ULT)

The Pharisees avoid calling Jesus by name to show they reject him.

the prince of the demons (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the chief of the demons"

ULT

24 But the Pharisees, having heard this, said, "He does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons."

Matthew 12:25

Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand (ULT)

Jesus uses a proverb to respond to the Pharisees. (See: [Proverbs](#))

Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand (ULT)

Both of these statements mean the same thing. They emphasize that it would not make sense for Beelzebul to use his power to fight other demons. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate (ULT)

Here, **kingdom** refers to those who live in the kingdom. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate (ULT)

You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: "A kingdom will not last when its people fight among themselves" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

every city or house divided against itself will not stand (ULT)

Here, **city** refers to the people who live there, and **house** refers to a family. (See: [Metonymy](#))

every city or house divided against itself will not stand (ULT)

Being **divided against itself** represents its people fighting each other. Alternate translation: "it ruins a city or a family when the people fight each other" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁵ But having known their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand."

Matthew 12:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees' accusation that he healed the man by the power of Satan.

if Satan casts out Satan (ULT)

The second use of **Satan** refers to the demons that serve Satan. Alternate translation: "If Satan works against his own demons" (See: [Metonymy](#))

How then will his kingdom stand (ULT)

Jesus uses this question to show the Pharisees that what they were saying was illogical. Alternate translation: "If Satan were divided against himself, his kingdom would not be able to stand!" or "If Satan were to fight against his own demons, his kingdom would not last!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁶ And if Satan casts out Satan, he has been divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

Matthew 12:27

Beelzebul (ULT)

This name refers to the same person as “Satan” (verse 26).

by whom do your sons cast them out (ULT)

Jesus uses another question to challenge the Pharisees. Alternate translation: “then you must say your followers also cast out demons by the power of Beelzebul. But, you know this is not true.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges.

your sons (ULT)

Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees. The phrase **your sons** refers to their followers. This was a common way of referring to those who follow teachers or leaders. Alternate translation: “your followers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

your...For this reason they will be...judges (ULT)

Alternate translation: “Because your followers cast out demons by the power of God, they prove that you are wrong about me.”

Matthew 12:28

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

But if...I (ULT)

Here, **if** does not mean Jesus is questioning how he casts out demons. Here Jesus uses the word to introduce a true statement. Alternate translation: "But because I"

ULT

²⁸ But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

then the kingdom of God has come upon you (ULT)

"then the kingdom of God has arrived among you." Here, **kingdom** refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "this means God is establishing his rule among you" (See: [Metonymy](#))

has come upon you (ULT)

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

Matthew 12:29

how is anyone able to enter into the house of the strong man and steal his belongings unless first he might have tied up the strong man? And then he will plunder his house (ULT)

Jesus uses a parable to continue his response to the Pharisees. Jesus means he can drive out demons because he is more powerful than Satan. (See: [Parables](#))

ULT

²⁹ Or how is anyone able to enter into the house of the strong man and steal his belongings unless first he might have tied up the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

how is anyone able to enter into the house of the strong man and steal his belongings unless first he might have tied up the strong man (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to teach the Pharisees and the crowd. Alternate translation: "No one can enter into the house of the strong man and steal his belongings without tying up the strong man first." or "If a person wants to enter into the house of the strong man and steal his belongings, he must first tie up the strong man." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

unless first he might have tied up the strong man (ULT)

Alternate translation: "without taking control of the strong man first"

the house...his...then he will plunder (ULT)

Alternate translation: "then he can steal his possessions"

Matthew 12:30

The one not being with me (ULT)

Alternate translation: "The one who does not support me" or "The one who does not work with me"

me is against (ULT)

Alternate translation: "opposes me" or "works against me"

the one not gathering with me scatters (ULT)

Jesus is using a metaphor that refers to a person either **gathering** the flock of sheep to a shepherd or making them scatter away from the shepherd. Jesus means that a person is either helping to make people become disciples of Jesus or he is making people reject Jesus. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁰ The one not being with me is against me, and the one not gathering with me scatters.

Matthew 12:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

I say to you (ULT)

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

I say to you (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural. Jesus is speaking directly to the Pharisees, but he is also teaching the crowd. (See: [Forms of You](#))

every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God will forgive every sin that people commit and every evil thing they say” or “God will forgive every person who sins or says evil things” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the...blasphemy of the Spirit will not be forgiven (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God will not forgive the person who speaks evil things about the Holy Spirit” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³¹ For this reason I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy of the Spirit will not be forgiven.

Matthew 12:32

whoever might speak a word against the Son of Man (ULT)

Here, **word** refers to what someone says. Alternate translation: “If a person says anything bad about the Son of Man” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

it will be forgiven him (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God will forgive a person for that” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

it will be forgiven him...not (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God will not forgive that person”

neither in this age, nor in the one coming (ULT)

Here, **this age** and **the one coming** refer to the present life and the next life. Alternate translation: “in this life or in the next life” or “now or ever” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³² And whoever might speak a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him. But whoever might speak against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in the one coming.

Matthew 12:33

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad (ULT)

ULT

³³ Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is recognized by its fruit.

This could mean: (1) if you make a tree good, its fruit will be good, and if you make the tree bad, its fruit will be bad. (2) this is a proverb that means if you consider a tree to be good, it will be because its fruit is good, and if you consider it tree to be bad, it will be because its fruit is bad. People were to apply its truth to how they can know whether a person is good or bad. (See: [Proverbs](#))

good...bad (ULT)

Alternate translation: "healthy ... diseased"

for the tree is recognized by its fruit (ULT)

Here, **fruit** is a metaphor for what a person does. Alternate translation: "people know whether a person is good or bad by looking at the results of that person's activities" (See: [Metaphor](#))

for the tree is recognized by its fruit (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "people know whether a tree is good or bad by looking at its fruit" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 12:34

You offspring of vipers (ULT)

Here, **offspring** means “having the characteristic of.” The **vipers** are poisonous snakes that are dangerous and represent evil. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Matthew 3:7](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

34 You offspring of vipers, being evil, how are you able to say good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

You offspring...are you able (ULT)

Both **You** and **you** are plural and refer to the Pharisees. (See: [Forms of You](#))

being evil, how are you able to say good things (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the Pharisees. Alternate translation: “you cannot say good things because you are evil” or “you can only say evil things because you are evil” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

out...of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (ULT)

Here, **mouth** is a synecdoche that represents a person as a whole. Alternate translation: “what a person says comes from his heart” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

out...of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (ULT)

Here, **heart** is a metonym for the thoughts in a person’s mind. Alternate translation: “what a person says with his mouth reveals what is in his mind” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 12:35

The good man from {his} good treasure brings forth good things, and the evil man from {his} evil treasure brings forth evil things (ULT)

Jesus speaks about the **heart** as if it were a container that a person fills with good or evil things. This is a metaphor that means what a person says reveals what the person is truly like. If you want to keep this imagery, see the UST. You can also translate the literal meaning. Alternate translation: “A man who is truly good will speak good things, and the man who is truly evil will speak evil things” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁵ The good man from {his} good treasure brings forth good things, and the evil man from {his} evil treasure brings forth evil things.

Matthew 12:36

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his response to the Pharisees' accusation that he healed the man by the power of Satan.

I say...to you (ULT)

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

every idle word that they will speak (ULT)

Here, **word** refers to something that someone says. Alternate translation: "every harmful thing they will have said" (See: [Metonymy](#))

men will give an account concerning it (ULT)

Alternate translation: "God will ask people about it" or "people will have to explain it to God"

ULT

³⁶ But I say to you that every idle word that they will speak, men will give an account concerning it in the day of judgment.

Matthew 12:37

you will be justified...you will be condemned (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will justify you ... God will condemn you" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁷ For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Matthew 12:38

General Information:

In verse 39, Jesus begins to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees.

Connecting Statement:

The dialogue in these verses happens immediately after Jesus responded to the Pharisees' accusation that he healed a man by the power of Satan.

we wish (ULT)

Alternate translation: "we want"

to see a sign from you (ULT)

You can make explicit why they want **to see a sign**. Alternate translation: "to see a sign from you that proves what you say is true" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

38 Then certain scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you."

Matthew 12:39

An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given to it (ULT)

Jesus is speaking to his present generation. Alternate translation: "You are an evil and adulterous generation who demands signs from me, but no sign will be given to you" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

³⁹ But answering, he said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet."

An...generation...adulterous (ULT)

Here, **adulterous** is a metaphor for people who are not faithful to God. Alternate translation: "An ... unfaithful generation" or "A ... godless generation" (See: [Metaphor](#))

no sign will be given to it (ULT)

Jesus would not give them a **sign** because, though he had already performed many miracles, they refused to believe him. If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "I will not give it a sign" or "God will not give you a sign" (See: [Active](#) or [Passive](#))

a sign...except the...of Jonah the prophet (ULT)

Alternate translation: "except the same sign God gave to Jonah the prophet"

Matthew 12:40

three days and three nights (ULT)

Here, **days** and **nights** mean complete 24-hour periods. Alternate translation: "three complete days" (See: [Merism](#))

the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

in the heart of the earth (ULT)

This means inside a physical grave. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the big fish, in this manner the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 12:41

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees.

The men of Nineveh (ULT)

Alternate translation: "The citizens of Nineveh"

at the judgment (ULT)

Alternate translation: "on judgment day" or "when God judges people"

this generation (ULT)

This refers to the people living during the time Jesus was preaching.

will condemn it (ULT)

The word **condemn** could: (1) here represent accusing. Alternate translation: "will accuse this generation of people" (2) mean God **will condemn** this generation of people because they did not repent as the people of Nineveh had. Alternate translation: "God will condemn this generation" (See: [Metonymy](#))

and...behold (ULT)

"and look." This emphasizes what Jesus says next.

something greater (ULT)

Alternate translation: "someone more important"

something greater (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

than Jonah {is} here (ULT)

You can make explicit the implicit meaning of Jesus' statement. Alternate translation: "than Jonah is here, yet you still have not repented, which is why God will condemn you" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

41 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and will condemn it. For they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah {is} here.

Matthew 12:42

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees.

The Queen of the South (ULT)

This refers to the Queen of Sheba. Sheba is a land south of Israel. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁴² The Queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon {is} here.

will rise up at the judgment (ULT)

Alternate translation: “will stand up at the judgment”

at the judgment (ULT)

“on judgment day” or “when God judges people.” See how you translated this in [Matthew 12:41](#).

this generation (ULT)

This refers to the people living during the time Jesus was preaching.

condemn it (ULT)

See how you translated a similar statement in [Matthew 12:41](#). The word **condemn** could: (1) here represent accusing. Alternate translation: “will accuse this generation of people” (2) mean God will **condemn** this generation of people because they did not listen to wisdom as the Queen of the South had. Alternate translation: “God will condemn this generation” (See: [Metonymy](#))

she came from the ends of the earth (ULT)

Here, **the ends of the earth** is an idiom that means “far away.” Alternate translation: “she came from very far away” (See: [Idiom](#))

for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon (ULT)

This statement explains why the Queen of the South will condemn the people of Jesus’ generation. (See: [Connecting Words and Phrases](#))

and...behold (ULT)

“and look.” This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

something greater (ULT)

Alternate translation: “someone more important”

something greater (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

than Solomon {is} here (ULT)

You can make explicit the implicit meaning of Jesus' statement. Alternate translation: "than Solomon is here, yet you do not listen. That is why God will condemn you" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 12:43

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees. He begins to tell a parable.

waterless places (ULT)

Alternate translation: "dry places" or "places where no people live"

not finding it (ULT)

Here, **it** refers to rest.

ULT

43 Now when the unclean spirit might have departed from the man, it passes through waterless places, seeking rest and not finding it.

Matthew 12:44

Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I departed (ULT)

You can translate this as a statement rather than a quotation.
Alternate translation: "So, the unclean spirit decides to return to the house from which it departed"

ULT

⁴⁴ Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I departed.' And having come, it finds it empty, having been swept out and put in order.

to my house...from which I departed (ULT)

This is a metaphor for the person in whom the unclean spirit was living. Alternate translation: "to the person I left" (See: [Metaphor](#))

it finds it empty, having been swept out and put in order (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "the unclean spirit finds that someone has swept the house clean and has put everything in the house where it belongs" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

empty, having been swept out and put in order (ULT)

Here, **swept out and put in order** suggests that no one is living in the house. Jesus means when an unclean spirit leaves a person, the person must invite the Holy Spirit to live in him or else the demon will come back. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 12:45

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes the parable that he began with the words **When an unclean spirit** in verse 43.

Then it goes and takes along with itself seven other spirits more evil than itself, and having entered, they live there. And the end of that man becomes worse than the first. It will be the same way also with this evil generation

Jesus tells a parable to warn the people of the danger of not believing him. (See: [Parables](#))

It will be the same way also with this evil generation

This means that if the people of Jesus' generation do not believe him and become his disciples, they will be in a worse situation than they were before he came.

ULT

45 Then it goes and takes along with itself seven other spirits more evil than itself, and having entered, they live there. And the end of that man becomes worse than the first. It will be the same way also with this evil generation."

Matthew 12:46

General Information:

The arrival of Jesus' mother and brothers becomes an opportunity for him to describe his spiritual family.

behold (ULT)

The word **behold** alerts us to a new people in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

his mother (ULT)

This is Mary, Jesus' human mother.

he...brothers (ULT)

These are probably other children born to Mary, but it is possible that the word **brothers** here refers to Jesus' cousins.

seeking...to speak (ULT)

Alternate translation: "wanting to speak"

ULT

46 While he is still speaking to the crowds, behold, his mother and his brothers have stood outside, seeking to speak to him.

Matthew 12:47

Now someone said to him, “Behold, your mother and your brothers stand outside, seeking to speak to you (ULT)”

You can translate this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “Someone told Jesus that his mother and brothers were outside and wanted to speak to him” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

⁴⁷ Now someone said to him, “Behold, your mother and your brothers stand outside, seeking to speak to you.”

Matthew 12:48

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story that began in [Matthew 12:1](#), where Matthew tells of growing opposition to Jesus' ministry.

to the one speaking to him (ULT)

The details of the message the person told Jesus are understood and not repeated here. Alternate translation: "to the one who told Jesus that his mother and brothers wanted to speak to him" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Who is my mother and who are my brothers (ULT)

Jesus uses these questions to teach the people. Alternate translation: "I will tell you who are really my mother and brothers." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

48 But answering, he said to the one speaking to him, "Who is my mother and who are my brothers?"

Matthew 12:49

Behold (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

my mother and my brothers (ULT)

This is a metaphor that means Jesus' disciples belong to Jesus' spiritual family. This is more important than belonging to his physical family. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

49 And having stretched out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Behold, my mother and my brothers!"

Matthew 12:50

whoever...may do (ULT)

Alternate translation: "anyone who does"

of my Father (ULT)

Father is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

he is my brother, and sister, and mother (ULT)

This is a metaphor meaning that those who obey God belong to Jesus' spiritual family. This is more important than belonging to his physical family. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵⁰ For whoever may do the will of my Father who {is} in the heavens, he is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Matthew 13

Matthew 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 13:14-15, which are words from the Old Testament.

This chapter begins a new section. It contains some of Jesus' parables about the kingdom of heaven.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metonymy

Jesus often says The word **heaven** when he wants his hearers to think of God, who lives in heaven ([Matthew 13:11](#)).

Implicit information

Speakers usually do not say things that they think their hearers already understand. When Matthew wrote that Jesus "sat beside the sea" ([Matthew 13:1](#)), he probably expected his hearers to know that Jesus was about to teach the people. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Metaphor

Speakers often use words for things that can be touched to speak of things that cannot be touched. Jesus spoke of a bird eating a seed to describe how Satan kept people from understanding Jesus' message ([Matthew 13:19](#)).

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Passive voice

Many sentences in this chapter tell that a person had something happen to him without saying who caused that something to happen. For example, "they were scorched" ([Matthew 13:6](#)). You may have to translate the sentence so that it tells the reader who performed the action. (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Parables

The parables were short stories that Jesus told so that people would easily understand the lesson he was trying to teach them. He also told the stories so that those who did not want to believe in him would not understand the truth ([Matthew 13:11-13](#)).

Matthew 13:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story where Jesus begins to teach the crowds, using parables, about the kingdom of heaven.

ULT

¹ On that day, Jesus, having gone out of the house, was sitting beside the sea.

On that day (ULT)

These events happened on the same day as those in the previous chapter.

having gone out...of the house (ULT)

It is not mentioned at whose house Jesus was staying.

was sitting beside the sea (ULT)

It is implied that he sat down to teach the people. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 13:2

so that he, having stepped into a boat, sat down (ULT)

It is implied that Jesus got into a boat because it would make it easier to teach the people. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

² And a very large crowd was gathered around him, so that he, having stepped into a boat, sat down, and the whole crowd stood on the beach.

a boat (ULT)

This was probably an open, wooden fishing boat with a sail. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

Matthew 13:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a person who sows seeds.

And he spoke many things to them in parables (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And Jesus told them many things in parables"

to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to the people in the crowd"

Behold (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Look" or "Listen." This word calls attention to what is to be said next. Alternate translation: "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

a sower went out to sow (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a farmer went out to scatter seeds in a field"

ULT

³ And he spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, a sower went out to sow.

Matthew 13:4

And as he sowed (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And as the farmer scattered the seed"

beside the road (ULT)

This refers to a path next to the field. The ground there would have been hard from people walking on it.

devoured them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "ate all the seeds"

ULT

⁴ And as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and devoured them.

Matthew 13:5

the rocky ground (ULT)

This is ground full of rocks with just a thin layer of soil on top of the rocks.

And immediately they sprang up (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And the seeds quickly sprouted and grew"

ULT

⁵ But others fell on the rocky ground, where they did not have much soil. And immediately they sprang up, because the soil had no depth.

Matthew 13:6

they were scorched (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the sun scorched the plants, and they became too hot” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

they were dried up (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the plants became dry and died”

ULT

⁶ But when the sun had risen, they were scorched, and because they had no root, they were dried up.

Matthew 13:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes telling a parable about a person who sows seeds.

fell among the thorns (ULT)

Alternate translation: "fell where plants with thorns grew"

choked them (ULT)

"choked the new sprouts." Use your word for the way weeds prevent other plants from growing well.

ULT

⁷ But others fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.

Matthew 13:8

produced fruit (ULT)

Alternate translation: "grew more seeds" or "gave fruit"

**some one 100 times as much, and some 60,
and some 30**

The words "seeds," "produced," and "crop" are understood from the previous phrase. These can be expressed clearly. Alternate translation: "some seeds produced 100 times as much crop, some seeds produced 60 times as much crop, and some seeds produced 30 times as much crop" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

100 {times as much...60...30 (ULT)

"one hundred times as much ... sixty ... thirty" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁸ But others fell on good soil and produced fruit, some 100 {times as much}, and some 60, and some 30.

Matthew 13:9

The one having ears, let him hear (ULT)

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase **having ears** here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Matthew 11:15](#). Alternate translation: “Let the one who is willing to listen, listen” or “The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ The one having ears, let him hear.”

The one having ears, let him hear (ULT)

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Matthew 11:15](#). Alternate translation: “If you are willing to listen, listen” or “If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Matthew 13:10

General Information:

Jesus explains to his disciples why he teaches with parables.

ULT

10 And having approached, the disciples said to him, "For what reason do you speak to them in parables?"

Matthew 13:11

To you has been given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to those it has not been given (ULT)

You can translate this with the active form. Alternate translation: “God has given to you to understand mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but God has not given it to these people” or “God has made you able to understand mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but he has not enabled these people to understand” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹¹ But he, answering, said to them, “To you has been given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to those it has not been given.”

To you has been given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to those it has not been given (ULT)

The implied information expressed clearly. Alternate translation: “God has given you the privilege of understanding mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but God has not given it to these people” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

To you has been given to understand (ULT)

The word **you** is plural here and refers to the disciples. (See: [Forms of You](#))

the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God’s rule. The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** occurs only in the book of Matthew. If possible, try to keep it in your translation. Alternate translation: “the secrets about our God in heaven and his rule” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 13:12

whoever...has (ULT)

Alternate translation: "whoever has understanding" or "whoever receives what I teach"

it will be given (ULT)

You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: "God will give him more understanding" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

whoever does not have

Alternate translation: "whoever does not have understanding" or "whoever does not receive what I teach"

even what he has will be taken away from him (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will take away even what he has" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² For whoever has, it will be given to him, and he will have an abundance. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

Matthew 13:13

General Information:

In verse 14, Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that the people's failure to understand Jesus' teaching is a fulfillment of prophecy.

ULT

13 For this reason I speak to them in parables; because seeing, they do not see; and hearing, they do not hear nor understand.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to explain to his disciples why he teaches in parables.

to them...they do not see...they do not hear (ULT)

All occurrences of **them** and **they** refer to the people in the crowd.

because seeing, they do not see; and hearing, they do not hear nor understand (ULT)

Jesus uses this parallelism to tell and emphasize to the disciples that the crowd refuses to understand God's truth. (See: [Parallelism](#))

seeing (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) them **seeing** what Jesus does. Alternate translation: "though they see what I do" (2) their ability to see. Alternate translation: "though they are able to see"

they do not see (ULT)

Here, **see** represents understanding. Alternate translation: "they do not understand" (See: [Metaphor](#))

hearing (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) them **hearing** what Jesus teaches. Alternate translation: "though they hear what I say" (2) their ability to hear. Alternate translation: "though they are able to hear"

they do not hear (ULT)

Here, **hear** represents listening well. Alternate translation: "they do not listen well" or "they do not pay attention" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 13:14

And to them the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "And they are fulfilling what God said long ago through the prophet Isaiah"

ULT

¹⁴ And to them the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'In hearing you will hear, but you may certainly not understand; and seeing, you will see, but you may certainly not perceive.'

In hearing you will hear, but you may certainly not understand; and seeing, you will see, but you may certainly not perceive (ULT)

This begins a quote from the prophet Isaiah about the unbelieving people of Isaiah's day. Jesus uses this quote to describe the very crowd that was listening to him. These statements are again parallel and emphasize that the people refused to understand God's truth. (See: [Parallelism](#))

In hearing you will hear, but you may certainly not understand (ULT)

"You will hear things, but you will not understand them." You can make explicit what the people will hear. Alternate translation: "You will hear what God says through the prophets, but you will not understand its true meaning" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

seeing, you will see, but you may certainly not perceive (ULT)

You can make explicit what the people will **see**. Alternate translation: "you will see what God does through the prophets, but you will not understand it" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 13:15

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes quoting the prophet Isaiah.

For the heart of this people has become dull, and {their} ears heard with difficulty, and they closed their eyes, lest they might see with {their} eyes, and might hear with {their} ears, and might understand with {their} hearts, and they might turn back, and I will heal them (ULT)

ULT

15 For the heart of this people has become dull, and {their} ears heard with difficulty, and they closed their eyes, lest they might see with {their} eyes, and might hear with {their} ears, and might understand with {their} hearts, and they might turn back, and I will heal them.'

In 13:15 God describes the people of Israel as if they have physical diseases that cause them to be unable to learn, to see, and to hear. God wants them to come to him so he will heal them. This is all a metaphor describing the people's spiritual condition. It means the people are stubborn and refuse to receive and understand God's truth. If they would, then they would repent and God would forgive them and welcome them back as his people. If the meaning is clear, keep the metaphor in your translation. (See: [Metaphor](#))

For the heart of this people has become dull (ULT)

Here, **heart** refers to the mind. Alternate translation: "For these people's minds are slow to learn" or "For these people can no longer learn" (See: [Metonymy](#))

{their} ears heard with difficulty (ULT)

They are not physically deaf. Here, **heard with difficulty** means they refuse to listen and learn God's truth. Alternate translation: "they refuse to use their ears to listen" (See: [Metonymy](#))

they closed their eyes (ULT)

They have not literally **closed their eyes**. This means they refuse to understand. Alternate translation: "they refuse to use their eyes to see" (See: [Metonymy](#))

lest they might see with their eyes, and might hear with their ears, and might understand with their hearts, and they might turn back

Alternate translation: "so that they are not able to see with their eyes, hear with their ears, or understand with their heart, and as a result turn again"

might understand with {their} hearts (ULT)

The word **hearts** here is a metonym for people's innermost being. You may need to use the word in your language for the source of people's thinking and feelings. Alternate translation: "understand with their minds" (See: [Metonymy](#))

they might turn back (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they might turn back to me" or "they might repent"

I will heal them (ULT)

"have me heal them." This means God would **heal them** spiritually by forgiving their sins and receiving them again as his people. Alternate translation: "have me receive them again" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 13:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes explaining to his disciples why he teaches with parables.

ULT

16 But blessed {are} your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.

But blessed {are} your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear (ULT)

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Jesus is emphasizing that they have pleased God because they have believed what Jesus has said and done. (See: [Parallelism](#))

But blessed {are} your eyes, for they see (ULT)

Here, **eyes** refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “You are blessed because your eyes are able to see” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

your...your (ULT)

Both occurrences of **your** are plural and refer to the disciples. (See: [Forms of You](#))

your ears, for they hear (ULT)

Here, **ears** refer to the whole person. Alternate translation: “you, for you hear” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

your ears, for they hear (ULT)

You can also make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: “you are blessed because your ears are able to hear” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Matthew 13:17

For truly I say to you (ULT)

“For I tell you the truth.” This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

to you...you see...you hear (ULT)

All occurrences of **you** are plural and refer to the disciples. (See: [Forms of You](#))

the things you see (ULT)

You can make explicit what they have seen. Alternate translation: “the things you have seen me do” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the things you hear (ULT)

You can make explicit what they have heard. Alternate translation: “the things you have heard me say” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

17 For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men longed to see the things you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things you hear, and did not hear them.

Matthew 13:18

Connecting Statement:

Here Jesus begins to explain to his disciples the parable about a person who sows seeds, which he began in [Matthew 13:3](#).

ULT

18 You, therefore, listen to the parable of the sower.

Matthew 13:19

the word of the kingdom (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the message about God's rule as king"

the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart (ULT)

Jesus speaks of Satan causing the person to forget what he has heard as if Satan were a bird snatching the seed from the ground. Alternate translation: "The evil one causes him to forget the message that he has heard just as a bird snatches away seed from the ground" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

19 Everyone hearing the word of the kingdom and not understanding it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown beside the road.

the evil one (ULT)

This refers to Satan. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

snatches away (ULT)

Try to use a word that means to grab something away from someone who is the rightful owner.

what has been sown in his heart (ULT)

You can translate this in active form: Alternate translation: "the message that God sowed in his heart" or "the message that he heard" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

in his heart (ULT)

Here, **heart** refers to the mind of the hearer. (See: [Metonymy](#))

the...This is...was sown beside the road (ULT)

Alternate translation: "This is the meaning of the seed that was sown beside the road" or "The road where seed was sown represents this person"

beside the road (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:4](#).

Matthew 13:20

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to explain to his disciples the parable about a person who sows seeds.

ULT

²⁰ Now that sown on the rocky ground, this is the one hearing the word and immediately receiving it with joy;

Now that sown on the rocky ground (ULT)

The phrase **that sown** refers to seed that fell. Alternate translation: “Now the seed that fell on rocky ground” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Now that sown on the rocky ground, this is (ULT)

Alternate translation: “Now the rocky ground where seed was sown represents” or “Now the rocky ground where seed fell represents”

that...hearing the word (ULT)

In the parable, the seed represents **the word**.

the word (ULT)

This represents God’s message. Alternate translation: “the message” or “God’s teaching” (See: [Metonymy](#))

receiving it with joy (ULT)

Believing the word is spoken of as **receiving it**. Alternate translation: “joyfully believing it” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 13:21

but he has no root in himself, but is temporary (ULT)

“Yet he has shallow roots and only lasts for a little while.” The **root** represents what makes a person continue to believe God’s message. Alternate translation: “But like a plant that does not grow deep roots, he only endures for a little while” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²¹ but he has no root in himself, but is temporary; but tribulation or persecution having happened because of the word, immediately he is caused to stumble.

immediately he is caused to stumble (ULT)

Here, **is caused to stumble** means stops believing. Alternate translation: “he quickly stops believing the message” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 13:22

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to explain to his disciples the parable about a person who sows seeds.

that which...has been sown (ULT)

This refers to seed that was **sown** or that fell. Alternate translation: “the seed that was sown” or “the seed that fell” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

22 Now that which has been sown among the thorns, this is the one hearing the word, but the cares of this age and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Now that which has been sown among the thorns (ULT)

Alternate translation: “Now the ground with the thorn plants where seed was sown”

that which...this is (ULT)

Alternate translation: “this represents the person”

the word (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the message” or “God’s teaching”

the cares of this age and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word (ULT)

Jesus speaks about the **cares** of the world and the **deceitfulness of riches** distracting a person from obeying God’s word as if they were weeds that could wind around a plant and keep it from growing. Alternate translation: “as weeds prevent good plants from growing, the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches keep this person from listening to God’s word” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the cares of this age (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the things in this world that people worry about”

the deceitfulness of riches (ULT)

Jesus describes **riches** as if it were a person who could deceive someone. This means people think having more money will make them happy, but it will not. Alternate translation: “the love of money” (See: [Personification](#))

it becomes unfruitful (ULT)

The person is spoken of as if he were a plant. Being **unfruitful** represents being unproductive. Alternate translation: “he becomes unproductive” or “he does not do what God wants” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 13:23

that which...has been sown on the good soil (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the good soil where seeds were sown"

who indeed bears fruit and yields, some (ULT)

The person is spoken of as if he were a plant. Alternate translation: "like a healthy plant that is productive, some bears a crop of fruit that yields" (See: [Metaphor](#))

some yield 100 times, and some 60, and some 30

The phrase "as much as was planted" is understood following each of these numbers. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:8](#). Alternate translation: "some people produce 100 times as much as was planted, some produce 60 times as much, and some produce 30 times as much" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

²³ Now that which has been sown on the good soil, this is the one hearing the word and understanding it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, some 100 {times}, and some 60, and some 30."

Matthew 13:24

Connecting Statement:

Here Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a field with both wheat and weeds growing in it. (See: [Parables](#))

The kingdom of the heavens is like a man (ULT)

The translation should not equate the **kingdom of the heavens** to a man, but rather the **kingdom of the heavens** is like the situation described in the parable. (See: [Simile](#))

The kingdom of the heavens is like (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** is used only in Matthew. if possible, use **heavens** in your translation. Alternate translation: "When our God in heaven shows himself to be king, it will be like" (See: [Metonymy](#))

good seed (ULT)

"good food seeds" or "good grain seeds." The audience probably thought that Jesus was talking about wheat. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁴ He set before them another parable, saying, "The kingdom of the heavens is like a man who had sown good seed in his field."

Matthew 13:25

his enemy came (ULT)

Alternate translation: "his enemy came to the field"

darnel (ULT)

The **darnel** that was sown looks like food plants when it is young, but its grain is poison. Alternate translation: "bad seed" or "weed seeds"

ULT

²⁵ But while the men slept, his enemy came and sowed darnel among the wheat and went away.

Matthew 13:26

Now when the blades sprouted (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But when the wheat seeds sprouted" or "But after the plants came up"

produced fruit (ULT)

Alternate translation: "produced grain" or "produced the wheat crop"

and...then the darnel became visible (ULT)

Alternate translation: "then people could see there were weeds in the field also"

ULT

²⁶ Now when the blades sprouted and produced fruit, then the darnel became visible also.

Matthew 13:27

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to tell a parable about a field with both wheat and weeds growing in it.

of the landowner (ULT)

This is the same person who sowed good seed in his field.

did you not sow good seed in your field (ULT)

The servants used a question to emphasize their surprise. Alternate translation: “you sowed good seed in your field!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

not...did you...sow (ULT)

The landowner probably had his servants plant the seeds. Alternate translation: “did we not sow” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

27 Now the servants of the landowner, having approached, said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have darnel?’

Matthew 13:28

But he was saying to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But the landowner said to the servants"

Therefore, do you want us (ULT)

The word **us** refers to the servants.

ULT

28 But he was saying to them, 'An enemy man did this.' But the servants say to him, 'Therefore, do you want us, having gone, to gather them up?'

Matthew 13:29

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes the parable about a field with both wheat and weeds growing in it.

But he says (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But the landowner said to his servants"

ULT

²⁹ But he says, 'No, lest gathering up the darnel, you might uproot the wheat along with them.'

Matthew 13:30

I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the darnel and tie them in bundles to burn them up, but gather the wheat into my barn (ULT)

You can translate this as an indirect quote (AT): “I will tell the reapers to first gather up the darnel and tie them in bundles to burn them, and then gather the wheat into my barn” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

barn (ULT)

a farm building that can be used for storing grain

ULT

³⁰ Permit both to grow together until the harvest, and at the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the darnel and tie them in bundles to burn them up, but gather the wheat into my barn.””

Matthew 13:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a very small seed that grows into a very big plant. (See: [Parables](#))

The kingdom of the heavens is like (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** is used only in Matthew. if possible, use **heavens** in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24](#). Alternate translation: "When our God in heaven shows himself to be king, it will be like" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³¹ He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of the heavens is like a mustard seed which, having taken, a man sowed in his field;

a mustard seed (ULT)

a very small seed that grows into a large plant (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

Matthew 13:32

which is indeed the smallest of all the seeds (ULT)

Mustard seeds were the **smallest seeds** known to the original hearers. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

But when it might grow (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But when the plant has grown"

greater than...it is (ULT)

Alternate translation: "it is larger than"

becomes a tree (ULT)

A mustard plant can grow about 2 to 4 meters tall.

the birds of the sky (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the birds"

ULT

³² which is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it might grow, it is greater than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and nest in its branches."

Matthew 13:33

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about the effect that yeast has on flour. (See: [Parables](#))

The kingdom of the heavens is like yeast (ULT)

The **kingdom** is not like the **yeast**, but the spread of the **kingdom** is like the spreading of the **yeast**. (See: [Simile](#))

The kingdom of the heavens is like (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** is used only in Matthew. if possible, use **heavens** in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24](#). Alternate translation: "When our God in heaven shows himself to be king, it will be like" (See: [Metonymy](#))

three measures of flour (ULT)

Say "a large amount of flour" or use a term that your culture uses for measuring large amounts of flour. (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

a woman mixed with three measures of flour until it all was leavened (ULT)

The implied information is that the yeast and the three measures of flour were made into dough for baking. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³³ He told them another parable: "The kingdom of the heavens is like yeast that, having taken, a woman mixed with three measures of flour until it all was leavened."

Matthew 13:34

General Information:

Here the author quotes from the Psalms to show that Jesus' teaching in parables fulfilled prophecy.

All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the crowds, and he was speaking nothing to them without a parable (ULT)

Both sentences mean the same thing. They are combined to emphasize that Jesus taught **the crowds** only with **parables**. (See: [Parallelism](#))

All these things (ULT)

This refers to what Jesus taught beginning at [Matthew 13:1](#).

he was speaking nothing to them without a parable (ULT)

"he taught them nothing except by parables." The double negative can be expressed in a positive way. Alternate translation: "everything he taught them he said in parables" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

³⁴ All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the crowds, and he was speaking nothing to them without a parable,

Matthew 13:35

what had been said through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "what God told one of the prophets to write long ago might come true" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁵ so that what had been said through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "I will open my mouth in parables. I will declare what has been hidden from the foundation of the world."

saying (ULT)

Alternate translation: "when the prophet said"

I will open...my mouth (ULT)

This is an idiom that means to speak. Alternate translation: "I will speak" (See: [Idiom](#))

what has been hidden (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "things that God has kept hidden" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

from the foundation of the world (ULT)

Alternate translation: "since the beginning of the world" or "since God created the world"

Matthew 13:36

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to the house where Jesus and his disciples were staying. Jesus begins to explain to them the parable of the field that had both wheat and weeds, which he told beginning in [Matthew 13:24](#).

ULT

³⁶ Then, having left the crowds, he went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the darnel of the field."

he went into the house (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he went indoors" or "he went into the house where he was staying"

Matthew 13:37

he...sowing the good seed (ULT)

Alternate translation: "The one who sows the good seed" or "The sower of the good seed"

the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is referring to himself. (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

37 Now answering, he said, "The one sowing the good seed is the Son of Man,

Matthew 13:38

the sons of the kingdom (ULT)

The idiom “sons of” refers to those who belong to or to have the same character as someone or something. Alternate translation: “the people who belong to the kingdom” (See: [Idiom](#))

of the kingdom (ULT)

Here, **kingdom** refers to God the king. Alternate translation: “of God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the sons of the evil one (ULT)

The idiom “sons of” refers those who belong to or to have the same character as someone or something. Alternate translation: “the people who belong to the evil one” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³⁸ and the field is the world, and the good seed—these are the sons of the kingdom. And the darnel are the sons of the evil one,

Matthew 13:39

the...the enemy...who sowed...them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the enemy who sowed the weeds"

ULT

³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. And the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.

Matthew 13:40

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes explaining to his disciples the parable of the field with both wheat and weeds.

Therefore, just as the darnel are gathered up and burned with fire (ULT)

You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: "Therefore, as people gather up weeds and burn them in the fire" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

40 Therefore, just as the darnel are gathered up and burned with fire, thus will it be at the end of the age.

Matthew 13:41

The Son of Man will send out his angels (ULT)

Here Jesus is speaking of himself. Alternate translation: “I, the Son of Man, will send out my angels” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

angels...doing lawlessness (ULT)

Alternate translation: “those who are lawless” or “evil people”

ULT

41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will gather up from his kingdom all the stumbling blocks and those doing lawlessness.

Matthew 13:42

the furnace of fire (ULT)

This is a metaphor for the fires of hell. If the term **furnace** is not known, “oven” can be used. Alternate translation: “fiery furnace” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴² And they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and grinding of the teeth.

weeping and grinding of the teeth (ULT)

Here, **Grinding of teeth** is a symbolic act, representing extreme sadness and suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12](#). Alternate translation: “weeping and showing that they are suffering very much” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

Matthew 13:43

will shine as the sun (ULT)

If this simile is not understandable in your language, you can use: “will be as easy to see as the sun.” (See: [Simile](#))

of their Father (ULT)

Father is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

The one having ears, let him hear (ULT)

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase **having ears** here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Matthew 11:15](#). Alternate translation: “Let the one who is willing to listen, listen” or “The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey” (See: [Metonymy](#))

The one having ears, let him hear (ULT)

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this in [Matthew 11:15](#). Alternate translation: “If you are willing to listen, listen” or “If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

43 Then the righteous will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The one having ears, let him hear.

Matthew 13:44

General Information:

In these two parables, Jesus uses two similes to teach his disciples what the kingdom of heaven is like. (See: [Simile](#))

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling two parables about people who sold their possessions to purchase something of great value. (See: [Parables](#))

ULT

44 The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in a field, which, having found, a man hid. And from his joy, he goes and sells everything, as much as he has, and buys that field.

The kingdom of the heavens is like (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** is used only in Matthew. if possible, use **heavens** in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24](#). Alternate translation: "When our God in heaven shows himself to be king, it will be like" (See: [Metonymy](#))

is like...a treasure hidden in a field (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "is like a treasure that someone had hidden in a field" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

a treasure (ULT)

a very valuable and precious thing or collection of things

hid (ULT)

Alternate translation: "covered it up"

sells everything, as much as he has, and buys that field (ULT)

The implied information is that the person **buys** the **field** to take possession of the hidden treasure. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 13:45

like...a man, a merchant, seeking fine pearls (ULT)

The implied information is that the man was looking for valuable **pearls** that he could buy. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴⁵ Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a man, a merchant, seeking fine pearls.

a man, a merchant (ULT)

a trader or wholesale dealer who often obtains merchandise from distant places

fine pearls (ULT)

A pearl is a smooth, hard, shiny, white or light-colored bead formed inside mollusks in the sea and highly prized as a gem or to make into valuable jewelry. Alternate translation: “fine valuable” or “beautiful pearls” (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

Matthew 13:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁶ But having found one very valuable pearl, having gone away, he sold everything, as much as he possessed, and bought it.

Matthew 13:47

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about fishermen who use a large net to catch fish. (See: [Parables](#))

the kingdom of the heavens is like a net (ULT)

The **kingdom** is not like the **net**, but the **kingdom** draws all kinds of people like a **net** catches all kinds of fish. (See: [Simile](#))

the kingdom of the heavens is like (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** is used only in Matthew. if possible, use **heavens** in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24](#). Alternate translation: "When our God in heaven shows himself to be king, it will be like" (See: [Metonymy](#))

like...a net having been cast into the sea (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "like a net that some fishermen cast into the sea" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

having been cast into the sea (ULT)

Alternate translation: "that was thrown into the sea"

having gathered from every kind (ULT)

Alternate translation: "having caught all kinds of fish"

ULT

⁴⁷ Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a net having been cast into the sea, and having gathered from every kind,

Matthew 13:48

they drew up on the beach (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they pulled the net up onto the beach" or "they pulled the net ashore"

the good things (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the good fish"

the worthless things

Alternate translation: "the bad fish" or "the inedible fish"

they threw away (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they did not keep"

ULT

48 which, when it had been filled, they drew up on the beach, and having sat down, they gathered the good things into containers, but the worthless things they threw away.

Matthew 13:49

Connecting Statement:

Jesus explains the parable about fishermen who use a large net to catch fish.

will come (ULT)

Alternate translation: “will come out” or “will go out” or “will come from heaven”

the wicked from among the righteous (ULT)

You can state the nominal adjectives **wicked** and **righteous** as adjectives. Alternate translation: “the wicked people from the righteous people” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

49 Thus it will be at the end of the age:
The angels will come and will separate
the wicked from among the righteous,

Matthew 13:50

they will throw them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the angels will throw the wicked people"

the furnace of fire (ULT)

This is a metaphor for the fires of hell. If the term **furnace** is not known, "oven" can be used. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:42](#). Alternate translation: "the fiery furnace" (See: [Metaphor](#))

weeping and grinding of the teeth (ULT)

Here, **grinding of teeth** is a symbolic act, representing extreme sadness and suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12](#). Alternate translation: "weeping and expressing their extreme suffering." (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁵⁰ and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and grinding of the teeth.

Matthew 13:51

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a person who manages a household. This is the end of the part of the story about Jesus teaching the crowds about the kingdom of heaven through using parables.

ULT

⁵¹ Have you understood all these things?" They say to him, "Yes."

Have you understood all these things?" They say to him, "Yes (ULT)

If necessary, both direct quotations can be translated as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "Jesus asked them if they had understood all this, and they said that they did understand." (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

Matthew 13:52

having been disciplined for the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "has learned the truth about our God in heaven, who is king" or "has submitted himself to God's rule" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵² Now he said to them, "For this reason, every scribe having been disciplined for the kingdom of the heavens is like a man, an owner of a house, who draws out new things and old things from his treasure."

is like a man, an owner of a house, who draws out new things and old things from his treasure (ULT)

Jesus speaks another parable. He compares scribes, who know very well the scriptures that Moses and the prophets wrote, and who also now accept Jesus' teachings, to a **house owner** who uses both **old** and **new** treasures. (See: [Parables](#))

his treasure (ULT)

A **treasure** is a very valuable and precious thing or a collection of things. Here it may refer to the place where these things are stored, the "treasury" or "storeroom."

Matthew 13:53

And it happened that when (ULT)

This phrase shifts the story from Jesus' teachings to what happened next. Alternate translation: "And then" or "And after"

ULT

53 And it happened that when Jesus finished these parables, he departed from there.

Matthew 13:54

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story that runs through [Matthew 17:27](#), where Matthew tells of continued opposition to Jesus' ministry and teaching about the kingdom of heaven. Here, the people of Jesus' home town reject him.

his hometown (ULT)

This refers to the town of Nazareth, where Jesus grew up. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

in their synagogue (ULT)

The pronoun **their** is referring to the people of the region.

them...to astonish (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they were amazed"

From where to this one {is} this wisdom and these miracles (ULT)

The people believed that Jesus was just an ordinary man. Alternate translation: "How can an ordinary man like this be so wise and do such great miracles?" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

From where to this one {is} this wisdom and these miracles (ULT)

The people use this question to express their amazement that he was so wise and was able to do miracles. Alternate translation: "It is strange that he is able to speak with such wisdom and do these miracles!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵⁴ And having entered into his hometown, he taught them in their synagogue so as to astonish them, and they say, "From where to this one {is} this wisdom and these miracles?"

Matthew 13:55

Is not this the son of the carpenter? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas (ULT)

The crowd uses these questions to express their belief that they know who Jesus is and that he is just an ordinary man. Alternate translation: "He is just the son of a carpenter. We know his mother Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵⁵ Is not this the son of the carpenter?
Is not his mother called Mary, and his
brothers, James and Joseph and Simon
and Judas?

the son of the carpenter (ULT)

A **carpenter** is someone who makes things with wood or stone. If **carpenter** is not known, "builder" can be used.

Matthew 13:56

are not all his sisters with us (ULT)

The crowd uses this question to express their belief that they know who Jesus is and that he is just an ordinary man. Alternate translation: "all his sisters are with us, too." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵⁶ And are not all his sisters with us?
From where, therefore, to this one {are}
all these things?"

From where, therefore, to this one {are} all these things (ULT)

The crowd uses this question to show their understanding that Jesus must have gotten his abilities from somewhere. They were probably expressing their doubt that he got his abilities from God. Alternate translation: "He must have gotten his ability to do these things from somewhere!" or "We do not know where he got these abilities!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

are} all these things (ULT)

This refers to Jesus' wisdom and ability to do miracles.

Matthew 13:57

they were offended by him (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the people of Jesus’ hometown took offense at him” or “the people rejected Jesus” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

57 And they were offended by him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in {his} hometown and in his own family.”

A prophet is not without honor (ULT)

You can state this in positive form. Alternate translation: “A prophet receives honor everywhere” or “People everywhere honor a prophet” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

his} hometown (ULT)

Alternate translation: “his own region”

by...his} hometown...his own...family (ULT)

Alternate translation: “in his own home”

Matthew 13:58

he did not do many miracles there (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Jesus did not do many miracles in his own hometown"

ULT

58 And he did not do many miracles there, because of their unbelief.

Matthew 14

Matthew 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verses 1 and 2 continue the account from chapter 13. Verses 3-12 stop the account and speak of things that happened earlier, possibly soon after Satan tempted Jesus (see [Matthew 4:12](#)). Verse 13 continues the account from verse 2. Be sure to have words in verses 3-12 that tell the reader that Matthew has stopped his account to give new information before he continues. (See: [Background Information](#))

Possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Passive voice

Many sentences in this chapter tell that a person had something happen to him without saying who caused that something to happen. For example, the writer does not tell who brought John's head to Herodias's daughter ([Matthew 14:11](#)). You may have to translate the sentence so that it tells the reader who performed the action. (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 14:1

General Information:

These verses explain Herod's reaction when he heard about Jesus. This event happens some time after the events that follow in the narrative. (See: [Order of Events](#))

ULT

¹ At that time, Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus.

At that time (ULT)

Alternate translation: "In those days" or "While Jesus was ministering in Galilee"

heard...the news about Jesus (ULT)

Alternate translation: "heard reports about Jesus" or "heard about the fame of Jesus"

Matthew 14:2

he said (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Herod said"

has been raised from the dead (ULT)

The words **from the dead** speak of all dead people together in the underworld. To rise from the dead speaks of coming alive again.

ULT

² And he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead, and because of this the miraculous powers are at work in him."

because of this the miraculous powers are at work in him (ULT)

Some Jews at that time believed if a person came back from the dead he would have **powers** to do mighty things.

Matthew 14:3

General Information:

Matthew recounts the story of John the Baptist's death in order to show why Herod reacted the way he did when he heard about Jesus.

Connecting Statement:

Here the author begins to tell about how Herod had executed John the Baptist. These events occur some time before the event in the previous verses. (See: [Order of Events](#))

ULT

³ For Herod, having arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of Philip, his brother.

For Herod, having arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison (ULT)

It says that **Herod** did these things because he ordered others to do them for him. Alternate translation: "Herod ordered his soldiers to arrest and bind John the Baptist and put him in prison" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the wife of Philip (ULT)

Philip was Herod's brother. Herod had taken Philip's wife to be his own **wife**. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Matthew 14:4

For John was saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her (ULT)

If needed, you can present the events of 14:3-4 in the order that they happened, as in the UST. (See: [Order of Events](#))

ULT

⁴ For John was saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.”

For John was saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her (ULT)

This can be expressed as an indirect quote, if needed. Alternate translation: “For John had said to Herod that it was not lawful for Herod to have Herodias as his wife.” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

For John was saying to him (ULT)

Alternate translation: “For John had kept saying to Herod”

It is not lawful (ULT)

Philip was still alive when Herod married Herodias. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 14:5

he feared (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Herod feared"

him...they regarded (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they regarded John"

ULT

⁵ And wanting to put him to death, he feared the people, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Matthew 14:6

in the midst (ULT)

You can make explicit the implicit information. Alternate translation: “in the midst of the guests attending the birthday celebration” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁶ But the birthday of Herod having come about, the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst and pleased Herod,

Matthew 14:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ because of which he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.

Matthew 14:8

Now she, having been urged beforehand by her mother (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "But after her mother instructed her" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ Now she, having been urged beforehand by her mother, said, "Give me here, on a platter, the head of John the Baptist."

Now she, having been urged beforehand (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But having been coached beforehand"

said (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the daughter of Herodias said to Herod"

a platter (ULT)

a very large plate

Matthew 14:9

And the king, having been grieved (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “And although her request made the king very upset” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the king (ULT)

Alternate translation: “King Herod”

commanded it to be granted to her (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “ordered his men to do what she said” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁹ And the king, having been grieved, because of {his} oath and those reclining to eat with him, commanded it to be granted to her.

Matthew 14:10

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the account of how Herod executed John the Baptist.

ULT

10 And having sent, he beheaded John in the prison.

Matthew 14:11

his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “someone brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

a platter (ULT)

a very large plate

to the girl (ULT)

Use the word for a young, unmarried girl.

ULT

11 And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl and she carried it to her mother.

Matthew 14:12

his disciples (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the disciples of John"

the corpse (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the dead body"

having come, they reported it to Jesus (ULT)

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the disciples of John went and told Jesus what had happened to John the Baptist" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹² And having come up, his disciples took away the corpse, and buried it. And having come, they reported it to Jesus.

Matthew 14:13

General Information:

These verses give background information about the miracle that Jesus is about to perform by feeding five thousand people. (See: [Background Information](#))

Connecting Statement:

These verses describe how Jesus reacted when he heard that Herod had executed John the Baptist.

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

having heard this (ULT)

Alternate translation: “having heard what happened to John” or “having heard the news about John”

Jesus withdrew (ULT)

“Jesus left” or “Jesus went away from the crowd.” It is implied that Jesus’ disciples went with him. Alternate translation: “Jesus and his disciples left” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

from there (ULT)

Alternate translation: “from that place”

And having heard of it, the crowds (ULT)

Alternate translation: “And when the crowds heard where Jesus had gone, they” or “And when the crowds heard that he had left, they”

the crowds (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the crowds of people” or “the huge group of people” or “the people”

on foot (ULT)

This means that the people in the crowd were walking. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

13 Now having heard this, Jesus withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. And having heard of it, the crowds followed him on foot from the cities.

Matthew 14:14

And having come out (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And when Jesus came ashore"

ULT

14 And having come out, he saw a large crowd, and had compassion on them, and healed their sick.

Matthew 14:15

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus feeding five thousand people with only five small loaves of bread and two small fish.

the disciples came to him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Jesus' disciples came to him"

ULT

15 Now evening having come, the disciples came to him, saying, "This place is desolate, and the hour is already late. Dismiss the crowds so that, having gone away to the villages, they might buy food for themselves."

Matthew 14:16

They have no need (ULT)

Alternate translation: "The people in the crowd have no need"

You give them (ULT)

The word **You** is plural, referring to the disciples. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

16 But Jesus said to them, "They have no need to go away. You give them to eat."

Matthew 14:17

But they say to him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But the disciples said to Jesus"

five loaves (ULT)

A loaf of bread is a lump of dough that is shaped and baked.

ULT

17 But they say to him, "We have nothing here except five loaves and two fish."

Matthew 14:18

Bring them here to me (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Bring the loaves and fish to me"

ULT

18 But he said, "Bring them here to me."

Matthew 14:19

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the account of Jesus feeding five thousand people.

to recline (ULT)

“lie down.” Use the verb for the position people in your culture usually are in when they eat.

having taken (ULT)

“he held in his hands.” He did not steal them. (See: [Idiom](#))

having broken them, he gave...the...loaves (ULT)

Alternate translation: “after tearing the loaves into pieces, he gave them”

the...loaves (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the pieces of the loaves of bread”

having looked up (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) while they were looking up. (2) after they looked up.

ULT

19 And having commanded the crowd to recline on the grass, having taken the five loaves and the two fish, having looked up to heaven, he blessed them, and having broken them, he gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the crowds.

Matthew 14:20

and were filled (ULT)

You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: “until they were full” or “until they were no longer hungry” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ And they all ate and were filled. And they took up what remains of the broken pieces—12 baskets full.

they took up (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the disciples gathered up” or “some people gathered up”

12 baskets full (ULT)

“twelve baskets full” (See: [Numbers](#))

Matthew 14:21

Now those eating (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Now those who ate the bread and the fish"

men...5,000 (ULT)

"five thousand men" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²¹ Now those eating were about 5,000 men, besides women and children.

Matthew 14:22

General Information:

These verses give background information about the miracle that Jesus is about to perform of walking on water.

Connecting Statement:

The following verses describe events that happened right after Jesus fed the five thousand people.

And immediately he made (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And as soon as Jesus had finished feeding all the people, he made"

ULT

22 And immediately he made the disciples to get into the boat and to go before him to the other side, while he would send away the crowds.

Matthew 14:23

Now evening having come about (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Now late in the evening" or "Now when it became dark"

ULT

²³ And having sent away the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. Now evening having come about, he was there alone.

Matthew 14:24

was being tossed about by the waves (ULT)

Alternate translation: "and the disciples could not control the boat because of the large waves"

ULT

²⁴ But the boat, already in the middle of the sea, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

Matthew 14:25

Now in the fourth watch of the night (ULT)

The fourth watch is between 3 AM and sunrise. Alternate translation: "Now just before dawn"

walking on the sea (ULT)

Alternate translation: "walking on top of the water"

ULT

²⁵ Now in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.

Matthew 14:26

were greatly troubled (ULT)

Alternate translation: "were very afraid"

a ghost (ULT)

a spirit that has left the body of a person who has died

ULT

²⁶ But the disciples, having seen him walking on the sea, were greatly troubled, saying, "It is a ghost," and they cried out from fear.

Matthew 14:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage! It is I! Do not be afraid."

Matthew 14:28

But answering him, Peter said (ULT)

Alternate translation: "but Peter answered Jesus and said"

ULT

²⁸ But answering him, Peter said, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

Matthew 14:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁹ And he said, "Come." And Peter, having gotten out from the boat, walked on the water to go to Jesus.

Matthew 14:30

seeing...the strong wind (ULT)

Here, **seeing** the **wind** means he became aware of the wind.

Alternate translation: "when Peter saw that the wind was tossing the waves back and forth" or "when he realized how strong the wind was" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³⁰ But seeing the strong wind, he became afraid, and having begun to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

Matthew 14:31

You of little faith, why (ULT)

Alternate translation: "You who have such little faith, why." Jesus addressed Peter this way because Peter became afraid. It can also be translated as an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You have so little faith! Why"

ULT

³¹ But immediately, Jesus, having stretched out {his} hand, took hold of him, and says to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

why did you doubt (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to tell Peter that he should not have doubted. Alternate translation: "you should not have doubted." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

why did you doubt (ULT)

You can make explicit what Peter should not have doubted. Alternate translation: "you should not have doubted that I could keep you from sinking." (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 14:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³² And when they had gotten into the boat, the wind ceased blowing.

Matthew 14:33

the Son of God (ULT)

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

33 And the disciples in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Matthew 14:34

Connecting Statement:

These verses describe what happened after Jesus walked on the water. They summarize how the people were responding to Jesus' ministry.

ULT

³⁴ And having crossed over, they came to the land at Gennesaret.

And having crossed over (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And when Jesus and his disciples had crossed over the lake"

Gennesaret (ULT)

This is a small town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Matthew 14:35

sent (ULT)

Alternate translation: "sent messages"

ULT

³⁵ And having recognized him, the men in that place sent into all that surrounding area, and they brought to him all those having sickness.

Matthew 14:36

And they were begging him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And the sick people were begging him"

the...of...his...garment (ULT)

Alternate translation: "of his robe" or "of what he was wearing"

were healed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "became well" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁶ And they were begging him so that they might only touch the edge of his garment, and as many as touched it were healed.

Matthew 15

Matthew 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 15:8-9, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The “traditions of the elders”

The “traditions of the elders” were oral laws that the Jewish religious leaders developed because they wanted to make sure that everyone obeyed the law of Moses. However, they often worked harder to obey these rules than to obey the law of Moses itself. Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for this, and they became angry as a result. (See: [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#))

Jews and Gentiles

The Jews of Jesus’ time thought that only Jews could please God by the way they lived. Jesus healed a Canaanite Gentile woman’s daughter to show his followers that he would accept both Jews and Gentiles as his people.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Sheep

The Bible often speaks of people as if they were sheep because sheep need someone to take care of them. This is because they do not see well and they often go to where other animals can kill them easily. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 15:1

General Information:

The scene shifts to events that occurred some time after events of the previous chapter. Here Jesus responds to the criticisms of the Pharisees. (See: [Introduction of a New Event](#))

ULT

¹ Then Pharisees and scribes come to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying,

Matthew 15:2

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders (ULT)

The Pharisees and scribes use this question to criticize Jesus and his disciples. Alternate translation: "Your disciples do not respect the rules that our ancestors have given us." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² "Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For they do not wash {their} hands when they would eat bread."

the traditions of the elders (ULT)

This is not the same as the law of Moses. This refers to later teachings and interpretations of the law given by religious leaders after Moses.

not...they do...wash {their} hands (ULT)

This washing is not only to clean hands. This refers to a ceremonial washing according to the tradition of the elders. Alternate translation: "they do not wash their hands properly" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 15:3

Why do you also violate the commandment of God because of your traditions (ULT)

Jesus answers with a question to criticize what the religious leaders do. Alternate translation: “And I see that you refuse to obey God’s commands just so that you can follow what your ancestors taught you!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ But he, answering, said to them, “Why do you also violate the commandment of God because of your traditions?”

Matthew 15:4

General Information:

In verse 4, Jesus quotes twice from Exodus to show how God expects people to treat their parents.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

let him end in death (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the people must surely execute him"

ULT

⁴ For God commanded, saying, 'Honor {your} father and {your} mother,' and 'The one reviling {his} father or mother, let him end in death.'

Matthew 15:5

But you say (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural and refers to the Pharisees and scribes. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁵ But you say, 'Whoever might say to {his} father or mother "Whatever from me might have been helpful {is} a gift,"'

Matthew 15:6

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the Pharisees.

he will certainly not honor his father (ULT)

The words beginning with “But you say” (verse 5) have a quotation within a quotation. If necessary you can translate them as indirect quotations. “But you teach that a person does not need to honor his parents by giving them something that may help them if the person tells his parents that he has already given it as a gift to God” (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#))

ULT

⁶ he will certainly not honor his father.
And so you have made void the word of
God ^[1] because of your traditions.

he will certainly not honor his father (ULT)

It is implied that **his father** means “his parents.” This means the religious leaders taught that a person does not need to show respect to his parents by taking care of them. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

father...you have made void...word of God (ULT)

Here, **word of God** refers specifically to his commands. Alternate translation: “you have treated the word of God as if it were invalid” or “you have ignored God’s commands”

because of your traditions (ULT)

Alternate translation: “because you want to follow your traditions”

Matthew 15:7

General Information:

In verses 8 and 9, Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to rebuke the Pharisees and scribes.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his response to the Pharisees and scribes.

Well did Isaiah prophesy about you (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Isaiah told the truth in this prophecy about you"

saying (ULT)

It is implied that Isaiah is speaking what God told him. Alternate translation: "when he told what God said" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁷ You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying,

Matthew 15:8

This people honors me with {their} lips (ULT)

Here, **lips** refers to speaking. Alternate translation: “These people say all the right things to me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ ‘This people honors me with {their} lips, but their heart is far away from me.

me...me (ULT)

Both occurrences of **me** refer to God.

but their heart is far away from me (ULT)

Here, **heart** refers to a person’s thoughts or emotions. (See: [Metonymy](#))

but their heart is far away from me (ULT)

This phrase is a way of saying the people are not truly devoted to God. Alternate translation: “but they do not really love me” (See: [Idiom](#))

Matthew 15:9

But they worship me in vain (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But their worship means nothing to me" or "But they only pretend to worship me"

the commandments of men (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the rules that people make up"

ULT

⁹ But they worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

Matthew 15:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach the crowd and his disciples about what defiles a person and why the Pharisees and scribes were wrong to criticize him.

ULT

10 And having summoned the crowd, he said to them, "Listen and understand:

Matthew 15:11

enters into the mouth...comes out from the mouth (ULT)

Jesus is contrasting what a person eats to what a person says. Jesus means that God is concerned with what a person says rather than what a person eats. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹¹ Nothing that enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what comes out from the mouth, this defiles the man."

Matthew 15:12

the Pharisees, having heard {this} word, were offended (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “this statement made the Pharisees angry” or “this statement offended the Pharisees” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² Then having come up, the disciples said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees, having heard {this} word, were offended?”

Matthew 15:13

Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted (ULT)

This is a metaphor. Jesus means that the Pharisees do not actually belong to God, so God will remove them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ But he answering said, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted."

my heavenly Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

will be uprooted (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "my Father will uproot" or "he will take out of the ground" or "he will remove" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 15:14

Let them go (ULT)

The word **them** refers to the Pharisees.

They are blind guides. But if the blind might guide the blind, both will fall into a pit (ULT)

Jesus uses another metaphor to describe the Pharisees. Jesus means that the Pharisees do not understand God's commands or how to please him. Therefore, they cannot teach others how to please God. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 Let them go! They are blind guides.
But if the blind might guide the blind,
both will fall into a pit."

Matthew 15:15

Connecting Statement:

Peter asks Jesus to explain the parable that Jesus told in [Matthew 15:13-14](#).

to us (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to us disciples"

ULT

¹⁵ Now answering, Peter said to him, "Explain the parable to us."

Matthew 15:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus explains the parable that he told in [Matthew 15:13-14](#).

Are you also still without understanding (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the disciples for not understanding the parable. Also, the word **you** is emphasized. Jesus cannot believe his own disciples do not understand. Alternate translation: "I am disappointed that you, my disciples, still do not understand what I teach!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

16 But he said, "Are you also still without understanding?"

Matthew 15:17

Do you not yet understand that everything that enters into the mouth passes into the stomach and is passed out into the latrine (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the disciples for not understanding the parable. Alternate translation: "Surely you that everything that enters into the mouth passes into the stomach and is passed out into the latrine."

(See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

into...passes...the stomach (ULT)

Alternate translation: "goes into the stomach"

the latrine (ULT)

This a polite term for the place where people bury body waste.

ULT

¹⁷ Do you not yet understand that everything that enters into the mouth passes into the stomach and is passed out into the latrine?

Matthew 15:18

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to explain the parable that he told in [Matthew 15:13-14](#).

the things that...proceed out from the mouth (ULT)

This refers to what a person says. Alternate translation: “the words that a person says” (See: [Metonymy](#))

from the heart (ULT)

Here, **heart** refers to a person’s mind or innermost being. Alternate translation: “from inside the person” or “from a person’s mind” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

18 But the things that proceed out from the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.

Matthew 15:19

murder (ULT)

the act of killing innocent people

ULT

19 For from the heart proceed evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, {and} slander.

Matthew 15:20

to eat...with unwashed hands (ULT)

This refers to eating without first ceremonially washing one's **hands** according to the traditions of the elders. Alternate translation: "eating without first washing one's hands"

ULT

²⁰ These are the things defiling the man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

Matthew 15:21

General Information:

This begins an account of Jesus healing the daughter of a Canaanite woman.

Jesus withdrew (ULT)

It is implied that the disciples went with Jesus. Alternate translation: “Jesus and his disciples went away” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

21 And having come out from there, Jesus withdrew into the regions of Tyre and Sidon.

Matthew 15:22

behold, a Canaanite woman...having come out (ULT)

The word **behold** alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "Now there was a Canaanite woman who came"

ULT

²² And behold, a Canaanite woman having come out from that region was crying out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

a Canaanite woman having come out from that region was crying out (ULT)

"a woman who was from that region and who belonged to the group of people called Canaanites came and cried out." The country of Canaan no longer existed by this time. She was a part of a people group that lived near the cities of Tyre and Sidon.

Have mercy on me (ULT)

This phrase implies that she is requesting that Jesus heal her daughter. Alternate translation: "Have mercy and heal my daughter" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Son of David (ULT)

Jesus was not David's literal son, so this may be translated as "Descendant of David." However, **Son of David** is also a title for the Messiah, and the woman may have been calling Jesus by this title.

My daughter is severely demon-possessed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "A demon is controlling my daughter terribly" or "A demon is tormenting my daughter severely" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 15:23

did not answer her a word (ULT)

Here, **word** refers to what a person says. Alternate translation: “said nothing” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

23 But he did not answer her a word.
And having approached, his disciples
were begging him, saying, “Send her
away, for she is crying out after us.”

Matthew 15:24

I was not sent (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God did not send me to anyone" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

24 But he answering said, "I was not sent, except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (ULT)

This is a metaphor comparing the entire nation of **Israel** to **sheep** who have gone away from their shepherd. See how you translated this in [Matthew 10:6](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 15:25

she (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the Canaanite woman"

bowed down to him (ULT)

This shows that the woman humbled herself before Jesus. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

²⁵ But she, having come, bowed down to him, saying, "Lord, help me."

Matthew 15:26

It is not good to take the bread of the children and to throw it to the little dogs (ULT)

Jesus responds to the woman with a proverb. The basic meaning is that it is not right to take what is supposed to belong to Jews and give it to non-Jews. (See: [Proverbs](#))

ULT

²⁶ Now he answering said, "It is not good to take the bread of the children and to throw it to the little dogs."

the bread of the children (ULT)

Here, **bread** refers to food in general. Alternate translation: "the children's food" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

to the little dogs (ULT)

The Jews considered **dogs** to be unclean animals. Here they are used as an image for non-Jews.

Matthew 15:27

even...the little dogs eat from the crumbs that fall from the tables of their masters (ULT)

The woman responds by using the same imagery as Jesus used in the proverb he just spoke. She means non-Jews should be able to have a small amount of the good things Jews are throwing away. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁷ But she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat from the crumbs that fall from the tables of their masters."

the little dogs (ULT)

Use words here for **dogs** of any size that people keep as pets. See how you translated this in [Matthew 15:26](#).

Matthew 15:28

let it be done (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “I will do” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

her daughter was healed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “Jesus healed her daughter” or “her daughter became well” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

from that hour (ULT)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “at exactly the same time” or “immediately” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

28 Then answering, Jesus said to her, “Woman, great {is} your faith; let it be done for you just as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that hour.

Matthew 15:29

General Information:

These verses give background information about the miracle that Jesus is about to perform by feeding four thousand people. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

29 And having left from there, Jesus went along the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on a hill, he was sitting there.

Matthew 15:30

the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute (ULT)

Alternate translation: "those who could not walk, those who could not see, those whose arms or legs did not function, those who could not talk"

they laid them at his feet (ULT)

Apparently some of these sick or crippled people were unable to stand up, so when their friends brought them to Jesus, they placed them on the ground in front of him. Alternate translation: "the crowds placed the sick people on the ground in front of Jesus"

ULT

³⁰ And large crowds came up to him, having with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others. And they laid them at his feet, and he healed them,

Matthew 15:31

the crippled healthy (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the crippled become well” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the crippled...the lame...the blind (ULT)

You can state these nominal adjectives as adjectives. Alternate translation: “people who were crippled ... people who were lame ... people who were blind” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

³¹ so that the crowd marveled, seeing the mute speak, the crippled healthy, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing, and they glorified the God of Israel.

Matthew 15:32

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus feeding four thousand people with seven loaves of bread and a few small fish.

hungry...lest they might faint on the way (ULT)

Alternate translation: "without eating because they might faint on the way"

ULT

³² But Jesus, having summoned his disciples, said, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have remained with me three days already and do not have anything to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they might faint on the way."

Matthew 15:33

**From where would be to us in a wilderness
enough bread so as to satisfy so large a crowd
(ULT)**

The disciples use a question to state that there is nowhere to get food for the **crowd**. Alternate translation: "There is nowhere in this wilderness where we can get enough bread for such a large crowd." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³³ And the disciples say to him, "From where would be to us in a wilderness enough bread so as to satisfy so large a crowd?"

Matthew 15:34

Seven, and a few small fish (ULT)

The understood information can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Seven loaves of bread, and a few small fish" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

³⁴ And Jesus says to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish."

Matthew 15:35

to recline on the (ULT)

Use your language's word for how people customarily eat when there is no table, whether sitting or lying down.

ULT

³⁵ And having commanded the crowd to recline on the ground,

Matthew 15:36

he took the seven loaves and the fish

Alternate translation: "Jesus held the seven loaves and the fish in his hands"

he broke them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he broke the loaves"

was giving them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "continued giving the bread and the fish"

ULT

³⁶ he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks, he broke them and was giving them to the disciples, and the disciples to the crowds.

Matthew 15:37

they took away (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the disciples gathered up" or "some people gathered up"

ULT

37 And they all ate and were satisfied.
And they took away seven baskets full
of the broken pieces that are left over.

Matthew 15:38

those...eating (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the people who ate"

4,000 men (ULT)

"four thousand men" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁸ But those eating were 4,000 men,
besides women and children.

Matthew 15:39

the region (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the area"

of Magadan (ULT)

This region is sometimes called "Magdala." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³⁹ And having sent away the crowds, he got into the boat and went into the region of Magadan.

Matthew 16

Matthew 16 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Yeast

Jesus spoke of the way people thought about God as if it were bread, and he spoke of what people taught about God as if it were the yeast that makes bread dough become larger and the baked bread taste good. He did not want his followers to listen to what the Pharisees and Sadducees taught. This was because if they did listen, they would not understand who God is and how he wants his people to live. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Jesus told his people to obey his commands. He did this by telling them to “follow” him. It is as if he were walking on a path and they were walking after him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Background information

Matthew continues his account from chapter 15 in verses 1-20. The account stops in verse 21 so Matthew can tell the reader that Jesus told his disciples again and again that people would kill him after he arrived in Jerusalem. Then the account continues in verses 22-27 with what happened the first time Jesus told the disciples that he would die.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Jesus uses a paradox when he says, “Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” ([Matthew 16:25](#)).

Matthew 16:1

General Information:

This begins an encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees and Sadducees.

testing him (ULT)

Here, **testing** is used in a negative sense. Alternate translation: “challenging him” or “wanting to trap him”

ULT

¹ And the Pharisees and Sadducees, having approached—testing him—asked him to show them a sign from heaven.

Matthew 16:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² But he answering said to them, ^[1]
[“When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be
fair weather, for the sky is red.’”]

Matthew 16:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ And early today, 'It will be stormy, for the sky is red, being overcast.' You know to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you are not able the signs of the times."]

Matthew 16:4

An evil and adulterous generation (ULT)

Jesus is speaking to his present generation. Alternate translation: "You are an evil and adulterous generation" See how you translated this in [Matthew 12:39](#). (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

An evil and adulterous generation (ULT)

Here, **adulterous** is a metaphor for people who are not faithful to God. See how you translated this in [Matthew 12:39](#). Alternate translation: "An unfaithful generation" or "A godless generation" (See: [Metaphor](#))

a sign...will not be given to it (ULT)

Jesus would not give them **a sign** because, though he had already performed many miracles, they refused to believe him. If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. See how you translated this in [Matthew 12:39](#). Alternate translation: "I will not give it a sign" or "God will not give you a sign" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

a sign...except the...of Jonah (ULT)

"except the same sign God gave to Jonah the prophet." See how you translated this in [Matthew 12:39](#).

ULT

⁴ "An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, but a sign will not be given to it except the sign of Jonah." And having left them, he went away.

Matthew 16:5

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to a later time. Jesus uses an opportunity to warn his disciples about the Pharisees and Sadducees.

the other side (ULT)

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: “the other side of the lake” or “the other side of the Sea of Galilee” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁵ And the disciples, having come to the other side, had forgotten to take bread.

Matthew 16:6

the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees (ULT)

Here, **yeast** is a metaphor that refers to evil ideas and wrong teaching. Translate as **yeast** here and do not explain its meaning in your translation. This meaning will be made clear in 16:12. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ Now Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Matthew 16:7

were reasoning among themselves (ULT)

Alternate translation: "were discussing this with each other" or "were thinking about this"

ULT

⁷ But they were reasoning among themselves, saying, "{It is} because we did not take bread."

Matthew 16:8

You of little faith (ULT)

“You who have such little faith.” Jesus addresses his disciples this way because their concern about not bringing bread shows they have **little faith** in Jesus to provide for them. See how you translated this in [Matthew 6:30](#).

ULT

⁸ But Jesus, having known this, said,
“You of little faith, why do you reason
among yourselves that {it is because}
you do not have bread?”

You of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves that {it is because} you do not have bread (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to rebuke his disciples for not understanding what he just said. Alternate translation: “I am disappointed that you think it was because you forgot to bring bread that I talked about the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Matthew 16:9

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to warn his disciples about the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Do you not yet perceive nor remember the five loaves of the 5,000, and how many baskets you gathered up (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the disciples. Alternate translation: "Surely you remember the five loaves of the 5,000, and how many baskets you gathered up!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

of the 5,000 (ULT)

"of the five thousand" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁹ Do you not yet perceive nor remember the five loaves of the 5,000, and how many baskets you gathered up?

Matthew 16:10

Or the seven loaves of the 4,000, and how many baskets you took up (ULT)

“Do you also not remember the seven loaves of the 4,000, and how many baskets you took up?” Jesus uses a question to rebuke his disciples. Alternate translation: “Surely you also remember the seven loaves of the 4,000, and how many baskets you took up!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Or the seven loaves of the 4,000, and how many baskets you took up?

of the 4,000 (ULT)

“of the four thousand” (See: [Numbers](#))

Matthew 16:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to warn his disciples about the Pharisees and Sadducees.

How do you not understand that I did not speak to you about bread (ULT)

Jesus uses this question to rebuke the disciples. Alternate translation: “You should have understood that I was not really speaking about bread.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees (ULT)

Here, **yeast** represents evil ideas and wrong teaching. Translate as “yeast” and do not explain the meaning in your translation. In 16:12 the disciples will understand the meaning. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 How do you not understand that I did not speak to you about bread? But beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Matthew 16:12

they understood (ULT)

This refer to the disciples.

ULT

¹² Then they understood that he had not told them to beware of the yeast of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Matthew 16:13

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to a later time. Jesus asks his disciples if they understand who he is.

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line or to introduce a new person. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is referring to himself. (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

13 Now Jesus, having come to the regions of Caesarea Philippi, asked his disciples, saying, "Who do men say the Son of Man is?"

Matthew 16:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁴ And they said, "Some, John the Baptist; and some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

Matthew 16:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 He says to them, "But who do you say I am?"

Matthew 16:16

the Son of the living God (ULT)

This is an important title for Jesus that shows his relationship to God.
(See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

of the living God

Here, **living** contrasts the God of Israel to all the false gods and idols that people worshiped. Only the God of Israel is alive and has power to act.

ULT

16 And answering, Simon Peter said,
"You are the Christ, the Son of the living
God."

Matthew 16:17

Simon Bar Jonah (ULT)

“Simon son of Jonah” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

flesh and blood did not reveal this (ULT)

Here, **flesh and blood** refers to a human being. Alternate translation: “a human did not reveal this” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

did not reveal this (ULT)

Here, **this** refers to Peter’s statement that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of the Living God.

but my Father who {is} in the heavens (ULT)

The understood information can be made clear. Alternate translation: “but it was my Father in the heavens who revealed this to you” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

my Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

17 Now answering, Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who {is} in the heavens.

Matthew 16:18

And I also say to you (ULT)

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

you are Peter (ULT)

The name Peter means “rock.” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

upon this rock I will build my church (ULT)

Here, **build my church** is a metaphor for uniting the people who believe in Jesus into a community. The phrase **this rock** could represent: (1) Peter. (2) the truth that Peter had just said in [Matthew 16:16](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

the gates of Hades will not prevail against it (ULT)

Here, **Hades** represents death, and its “gates” represent its power. (See: [Metonymy](#))

the gates of Hades will not prevail against it (ULT)

Here, **Hades** is spoken of as if it were a city surrounded by walls with gates that keep dead people in and other people out. This could mean: (1) Jesus is saying the powers of death will not overcome his church. (2) Jesus is saying his church will break down the power of death the way an army breaks into a city. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

Matthew 16:19

I will give to you (ULT)

Here, **you** is singular and refers to Peter. (See: [Forms of You](#))

the keys of the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

Keys are objects that are used to lock or unlock doors. Here they represent authority. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you may have bound on the earth will be bound in the heavens, and whatever you may have loosed on the earth will be loosed in the heavens."

of the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

This refers to God's rule as king. The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** is used only in the book of Matthew. if possible, use **heavens** in your translation. (See: [Metonymy](#))

whatever you may have bound on the earth will be bound in the heavens, and whatever you may have loosed on the earth will be loosed in the heavens (ULT)

Here, **bound** is a metaphor meaning to forbid something, and **loosed** is a metaphor meaning to allow something. (See: [Metaphor](#))

whatever you may have bound on the earth will be bound in the heavens, and whatever you may have loosed on the earth will be loosed in the heavens (ULT)

Here, **in the heavens** is a metonym that represents God himself. Alternate translation: "God in heaven will approve whatever you forbid or allow on earth" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 16:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ Then he commanded the disciples that they would tell no one that he is the Christ.

Matthew 16:21

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells his disciples for the first time that he will die soon.

scribes and to be killed and to be raised on the third day (ULT)

Here, **to be raised** is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²¹ From that time Jesus Christ began to show his disciples that it is necessary for him to go to Jerusalem and to suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and to be killed and to be raised on the third day.

scribes and to be killed and to be raised on the third day (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. The elders and chief priests would accuse Jesus so that others would kill him. Alternate translation: “scribes. People will then kill him, and on the third day God will make him become alive again” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

on the third day (ULT)

The word **third** is the ordinal form of “three.” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Matthew 16:22

And having taken him aside, Peter (ULT)

Jesus tells them for the first time that he will die soon (verse 21). He will tell them the same thing many times after this first time. It is after this first time that **Peter** takes Jesus **aside**. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

22 And having taken him aside, Peter began to rebuke him, saying, "Merciful to you, Lord; may this never be to you."

having taken him aside, Peter (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And Peter spoke to Jesus when no one else could hear them and"

Merciful to you (ULT)

This is an idiom that means "May God be merciful to you." (See: [Idiom](#))

Matthew 16:23

Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me (ULT)

Jesus means that Peter is acting like **Satan** because Peter is trying to prevent Jesus from accomplishing what God sent him to do.

Alternate translation: "Get behind me, because you are acting like Satan! You are a stumbling block to me" or "Get behind me, Satan! I call you Satan because you are a stumbling block to me" (See:

[Metaphor](#))

Get behind me (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Get away from me"

ULT

²³ But, he, having turned, said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men."

Matthew 16:24

to come after me (ULT)

“to follow me.” To **come after** Jesus here represents being one of his disciples. Alternate translation: “be my disciple” or “be one of my disciples” (See: [Metaphor](#))

let him deny himself (ULT)

Alternate translation: “he must not give in to his own desires” or “he must forsake his own desires”

take up his cross and follow me (ULT)

“carry his cross, and follow me.” To **take up** a **cross** represents being willing to suffer and die. Alternate translation: “obey me even to the point of suffering and dying” or “he must obey me even to the point of suffering and dying” (See: [Metaphor](#))

take up his cross and follow me (ULT)

The **cross** represents suffering and death. (See: [Metonymy](#))

and follow me (ULT)

To **follow** Jesus here represents obeying him. Alternate translation: “and obey me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

Matthew 16:25

will lose it (ULT)

This does not mean the person must necessarily die. It is a metaphor that means the person will consider obeying Jesus as being more important than his own life. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁵ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever might have lost his life for my sake will find it.

for my sake (ULT)

Alternate translation: “because he trusts me” or “on my account” or “because of me”

will find it (ULT)

This metaphor means the person will experience spiritual life with God. Alternate translation: “will find true life” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 16:26

For what will it profit a man if he would have gained the whole world but would have forfeited his life (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "It does not profit a man to gain the whole world if he forfeits his life."
(See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he would have gained the whole world but would have forfeited his life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his life?

if he would have gained the whole world (ULT)

The words **the whole world** are an exaggeration for great riches. Alternate translation: "if he would gain everything he desires" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

but would have forfeited his life (ULT)

Alternate translation: "but he would lose his life"

Or what will a man give in exchange for his life (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "There is nothing that a person can give to regain his life." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Matthew 16:27

is about...the Son...of Man...of...Father...his... he will recompense (ULT)

Here Jesus refers to himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of man, am about ... my ... I will repay" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

²⁷ For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels. And then he will recompense each one according to his actions.

is about...of Man...to come in the glory...of...his...Father (ULT)

Alternate translation: "will come, having the same glory as his Father,"

with his angels (ULT)

"and the angels will be with him." If you translate the first part of the sentence with Jesus speaking in the first person, you can translate this as "and my Father's angels will be with me." (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

of his Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and the Son of Man, Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

his...according to...actions (ULT)

Alternate translation: "according to what each person has done"

Matthew 16:28

Truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

to you (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural and refers to the disciples. (See: [Forms of You](#))

may certainly not have tasted death (ULT)

Here, **tasted** means to experience. Alternate translation: "will not have experienced death" or "will still be alive" (See: [Idiom](#))

until they may see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom (ULT)

Here, **his kingdom** represents him being King. Alternate translation: "until they see the Son of Man coming as King" or "until they see the evidence that the Son of Man is King" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

28 Truly I say to you that there are some of those standing here who may certainly not have tasted death until they may see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Matthew 17

Matthew 17 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Elijah

The Old Testament prophet Malachi lived many years before Jesus was born. Malachi had said that before the Messiah came a prophet named Elijah would return. Jesus explained that Malachi had been talking about John the Baptist. Jesus said this because John the Baptist had done what Malachi had said that Elijah would do. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [Christ, Messiah](#))

“transfigured”

Scripture often speaks of God’s glory as a great, brilliant light. When people see this light, they are afraid. Matthew says in this chapter that Jesus’ body shone with this glorious light so that his followers could see that Jesus truly was God’s Son. At the same time, God told them that Jesus was his Son. (See: [glory](#), [glorious](#), [glorify](#) and [fear](#), [afraid](#), [frighten](#))

Matthew 17:1

General Information:

This begins the account of Jesus' transfiguration.

Peter, James, and John his brother

Alternate translation: "Peter, James, and James's brother John"

ULT

¹ And six days later Jesus takes with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and brings them up onto a high mountain by themselves.

Matthew 17:2

he was transfigured before them (ULT)

When they looked at him, his appearance was different from what it had been.

he was transfigured (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “his appearance had changed” or “he appeared very different” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

before them (ULT)

Alternate translation: “in front of them” or “so they could clearly him”

his face shone like the sun, and his garments became brilliant as the light (ULT)

These are similes that emphasize how bright Jesus’ appearance became. (See: [Simile](#))

garments...his...garments (ULT)

Alternate translation: “what he was wearing”

ULT

² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became brilliant as the light.

Matthew 17:3

behold (ULT)

This word alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

to them (ULT)

This refers to Peter, James, and John.

with him (ULT)

Alternate translation: “with Jesus”

ULT

³ And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with him.

Matthew 17:4

answering...Peter said (ULT)

“Peter said.” Peter is not responding to a question.

it is good for us to be here (ULT)

It is not clear whether **us** refers only to Peter, James, and John, or if it refers to everyone there, including Jesus, Elijah, and Moses. If you can translate so that both options are possible, do so. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

ULT

⁴ But answering, Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you desire, I will make here three shelters—one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

Matthew 17:5

behold (ULT)

This alerts the reader to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

overshadowed them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "came over them"

a voice from the cloud (ULT)

Here, **voice** refers to God speaking. Alternate translation: "God spoke to them from the cloud" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice from the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased. Listen to him."

Matthew 17:6

And having heard that, the disciples (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And when the disciples heard God speak, they"

fell on their face (ULT)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "they fell forward, with their faces to the ground" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁶ And having heard that, the disciples fell on their face and were very afraid.

Matthew 17:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ And Jesus, having approached and having touched them, said, "Get up and do not be afraid."

Matthew 17:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ But having lifted up their eyes, they saw no one except only Jesus himself.

Matthew 17:9

Connecting Statement:

The following events happen immediately after the three disciples witness Jesus' transfiguration.

And as they were coming down (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And as Jesus and the disciples were coming down"

the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

⁹ And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell this vision to no one until the Son of Man might have risen from the dead."

Matthew 17:10

Why then do the scribes say that it is necessary for Elijah to come first (ULT)

The disciples are referring to the belief that **Elijah** will come back to life and return to the people of Israel before the Messiah comes.
(See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁰ And his disciples questioned him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that it is necessary for Elijah to come first?"

Matthew 17:11

will restore all things (ULT)

Alternate translation: "will put things in order" or "will get the people ready to receive the Messiah"

ULT

11 But he, answering, said, "Elijah indeed is coming and will restore all things."

Matthew 17:12

But I say to you (ULT)

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

they did...them (ULT)

Here, **they** and **them** could refer to: (1) the Jewish leaders. (2) all the Jewish people.

the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is referring to himself. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

¹² But I say to you that Elijah already came, but they did not recognize him. Instead, they did whatever they wanted to him. In the same way also, the Son of Man is going to suffer by them.”

Matthew 17:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them about John the Baptist.

Matthew 17:14

Connecting Statement:

This begins an account of Jesus healing a boy who had an evil spirit. These events happen immediately after Jesus and his disciples descend from the mountain.

ULT

14 And having come to the crowd, a man, having approached him, is kneeling before him

Matthew 17:15

have mercy on my son (ULT)

It is implied that the man wants Jesus to heal his son. Alternate translation: "have mercy on my son and heal him" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

he is epileptic (ULT)

This means that he sometimes had seizures. He would become unconscious and move uncontrollably. Alternate translation: "he has seizures"

ULT

¹⁵ and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, because he is epileptic and has sickness, for he often falls into the fire and often into the water."

Matthew 17:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 And I brought him to your disciples,
but they were not able to heal him."

Matthew 17:17

O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long (ULT)

Alternate translation: "O you generation that does not believe in God and does not know what is right or wrong. How long"

how long will I be with you? How long will I bear with you (ULT)

These questions show Jesus is unhappy with the people. Alternate translation: "I am tired of being with you! I am tired of your unbelief and corruption!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁷ But answering, Jesus said, "O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long will I be with you? How long will I bear with you? Bring him here to me."

Matthew 17:18

the boy was healed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the boy became well” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

from that hour (ULT)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “immediately” or “at that moment” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

18 And Jesus rebuked it, and the demon came out from him, and the boy was healed from that hour.

Matthew 17:19

we (ULT)

Here, **we** refers to the speakers but not the hearers and so is exclusive. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

For what reason were we not able to cast it out (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Why could we not make the demon come out of the boy?"

ULT

19 Then the disciples, having come to Jesus privately, said, "For what reason were we not able to cast it out?"

Matthew 17:20

For I truly say to you (ULT)

“For I tell you the truth.” This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

if you would have faith as a mustard seed (ULT)

Jesus compares the size of **a mustard seed** to the amount of **faith** needed to do a miracle. A mustard seed is very small, but it grows into a large plant. Jesus means it only takes a small amount of faith to do a great miracle. (See: [Simile](#))

nothing will be impossible for you (ULT)

You can state this in a positive form. Alternate translation: “you will be able to do anything” (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

20 And he says to them, “Because of your little faith. For I truly say to you, if you would have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”

Matthew 17:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹^[1] [But this kind does not go out
except with prayer and fasting.]

Matthew 17:22

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts momentarily, and Jesus foretells his death and resurrection a second time.

as...are gathered together...they (ULT)

Alternate translation: "as Jesus and his disciples were gathered together"

ULT

²² Now as they are gathered together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men,

The Son of Man is about to be delivered (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone will deliver the Son of Man" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to be delivered into the hands of men (ULT)

The word **hands** here is a metonym for the power that people use hands to exercise. Alternate translation: "to be taken and put under the power of people" or "to be taken and given to people who will control him" (See: [Metonymy](#))

The Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Matthew 17:23

him...he will be raised up (ULT)

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

on the third day (ULT)

The word **third** is the ordinal form of “three.” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

he will be raised up (ULT)

Here to be **raised up** is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. (See: [Idiom](#))

he will be raised up (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God will raise him up” or “God will cause him to become alive again” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²³ and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised up.” And they became very upset.

Matthew 17:24

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts again to a later time when Jesus teaches Peter about paying the temple tax.

when...had come...they (ULT)

Alternate translation: "when Jesus and his disciples had come"

the two-drachma tax (ULT)

This was a **tax** that Jewish men paid to support the temple in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the temple tax" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the two-drachma tax (ULT)

The **drachma** was equivalent to the "denarius," which was worth about one day's wage. (See: [Biblical Money](#))

ULT

24 Now when they had come to Capernaum, the ones collecting the two-drachma tax came to Peter and said, "Does not your teacher pay the two-drachma tax?"

Matthew 17:25

the house (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the place where Jesus was staying"

What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive taxes or tolls? From their sons or from strangers (ULT)

Jesus asks these questions to teach Simon, not to gain information for himself. Alternate translation: "Listen, Simon. We know that when kings collect taxes, they collect it from people who are not members of their own family." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁵ He says, "Yes." And having entered into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive taxes or tolls? From their sons or from strangers?"

Matthew 17:26

General Information:

This is the end of the part of the story that began in [Matthew 13:54](#), where Matthew tells of continued opposition to Jesus' ministry and teaching about the kingdom of heaven.

ULT

²⁶ But when he said, "From strangers," Jesus said to him, "Therefore, the sons are free."

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach Peter about paying the temple tax.

But when he said, "From strangers," Jesus said to him (ULT)

If you translated Jesus' questions as statements in [Matthew 17:25](#), you may need to give an alternate response here. You could also state it as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "But when Peter said, 'Yes, that is true. Kings collect taxes from foreigners,' Jesus said" or "But after Peter agreed with Jesus, Jesus said" (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

From strangers (ULT)

In modern times, leaders usually tax their own citizens. But, in ancient times, the leaders often taxed the people they had conquered rather than their own citizens.

the sons (ULT)

people over whom a ruler or king rules

Matthew 17:27

But in order that we might not offend them, having gone (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But we do not want to make the tax collectors angry. So, go"

throw in a fishhook (ULT)

Fishermen tied **a hook** to the end of a line, then threw it in the water to catch fish. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

its mouth (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the fish's mouth"

a shekel (ULT)

a silver coin worth four days' wages (See: [Biblical Money](#))

Having taken that, give it (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Take the shekel and give it"

on behalf of me and you (ULT)

Here, **you** is singular and refers to Peter. Each man had to pay a half shekel tax. So one shekel would be enough for Jesus and Peter to pay their taxes. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²⁷ But in order that we might not offend them, having gone to the sea, throw in a fishhook, and draw in the fish that comes up first. And having opened its mouth, you will find a shekel. Having taken that, give it to them on behalf of me and you."

Matthew 18

Matthew 18 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

What should Jesus' followers do when other followers sin against them?

Jesus taught that his followers must treat each other well and not be angry with each other. They should forgive anyone who is sorry for his sin, even if he has committed the same sin before. If he is not sorry for his sin, Jesus' followers should speak with him alone or in a small group. If he is still not sorry after that, then Jesus' followers can treat him as guilty. (See: [repent, repentance](#) and [sin, sinful, sinner, sinning](#))

Matthew 18:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story that runs through [Matthew 18:35](#), where Jesus teaches about life in the kingdom of heaven. Here, Jesus uses a little child to teach the disciples.

ULT

¹ At that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of the heavens?"

Who then is greatest (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Who therefore is the most important" or "Who then among us will be the most important"

in the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use **heavens** in your translation. Alternate translation: "in God's kingdom" or "when our God in heaven establishes his rule on earth" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 18:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² And having called to himself a little child, he set him in the midst of them

Matthew 18:3

Truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

unless you would turn and would become like little children, you may certainly not enter (ULT)

You can state this in positive form. Alternate translation: "you must change and become like little children in order to enter" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

would become like little children (ULT)

Jesus uses a simile to teach the disciples that they should not be concerned with who is most important. They should be concerned with becoming humble like a child. (See: [Simile](#))

you may certainly not enter into the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is used only in the book of Matthew. if possible, use **heavens** in your translation. Alternate translation: "you will certainly not enter God's kingdom" or "you will never belong to our God in heaven when he establishes his rule on earth" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you would turn and would become like little children, you may certainly not enter into the kingdom of the heavens."

Matthew 18:4

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues teaching the disciples that they need to be humble like a child if they want to be important in God's kingdom. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁴ Therefore, whoever will humble himself like this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens.

is the greatest (ULT)

Alternate translation: "is the most important" or "will be the most important"

in the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use **heavens** in your translation. Alternate translation: "in God's kingdom" or "when our God in heaven establishes his rule on earth" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 18:5

in my name (ULT)

Here, **my name** refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: “because of me” or “because he is my disciple” (See: [Metonymy](#))

in my name receives me (ULT)

Jesus means that it is the same as welcoming him. Alternate translation: “in my name, it is like he is welcoming me” or “in my name, it is as if he were welcoming me”

ULT

⁵ And whoever might receive a little child like this in my name receives me.

Matthew 18:6

that a millstone of a donkey would have been hung about his neck and he would have been sunk into the depth of the sea (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “if someone put a great millstone around his neck and threw him into the deep sea” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

a millstone (ULT)

This is a large, heavy, circular stone used for grinding wheat grain into flour. Alternate translation: “a very heavy stone”

ULT

⁶ But whoever might have caused one of these little ones who believes in me to stumble, it is better for him that a millstone of a donkey would have been hung about his neck and he would have been sunk into the depth of the sea.

Matthew 18:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to use a little child to teach the disciples and warns against the terrible consequences of causing children to sin.

to the world (ULT)

Here, **world** refers to people. Alternate translation: “to the people of the world” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ Woe to the world because of the stumbling blocks! For it is necessary that those stumbling blocks come, but woe to the man through whom the stumbling block comes!

the stumbling blocks...that those stumbling blocks come...to the man through whom the stumbling block comes (ULT)

Here, **stumbling** is a metaphor for sin. Alternate translation: “things that cause people to sin ... that things come that cause people to sin ... to any person who causes others to sin” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 18:8

Now if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away from you (ULT)

Jesus exaggerates here to emphasize that people must do anything necessary to remove from their lives what causes them to sin. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

your...you...you...for you (ULT)

All occurrences of **your** and **you** are singular. Jesus is speaking to all people in general. It may be more natural for your language to translate with a plural “you.” (See: [Forms of You](#))

into life (ULT)

Alternate translation: “into eternal life”

than to be thrown into the everlasting fire having two hands or two feet (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “than to have both hands and feet when God throws you into the eternal fire” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ Now if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away from you. It is better for you to enter into life maimed or lame than to be thrown into the everlasting fire having two hands or two feet.

Matthew 18:9

And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you (ULT)

The command to destroy the **eye**, perhaps the most important part of the body, is probably an exaggeration for his hearers to do anything necessary to remove from their lives anything that causes them to sin. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

⁹ And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye than to be thrown into the Gehenna of fire having two eyes.

causes you to stumble (ULT)

Here, **stumble** is a metaphor for sin. Alternate translation: “causes you to sin” (See: [Metaphor](#))

your...you...you...for you (ULT)

All occurrences of **your** and **you** are singular. Jesus is speaking to all people in general. It may be more natural for your language to translate with a plural “you.” (See: [Forms of You](#))

into life (ULT)

Alternate translation: “into eternal life”

than to be thrown into the Gehenna of fire having two eyes (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “than to have both eyes when God throws you into the eternal fire” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 18:10

See that (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Be careful that" or "Be sure that"

you would not despise one of these little ones (ULT)

Alternate translation: "you do not think of these little ones as being unimportant." You can state this in positive form. Alternate translation: "you show respect to these little ones"

ULT

¹⁰ See that you would not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who {is} in the heavens.

For I say to you (ULT)

This add emphasis to what Jesus says next.

in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who {is} in the heavens (ULT)

Jewish teachers taught that only the most important angels could be in God's presence. Jesus means that the most important angels speak to God about these little ones. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

always look on the face of my Father (ULT)

This is an idiom that means they are in God's presence. Alternate translation: "are always close to my Father" or "are always in the presence of my Father" (See: [Idiom](#))

of my Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Matthew 18:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11^[1] [For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.]

Matthew 18:12

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to use a little child to teach the disciples and tells a parable to explain God's care for people.

What do you think (ULT)

Jesus uses this question to get people's attention. Alternate translation: "Think about how people act." or "Think about this." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

you (ULT)

This word is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

100...99 (ULT)

"one hundred ... ninety-nine" (See: [Numbers](#))

having left the 99 on the hillside and having gone out, does he not seek the one wandering (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "he will always leave the 99 where they are and go out so seek the one that has gone astray." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹² What do you think? If a certain man might have 100 sheep, and one of them might have gone astray, having left the 99 on the hillside and having gone out, does he not seek the one wandering?

Matthew 18:13

And if he might happen to find it, truly I say to you that he rejoices over it more than over the 99 that have not gone astray (ULT)

This is the end of the parable that begins with the words “If anyone” in verse 12. (See: [Parables](#))

ULT

¹³ And if he might happen to find it, truly I say to you that he rejoices over it more than over the 99 that have not gone astray.

truly I say to you (ULT)

“I tell you the truth.” This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next. The word **you** is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Matthew 18:14

it is not the will before your Father who is in the heavens that one of these little ones would perish

Alternate translation: "your Father in heaven does not want any of these little ones to die" or "your Father in heaven does not want even one of these little ones to die"

your (ULT)

This word is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

¹⁴ In the same way, it is not the will before your Father who {is} in the heavens that one of these little ones would perish.

Matthew 18:15

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach his disciples about forgiveness and reconciliation.

your brother (ULT)

This refers to a fellow believer in God, not a physical brother. Alternate translation: “your fellow believer”

your...you will have gained...brother (ULT)

Alternate translation: “you will have made your relationship with your brother good again”

ULT

15 But if your brother might have sinned against you, go, reprove him between you and him alone. If he would listen to you, you will have gained your brother.

Matthew 18:16**so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be verified (ULT)**

Here, **mouth** and **word** refer to what a person says. (See: [Metonymy](#))

so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be verified (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “so that two or three witnesses may verify that what you say about your brother is true” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁶ But if he might not listen, take with you yet one or two {others}, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be verified.

Matthew 18:17

if...he might refuse to listen to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "if your fellow believer refuses to listen to the witnesses who came with you"

the church (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the whole community of believers"

let him be to you even as the Gentile and the tax collector (ULT)

"treat him as you would treat a Gentile or tax collector." This implies that they should remove him from the community of believers. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

17 But if he might refuse to listen to them, tell it to the church. But if he also might refuse to listen to the church, let him be to you even as the Gentile and the tax collector.

Matthew 18:18

Truly I say to you (ULT)

“I tell you the truth.” This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

to you...you may bind...you may release (ULT)

All occurrences of **you** are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

18 Truly I say to you, whatever you may bind on the earth will be bound in heaven; and whatever you may release on the earth will be released in heaven.

whatever you may bind on the earth will be bound in heaven; and whatever you may release on the earth will be released in heaven (ULT)

Here, **in heaven** is a metonym that represents God himself. (See: [Metonymy](#))

whatever you may bind on the earth will be bound in heaven; and whatever you may release on the earth will be released in heaven (ULT)

Here, **bind** is a metaphor meaning to forbid something, and **release** is a metaphor meaning to allow something. See how you translated similar phrases in [Matthew 16:19](#). Alternate translation: “God in heaven will approve whatever you forbid or allow on earth” (See: [Metaphor](#))

I say to you (ULT)

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

Matthew 18:19

if two...of you (ULT)

It is implied that Jesus means “if at least two of you” or “if two or more of you.” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

if...they might ask...for them (ULT)

These refer to the “two of you.” Alternate translation: “you might ask ... for you”

my Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

19 Again I truly say to you that if two of you might have agreed on the earth about any matter that they might ask, it will be done for them by my Father who {is} in the heavens.

Matthew 18:20

two or three (ULT)

It is implied that Jesus means “two or more” or “at least two.” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

gathered together (ULT)

Alternate translation: “meeting together”

in my name (ULT)

Here, **name** refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: “because of me” or “because they are my disciples” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst.”

Matthew 18:21

seven times (ULT)

“7 times” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²¹ Then having approached, Peter said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me and I will forgive him? Until seven times?”

Matthew 18:22

seventy times seven (ULT)

This could mean: (1) 70 times 7. (2) 77 times. If using a number would be confusing, you can translate it as “more times than you can count” or “you must always forgive him.” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.”

Matthew 18:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus uses a parable to teach about forgiveness and reconciliation.

the kingdom of the heavens may be compared to (ULT)

ULT

23 For this reason, the kingdom of the heavens may be compared to a man, a king, who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves.

This introduces a parable. See how you translated a similar parable introduction in [Matthew 13:24](#). (See: [Parables](#))

the...to settle accounts with his...slaves (ULT)

Alternate translation: "his slaves to pay him what they owed"

Matthew 18:24

one...was brought to him (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “someone brought one of the king’s servants to him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁴ Now when he had begun to settle, one debtor of 10,000 talents was brought to him.

of 10,000 talents (ULT)

“of ten thousand talents” or “more money than the servant could ever repay” (See: [Numbers](#))

of 10,000 talents (ULT)

A *talent* was equal to one day's wage. (See: [Biblical Money](#))

Matthew 18:25

**the master commanded him to be sold,
together with {his} wife and children and
everything, as much as he had, and
repayment to be made (ULT)**

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the king commanded his servants to sell the man along with his wife and children and everything that he had, and to pay the debt with the money from the sale” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁵ But, he not being able to repay, the master commanded him to be sold, together with {his} wife and children and everything, as much as he had, and repayment to be made.

Matthew 18:26

So, having fallen down, the slave was bowing down before (ULT)

This shows that the **slave** approached the king in the most humble way possible. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

was bowing down before him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "was bowing down before the king"

ULT

²⁶ So, having fallen down, the slave was bowing down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will repay you everything.'

Matthew 18:27

having felt compassion (ULT)

Alternate translation: "feeling compassion for the slave"

released him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "let him go"

ULT

²⁷ Now having felt compassion, the master of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

Matthew 18:28

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable to his disciples. (See: [Parables](#))

100 denarii (ULT)

“one hundred denarii” (See: [Numbers](#))

100 denarii (ULT)

“one hundred days’ wages” (See: [Biblical Money](#))

having grasped him (ULT)

Alternate translation: “when first slave had grasped his fellow slave”

having grasped (ULT)

Alternate translation: “having taken hold of” or “having seized”

ULT

28 But having gone out, that slave found one of his fellow slaves, who owed him 100 denarii, and having grasped him, he choked him, saying, ‘Repay whatever you owe.’

Matthew 18:29

having fallen down (ULT)

This shows that the fellow slave approached the first slave in the most humble way possible. See how you translated this in [Matthew 18:26](#). (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

begged him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "implored him"

ULT

²⁹ Then having fallen down, his fellow slave begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will repay you.'

Matthew 18:30

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable to his disciples. (See: [Parables](#))

having gone out, he threw him into prison (ULT)

ULT

30 But he was not willing. Instead, having gone out, he threw him into prison until he might repay what is owed.

Alternate translation: "the first slave went and threw his fellow slave into prison"

Matthew 18:31

his fellow slaves (ULT)

Alternate translation: "other slaves"

they fully explained to their master (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they told the king"

ULT

³¹ Therefore, when his fellow slaves had seen what had happened, they were very upset. And having come, they fully explained to their master everything that had happened.

Matthew 18:32

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable to his disciple. (See: [Parables](#))

Then, having called him, his master (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Then the king called the first slave and"

you begged me (ULT)

Alternate translation: "you implored me"

ULT

³² Then, having called him, his master said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.

Matthew 18:33

Was it not necessary for you to also have had mercy on your fellow slave, just as I also had mercy on you (ULT)

The king uses a question to scold the first servant. Alternate translation: "You should have had mercy on your fellow slave, just as I also had mercy on you!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³³ Was it not necessary for you to also have had mercy on your fellow slave, just as I also had mercy on you?'

Matthew 18:34

General Information:

This is the end of the part of the story that began in [Matthew 18:1](#), where Jesus teaches about life in the kingdom of heaven.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his parable about forgiveness and reconciliation.

his master (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the king"

handed him over (ULT)

"gave him over." Most likely the king himself did not take the first slave to the torturers. Alternate translation: "he ordered his slaves to give him over" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

to the torturers (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to those who would torture him"

that is owed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "that the first slave owed the king" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁴ And having been provoked, his master handed him over to the torturers until he might repay all that is owed.

Matthew 18:35

my heavenly Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

to you...each of you...your (ULT)

All occurrences of **you** and **your** are plural. Jesus is speaking to his disciples, but this parable teaches a general truth that applies to all believers. (See: [Forms of You](#))

from your heart (ULT)

Here, **heart** is a metonym for a person's inner being. (See: [Metonymy](#))

from your heart (ULT)

The phrase **from your heart** is an idiom that means "sincerely." Alternate translation: "sincerely" or "completely" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³⁵ In this way also my heavenly Father will do to you, if each of you might not have forgiven his brother from your heart."

Matthew 19

Matthew 19 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Divorce

Jesus taught about divorce because the Pharisees wanted people to think Jesus' teachings about divorce were wrong ([Matthew 19:3-12](#)). Jesus talked about what God had first said about marriage when he created it.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metonymy

Jesus often says the word "heaven" when he wants his hearers to think of God, who lives in heaven ([Matthew 1:12](#)).

Matthew 19:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story that runs through [Matthew 22:46](#), which tells of Jesus ministering in Judea. These verses provide background information of how Jesus came to be in Judea. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

¹ And it happened that when Jesus had finished these words, he departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.

it happened that when (ULT)

This phrase shifts the story from Jesus' teachings to what happened next. Alternate translation: "And when" or "And after"

had finished...these words (ULT)

Here, **words** refers to what Jesus taught starting in [Matthew 18:1](#). Alternate translation: "had finished teaching these things" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 19:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² And great crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

Matthew 19:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach about marriage and divorce.

approached him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "came to Jesus"

And...testing him...saying (ULT)

Here, **testing** is used in a negative sense. Alternate translation: "and challenged him by asking him" or "and wanted to trap him by asking him"

ULT

³ And Pharisees approached him, testing him, and saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?"

Matthew 19:4

Have you not read that the one who made them from the beginning made them male and female (ULT)

This rhetorical question continues to the end of the next verse. Jesus uses this question to remind the Pharisees of what the scripture says about men, women, and marriage. Alternate translation: “Surely you have read that in the beginning when God created people he made them male and female,” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ But he, answering, said, “Have you not read that the one who made them from the beginning made them male and female,

Matthew 19:5

General Information:

In verse 5, Jesus quotes from Genesis to show that a husband and wife should not divorce.

and said, ‘On account of this, a man will leave {his} father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will be one flesh (ULT)

This verse is the second part of the rhetorical question that Jesus began in the previous verse. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

and said, ‘On account of this, a man will leave {his} father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will be one flesh (ULT)

The direct quotation can be expressed as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “and said that this is the reason that a man will leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will be one flesh?” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

On account of this (ULT)

This is a part of the quotation from Genesis story about Adam and Eve. In that context the reason a man will leave his father and mother is because God created a woman to be the man’s companion.

will be joined to his wife (ULT)

Alternate translation: “will stay close to his wife” or “will live with his wife”

the two will be one flesh (ULT)

This is a metaphor that emphasizes the unity of a husband and a wife. Alternate translation: “they will become like one person” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ and said, ‘On account of this, a man will leave {his} father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will be one flesh’?

Matthew 19:6

So then, they are no longer two, but one flesh (ULT)

This is a metaphor that emphasizes the unity of a husband and a wife. Alternate translation: “So a husband and wife are no longer like two persons, but they are like one person” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ So then, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

Matthew 19:7

They say to him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "The Pharisees said to Jesus"

has Moses commanded us (ULT)

Alternate translation: "has Moses command us Jews"

a certificate of divorce (ULT)

This is a document that legally ends the marriage.

ULT

⁷ They say to him, "Why then has Moses commanded us to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"

Matthew 19:8

For your hardness of heart (ULT)

The phrase **hardness of heart** is a metaphor that means “stubbornness.” Alternate translation: “Because of your stubbornness” or “Because you are stubborn” (See: [Metaphor](#))

your hardness of heart...allowed you...your wives (ULT)

Here, **you** and **your** are plural. Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees, but Moses gave this command many years earlier to their ancestors. Moses’ command applied to all Jewish men in general. (See: [Forms of You](#))

but from the beginning (ULT)

Here, **beginning** refers to when God first created man and woman. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ He says to them, “For your hardness of heart, Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not that way.”

Matthew 19:9

I say...to you (ULT)

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

might marry another (ULT)

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "may marry another woman" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁹ But I say to you that whoever might divorce his wife, except for sexual immorality, and might marry another, commits adultery; and the one having been divorced, having married, commits adultery."

and the one having been divorced, having married, commits adultery (ULT)

Many early texts do not include these words. (See: [Textual Variants](#))

Matthew 19:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁰ The disciples say to him, “If thus is the case of the man with {his} wife, it is better not to marry.”

Matthew 19:11

those to whom it has been given (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom God allows” or “those whom God enables” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

11 But he said to them, “Not everyone can accept this word, but those to whom it has been given.

Matthew 19:12

For there are eunuchs who were born thus from {their} mother's womb (ULT)

You can make explicit the implicit information. Alternate translation: "For there are different reasons that men do not marry. For instance, there are men who were born eunuchs" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "there are men whom other men have made eunuchs" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs (ULT)

This could mean: (1) Jesus is referring to men who have made themselves eunuchs by removing their private parts. (2) Jesus is referring to men who choose to remain unmarried and sexually pure. (See: [Metaphor](#))

for the sake of the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is found only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use **heavens** in your translation. Alternate translation: "so they can better serve our God in heaven" (See: [Metonymy](#))

to accept this, let him accept it (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to accept this teaching, let him accept it"

ULT

¹² For there are eunuchs who were born thus from {their} mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of the heavens. The one being able to accept this, let him accept it."

Matthew 19:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus receives and blesses little children.

little children were brought to him (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “some people brought little children to Jesus” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

13 Then little children were brought to him so that he would lay {his} hands on them and would pray, but the disciples rebuked them.

Matthew 19:14

Permit (ULT)

allow

do not forbid them to come to me (ULT)

Alternate translation: "do not stop them from coming to me"

ULT

14 But Jesus said, "Permit the little children, and do not forbid them to come to me, for the kingdom of the heavens is of such as these."

for the kingdom of the heavens is of such as these (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is found only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use **heavens** in your translation. Alternate translation: "for when our God in heaven establishes his rule on earth, he will be king over such as these" or "for God will allow such as these into his kingdom" (See: [Metonymy](#))

of such as these...the kingdom of the heavens is...of such as these (ULT)

"the kingdom of the heavens belongs to those who are like children." This is a simile that means those who are humble like children will enter God's kingdom. (See: [Simile](#))

Matthew 19:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 And having placed {his} hands on them, he went on from there.

Matthew 19:16

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to a different time when Jesus explains to a rich man what it will cost to follow him.

behold (ULT)

The word **behold** alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

good thing (ULT)

This means a thing that pleases God.

ULT

16 And behold, a man, having approached him, said, "Teacher, what good thing might I do in order that I might have eternal life?"

Matthew 19:17

Why do you ask me about what {is} good (ULT)

Jesus uses this rhetorical question to encourage the man to think about his reason for asking Jesus about what is good. Alternate translation: "You ask me about what is good" or "Think about why you ask me about what is good." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

he...One is...good (ULT)

Alternate translation: "God alone is completely good"

to enter into life (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to receive eternal life"

ULT

¹⁷ But he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what {is} good? One is good, but if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

Matthew 19:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁸ He says to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness,

Matthew 19:19

your} father...love your...neighbor (ULT)

The Jewish people believed that their neighbors were only other Jews. Jesus is extending that definition to include all people.

ULT

19 honor {your} father and {your} mother, and love your neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 19:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ The young man says to him, "All these things I have obeyed. What do I still lack?"

Matthew 19:21

If you want (ULT)

Alternate translation: "If you want"

to the poor (ULT)

You can state this nominal adjective as an adjective. Alternate translation: "to those who are poor" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

you will have treasure in the heavens (ULT)

The phrase **treasure in the heavens** is a metaphor that refers to a reward from God. Alternate translation: "God will reward you in the heavens" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²¹ Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you possess, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in the heavens; and come, follow me."

Matthew 19:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² But the young man, having heard the word, went away being grieved, for he had many possessions.

Matthew 19:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus explains to his disciples the rewards of giving up material possessions and relationships to follow him.

Truly I say to you (ULT)

“I tell you the truth.” This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

will enter...into the kingdom of the heavens (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God’s rule as king. This phrase is found only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use **heavens** in your translation. Alternate translation: “to accept ... our God in heaven as their king” or “to enter ... into God’s kingdom” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²³ Now Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I say to you, a rich man will enter with difficulty into the kingdom of the heavens.”

Matthew 19:24

it is...for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God (ULT)

Jesus uses an exaggeration to illustrate how very difficult it is for **rich** people to enter the **kingdom of God**. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

the eye of a needle (ULT)

the hole near one end of a needle, through which thread is passed

ULT

²⁴ And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

Matthew 19:25

were very astonished (ULT)

“the disciples were amazed.” It is implied that they were astonished because they believed having riches was proof that God approved of someone. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁵ Now having heard this, the disciples were very astonished, saying, “Who then is able to be saved?”

Who then is able to be saved (ULT)

The disciples use a question to emphasize their surprise. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Who then is able to be saved (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “Then there is no one whom God will save!” or “Then there is no one who will receive eternal life!” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 19:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ But Jesus, having looked at them, said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Matthew 19:27

we have left everything (ULT)

Alternate translation: "we have left all our wealth" or "we have given up all our possessions"

What then will there be for us (ULT)

Alternate translation: "What good thing will God give us?"

ULT

27 Then answering, Peter said to him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed you. What then will there be for us?"

Matthew 19:28

Truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

in the renewal (ULT)

"in the new time." This refers to when God restores all things.
Alternate translation: "at the time when God makes all things new"
(See: [Metonymy](#))

the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

may sit...on his glorious throne (ULT)

Sitting on his throne represents ruling as a king. His throne being glorious represents his rule being glorious.
Alternate translation: "may sit as king on his glorious throne" or "will rule gloriously as king" (See: [Metonymy](#))

will also sit...upon 12 thrones (ULT)

Here sitting on **thrones** refers to ruling as kings. The disciples will not be equal to Jesus who is also on a throne. They will receive authority from him. Alternate translation: "will also sit as kings on 12 thrones" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the 12 tribes of Israel (ULT)

Here, **tribes** refers to people from those tribes. Alternate translation: "the people of the 12 tribes of Israel" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, in the renewal when the Son of Man may sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me, you will also sit upon 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel."

Matthew 19:29

for the sake of my name (ULT)

Here, **name** refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: “because of me” or “because he believes in me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

will receive 100 times {as much} (ULT)

“will receive from God one hundred times as many good things as they gave up” (See: [Numbers](#))

will inherit eternal life (ULT)

This is an idiom that means “God will bless them with eternal life” or “God will cause them to live forever.” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

29 And everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or land for the sake of my name, will receive 100 times {as much} and will inherit eternal life.

Matthew 19:30

But many who will be first will be last, and the last, first

Here, **first** and **last** refer to people's status or importance. Jesus is contrasting people's status now with their status in the kingdom of heaven. Alternate translation: "But many who seem to be important now will be the least important, and many who seem to be unimportant now will be very important"

ULT

³⁰ But many who will be first will be last, and the last, first.

Matthew 20

Matthew 20 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The parable of the landowner and his vineyard

Jesus tells this parable ([Matthew 20:1-16](#)) to teach his disciples that what God says is right is different from what people say is right.

Matthew 20:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells a parable about a landowner who hires workers, to illustrate how God will reward those who belong to the kingdom of heaven.

For the kingdom of the heavens is like (ULT)

This is the beginning of a parable. See how you translated the introduction to the parable in [Matthew 13:24](#). (See: [Parables](#))

ULT

¹ For the kingdom of the heavens is like a man, a landowner, who went out with the morning to hire workers for his vineyard.

Matthew 20:2

having agreed (ULT)

Alternate translation: "After the landowner had agreed"

a denarius (ULT)

This was the daily wage at that time. Alternate translation: "one day's wages" (See: [Biblical Money](#))

he sent them into his vineyard (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he sent them to work in his vineyard"

ULT

² Now having agreed with the workers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.

Matthew 20:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable. (See: [Parables](#))

And having gone out (ULT)

Alternate translation: "The landowner went out again"

the third hour (ULT)

The third hour is around nine in the morning. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

having stood idle in the marketplace (ULT)

Alternate translation: "standing in the marketplace not doing anything" or "standing in the marketplace with no work to do"

the marketplace (ULT)

a large, open-air area where people buy and sell food and other items

ULT

³ And having gone out about the third hour, he saw others having stood idle in the marketplace.

Matthew 20:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ And to them he said, 'You also, go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.'

Matthew 20:5

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable. (See: [Parables](#))

Having gone out again (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Again the landowner went out"

about the sixth and the ninth hour (ULT)

The sixth hour is around noon. The ninth hour is around three in the afternoon. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

he did the same (ULT)

This means the landowner went to the marketplace and hired workers.

ULT

⁵ So they went out. Having gone out again about the sixth and the ninth hour, he did the same.

Matthew 20:6

the eleventh hour (ULT)

This is about five in the afternoon. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

having stood (ULT)

Alternate translation: “not doing anything” or “not having any work”

ULT

⁶ Now having gone out about the eleventh hour, he found others having stood, and he says to them, ‘Why have you stood here idle the whole day?’

Matthew 20:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ They say to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He says to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.'

Matthew 20:8

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable. (See: [Parables](#))

having begun from the last to the first

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: “beginning with the workers who started working last, then the workers who started working earlier, and finally the workers who started working first” or “first paying the workers I hired last, then paying the workers I hired earlier in the day, and finally paying the workers I hired first”

ULT

⁸ And evening having come, the owner of the vineyard says to his manager, ‘Call the workers and pay them {their} wages, having begun from the last to the first.’

Matthew 20:9

those (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom the landowner hired” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁹ And having come, those about the eleventh hour each received a denarius.

Matthew 20:10

a denarius (ULT)

This was the daily wage at that time. Alternate translation: “one day’s wages” (See: [Biblical Money](#))

ULT

10 But having come, the first thought that they will receive more, but they also received a denarius each.

Matthew 20:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable. (See: [Parables](#))

having received it (ULT)

Alternate translation: "when the workers who had worked the longest had received a denarius"

the landowner (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the vineyard owner"

ULT

11 But having received it, they were murmuring against the landowner,

Matthew 20:12

you made them equal to us (ULT)

Alternate translation: "you have paid them the same amount of money as you paid us"

who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat (ULT)

The phrase **borne the burden of the day** is an idiom that means "worked the entire day." Alternate translation: "who have worked the entire day, even during the hottest part" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹² saying, 'These last ones have done one hour, but you made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'

Matthew 20:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable. (See: [Parables](#))

to one of them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to one of the workers who had worked the longest"

Friend (ULT)

Use a word that one man would use to address another man whom he is politely rebuking.

Did you not agree with me for a denarius (ULT)

The landowner uses a question to rebuke the workers who were complaining. Alternate translation: "We already agreed that I would give you one denarius." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

for a denarius (ULT)

This was the daily wage at that time. Alternate translation: "for one day's wages" (See: [Biblical Money](#))

ULT

13 But he, answering, said to one of them, 'Friend, I am not wronging you. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?

Matthew 20:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁴ Take what {is} yours and go away. But I desire to give to these last as also to you.

Matthew 20:15

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his parable about a landowner who hires workers.
(See: [Parables](#))

Or is it not lawful for me to do what I desire with what {is} mine (ULT)

The landowner uses a question to correct the workers who were complaining. Alternate translation: "I can do what I want with my own possessions." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Or is your eye evil because I am good (ULT)

The landowner uses a question to rebuke the workers who were complaining. Alternate translation: "Do not be jealous when I am generous to other people." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

15 Or is it not lawful for me to do what I desire with what {is} mine? Or is your eye evil because I am good?

Matthew 20:16

In the same way, the last will be first, and the first last

Here, **first** and **last** refer to people's status or importance. Jesus is contrasting people's status now with their status in the kingdom of heaven. See how you translated a similar statement in [Matthew 19:30](#). Alternate translation: "So those who seem to be unimportant now will be the most important, and those who seem to be the most important now will be the least important"

ULT

¹⁶ In the same way, the last will be first, and the first last." ^[1]

In the same way, the last will be first (ULT)

Here the parable has ended and Jesus is speaking. Alternate translation: "Then Jesus said, 'In the same way, the last will be first'"

Matthew 20:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus foretells his death and resurrection a third time as he and his disciples travel to Jerusalem.

Jesus, going up to Jerusalem (ULT)

Jerusalem was on top of a hill, so people had to travel **up** to get there.

ULT

17 And Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the 12 disciples aside by themselves, and on the way he said to them,

Matthew 20:18

Behold, we are going up (ULT)

Jesus uses the word **Behold** to tell the disciples they must pay attention to what he is about to tell them.

we are going up (ULT)

Here, **we** refers to Jesus and the disciples. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

the Son of Man will be delivered (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "someone will deliver the Son of Man" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the Son of Man...him (ULT)

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If necessary, you can translate these in the first person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

they will condemn (ULT)

The chief priests and scribes will condemn Jesus.

ULT

18 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death

Matthew 20:19

and will deliver him to the Gentiles for them to mock (ULT)

The chief priests and scribes will deliver Jesus to the **Gentiles**, and the Gentiles will **mock** him.

to flog (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to whip him" or "to beat him with whips"

on the third day (ULT)

The word **third** is the ordinal form of "three." (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

him...to crucify him...he will be raised up (ULT)

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If necessary, you can translate these in the first person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

he will be raised up (ULT)

The words **be raised up** are an idiom for "be made alive again." If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will raise him up" or "God will make him alive again" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁹ and will deliver him to the Gentiles for them to mock and to flog and to crucify him. But on the third day he will be raised up."

Matthew 20:20

Connecting Statement:

In response to the question that the mother of two of the disciples asks, Jesus teaches his disciples about authority and serving others in the kingdom of heaven.

of the sons of Zebedee (ULT)

This refers James and John.

ULT

20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached him with her sons, bowing down and asking for something from him.

Matthew 20:21

at your right hand...at your left hand (ULT)

These refer to having positions of power, authority, and honor. (See: [Metonymy](#))

in your kingdom (ULT)

Here, **kingdom** refers to Jesus ruling as king. Alternate translation: "when you are king" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

21 But he said to her, "What do you desire?" She says to him, "Say that these my two sons might sit, one at your right hand and one at your left hand, in your kingdom."

Matthew 20:22

You do not know (ULT)

You is plural and refers to the mother and the sons. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Are you able (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural, but Jesus is only talking to the two sons. (See: [Forms of You](#))

to drink the cup that I am about to drink (ULT)

To **drink the cup** or “drink from the cup” is an idiom that means to experience suffering. Alternate translation: “to suffer what I am about to suffer” (See: [Idiom](#))

They say (ULT)

Alternate translation: “The sons of Zebedee said” or “James and John said”

ULT

22 But answering, Jesus said, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?” They say to him, “We are able.”

Matthew 20:23

My cup you will drink (ULT)

To **drink** a **cup** or “drink from a cup” is an idiom that means to experience suffering. Alternate translation: “You will indeed suffer as I will suffer” (See: [Idiom](#))

right hand...my left hand (ULT)

These refer to having positions of power, authority, and honor. See how you translated this in [Matthew 20:21](#). (See: [Metonymy](#))

to those who have been prepared by my Father (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “my Father has prepared those places, and he will give them to whom he chooses” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

my Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

²³ He says to them, “My cup you will drink. But to sit at my right hand and at my left hand is not mine to give, but to those who have been prepared by my Father.”

Matthew 20:24

having heard this (ULT)

Alternate translation: "having heard what James and John had asked Jesus"

were very angry with the two brothers (ULT)

If necessary, you can make explicit why the ten disciples were angry. Alternate translation: "were very angry with the two brothers because each of them also wanted to sit in a place of honor next to Jesus" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁴ And having heard this, the ten {disciples} were very angry with the two brothers.

Matthew 20:25

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes teaching his disciples about authority and serving others.

having called them to himself (ULT)

Alternate translation: "having called the 12 disciples"

the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the Gentile kings forcefully rule over their people"

the...great ones (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the important men among the Gentiles"

them...exercise authority over (ULT)

Alternate translation: "have control over the people"

ULT

²⁵ But Jesus, having called them to himself, said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones exercise authority over them."

Matthew 20:26

whoever might desire (ULT)

Alternate translation: "whoever wants"

ULT

²⁶ It is not this way among you. Instead, whoever might desire to become great among you will be your servant,

Matthew 20:27

to be first (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to be important"

ULT

²⁷ and whoever might desire to be first
among you will be your servant,

Matthew 20:28

the Son of Man...his life (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If necessary, you can translate this in the first person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many."

did not come to be served (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "did not come so that other people would serve him" or "did not come so that other people would serve me" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

but to serve (ULT)

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "but to serve other people" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many (ULT)

Jesus' **life** being a **ransom** is a metaphor for his being punished in order to set people free from being punished for their own sins. Alternate translation: "to give his life as a substitute for many" or "to give his life as a substitute to set many free" (See: [Metaphor](#))

and to give his life (ULT)

To give one's **life** is an idiom meaning to die voluntarily, usually in order to help others. Alternate translation: "and to die" (See: [Idiom](#))

in exchange for many (ULT)

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "in exchange for many people" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Matthew 20:29

Connecting Statement:

This begins an account of Jesus healing two blind men.

as they were proceeding (ULT)

This refers to the disciples and Jesus.

followed him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "followed Jesus"

ULT

²⁹ And as they were proceeding from Jericho, a great crowd followed him.

Matthew 20:30

Having heard (ULT)

Alternate translation: "When the two blind men heard"

is passing by (ULT)

Alternate translation: "was walking by them"

Son of David (ULT)

Jesus was not David's literal son, so this may be translated as "Descendant of King David." However, **Son of David** is also a title for the Messiah, and the men were probably calling Jesus by this title.

ULT

30 And behold, two blind men are sitting beside the road. Having heard that Jesus is passing by, they cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David."

Matthew 20:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³¹ Now the crowd rebuked them, so that they would be silent, but they cried out even more, saying, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David."

Matthew 20:32

called to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "called to the blind men"

ULT

³² And having stood still, Jesus called to them and said, "What do you want that I might do for you?"

Matthew 20:33

that our eyes might be opened (ULT)

The men speak of becoming able to see as if their **eyes** were to **be opened**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³³ They say to him, "Lord, that our eyes might be opened."

that our eyes might be opened (ULT)

Because of Jesus' previous question, we understand that they were expressing their desire. Alternate translation: "we want you to open our eyes" or "we want to be able to see" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Matthew 20:34

having been moved with compassion (ULT)

Alternate translation: "having compassion on them" or "feeling compassion for them"

ULT

³⁴ Now having been moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. And immediately they received their sight and followed him.

Matthew 21

Matthew 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 21:5,16 and 42, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The donkey and the colt

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an animal. In this way he was like a king who came into a city after he had won an important battle. Also, the kings of Israel in the Old Testament rode on donkeys. Other kings rode on horses. So Jesus was showing that he was the king of Israel and that he was not like other kings.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about this event. Matthew and Mark wrote that the disciples brought Jesus a donkey. John wrote that Jesus found a donkey. Luke wrote that they brought him a colt. Only Matthew wrote that there were both a donkey and a colt. No one knows for sure whether Jesus rode the donkey or the colt. It is best to translate each of these accounts as it appears in the ULT without trying to make them all say exactly the same thing. (See: [Matthew 21:1-7](#) and [Mark 11:1-7](#) and [Luke 19:29-36](#) and [John 12:14-15](#))

Hosanna

This is what the people shouted to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem. This word meant "Save us," but people used it to praise God.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The kingdom of God will be taken away from you"

No one knows for sure what this phrase means. No one knows if Jesus meant that God would someday give the kingdom back or not.

Matthew 21:1

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Here he gives his disciples instructions about what they are to do.

Bethphage (ULT)

This is a village near Jerusalem. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ And when they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,

Matthew 21:2

a donkey tied up (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “a donkey that someone has tied up” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

tied up (ULT)

You can make explicit how the donkey is tied. Alternate translation: “tied up to a post” or “tied up to a tree” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

a colt (ULT)

young male donkey

ULT

² saying to them, “Go into the village that {is} in front of you, and you will immediately find a donkey tied up, and a colt with her. Having untied them, bring them to me.

Matthew 21:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ And if anyone might say anything to you, you will say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

Matthew 21:4

General Information:

Here the author quotes the prophet Zechariah to show that Jesus fulfilled prophecy by riding a donkey into Jerusalem.

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew explains how Jesus' actions fulfill scripture.

this...had come about so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "this happened so that Jesus would fulfill what God spoke through the prophet long ago" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

through the prophet (ULT)

There were many prophets. Matthew was speaking of Zechariah. Alternate translation: "the prophet Zechariah" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴ Now this had come about so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,

Matthew 21:5

the daughter of Zion (ULT)

The **daughter** of a city means the people of the city. Alternate translation: “the people of Zion” or “the people who live in Zion”

of Zion (ULT)

This is another name for Jerusalem.

ULT

⁵ “Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your King is coming to you, Humble and riding on a donkey— and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”

on a donkey—and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden

The phrase **on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden** is explaining that the donkey is a young animal. Alternate translation: “on a young, male donkey”

Matthew 21:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ Now the disciples, having gone and having done just as Jesus had directed them,

Matthew 21:7

cloaks (ULT)

These were outer clothing or long coats.

ULT

⁷ brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat upon them.

Matthew 21:8

**the crowd spread their cloaks on the road,
and others were cutting branches from the
trees and were spreading them in the road
(ULT)**

These are ways to show honor to Jesus as he was entering Jerusalem.
(See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁸ Now most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and were spreading them in the road.

**the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others were cutting branches
from the trees and were spreading them in the road (ULT)**

You can state clearly that they did this to honor Jesus. Alternate translation: “the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and were spreading them in the road in order to show honor to Jesus” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 21:9

Hosanna (ULT)

This word means “save us,” but it can also mean “praise God!”

to the Son of David (ULT)

Jesus was not David’s literal son, so this may be translated as “descendant of king David.” However, **Son of David** is also a title for the Messiah, and the crowd was probably calling Jesus by this title.

ULT

⁹ Now the crowds that are going before him and those following him were crying out, saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one coming in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

in the name of the Lord (ULT)

Here, **in the name** means “in the power” or “as a representative.” Alternate translation: “in the power of the Lord” or “as the representative of the Lord” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hosanna in the highest (ULT)

Here, **highest** refers to God who rules from the highest heaven. Alternate translation: “Praise God, who is in the highest heaven” or “Praise be to God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 21:10

the whole city was stirred (ULT)

Here, **city** refers to the people living there. Alternate translation: "many people from all over the city were stirred" (See: [Metonymy](#))

was stirred (ULT)

Alternate translation: "was excited"

ULT

10 And when he had entered into Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?"

Matthew 21:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And the crowds answered, "This is Jesus the prophet who {is} from Nazareth of Galilee."

Matthew 21:12

General Information:

In verse 13, Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to rebuke the vendors and money changers.

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus entering into the temple.

Jesus entered into the temple (ULT)

Jesus did not enter the actual **temple**. He entered the courtyard around the temple. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

And...those buying...selling (ULT)

Merchants were **selling** animals and other items that travelers bought to offer the proper sacrifices at the temple.

ULT

12 And Jesus entered into the temple and cast out all those buying and selling in the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those selling the doves.

Matthew 21:13

he says to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Jesus said to those who were changing money and buying and selling things"

It is written (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "The prophets wrote long ago" or "God said long ago" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

My house...will be called (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "People should call my house" or "My house will be" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

My house (ULT)

Here, **My** refers to God and **house** refers to the temple.

a house of prayer (ULT)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "a place where people pray" (See: [Idiom](#))

a den of robbers (ULT)

Jesus uses a metaphor to scold the people for buying and selling items in the temple. Alternate translation: "like a place where robbers hide" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 And he says to them, "It is written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."

Matthew 21:14

the blind and the lame (ULT)

You can state these nominal adjectives as adjectives. Alternate translation: "those who were blind and those who were lame" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

the lame (ULT)

those who have an injured foot or leg that makes walking difficult

ULT

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.

Matthew 21:15

General Information:

In verse 16, Jesus quotes from the Psalms to justify how the people had responded to him.

the marvelous things (ULT)

“the wonderful things” or “the miracles.” This refers to Jesus healing the blind and lame people in [Matthew 21:14](#).

Hosanna (ULT)

This word means “save us” but can also mean “praise God!” See how you translated this in [Matthew 21:9](#).

the...to...Son of David (ULT)

Jesus was not David’s literal son, so this may be translated as “descendant of king David.” However, “Son of David” is also a title for the Messiah, and the children were probably calling Jesus by this title. See how you translated this in [Matthew 21:9](#).

they became very angry (ULT)

It is implied that they were **angry** because they did not believe Jesus was the Christ and they did not want other people praising him. Alternate translation: “they became very angry because people were praising him” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

15 But the chief priests and the scribes, having seen the marvelous things that he did, and the children who were crying out in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they became very angry.

Matthew 21:16

Do you hear what they are saying (ULT)

The chief priests and scribes ask this question to rebuke Jesus because they are angry with him. Alternate translation: "You should not allow them to say these things about you!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Have you never read, 'From the mouths of little children and nursing infants you have prepared praise'?

Jesus asks this question to remind the chief priests and scribes of what they had studied in the scriptures. Alternate translation: "I hear them, but you should remember what you read in the scriptures, 'From the mouths of little children and nursing infants you have prepared praise'?" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

From the mouths of little children and nursing infants you have prepared praise (ULT)

From the mouths refers to speaking. Alternate translation: "You caused little children and nursing infants to prepare to give praise to God" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

16 And they said to him, "Do you hear what they are saying?" But Jesus says to them, "Yes! Have you never read, 'From the mouths of little children and nursing infants you have prepared praise'?"

Matthew 21:17

having left them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "after Jesus left the chief priests and scribes"

ULT

17 And having left them, he went out from the city to Bethany and spent the night there.

Matthew 21:18

Connecting Statement:

Jesus uses a fig tree to teach his disciples about faith and prayer.

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew explains that Jesus is hungry and that is why he stops at the fig tree.

ULT

18 Now in the morning, returning to the city, he was hungry.

Matthew 21:19

withered (ULT)

died and dried up

ULT

19 And having seen one fig tree along the road, he went to it and found nothing on it except leaves only. And he says to it, "May there no longer be fruit from you to eternity," and immediately the fig tree withered.

Matthew 21:20

How did the fig tree immediately wither away (ULT)

The disciples use a question to emphasize how surprised they are.
Alternate translation: "We are astonished that the fig tree has dried up so quickly!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

did...wither away (ULT)

Alternate translation: "did ... dry up and die"

ULT

²⁰ And having seen this, the disciples marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree immediately wither away?"

Matthew 21:21

Truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

if you have faith and would not doubt (ULT)

Jesus expresses the same idea both positively and negatively to emphasize that this faith must be genuine. Alternate translation: "if you truly believe" (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

21 But answering, Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and would not doubt, you will not only do what {was} of the fig tree, but even if you might say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and be thrown into the sea,' it will happen."

even if you might say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and be thrown into the sea (ULT)

You can translate this direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "you will even be able to tell this mountain to be taken up and be thrown into the sea," (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

even if you might say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and be thrown into the sea (ULT)

You can translate this direct quotation as an indirect quotation. If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "you will even be able to tell this mountain to get up and throw itself into the sea," (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 21:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² And everything, whatever you might request in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

Matthew 21:23

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of the religious leaders questioning Jesus' authority.

when he had come into the temple (ULT)

It is implied that Jesus did not enter the actual **temple**. He entered the courtyard around the temple. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

these things (ULT)

This refers to Jesus teaching and healing in the temple. It probably also refers to Jesus driving out the buyers and sellers the previous day.

ULT

23 And when he had come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he is teaching, saying, "By what authority do you do these things, and who gave you this authority?"

Matthew 21:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ But answering, Jesus said to them, "I also will ask you one word, that if you would tell me, I also will tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

Matthew 21:25

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the religious leaders.

from where was it (ULT)

Alternate translation: "where did he get the authority to do that?"

If we would say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him (ULT)

This has quotes within a quote. You could translate the direct quotations as an indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "If we say that we believe John received his authority from heaven, then Jesus will ask us why we did not believe John." (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#))

From heaven (ULT)

Here, **heaven** refers to God. Alternate translation: "from God in heaven" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Why then did you not believe him (ULT)

The religious leaders know that Jesus could scold them with this rhetorical question. Alternate translation: "Then you should have believed John the Baptist" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁵ The baptism of John—from where was it? From heaven or from men?" But they were debating among themselves, saying, "If we would say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'

Matthew 21:26

But if we would say, 'From men (ULT)

This is a quote within a quote. You could translate the direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "But if we say that we believe John received his authority from men" (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#))

ULT

²⁶ But if we would say, 'From men,' we fear the crowd, for they all regard John as a prophet."

we fear the crowd (ULT)

Alternate translation: "we fear what the crowd would think or even do to us"

all...the...they...regard...John...as a prophet (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they believe John is a prophet"

Matthew 21:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." He also said to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Matthew 21:28

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells a parable about two sons to rebuke the religious leaders and to illustrate their unbelief. (See: [Parables](#))

But what do you think (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to challenge the religious leaders to think deeply about the parable he will tell them.
Alternate translation: "Tell me what you think about what I am about to tell you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

28 But what do you think? A man had two sons, and having gone to the first, said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.'

Matthew 21:29

having changed his mind (ULT)

This refers to the son reconsidering his thoughts and deciding to act differently from how he had said he would act. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁹ But he, answering, said, 'I will not,' but afterward, having changed his mind, he went.

Matthew 21:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁰ But having gone to the second son, he said likewise. And he, answering, said, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

Matthew 21:31

They say (ULT)

Alternate translation: "The chief priests and elders said"

The...Jesus...says to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Jesus said to the chief priests and elders"

ULT

³¹ Which of the two did the will of {his} father?" They say, "The first one." Jesus says to them, "Truly I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes enter into the kingdom of God before you."

Truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

the tax collectors and the prostitutes enter into the kingdom of God before you (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of God** refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "when God establishes his rule on earth, he will agree to bless the tax collectors and prostitutes by ruling over them before he agrees to do that for you" (See: [Metonymy](#))

enter...before you (ULT)

This could mean: (1) God will accept the tax collectors and prostitutes sooner than he will accept the Jewish religious leaders. (2) God will accept the tax collectors and prostitutes instead of the Jewish religious leaders.

Matthew 21:32

came...John...to you (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural and refers to all the people of Israel not just the religious leaders. Alternate translation: "John came to the people of Israel" (See: [Forms of You](#))

in the way of righteousness (ULT)

This is an idiom that means John showed the people the right way to live. Alternate translation: "and told you the way God wants you to live" (See: [Idiom](#))

you did not believe him (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural and refers to the religious leaders. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, but you did not believe him. But the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. But you, having seen this, did not repent afterward to believe in him.

Matthew 21:33

Connecting Statement:

To rebuke the religious leaders and illustrate their unbelief, Jesus tells a parable about rebellious servants. (See: [Parables](#))

a landowner (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a person who owned a piece of property"

a hedge (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a wall" or "a fence made of bushes"

it...dug a winepress in (ULT)

Alternate translation: "dug a hole in the vineyard in which to press the grapes"

rented it out to vine growers (ULT)

The owner still owned the vineyard, but he allowed the **vine growers** to take care of it. When the grapes became ripe, they were to give some of them to the owner and keep the rest.

to vine growers (ULT)

These were people who knew how to take care of vines and grapes.

ULT

33 Listen to another parable. There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard and put a hedge around it and dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower and rented it out to vine growers and went into another country.

Matthew 21:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁴ Now when the fruit season approached, he sent his servants to the vine growers to receive his fruit.

Matthew 21:35

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable. (See: [Parables](#))

his servants (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the landowner's servants"

ULT

³⁵ But the vine growers having taken hold of his servants, one they beat, and one they killed, and one they stoned.

Matthew 21:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁶ Again, he sent other servants, more than the first, but they did to them likewise.

Matthew 21:37

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁷ But afterward, he sent to them his own son, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

Matthew 21:38

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable. (See: [Parables](#))

ULT

³⁸ But the vine growers, having seen the son, said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, that we might kill him and have his inheritance.'

Matthew 21:39

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁹ And having laid hold of him, they threw him out from the vineyard and killed him.

Matthew 21:40

Therefore (ULT)

The word **Therefore** indicates that what follows is the result of what has happened in the previous verse. (See: [Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

ULT

40 Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard may come, what will he do to those vine growers?"

Matthew 21:41

They say to him (ULT)

Matthew does not make clear who answered Jesus. If you need to specify an audience you can translate as "The people said to Jesus."

ULT

41 They say to him, "He will severely destroy those evil ones, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine growers who will give him the fruit at their season."

Matthew 21:42

General Information:

Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that God will honor the one whom the religious leaders reject.

Connecting Statement:

Here Jesus begins to explain the parable of the rebellious servants.

ULT

⁴² Jesus says to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner. This came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

Jesus says to them (ULT)

It is unclear to whom Jesus asks the following question. If you need to make **them** specific, use the same audience as you did in [Matthew 21:41](#).

Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner. This came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to make his audience think deeply about what this scripture means. Alternate translation: “Think about what you have read in the scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner. This was from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes.’” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner (ULT)

Jesus is quoting from the Psalms. This is a metaphor that means the religious leaders, like builders, will reject Jesus, but God will make him the most important in his kingdom, like the cornerstone in a building. (See: [Metaphor](#))

has become the head of the corner (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “is now the cornerstone” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

This came about from the Lord (ULT)

Alternate translation: “The Lord has caused this great change”

it is marvelous in our eyes (ULT)

Here, **in our eyes** refers to seeing. Alternate translation: “it is wonderful to see” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 21:43

I say to you (ULT)

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

to you (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural. Jesus was speaking to the religious leaders who had rejected him. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

43 For this reason I say to you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a nation producing its fruits.

the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a nation (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of God** refers to God's rule as king. If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will reject you and he will be king over people from other nations" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a nation (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will take his kingdom away from you and will give it to a nation" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

producing its fruits (ULT)

Here, **fruits** is a metaphor for "results" or "outcomes." Alternate translation: "that produces good results" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 21:44

the one having fallen on this stone will be broken to pieces (ULT)

Here, **this stone** is the same stone as in [Matthew 21:42](#). This is a metaphor that means the Christ will destroy anyone who rebels against him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴⁴ And the one having fallen on this stone will be broken to pieces, but on whomever it might fall, it will crush him."

the one having fallen on this stone will be broken to pieces (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "the stone will break into pieces anyone who falls on it" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

but on whomever it might fall, it will crush him (ULT)

This means basically the same thing as the previous sentence. (See: [Parallelism](#))

but on whomever it might fall, it will crush him (ULT)

This is a metaphor that means the Christ will have the final judgment and will destroy everyone who rebels against him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 21:45

Connecting Statement:

The religious leaders react to the parable that Jesus told.

his parables (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Jesus' parables"

ULT

⁴⁵ And the chief priests and the Pharisees, having heard his parables, understood that he is speaking about them.

Matthew 21:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁶ And seeking to arrest him, they were afraid of the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Matthew 22

Matthew 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 verse 44, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Wedding Feast

In the parable of the wedding feast ([Matthew 22:1-14](#)), Jesus taught that when God offers to save a person, that person needs to accept the offer. Jesus spoke of life with God as a feast that a king prepares for his son, who has just gotten married. In addition, Jesus emphasized that not everyone whom God invites will properly prepare themselves to come to the feast. God will throw these people out from the feast.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Implicit information

Speakers usually do not say things that they think their hearers already understand. When the king in the parable said, "My oxen and fattened calves have been killed" ([Matthew 22:4](#)), he assumed that the hearers would understand that those who had killed the animals had also cooked them.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. To the Jews, the ancestors were the masters of the descendants, but in one psalm David calls one of his descendants "Lord." Jesus tells the Jewish leaders that this is a paradox, saying, "If David then calls the Christ 'Lord,' how is he David's son?" ([Matthew 22:45](#)).

Matthew 22:1

Connecting Statement:

To rebuke the religious leaders and to illustrate their unbelief, Jesus tells a parable about a marriage feast. (See: [Parables](#))

to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to the people"

ULT

¹ And answering, Jesus again spoke to them in parables, saying,

Matthew 22:2

The kingdom of the heavens is like (ULT)

This is the beginning of a parable. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24](#).

ULT

² "The kingdom of the heavens is like a man, a king, who prepared a wedding feast for his son.

Matthew 22:3

those who had been invited (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the people the king had invited” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ And he sent out his servants to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, but they were not willing to come.

Matthew 22:4

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable. (See: [Parables](#))

servants, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "servants, saying, 'Tell those whom I have invited'" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner. My oxen and fattened calves have been killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding feasts."' "

servants, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited (ULT)

You can state this direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "servants, ordering them to tell those whom he invited" (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

Behold (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

My oxen and fattened calves have been killed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "My servants have killed my oxen and my fattened calves" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

My oxen and fattened calves have been killed (ULT)

It is implied that the animals are cooked and ready to eat. Alternate translation: "My servants have killed and cooked my oxen and my fattened calves" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

my...oxen and fattened calves (ULT)

Alternate translation: "My best oxen and calves for eating"

Matthew 22:5

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable. (See: [Parables](#))

But they, having paid no attention (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But the guests the king invited, ignoring the invitation"

ULT

⁵ But they, having paid no attention, went away, one to his own field and one to his business.

Matthew 22:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ But the others, having seized his servants, treated them shamefully and killed them.

Matthew 22:7

he killed those murderers (ULT)

It is implied that the king's soldiers killed the **murderers**. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁷ But the king was provoked, and having sent his soldiers, he killed those murderers and burned their city.

Matthew 22:8

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable. (See: [Parables](#))

those...who had been invited (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom I invited" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ Then he says to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those who had been invited were not worthy.'

Matthew 22:9

the crossings of the roads (ULT)

“the crossroads” or “where the main roads of the city cross.” The king is sending the servants to the place where they are most likely to find people.

ULT

⁹ Therefore, go to the crossings of the roads and invite as many as you might find to the wedding feasts.'

Matthew 22:10

And...both evil...good (ULT)

Alternate translation: "both the good people and the bad people"

and the wedding hall was filled with those reclining to eat (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "So the guests filled the wedding hall" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the wedding hall (ULT)

a large room

ULT

10 And those servants, having gone out to the roads, gathered together all whom they found, both evil and good, and the wedding hall was filled with those reclining to eat.

Matthew 22:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable. (See: [Parables](#))

ULT

11 But the king, having come in to look at those reclining to eat, saw there a man not wearing wedding clothes.

Matthew 22:12

how did you come in here, not having wedding clothes (ULT)

The king uses a question to scold the guest. Alternate translation: "you are not wearing proper clothes for a wedding. You should not be here." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

he...was speechless (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the man was silent"

ULT

¹² And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here, not having wedding clothes?' But he was speechless.

Matthew 22:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his parable about a marriage feast.

Having bound him foot and hand (ULT)

Alternate translation: "After you have tied him up so that he cannot move his hands or feet"

ULT

13 Then the king said to the servants, 'Having bound him foot and hand, throw him out into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and grinding of the teeth.'

the outer darkness (ULT)

Here, **outer darkness** is a metonym for the place where God sends those who reject them. This is a place that is completely separated from God forever. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12](#). Alternate translation: "the dark place away from God" (See: [Metonymy](#))

weeping and grinding of the teeth (ULT)

Here, **the grinding of teeth** is symbolic action, representing extreme sadness and suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12](#). Alternate translation: "weeping and expressing their extreme suffering" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

Matthew 22:14

For many are called, but few chosen (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "For God invites many people, but he only chooses a few" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁴ For many are called, but few chosen."

For (ULT)

This marks a transition. Jesus has ended the parable and will now explain the point of the parable.

Matthew 22:15

Connecting Statement:

This begins an account of the religious leaders trying to trap Jesus with several difficult questions. Here the Pharisees ask him about paying taxes to Caesar.

how they might entrap him in {his} words (ULT)

Alternate translation: "how they could cause Jesus to say something wrong so they could arrest him"

ULT

15 Then having gone, the Pharisees took counsel how they might entrap him in {his} words.

Matthew 22:16

their disciples...the Herodians (ULT)

The **disciples** of the Pharisees supported paying taxes only to Jewish authorities. The **Herodians** supported paying taxes to the Roman authorities. It is implied that the Pharisees believed that no matter what Jesus said, he would offend one of these groups. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Herodians (ULT)

These were officials and followers of the Jewish king Herod. He was friends with Roman authorities. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

not...for you do...look at the face of men (ULT)

Alternate translation: “you do not show special honor to anyone” or “you do not consider anyone more important than anyone else”

ULT

16 And they send to him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are truthful, and you teach the way of God in truth, and it is not a concern to you about anyone, for you do not look at the face of men.”

Matthew 22:17

to give a poll tax to Caesar (ULT)

People did not pay taxes directly to **Caesar** but to one of his **tax** collectors. Alternate translation: “to pay the taxes that Caesar requires” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

17 Therefore, tell us, what do you think?
Is it lawful to give a poll tax to Caesar,
or not?”

Matthew 22:18

Why are you testing me, you hypocrites (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to scold those who were trying to trap him.
Alternate translation: "Do not test me, you hypocrites!" or "I know that you hypocrites are only trying to test me!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

18 But Jesus, having perceived their wickedness, said, "Why are you testing me, you hypocrites?"

Matthew 22:19

a denarius (ULT)

This was a Roman coin worth one day's wages. (See: [Biblical Money](#))

ULT

19 Show me the coin of the poll tax."
And they brought a denarius to him.

Matthew 22:20

to them (ULT)

Here, **them** refers to the Herodians and the disciples of the Pharisees.

ULT

²⁰ And he says to them, “Whose image and inscription {is} this?”

Whose image and inscription {is} this (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to get the people to think deeply about what he is saying. Alternate translation: “Tell me whose image and name you see on this coin.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Matthew 22:21

Caesar's (ULT)

You can make clear the understood information in their response.
Alternate translation: "The coin has Caesar's image and name on it"
(See: [Ellipsis](#))

Caesar's...the things (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the things that belong to Caesar"

the things...of God (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the things that belong to God"

ULT

21 They say, "Caesar's." Then he says to them, "Therefore, give to Caesar the things of Caesar, and to God the things of God."

Matthew 22:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² And having heard it, they marveled,
and having left him, they went away.

Matthew 22:23

Connecting Statement:

The Sadducees try to trap Jesus by asking him a difficult question about marriage and the resurrection of the dead.

ULT

²³ On that day Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him, and questioned him,

Matthew 22:24

Teacher, Moses said, 'If someone might have died (ULT)

The religious leaders were asking Jesus about what **Moses** had written in the scriptures. If your language does not allow quotes within quotes, you could state this as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies" (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#))

ULT

²⁴ saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If someone might have died, not having children, his brother will marry his wife and will raise up seed for his brother.'

his brother...his...wife...his...for...brother (ULT)

Here, **his** refers to the dead man.

Matthew 22:25

Connecting Statement:

The Sadducees continue asking Jesus a question.

the first (ULT)

“the oldest” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁵ But there were among us seven brothers, and the first, having married, died. And not having seed, he left his wife to his brother.

Matthew 22:26

the second...the third...the seventh (ULT)

“the next oldest ... the next oldest ... the youngest” or “his oldest younger brother ... that brother’s oldest younger brother ... the youngest” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁶ Likewise also, the second and the third, up to the seventh.

Matthew 22:27

last...of all (ULT)

Alternate translation: "after every brother had died"

ULT

²⁷ And last of all, the woman died.

Matthew 22:28

Therefore (ULT)

Here the Sadducees shift from the story about the seven brothers to their actual question.

in the resurrection (ULT)

Alternate translation: "when dead people come back to life"

ULT

²⁸ Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her."

Matthew 22:29

You have been led astray (ULT)

It is implied that Jesus means that they are mistaken about what they think about the resurrection. Alternate translation: "You are mistaken about the resurrection" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁹ But answering, Jesus said to them, "You have been led astray, not knowing the scriptures or the power of God."

You have been led astray (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "You are mistaken" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the power of God (ULT)

Alternate translation: "what God is able to do"

Matthew 22:30

in...the resurrection (ULT)

Alternate translation: "when dead people rise back to life"

they neither marry (ULT)

Alternate translation: "people do not marry"

nor are given in marriage (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "nor will people give their children in marriage" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like angels in heaven.

Matthew 22:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins asking a question to show that people who have died will live again.

have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying (ULT)

This is the first part of a rhetorical question that continues into the next verse. Jesus scolds the Sadducees by asking a question. He is not looking for an answer. Alternate translation: "I know you have read what was spoken to you by God. You know that he said," (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

what was spoken to you by God (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "what God spoke to you" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³¹ But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying,

Matthew 22:32

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes asking the question he began in verse 31.

I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (ULT)

ULT

³² 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not of the dead, but of the living."

This is the end of the question that begins with the words **have you not read** in verse 31. Jesus asks this question to remind the religious leaders of what they know from scripture. "I know you have read it, but you do not seem to understand what ... Jacob.'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (ULT)

You can translate this direct quotation as an indirect quotation. "God, who said to Moses that he is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

of the dead, but of the living (ULT)

You can state these nominal adjectives as adjectives. Alternate translation: "of dead people, but he is the God of living people" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

Matthew 22:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³³ And having heard this, the crowds were astonished at his teaching.

Matthew 22:34

Connecting Statement:

A Pharisee who was an expert in the law tries to trap Jesus by asking him a difficult question about the greatest commandment.

ULT

³⁴ But the Pharisees, having heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, gathered together.

Matthew 22:35

a lawyer (ULT)

“an expert in the law.” This is a Pharisee who had special skill in understanding the law of Moses.

ULT

³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer,
questioned him, testing him—

Matthew 22:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁶ “Teacher, which {is} the greatest commandment in the law?”

Matthew 22:37

General Information:

Jesus quotes a verse from Deuteronomy as the greatest commandment.

with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind (ULT)

These three phrases are used together to mean “completely” or “earnestly.” (See: [Doublet](#))

with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind (ULT)

Here, **heart** and **soul** are metonyms for a person’s inner being. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁷ But he said to him, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’”

Matthew 22:38

the great and first commandment (ULT)

Here, **great** and **first** mean the same thing. They emphasize that this is the most important commandment. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

38 This is the great and first commandment.

Matthew 22:39

General Information:

Jesus quotes a verse from Leviticus as the second greatest commandment.

your neighbor (ULT)

Here, **neighbor** means more than just those who live nearby. Jesus means a person must **love** all people.

ULT

³⁹ Now a second {is} like it—'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Matthew 22:40

On these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets (ULT)

Here the phrase **the whole law and the prophets** refers to all of scripture. Alternate translation: "Everything that Moses and the prophets wrote in the scriptures is based on these two commandments" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets."

Matthew 22:41

Connecting Statement:

Jesus asks the Pharisees a difficult question in order to stop their attempts to trap him.

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story when Jesus asks the religious leaders a question.

ULT

41 Now the Pharisees having been gathered together, Jesus questioned them,

Matthew 22:42

son (ULT)

Here, **son** means "descendant."

Of David (ULT)

In this reply, it is understood that they are saying whose son the Christ will be. Alternate translation: "He is the son of David" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁴² saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They say to him, "Of David."

Matthew 22:43

General Information:

Jesus quotes from the Psalms to show that the Christ is more than just “the son of David.”

ULT

⁴³ He says to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying,

How then does David in the Spirit call him Lord (ULT)

Jesus begins to ask a question to make the religious leaders think deeply about the Psalm he is about to quote. The question continues into the next verse. Alternate translation: “Then, tell me why David in the Spirit calls him Lord, saying” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

David in the Spirit (ULT)

“David, whom the Holy Spirit is inspiring.” This means the Holy Spirit is influencing what David says.

does...call...him (ULT)

Here, **him** refers to the Christ, who is also the descendant of David.

Matthew 22:44

The Lord said (ULT)

Here, **Lord** refers to God the Father.

to my Lord (ULT)

Here, **Lord** refers to the Christ. Also, **my** refers to David. This means the Christ is superior to David, because he is David's "Lord."

ULT

44 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I might put your enemies under your feet"'?

Sit at my right hand (ULT)

To sit at the **right hand** of God is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

until I might put your enemies under your feet (ULT)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "until I conquer your enemies" or "until I make your enemies bow down before you" (See: [Idiom](#))

Matthew 22:45

General Information:

This is the end of the part of the story that began in [Matthew 19:1](#), that tells of Jesus ministering in Judea.

ULT

⁴⁵ If David therefore calls him 'Lord,' how is he his son?"

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the account of the religious leaders trying to trap Jesus with several difficult questions.

If David therefore calls him 'Lord,' how is he his son (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to make the religious leaders think deeply about what he is saying. Alternate translation: "David calls him 'Lord,' so the Christ has to be more than just a descendant of David." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

If David therefore calls him 'Lord (ULT)

David referred to Jesus as **Lord** because Jesus was not only a descendant of David, but he was also superior to him.

Matthew 22:46

to answer him a word (ULT)

Here, **word** refers to what people say. Alternate translation: “to answer him anything” or “to answer him” (See: [Metonymy](#))

to question him any longer (ULT)

It is implied that no one asked him the kind of questions that were intended to make him say something wrong so the religious leaders could arrest him. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

46 And no one was able to answer him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day to question him any longer.

Matthew 23

Matthew 23 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Hypocrites

Jesus calls the Pharisees hypocrites many times ([Matthew 23:13](#)) and carefully tells what he means by doing that. The Pharisees made rules that no one could actually obey, and then they persuaded the ordinary people that they were guilty because they could not obey the rules. Also, the Pharisees obeyed their own rules instead of obeying God's original commands in the law of Moses.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Name calling

In most cultures, it is wrong to insult people. The Pharisees took many of the words in this chapter as insults. Jesus called them "hypocrites," "blind guides," "fools," and "serpents" ([Matthew 23:16-17](#)). Jesus uses these words say that God would surely punish them because they were doing wrong.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Jesus uses a paradox when he says, "He who is greatest among you will be your servant" ([Matthew 23:11-12](#)).

Matthew 23:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story that runs through [Matthew 25:46](#), where Jesus teaches about salvation and the final judgment. Here he begins to warn the people about the scribes and Pharisees.

ULT

¹ Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples,

Matthew 23:2

sat in the seat of Moses (ULT)

Here, **seat** represents the authority to rule and make judgments. Alternate translation: “have authority as Moses had” or “have authority to say what the law of Moses means” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees sat in the seat of Moses.

Matthew 23:3

Therefore, all, whatever...do and keep (ULT)

Alternate translation: "all the things ... do them and observe them"
or "everything ... do it and observe it"

ULT

³ Therefore, all, whatever they command you, do and keep. But do not do according to their works, for they say, but do not do.

Matthew 23:4

And they tie up loads, heavy and difficult to carry, and they put them on the shoulders of men, but they themselves are not willing with their finger to move them (ULT)

Here, **bind heavy burdens ... put them on people's shoulders** is a metaphor for the religious leaders making many difficult rules and making the people obey them. Alternate translation: "they make you obey many rules that are difficult to follow, but they do not lift a finger to help" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ And they tie up loads, heavy and difficult to carry, and they put them on the shoulders of men, but they themselves are not willing with their finger to move them.

And they tie up loads, heavy and difficult to carry, and they put them on the shoulders of men, but they themselves are not willing with their finger to move them (ULT)

Here, **will not move a finger** is an idiom that means the religious leaders will not help the people. Alternate translation: "they make you obey many rules that are difficult to follow. But they do nothing at all to help the people follow the rules" (See: [Idiom](#))

Matthew 23:5

But they do all their deeds to be seen by men (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "They do all their deeds so that people can see what they do" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ But they do all their deeds to be seen by men. For they broaden their phylacteries and they lengthen {their} tassels.

For they broaden their phylacteries and they lengthen {their} tassels (ULT)

Both of these are things the Pharisees do to appear as if they honor God more than other people. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

phylacteries (ULT)

small leather boxes containing paper with scripture written on it

deeds...they lengthen...their} tassels (ULT)

The Pharisees made the tassels on the bottom of their robes especially long to show their devotion to God.

Matthew 23:6

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the crowds and disciples about the Pharisees.

the chief places...the chief seats (ULT)

Both of these are the places where the most important people sit.

ULT

⁶ Now they love the chief places at the banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues,

Matthew 23:7

the marketplaces (ULT)

large, open-air areas where people buy and sell items

to be called 'Rabbi' by men (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "for people to call them 'Rabbi.'" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ and the greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called 'Rabbi' by men.

Matthew 23:8

But you should not be called (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “But you must not let anyone call you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ But you should not be called ‘Rabbi,’ for one is your teacher, and all you are brothers.

you (ULT)

All occurrences of “you” are plural and refer to all of Jesus’ followers. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you...are brothers (ULT)

Here, **brothers** means “fellow believers.”

Matthew 23:9

you should not call any of you on the earth 'father' (ULT)

Jesus is using hyperbole to tell his hearers that they must not allow even the most important people to be more important to them than God is. Alternate translation: "do not call any man on earth your father" or "do not say that any man on earth is your father" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

⁹ And you should not call any of you on the earth 'father,' for you have one heavenly Father.

heavenly Father (ULT)

Father here is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Matthew 23:10

And you should not be called (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “Also, do not let anyone call you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁰ And you should not be called ‘teacher,’ for your teacher is one—the Christ.

for your teacher is one—the Christ (ULT)

When Jesus said **the Christ**, he was speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: “for I, the Christ, am your only teacher” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Matthew 23:11

the...greatest among you (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the person who is most important among you"

among you (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural and refers to Jesus' followers. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

11 But the greatest among you will be your servant.

Matthew 23:12

will exalt himself (ULT)

Alternate translation: "makes himself important"

will be humbled (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will humble" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

will be exalted (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will make important" or "God will honor" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

12 But whoever will exalt himself will be humbled, and whoever will humble himself will be exalted.

Matthew 23:13

General Information:

Jesus speaks of the **kingdom of the heavens** as if it were a house, the door into which the Pharisees have shut from the outside so that neither they nor anyone else can enter the house. If you do not keep the metaphor of the house, be sure to change all instances of “shut” and “enter.” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of the heavens in front of men. For you do not enter in, nor do you permit those entering to enter.

General Information:

The words **kingdom of the heavens**, which refer to God, who lives in heaven, occur only in Matthew, try to use your language's word for “heaven” in your translation. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to rebuke the religious leaders because of their hypocrisy.

But woe to you (ULT)

“But how terrible it will be for you!” See how you translated this in [Matthew 11:21](#).

you shut the kingdom of the heavens in front of men. For you do not enter in, nor do you permit those entering to enter (ULT)

The phrase **the kingdom of the heavens** refers to God ruling over his people. The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** is found only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use **heavens** in your translation. Alternate translation: “You prevent people from accepting God, who lives in heaven, as king, but you do not accept him as king, and you make it impossible for those about to accept him as king to do so” (See: [Metonymy](#))

you shut the kingdom of the heavens in front of men. For you do not enter in, nor do you permit those entering to enter (ULT)

Jesus is speaking of the **kingdom of the heavens** as if it were a house, the door into which the Pharisees have shut from the outside so that neither they nor anyone else can enter the house. Alternate translation: “You make it impossible for people to enter the kingdom of heaven, but you do not enter it, and neither do you allow those about to enter to do so” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 23:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14^[1] [Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, while you make a show of long prayers.] You will receive this greater condemnation.

Matthew 23:15

you go over the sea and the dry land (ULT)

This is an idiom that means they go to distant places. Alternate translation: “you travel great distances” (See: [Idiom](#))

the sea and the dry land (ULT)

The **sea** and the **dry land** represent the two extremes where people can go on earth. Alternate translation: “everywhere” (See: [Merism](#))

to make one proselyte (ULT)

Alternate translation: “to make one person accept your religion”

a son of Gehenna (ULT)

Here, **son of** is an idiom that means “one belonging to.” Alternate translation: “person who belongs in hell” or “person who should go to hell” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you go over the sea and the dry land to make one proselyte, and when he might become one, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as you.

Matthew 23:16

you blind guides (ULT)

The Jewish leaders were spiritually **blind**. Although they thought of themselves as teachers, they were unable to understand God's truth. See how you translated "blind guides" in [Matthew 15:14](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

by the temple, it is nothing (ULT)

Alternate translation: "by the temple does not have to keep his oath"

he is obligated (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he is obligated by his oath"

ULT

16 Woe to you, you blind guides, you saying, 'Whoever might swear by the temple, it is nothing. But whoever might swear by the gold of the temple, he is obligated.'

Matthew 23:17

You fools and blind men (ULT)

The Jewish leaders were spiritually **blind**. Although they thought of themselves as teachers, they were unable to understand God's truth. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 You fools and blind men! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold?

For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold (ULT)

Jesus uses this question to rebuke the Pharisees because they treated the **gold** as if it were more important than the **temple**. Alternate translation: "The temple that has dedicated the gold to God is more important than the gold!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the temple that has made the gold holy

Alternate translation: "the temple that makes the gold belong to God alone"

Matthew 23:18

And (ULT)

The understood information can be made clear. Alternate translation: "And you also say" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

it is nothing (ULT)

Alternate translation: "He does not have to do what he has sworn to do" or "He does not have to keep his oath"

the...gift (ULT)

This is an animal or grain that a person would bring to God by putting it on God's altar.

he is obligated (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he is obligated by his oath"

ULT

18 And, 'Whoever might swear by the altar, it is nothing. But whoever might swear by the gift that {is} on top of it, he is obligated.'

Matthew 23:19

blind men (ULT)

The Jewish leaders were spiritually **blind**. Although they thought of themselves as teachers, they were unable to understand God's truth. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

19 You fools and blind men! For which {is} greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?

For which {is} greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift (ULT)

Jesus uses this question to rebuke the Pharisees for treating the **gift** as if it were more important than the **altar**. Alternate translation: "The altar that makes the gift holy is greater than the gift!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the altar that makes the gift holy

Alternate translation: "the altar that makes the gift special to God"

Matthew 23:20

by...everything that {is} on top of it (ULT)

Alternate translation: "by all the gifts that people have placed on it"

ULT

²⁰ Therefore, the one having sworn by the altar swears by it and by everything that {is} on top of it.

Matthew 23:21

the...inhabiting it (ULT)

God the Father

ULT

²¹ And the one having sworn by the temple swears by it and by the one inhabiting it.

Matthew 23:22

heaven...sitting on it (ULT)

God the Father

ULT

²² And the one having sworn by heaven swears by the throne of God and by the one sitting on it.

Matthew 23:23

Woe to you...hypocrites (ULT)

“How terrible it will be for you ... hypocrites!” See how you translated this in [Matthew 11:21](#).

the mint and the dill and the cumin (ULT)

These are various leaves and seeds people used to make food taste good. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

you have neglected (ULT)

Alternate translation: “you have not obeyed”

the weightier matters (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the more important matters”

But it was necessary to do these (ULT)

Alternate translation: “But you ought to have obeyed these more important laws”

and not to neglect those (ULT)

You can state this in positive form. Alternate translation: “while also obeying the less important laws” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

23 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe the mint and the dill and the cumin, but you have neglected the weightier matters of the law—justice and mercy and faithfulness. But it was necessary to do these and not to neglect those.

Matthew 23:24

You blind guides (ULT)

Jesus uses this metaphor to describe the Pharisees. Jesus means that the Pharisees do not understand God's commands or how to please him. Therefore, they cannot teach others how to please God. See how you translated this metaphor in [Matthew 15:14](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

24 You blind guides, who are straining out the gnat but swallowing the camel!

who are straining out the gnat but swallowing the camel (ULT)

Being careful to follow the less important laws and ignoring the more important laws is as foolish as being careful not to swallow the smallest unclean animal but eating the meat of the largest unclean animal. Alternate translation: "you are as foolish as a person who strains out a gnat that falls into his drink but swallows a camel" (See: [Metaphor](#))

who are straining out the gnat but swallowing the camel (ULT)

Jesus understands that it is impossible for a man to swallow a **camel**. He is exaggerating in order to emphasize how foolish the scribes and Pharisees are to ignore the most important laws. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

who are straining out the gnat but swallowing the camel (ULT)

It is not possible for a person to swallow a camel. Jesus is exaggerating to emphasize how the Pharisees and scribes are ignoring things that should be obvious to them. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

who are straining out the gnat (ULT)

This means to pour a liquid through a cloth to remove a **gnat** from a drink.

gnat (ULT)

a small flying insect

Matthew 23:25

Woe to you...hypocrites (ULT)

“How terrible it will be for you ... hypocrites!” See how you translated this in [Matthew 11:21](#).

For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence (ULT)

This is a metaphor that means the scribes and Pharisees appear pure on the **outside** to others, but on the **inside** they are wicked. (See: [Metaphor](#))

and...they are full of greed...self-indulgence (ULT)

Alternate translation: “they want what others have, and they act in the interest of the self”

ULT

25 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Matthew 23:26

You blind Pharisee (ULT)

The Pharisees were spiritually blind. Although they thought of themselves as teachers, they were unable to understand God's truth. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Clean first the inside of the cup and of the plate, so that the outside of it might become clean also (ULT)

This is a metaphor that means that if they would become pure in their inner being, then the result is that they would be pure on the **outside** as well. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

26 You blind Pharisee! Clean first the inside of the cup and of the plate, so that the outside of it might become clean also.

Matthew 23:27

you are like whitewashed tombs... uncleanness (ULT)

This is a simile that means the scribes and Pharisees may appear to be pure on the outside, but they are wicked on the inside. (See: [Simile](#))

whitewashed tombs (ULT)

“tombs that someone has painted white.” The Jews would paint **tombs** white so that people would easily see them and avoid touching them. Touching a tomb would make a person ceremonially unclean. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁷ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside appear beautiful, but on the inside are full of bones of the dead and all uncleanness.

Matthew 23:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁸ In the same way, you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Matthew 23:29

of the righteous (ULT)

You can state this nominal adjective as an adjective. Alternate translation: "of the righteous people" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

29 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the tombs of the righteous.

Matthew 23:30

in the days of our fathers (ULT)

Alternate translation: "during the time of our forefathers"

we were...we would not have been partners with them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "we would not have joined with them"

in the blood of the prophets (ULT)

Here, **blood** is associated with the killing of the prophets. Alternate translation: "in the killing of the prophets" or "in the murder of the prophets" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁰ And you say, 'If we were in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in the blood of the prophets.'

Matthew 23:31

you are sons (ULT)

Here, **sons** means “descendants.”

ULT

³¹ Therefore you testify against yourselves that you are sons of those who have killed the prophets,

Matthew 23:32

and you fill up the measure of your fathers (ULT)

Jesus uses this as a metaphor meaning the Pharisees will complete the wicked behavior that their forefathers started when they killed the prophets. Alternate translation: “And you finish the sins your ancestors began” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³² and you fill up the measure of your fathers.

Matthew 23:33

You serpents, you offspring of vipers (ULT)

Here, **serpents** and **vipers** both refer to poisonous snakes. (See: [Doublet](#))

You serpents, you offspring of vipers (ULT)

Here, **serpents** and **vipers** are dangerous creatures and often symbols of evil. Alternate translation: “You are as evil as dangerous and poisonous snakes” (See: [Metaphor](#))

you offspring of vipers (ULT)

Here, **offspring** means “having the characteristic of.” See how you translated a similar phrase in [Matthew 3:7](#).

how might you escape from the judgment of Gehenna (ULT)

Jesus uses this question as a rebuke. Alternate translation: “there is no way for you to escape the judgment of hell!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

33 You serpents, you offspring of vipers, how might you escape from the judgment of Gehenna?

Matthew 23:34

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the religious leaders because of their hypocrisy.

I am sending to you prophets and wise men and scribes

Sometimes the present tense is used to show that someone will do something very soon. Alternate translation: "I will send prophets, wise men, and scribes to you"

ULT

³⁴ For this reason, behold, I am sending to you prophets and wise men and scribes. From among them you will kill and crucify, and from among them you will whip in your synagogues and pursue them from city to city,

Matthew 23:35

might come upon you all the righteous blood being shed on the earth (ULT)

The phrase **come upon you** is an idiom that means to receive punishment. Alternate translation: "God will punish you for all the righteous blood being shed on the earth" (See: [Idiom](#))

might come upon you all the righteous blood being shed on the earth (ULT)

To shed **blood** is a metonym meaning to kill people, so "righteous blood that being shed on the earth" represents **righteous** people who are being killed. Alternate translation: "God will punish you for the murders of all the righteous people" (See: [Metonymy](#))

from the blood...as far as the blood (ULT)

Here the word **blood** represents a person being killed. Alternate translation: "from the murder ... to the murder" (See: [Metonymy](#))

of...Abel...of Zechariah (ULT)

Abel was the first righteous victim of murder, and **Zechariah**, who was murdered by Jews in the temple, was probably thought to be the last. These two men represent all the righteous people who have been murdered. (See: [Merism](#))

of Zechariah (ULT)

This **Zechariah** was not the father of John the Baptist.

whom you killed (ULT)

Jesus does not mean the people to whom he is speaking actually **killed** Zechariah. He means their ancestors did.

ULT

³⁵ so that might come upon you all the righteous blood being shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, as far as the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you killed between the temple and the altar.

Matthew 23:36

Truly I say to you (ULT)

“I tell you the truth.” This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

ULT

³⁶ Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Matthew 23:37

Connecting Statement:

Jesus mourns over the people of Jerusalem because they reject every messenger that God sends to them.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem (ULT)

Jesus speaks as if he were talking only to the city of Jerusalem. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

Jerusalem, Jerusalem (ULT)

Jesus speaks to the people of Jerusalem as though they were the city itself. (See: [Metonymy](#))

those who have been sent to you (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom God sends to you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

your children (ULT)

Jesus is speaking to Jerusalem as if it is a woman and the people are her **children**. Alternate translation: “your people” or “your inhabitants” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the way a hen gathers her chicks under {her} wings (ULT)

This is a simile that emphasizes Jesus’ love for the people and how he wanted to take care of them. (See: [Simile](#))

a hen (ULT)

a female chicken. You can translate with any bird that protects her children under her wing. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

³⁷ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to you! How often did I desire to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under {her} wings, but you were not willing!

Matthew 23:38

your house is left to you desolate (ULT)

Alternate translation: "God will leave your house, and it will be empty"

your house (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) the city of Jerusalem. (2) the temple. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

38 Behold, your house is left to you desolate.

Matthew 23:39

For I say to you (ULT)

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

Blessed is the one coming in the name of the Lord (ULT)

Here, **in the name** means “in the power” or “as a representative.” See how you translated this in [Matthew 21:9](#). Alternate translation: “He who comes in the power of the Lord is blessed” or “He who comes as the representative of the Lord will be blessed” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁹ For I say to you, You will certainly not see me from now on until you might say, ‘Blessed is the one coming in the name of the Lord!’”

Matthew 24

Matthew 24 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Jesus begins to prophesy about the future from that time until he returns as king of everything. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

“The end of the age”

In this chapter, Jesus gives an answer to his disciples when they ask how they will know when he will come again. (See: [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

The example of Noah

In the time of Noah, God sent a great flood to punish people for their sins. He warned them many times about this coming flood, but it actually began suddenly. In this chapter, Jesus draws a comparison between that flood and the last days. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“Let”

The ULT uses this word to begin several commands of Jesus, such as “let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (24:16), “let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house” (24:17), and “let him who is in the field not return to take his cloak” (24:18). There are many different ways to form a command. Translators must select the most natural ways in their own languages.

Matthew 24:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to describe events that will happen before he comes again during the end times.

from the temple (ULT)

It is implied that Jesus was not in the **temple** itself. He was in the courtyard around the temple. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹ And Jesus, having departed from the temple, was going on his way. And his disciples approached him to point out to him the buildings of the temple.

Matthew 24:2

Do you not see all these things (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to make the disciples think deeply about what he will tell them. Alternate translation: "Let me tell you something about all these buildings." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

ULT

² But he, answering, said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, certainly stone upon stone may not be left here that will not be torn down."

certainly stone upon stone may not be left here that will not be torn down (ULT)

It is implied that enemy soldiers will tear down the stones. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

certainly stone upon stone may not be left here that will not be torn down (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "when the enemy soldiers come, they will tear down every stone in these buildings" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 24:3

what {will be} the sign of your coming and of the end of the age (ULT)

Here, **your coming** refers to when Jesus will come in power, establishing God's reign on earth and bringing this **age** to an end. Alternate translation: "what will be the sign that you are about to come and that the world is about to end" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³ Now as he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him by themselves, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what {will be} the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

Matthew 24:4

Be careful that no one might lead you astray (ULT)

Here, **might lead you astray** is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: "Be careful that no one deceives you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ And answering, Jesus said to them,
"Be careful that no one might lead you
astray."

Matthew 24:5

many...will come in my name (ULT)

Here, **in my name** refers to “in my authority” or “as my representative.” Alternate translation: “many will claim that they have come as my representative” or “many will say they speak for me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ For many will come in my name saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will lead many astray.

will lead many astray (ULT)

Here, **will lead many astray** is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: “will deceive many people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 24:6

See that you are not troubled (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “Do not let these things trouble you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ And you are going to hear of wars and reports of wars. See that you are not troubled, for it is necessary for this to happen, but the end is not yet.

Matthew 24:7

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom (ULT)

Both of these mean the same thing. Jesus is emphasizing that people everywhere will fight each other. (See: [Parallelism](#))

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom (ULT)

Here, **nation** and **kingdom** represent the people within them. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

Matthew 24:8

are the beginning of birth pains (ULT)

This refers to the **pains** a woman feels before giving **birth** to a child. This metaphor means these wars, famines, and earthquakes are just the **beginning** of the events that will lead to the end of the age. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ But all these things are the beginning of birth pains.

Matthew 24:9

they will deliver you up to tribulation and will kill you

Alternate translation: “people will give you over to the authorities, who will make you suffer and will kill you.”

ULT

⁹ Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be hated by all the nations for the sake of my name.

you will be hated by all the nations (ULT)

Here, **nations** is a metonym, referring to the people of nations. (See: [Metonymy](#))

you will be hated by all the nations (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “People from every nation will hate you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

for the sake of my name (ULT)

Here, **name** refers to the complete person. Alternate translation: “because you believe in me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 24:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 And then many will be caused to stumble, and will betray one another and will hate one another.

Matthew 24:11

will be raised up (ULT)

Here, **be raised up** is an idiom for “become established.” Alternate translation: “will come” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

11 And many false prophets will be raised up and will lead many astray.

and will lead many astray (ULT)

Here, **lead ... astray** is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: “and will deceive many people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 24:12

lawlessness will be increased (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **lawlessness**, you can express it with the phrase “disobeying the law.” Alternate translation: “disobeying the law will increase” or “people will disobey God’s law more and more” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹² And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.

the love of many will grow cold (ULT)

This could mean: (1) many people will no longer love other people. (2) many people will no longer love God. (See: [Idiom](#))

Matthew 24:13

the one...who has endured to the end, he will be saved (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will save the person who endures to the end" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹³ But the one who has endured to the end, he will be saved.

But the one who has endured (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But the person who stays faithful"

to the end (ULT)

It is not clear whether **the end** refers to when a person dies or when the persecution ends or the end of the age when God shows himself to be king. The main point is that they endure as long as necessary.

the end (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the end of the world" or "the end of the age"

Matthew 24:14

this gospel of the kingdom will be preached (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “people will tell the good news of the kingdom” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

this gospel of the kingdom will be preached (ULT)

Here, **kingdom** refers to God’s rule as king. Alternate translation: “people will tell the good news that God will rule” (See: [Metonymy](#))

to all the nations (ULT)

Here, **nations** stands for people. Alternate translation: “to all people in all places” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 24:15

the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the shameful one who defiles the things of God, about whom Daniel the prophet wrote” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Therefore, when you might see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet, set up in the holy place” (let the one reading understand),

let the one reading understand (ULT)

This is not Jesus speaking. Matthew added this to alert the reader that Jesus was using words that they would need to think about and interpret.

Matthew 24:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 “then let those in Judea flee to the mountains,

Matthew 24:17

the one on the housetop (ULT)

A typical **housetop** where Jesus lived was flat, and people could stand on it.

ULT

17 let the one on the housetop not go down to take anything from his house,

Matthew 24:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁸ and let the one in the field not turn back to take his cloak.

Matthew 24:19

to those having in the womb (ULT)

This is a polite way to say “pregnant women.” (See: [Euphemism](#))

to those...in...those...days (ULT)

Alternate translation: “at that time”

ULT

19 But woe to those having in the womb
and to those nursing in those days!

Matthew 24:20

so that your flight would not occur (ULT)

Alternate translation: "so that you will not have to flee" or "so that you will not have to run away"

in winter (ULT)

Alternate translation: "in the cold season"

ULT

²⁰ But pray so that your flight would not occur in winter or on a Sabbath.

Matthew 24:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ For then will be a great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor will ever happen again.

Matthew 24:22

unless those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved

You can state this in positive and active form. Alternate translation: "If God does not shorten that time of suffering, everyone will die" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

²² And if those days had not been shortened, no flesh would have been saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened.

flesh (ULT)

"people." Here, "flesh" is poetic way of referring to human beings. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

those days will be shortened (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will shorten the time of suffering" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 24:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.

you may not believe it (ULT)

Alternate translation: "do not believe the false things they have said to you"

ULT

²³ Then if anyone might say to you,
'Behold, here {is} the Christ!' or, 'Here!'
you may not believe it.

Matthew 24:24

so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect (ULT)

Here, **lead astray** is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. You can translate this as two sentences. Alternate translation: “so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect” or “so as to deceive people. If possible, they would even deceive the elect” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will be raised up and will give great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

Matthew 24:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ Behold, I have told you beforehand.

Matthew 24:26

if...they might say to you, 'Behold, he is in the wilderness,' you may not go out there (ULT)

You can state this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "if someone tells you that the Christ is in the wilderness, do not go out there" (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

Or, 'Behold, in the inner rooms (ULT)

You can state this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Or, if someone tells you that the Christ is in the inner rooms," (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

in...the inner rooms (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he is in a secret room" or "he is in secret places"

ULT

²⁶ Therefore, if they might say to you, 'Behold, he is in the wilderness,' you may not go out there. Or, 'Behold, in the inner rooms,' you may not believe it.

Matthew 24:27

just as...the lightning comes out from the east and shines as far as the west, in the same way will be the coming (ULT)

This means that the Son of Man will come very quickly and will be easy to see. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²⁷ For just as the lightning comes out from the east and shines as far as the west, in the same way will be the coming of the Son of Man.

of the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Matthew 24:28

Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will be gathered (ULT)

This is probably a proverb that the people of Jesus' time understood. This could mean: (1) when the Son of Man comes, everyone will see him and know that he has come. (2) wherever spiritually dead people are, false prophets will be there to tell them lies. (See: [Proverbs](#))

ULT

²⁸ Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will be gathered.

the vultures (ULT)

birds that eat the bodies of dead or dying creatures

Matthew 24:29

immediately...after the tribulation of those days the sun (ULT)

Alternate translation: "as soon as the tribulation of those days has finished, the sun"

the tribulation of those days (ULT)

Alternate translation: "that time of suffering"

the sun will be darkened (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will make the sun dark" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the powers of the heavens will be shaken (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will shake things in the sky and above the sky" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁹ But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Matthew 24:30

of the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

all the tribes (ULT)

Here, **tribes** refers to people of different ethnic groups. Alternate translation: “every people group” or “all the people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

30 And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Matthew 24:31

he will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet (ULT)

Alternate translation: “he will have a trumpet sounded and send his angels” or “he will have an angel blow a trumpet, and he will send his angels”

ULT

³¹ And he will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the heavens as far as the ends of them.

he will send...his (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

they will gather together (ULT)

Alternate translation: “his angels will gather up”

his angels...elect (ULT)

These are the people whom the Son of Man has chosen.

from the four winds, from the ends of the heavens as far as the ends of them (ULT)

Both of these mean the same thing, and emphasize how far the angels will go to gather the elect. (See: [Parallelism](#))

from the four winds, from the ends of the heavens as far as the ends of them (ULT)

These phrases are idioms that mean “from everywhere.” Alternate translation: “from all over the world” (See: [Idiom](#))

Matthew 24:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³² Now learn {this} parable from the fig tree. When its branch already might become tender and it might put out its leaves, you know that the summer {is} near.

Matthew 24:33

he is near (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "the time for me to come is near" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

at the gates (ULT)

"close to the gates." Jesus uses the imagery of a king or important official getting close to the gates of a walled city. It is a metaphor meaning the time for Jesus to come is soon. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³³ In the same way also, when you might see all these things, you know that he is near, at the gates.

Matthew 24:34

Truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

this generation may certainly not pass away (ULT)

Here, **pass away** is a polite way of saying "die." Alternate translation: "this generation will not all die" (See: [Euphemism](#))

this generation (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) the people alive when Jesus was speaking. (2) all people alive when these things Jesus has just described happen. Try to translate so that both interpretations are possible.

until all these things may have happened (ULT)

Alternate translation: "until God causes all these things to happen"

may certainly not pass away (ULT)

Alternate translation: "will certainly not disappear" or "will certainly remain alive"

ULT

³⁴ Truly I say to you that this generation may certainly not pass away until all these things may have happened.

Matthew 24:35

The heaven and the earth will pass away (ULT)

The phrase **the heaven and the earth** is a synecdoche that includes everything that God has created, especially those things that seem permanent. Jesus is saying that his word, unlike these things, is permanent. Alternate translation: “Even the heaven and the earth will pass away” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

³⁵ The heaven and the earth will pass away, but my words may certainly not pass away.

words...my...words...may certainly not pass away (ULT)

Here, **words** refers to what Jesus has said. Alternate translation: “what I say will always be true” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Matthew 24:36

that day and hour (ULT)

Here, **day** and **hour** refer to the exact time that the Son of Man will return. (See: [Metonymy](#))

not even...the Son (ULT)

Alternate translation: "not even the Son"

Son (ULT)

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

³⁶ But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of the heavens, nor the Son, except the Father only.

Matthew 24:37

For just as the days of Noah were, thus will be the coming of the Son of Man

Alternate translation: "For at the time when the Son of Man comes, it will be like the time of Noah."

ULT

³⁷ For just as the days of Noah were, thus will be the coming of the Son of Man.

of the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Matthew 24:38

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until that day Noah entered into the ark,

Matthew 24:39

and they did not understand (ULT)

You can translate this as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: “and the people did not realize anything was happening”

took them all away—thus also will be the coming of the Son of Man

You can translate this as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: “too them all away. This is how it will be when the Son of Man comes”

ULT

³⁹ and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away—thus also will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Matthew 24:40

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to tell his disciples to be ready for his return.

Then (ULT)

This is when the Son of Man comes.

one is taken, and one is left (ULT)

This could mean: (1) the Son of Man will take one away to heaven and will leave the other on earth for punishment.
(2) the angels will take one away for punishment and leave the other for blessing. (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

40 Then two men will be in the field—
one is taken, and one is left.

Matthew 24:41

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴¹ Two women are grinding with the mill—one is taken, and one is left.

Matthew 24:42

Therefore (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Because what I have just said is true,"

be alert (ULT)

Alternate translation: "pay attention"

ULT

⁴² Therefore, be alert, for you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

Matthew 24:43

if the master of the house had known in which watch of night the thief is coming, he would have been alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into (ULT)

Jesus uses a parable of a **master** and a **thief** to illustrate that his disciples should be prepared for his return. (See: [Parables](#))

ULT

⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known in which watch of night the thief is coming, he would have been alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

the thief (ULT)

Jesus is saying he will come when people are not expecting him, not that he will come to steal. (See: [Metaphor](#))

he would have been alert (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he would have guarded his house"

would not have allowed his house to be broken into (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "would not have allowed anyone to get into his house to steal things" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 24:44

the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

44 For this reason you also be ready, for the Son of Man will come at the hour that you do not think.

Matthew 24:45

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues his proverb of a master and servants to illustrate that his disciples should be prepared for his return.

Who then is the faithful and wise slave whom his master has appointed over his household to give them {their} food at the proper time (ULT)

Jesus uses this question to make his disciples think. Alternate translation: “So who is the faithful and wise servant? He is the one whom his has appointed over his household to give them their food at the proper time.” or “Be like the faithful and wise servant, whom his has appointed over his household to give them their food at the proper time.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

to give them {their} food (ULT)

Alternate translation: “to give the people in the master’s home their food”

ULT

45 Who then is the faithful and wise slave whom his master has appointed over his household to give them {their} food at the proper time?

Matthew 24:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁶ Blessed {is} that slave whom, his master having come, will find him doing thus.

Matthew 24:47

Truly I say to you (ULT)

“I tell you the truth.” This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

ULT

47 Truly I say to you that he will appoint him over everything that he possesses.

Matthew 24:48

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his proverb of a master and servants to illustrate that his disciples should be prepared for his return. (See: [Proverbs](#))

ULT

48 But if that evil slave might say in his heart, 'My master is delaying,'

might say...in his heart (ULT)

Here, **heart** refers to the mind. Alternate translation: "might think in his mind" (See: [Metonymy](#))

My master is delaying (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "My master is slow to return" or "My master will not return for a long time" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 24:49

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁹ and might begin to beat his fellow slaves, and might eat and might drink with those being drunk,

Matthew 24:50

on a day that he does not expect and at an hour that he does not know (ULT)

Both of these statements mean the same thing. They emphasize that the master will come when the servant is not expecting him. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁵⁰ the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect and at an hour that he does not know.

Matthew 24:51

he will cut him in pieces (ULT)

This is an idiom that means to make the person suffer terribly. (See: [Idiom](#))

will assign his place with the hypocrites (ULT)

Alternate translation: “will put him with the hypocrites” or “will send him to the place where hypocrites are sent”

there will be weeping and grinding of the teeth (ULT)

Here, **the grinding of the teeth** is a symbolic act, representing extreme suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12](#). Alternate translation: “people will weep and grind their teeth because of their suffering” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

51 And he will cut him in pieces and will assign his place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and grinding of the teeth.

Matthew 25

Matthew 25 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the teaching of the previous chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

The parable of the ten virgins

Jesus told the parable of the ten virgins ([Matthew 25:1-13](#)) to tell his followers to be ready for him to return. His hearers could understand the parable because they knew Jewish wedding customs.

When the Jews arranged marriages, they would plan for the wedding to take place weeks or months later. At the proper time, the young man would go to his bride's house, where she would be waiting for him. The wedding ceremony would take place, and then the man and his bride would travel to his home, where there would be a feast. (See: [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

Matthew 25:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells a parable about wise and foolish virgins to illustrate that his disciples should be prepared for his return. (See: [Parables](#))

the kingdom of the heavens will be compared to (ULT)

Here, **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king. The phrase **kingdom of the heavens** is used only in Matthew. if possible, use **heavens** in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24](#). Alternate translation: "when our God in heaven shows himself to be king, it will be like" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹ Then the kingdom of the heavens will be compared to ten virgins who, having taken their lamps, went out to a meeting of the bridegroom.

lamps (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) oil **lamps**. (2) torches made by putting cloth around the end of a stick and wetting the cloth with oil.

Matthew 25:2

five...of them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "five of the virgins"

ULT

² Now five of them were foolish and five wise.

Matthew 25:3

did not take oil with themselves (ULT)

Alternate translation: "took with them only the oil in their lamps"

ULT

³ For the foolish virgins, having taken their lamps, did not take oil with themselves.

Matthew 25:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ But the wise took oil in the containers with their lamps.

Matthew 25:5

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Jesus starts to tell a new part of the story.

ULT

⁵ Now while the bridegroom is delaying, they all became sleepy and were sleeping.

while...is delaying...the bridegroom (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “while the bridegroom was taking a long time to arrive” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

they all became sleepy (ULT)

Alternate translation: “all ten virgins became sleepy”

Matthew 25:6

there was a cry (ULT)

Alternate translation: "someone shouted"

ULT

⁶ But in the middle of the night there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Go out to the meeting.'

Matthew 25:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable. (See: [Parables](#))

trimmed their lamps (ULT)

Alternate translation: “adjusted their lamps so they would burn brightly”

ULT

⁷ Then all those virgins were awakened and trimmed their lamps.

Matthew 25:8

the...foolish said to the wise (ULT)

You can state these nominal adjectives as adjectives. Alternate translation: "the foolish virgins said to the wise virgins" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

our lamps are going out (ULT)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "the fire in our lamps is about to burn out" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁸ Now the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us from your oil, because our lamps are going out.'

Matthew 25:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ But answering, the wise said, 'Perhaps there might certainly not be enough for us and you. Go instead to those who are selling and buy for yourselves.'

Matthew 25:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes the parable about the ten virgins. (See: [Parables](#))

But while they were going away (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But while the five foolish virgins went away"

to buy (ULT)

You can state the understood information clearly. Alternate translation: "to buy more oil" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

the prepared (ULT)

These are the virgins who had extra oil.

the door was shut (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "the servants shut the door" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

10 But while they were going away to buy, the bridegroom came, and the prepared entered with him into the wedding feasts, and the door was shut.

Matthew 25:11

open for us (ULT)

You can state this implicit information explicitly. Alternate translation: "open the door for us so we can come inside" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

11 But afterward the other virgins also come, saying, 'Master, master, open for us.'

Matthew 25:12

Truly I say to you (ULT)

“I tell you the truth.” This adds emphasis to what the master says next.

I do not know you (ULT)

“I do not know who you are.” This is the end of the parable.

ULT

¹² But he, answering, said, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’

Matthew 25:13

you do not know the day nor the hour (ULT)

Here, **day** and **hour** refer to an exact time. Alternate translation: “you do not know the exact time” (See: [Metonymy](#))

you do not know the day nor the hour (ULT)

You can state the implied information explicitly. Alternate translation: “you do not know the exact time when the Son of Man will return” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

13 Therefore, stay alert, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

Matthew 25:14

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells a parable about faithful and unfaithful servants to illustrate that his disciples should remain faithful during his absence and be prepared for his return. (See: [Parables](#))

ULT

14 For {it is} like a man going to another country. He called his own slaves and handed over to them his possessions.

it is} like (ULT)

The word **it** here refers to the kingdom of heaven ([Matthew 13:24](#)).

going to another country (ULT)

Alternate translation: “was ready to go to another country” or “was to go soon to another country”

handed over to them his possessions (ULT)

Alternate translation: “put them in charge of his wealth”

his possessions (ULT)

Alternate translation: “his property” or “his wealth”

Matthew 25:15

five talents (ULT)

“five talents of gold.” Avoid translating this into modern money. A **talent** of gold was worth twenty years’ wages. The parable is contrasting the relative amounts of five, two, and one, as well as the large amount of wealth involved. Alternate translation: “five bags of gold” or “five bags of gold, each worth 20 years’ wages” (See: [Biblical Money](#))

ULT

15 And to one he gave five talents, and to one, two, and to one, one—to each according to his own ability. And immediately he went to another country.

and to one, two, and to one, one (ULT)

The word **talents** is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “and to another he gave two talents of gold, and to another he gave one talent of gold” or “and to another he gave two bags of gold, and to another he gave one bag of gold” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

according to his own ability (ULT)

You can state the implicit information explicitly. Alternate translation: “according to each servant’s skill in managing wealth” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 25:16

five talents...gained another (ULT)

Alternate translation: "out of his investments, he earned another five talents"

ULT

16 When he had gone, the one having received the five talents traded with them and gained another five talents.

Matthew 25:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable about the servants and the talents.
(See: [Parables](#))

with...two...gained another (ULT)

Alternate translation: "earned another two talents"

ULT

17 Likewise, the one with the two also gained another two.

Matthew 25:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁸ But the one having received the one,
having gone away, dug in the ground
and hid the money of his master.

Matthew 25:19

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling the parable about the servants and the talents. (See: [Parables](#))

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Jesus starts to tell a new part of the story.

ULT

19 Now after a long time, the master of those slaves comes and settles accounts with them.

Matthew 25:20

five talents...I gained (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I have earned five more talents"

talents (ULT)

A "talent" was worth twenty years' wages. Avoid translating this into modern money. See how you translated this in [Matthew 25:15](#). (See: [Biblical Money](#))

ULT

²⁰ And having approached, the one having received the five talents brought another five talents, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents. But behold, I gained five talents.'

Matthew 25:21

Well done (ULT)

“You have done well” or “You have done right.” Your culture might have an expression that a master (or someone in authority) would use to show that he approves of what his servant (or someone under him) has done.

Enter into the joy of your master (ULT)

The phrase **Enter into the joy** is an idiom. Alternate translation: “Come and be happy with me” (See: [Idiom](#))

Enter into the joy of your master (ULT)

The master is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

21 His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave! You have been faithful over a few things. I will appoint you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.’

Matthew 25:22

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling the parable about the servants and the talents. (See: [Parables](#))

with...two talents...I have gained (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I have earned two more talents"

ULT

²² The one with the two talents, having also approached, said, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents, but behold, I have gained two talents.'

Matthew 25:23

Well done (ULT)

“You have done well” or “You have done right.” Your culture might have an expression that a master (or someone in authority) would use to show that he approves of what his servant (or someone under him) has done. See how you translated this in [Matthew 25:21](#).

Enter into the joy of your master (ULT)

The phrase **Enter into the joy** is an idiom. See how you translated this in [Matthew 25:21](#). Alternate translation: “Come and be happy with me” (See: [Idiom](#))

Enter into the joy of your master (ULT)

The master is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

23 His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave! You have been faithful over a few things. I will appoint you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.’

Matthew 25:24

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling the parable about the servants and the talents. (See: [Parables](#))

reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter (ULT)

The words **reaping where you did not sow** and **gathering where you did not scatter** mean the same thing. (See: [Parallelism](#))

reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter (ULT)

This refers to a farmer who gathers crops that other people have planted. The servant uses this metaphor to accuse the master of taking what rightfully belongs to others. (See: [Metaphor](#))

you did not scatter (ULT)

“you did not scatter seed.” This refers to sowing seed by gently throwing handfuls of it onto the soil.

ULT

24 But the one who had received the one talent, having also approached, said, ‘Master, I know you, that you are a strict man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter.’

Matthew 25:25

talent...Behold, you have...yours (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Look, here is what is yours"

ULT

²⁵ And having become afraid, having gone away, I hid your talent in the ground. Behold, you have what {is} yours.'

Matthew 25:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable about the servants and the talents.
(See: [Parables](#))

You wicked and lazy slave! You have known (ULT)

Alternate translation: "You are a wicked slave who does not want to work. You knew"

ULT

26 But answering, his master said to him, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You have known that I reap where I did not sow and harvest where I did not scatter.'

I reap where I did not sow and harvest where I did not scatter (ULT)

The words **reap where I did not sow** and **harvest where I did not scatter** mean the same thing. (See: [Parallelism](#))

I reap where I did not sow and harvest where I did not scatter (ULT)

This refers to a farmer who gathers crops that people who work for him have planted. See how you translated this in [Matthew 25:24](#), where the servant uses these words to accuse the farmer. The readers should understand that the farmer is acknowledging that he does indeed gather what others have planted but is saying that he is right to do so. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Matthew 25:27

would have received back my money (ULT)

You can state the understood information clearly. Alternate translation: "I would have received back my own money" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

interest (ULT)

payment from the banker for the temporary use of the master's money

ULT

²⁷ Therefore, it was necessary for you to have placed my money at the bankers, and having come, I would have received back my money with interest.

Matthew 25:28

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes the parable about the servants and the talents. (See: [Parables](#))

take away...the talent (ULT)

The master is speaking to other servants.

the talent (ULT)

A **talent** was worth twenty years' wages. Avoid translating this into modern money. See how you translated this in [Matthew 25:15](#). (See: [Biblical Money](#))

ULT

28 Therefore, take away the talent from him and give it to the one having the ten talents.

Matthew 25:29

to the one...having (ULT)

It is implied that the person who has something also uses it wisely. Alternate translation: “to the one who uses well what he has” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

even more abundantly (ULT)

Alternate translation: “even much more”

But from the one not having (ULT)

It is implied that the person does have something but he does not use it wisely. Alternate translation: “But from the one does not use well what he has” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

will be taken away (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God will take away” or “I will take away” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁹ For to the one having, all will be given—even more abundantly. But from the one not having, even what he has will be taken away from him.

Matthew 25:30

the outer darkness (ULT)

Here, **outer darkness** is a metonym for the place where God sends those who reject them. This is a place that is completely separated from God forever. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12](#). Alternate translation: “the dark place away from God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

30 And throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and grinding of the teeth.’

weeping and grinding of the teeth (ULT)

Here, **grinding of teeth** is symbolic action, representing extreme sadness and suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12](#). Alternate translation: “weeping and expressing their extreme suffering” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

Matthew 25:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to tell his disciples how he will judge people when he returns at the end time.

the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

³¹ But when the Son of Man may come in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

Matthew 25:32

And before him will be gathered all the nations (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "And he will gather all the nations before himself" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³² And before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them from one another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

before him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "in front of him"

all the nations (ULT)

Here, **nations** refers to people. Alternate translation: "all people from every country" (See: [Metonymy](#))

just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats (ULT)

Jesus uses a simile to describe how he will separate the people. (See: [Simile](#))

Matthew 25:33**And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on his left**

This is a metaphor that means the Son of Man will separate all people. He will put the righteous people at his right side, and he will put the sinners at his left side. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on {his} left.

Matthew 25:34

the King...his (ULT)

Here, “the King” is another title for the Son of Man. Jesus was referring to himself in the third person. Alternate translation: “I, the King, ... my right hand” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Come, you who have been blessed by my Father (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “Come, you whom my Father has blessed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

by my Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

inherit the kingdom prepared for you (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “inherit the kingdom that God has made ready for you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

inherit the kingdom prepared for you (ULT)

Here, **kingdom** refers to God’s rule as king. Alternate translation: “receive the blessings of God’s rule that he has planned to give you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

from the foundation of the world (ULT)

Alternate translation: “since he first created the world”

ULT

³⁴ Then the King will say to those at his right, ‘Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’

Matthew 25:35

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁵ For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in;

Matthew 25:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁶ I was naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you cared for me; I was in prison, and you came to me.'

Matthew 25:37

the righteous (ULT)

You can state this as an adjective. Alternate translation: “the righteous people” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

Or thirsty (ULT)

You can state the understood information clearly. Alternate translation: “Or when did we see you thirsty” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you to drink?’

Matthew 25:38

Or naked (ULT)

This is the end of a series of questions that begins in verse 37. You can state the understood information clearly. Alternate translation: "Or when did we see you naked" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

38 And when did we see you a stranger and invite you in? Or naked and clothe you?

Matthew 25:39

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?’

Matthew 25:40

the King (ULT)

This is another title for the Son of Man. Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

will say to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "will say to those at his right hand"

Truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This emphasizes what the King says next.

for one...of...least...brothers (ULT)

Alternate translation: "for one of the least important"

of these brothers of mine (ULT)

Here, **brothers** refers to anyone, male or female, who obeys the King. Alternate translation: "my brothers and sisters here" or "these who are like my brothers and sisters" (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

you did it...for me (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I consider that you did it for me"

ULT

40 And answering, the King will say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.'

Matthew 25:41

Then he also will say (ULT)

“Then the King also will.” Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

you cursed (ULT)

Alternate translation: “you people whom God has cursed”

the everlasting fire that has been prepared (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the everlasting fire that God has prepared” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to those...his...angels (ULT)

Satan's helpers

ULT

41 Then he also will say to those on {his} left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels,

Matthew 25:42

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴² for I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and you did not give me to drink;

Matthew 25:43

naked, and you did not clothe me (ULT)

The words **I was** preceding **naked** are understood. Alternate translation: "I was naked, but you did not give me clothes" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

sick and in prison (ULT)

The words "I was" preceding **sick** are understood. Alternate translation: "I was sick and in prison" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁴³ I was a stranger, and you did not invite me in; naked, and you did not clothe me; sick and in prison, and you did not care for me.'

Matthew 25:44

General Information:

This is the end of the part of the story that began in [Matthew 23:1](#), where Jesus teaches about salvation and the final judgment.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes telling his disciples how he will judge people when he returns at the end time.

they will also answer (ULT)

Alternate translation: "those on his left will also answer"

ULT

44 Then they will also answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not serve you?'

Matthew 25:45

for one of the least of these (ULT)

Alternate translation: "for any of the least important ones of my people"

you did...do it...not...for me (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I consider that you did not do it for me" or "I was really the one whom you did not help"

ULT

⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it for one of the least of these, you did not do it for me.'

Matthew 25:46

And these will go away into everlasting punishment (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And the King will send these to a place where they will receive punishment that never ends"

ULT

⁴⁶ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life."

but the righteous into everlasting life (ULT)

The understood information can be made clear. Alternate translation: "but the King will send the righteous to the place where they will live forever with God" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

the...righteous (ULT)

You can state this nominative adjective as an adjective. Alternate translation: "the righteous people" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

Matthew 26

Matthew 26 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 26:31, which is words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Sheep

Sheep are a common image used in Scripture to refer to the people of Israel. In [Matthew 26:31](#), however, Jesus used the words “the sheep” to refer to his disciples and to say that they would run away when he was arrested.

Passover

The Passover festival was when the Jews would celebrate the day God killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians but “passed over” the Israelites and let them live.

The eating of the body and blood

[Matthew 26:26-28](#) describes Jesus’ last meal with his followers. At this time, Jesus told them that what they were eating and drinking were his body and his blood. Nearly all Christian churches celebrate “the Lord’s Supper,” the “Eucharist”, or “Holy Communion” to remember this meal.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Judas’ kiss for Jesus

[Matthew 26:49](#) describes how Judas kissed Jesus so the soldiers would know whom to arrest. The Jews would kiss each other when they greeted each other.

“I am able to destroy the temple of God”

Two men accused Jesus of saying that he could destroy the temple in Jerusalem and then rebuild it “in three days” ([Matthew 26:61](#)). They were accusing him of insulting God by claiming that God had given him the authority to destroy the temple and the power to rebuild it. What Jesus actually said was that if the Jewish authorities were to destroy this temple, he would certainly raise it up in three days ([John 2:19](#)).

Matthew 26:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story that tells of Jesus' crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Here he tells his disciples how he will suffer and die.

ULT

¹ And it happened that when Jesus had finished all these words, he said to his disciples,

And it happened that when (ULT)

“And after” or “Then, after.” This phrase shifts the story from Jesus' teachings to what happened next.

all these words (ULT)

This refers to all that Jesus taught starting in [Matthew 24:3](#).

Matthew 26:2

the Son of Man is being delivered up to be crucified (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “some men will take the Son of Man to other people who will crucify him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

² “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is being delivered up to be crucified.”

the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Matthew 26:3

Connecting Statement:

These verses give background information about the Jewish leaders' plot to arrest and kill Jesus. (See: [Background Information](#))

were gathered together (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "came together" or "met together" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the palace of the high priest, who was named Caiaphas.

Matthew 26:4

stealthily (ULT)

Alternate translation: "secretly"

ULT

⁴ And they plotted together in order that they might arrest Jesus stealthily and might kill him.

Matthew 26:5

Not during the festival (ULT)

It may be helpful to your readers to state What the leaders did not want to do during the festival. Alternate translation: “We should not kill Jesus during the festival” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

during the festival (ULT)

This is the yearly Passover festival.

ULT

⁵ But they were saying, “Not during the festival, so that a riot does not happen among the people.”

Matthew 26:6

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of a woman pouring expensive oil on Jesus before his death.

ULT

⁶ Now while Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

of Simon the leper (ULT)

It is implied that this is a man whom Jesus had healed from leprosy. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 26:7

as he is reclining to eat (ULT)

“and Jesus was lying on his side.” You can use your language’s word for the position people usually are in when they eat.

a woman came to him (ULT)

Alternate translation: “a woman came to Jesus”

an alabaster jar (ULT)

This is a costly container made of soft stone. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

of very expensive ointment (ULT)

oil that has a pleasing smell

she poured it upon his head (ULT)

The woman did this to honor Jesus.

ULT

⁷ a woman came to him having an alabaster jar of very expensive ointment, and she poured it upon his head as he is reclining to eat.

Matthew 26:8

For what {is} this waste (ULT)

The disciples ask this question out of their anger over the woman's actions. Alternate translation: "This woman has done a bad thing by wasting this ointment!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁸ Now having seen this, the disciples became angry, saying, "For what {is} this waste?"

Matthew 26:9

For this was able to have been sold for much and to be given (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "For she could have sold this for a large amount of money and given the money" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁹ For this was able to have been sold for much and to be given to the poor."

to the poor (ULT)

You can state **the poor** as an adjective. Alternate translation: "to poor people" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

Matthew 26:10

Why are you causing trouble for this woman (ULT)

Jesus asks this question as a rebuke of his disciples. Alternate translation: "You should not be troubling this woman!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

are you causing (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural and refers to the disciples. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

¹⁰ But Jesus, knowing this, said to them, "Why are you causing trouble for this woman? For she has done a good work for me."

Matthew 26:11

the poor (ULT)

You can state this as an adjective. Alternate translation: “poor people” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

11 For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.

Matthew 26:12

ointment (ULT)

This is oil that has a pleasing smell. See how you translated this in [Matthew 26:7](#).

ULT

12 For when she poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.

Matthew 26:13

Truly I say to you (ULT)

“I tell you the truth.” This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

wherever this gospel might be preached (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “wherever people preach this good news” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

what she has done will also be spoken of in memory of her (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “they will remember what this woman has done and will tell others about her” or “people will remember what this woman has done and will tell others about her” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

13 Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel might be preached in the whole world, what she has done will also be spoken of in memory of her.”

Matthew 26:14

Connecting Statement:

Judas Iscariot agrees to help the Jewish leaders arrest and kill Jesus.

ULT

14 Then one of the Twelve, who was named Judas Iscariot, having gone to the chief priests,

Matthew 26:15

and I will betray him to you (ULT)

Alternate translation: "and I will bring Jesus to you"

30 shekels of silver (ULT)

Since these words are the same as those in an Old Testament prophecy, keep this form instead of changing it to modern money.

30 shekels of silver (ULT)

"thirty pieces of silver" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

¹⁵ said, "What are you willing to give me, and I will betray him to you?" And they weighed out 30 shekels of silver for him.

Matthew 26:16

in order that he might betray him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "so that he would give him over to them"

ULT

16 And from that moment he began to seek an opportunity in order that he might betray him.

Matthew 26:17

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus celebrating the Passover with his disciples.

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

ULT

17 Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want that we might prepare for you to eat the Passover?"

Matthew 26:18

And he said, “Go into the city to such a man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is near. I am doing the Passover at your {house} with my disciples (ULT)”’”

This has quotations within quotations. You can state some of the direct quotations as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: “But he told his disciples to go into the city to a certain man and tell him that the Teacher says to him, ‘My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’” or “But he told his disciples to go into the city to a certain man and say to him that the Teacher’s time is at hand and he will keep the Passover with his disciples at that man’s house.” (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#))

ULT

¹⁸ And he said, “Go into the city to such a man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is near. I am doing the Passover at your {house} with my disciples.”’”

he...My...time (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) the time that Jesus told them about. (2) the time God has set for Jesus.

is near (ULT)

This could mean: (1) it “is near.” (2) it “has come.” (See: [Idiom](#))

I am doing the Passover (ULT)

Alternate translation: “I am eat the Passover meal” or “I am celebrating the Passover by eating the special meal”

Matthew 26:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁹ And the disciples did as Jesus directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

Matthew 26:20

he was reclining to eat (ULT)

Use the word for the position people in your culture usually are in when they eat.

ULT

20 Now evening having come, he was reclining to eat with the Twelve.

Matthew 26:21

Truly I say to you (ULT)

“I tell you the truth.” This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

ULT

²¹ And as they were eating, he said,
“Truly I say to you that one of you will
betray me.”

Matthew 26:22

Surely not I, Lord (ULT)

“I am surely not the one, am I, Lord?” This could be: (1) a rhetorical question since the apostles were sure they would not betray Jesus. Alternate translation: “Lord, I would never betray you!” (2) a sincere question since Jesus’ statement probably troubled and confused them. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²² And being very grieved, each one began to ask him, “Surely not I, Lord?”

Matthew 26:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ But he, answering, said, "The one who dipped {his} hand with me in the dish, he will betray me.

Matthew 26:24

The Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

will depart (ULT)

Here, **depart** is a polite way to refer to dying. Alternate translation: “will go to his death” or “will die” (See: [Euphemism](#))

just as it is written about him (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “just as the prophets wrote about him in the scriptures” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “to the man who betrays the Son of Man” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

24 The Son of Man will depart just as it is written about him. But woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It was better for him if that man had not been born.”

Matthew 26:25

Surely it is not I, Rabbi (ULT)

“Rabbi, am I the one who will betray you?” Judas may be using a rhetorical question to deny that he is the one who will betray Jesus. Alternate translation: “Rabbi, surely I am not the one who will betray you!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁵ But answering, Judas, the one betraying him, said, “Surely it is not I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said it yourself.”

You have said it yourself (ULT)

This is an idiom that Jesus uses to mean “yes” without being completely clear about what he means. Alternate translation: “You are saying it” or “You are admitting it” (See: [Idiom](#))

Matthew 26:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper as he celebrates the Passover with his disciples.

having taken...having blessed it, he broke it (ULT)

See how you translated these words in [Matthew 14:19](#).

ULT

26 Now as they are eating, Jesus, having taken bread and having blessed it, he broke it. And having given it to the disciples, he said, "Take, eat. This is my body."

Matthew 26:27

a cup (ULT)

Here, **cup** refers to both the cup and the wine in it. (See: [Metonymy](#))

he gave it to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he gave it to the disciples"

Drink from it (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Drink the wine from this cup"

ULT

27 And having taken a cup and having given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

Matthew 26:28

For this is my blood (ULT)

Alternate translation: "For this wine is my blood"

blood...of the covenant (ULT)

Alternate translation: "blood that shows that the covenant is in effect" or "blood that makes the covenant possible"

is being poured out (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "will soon flow out of my body" or "will flow out of my wounds when I die" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁸ For this is my blood of the covenant that is being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Matthew 26:29

I say...to you (ULT)

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

fruit of the vine (ULT)

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

in the kingdom of my Father (ULT)

Here, **kingdom** refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "when my Father establishes his rule on earth" (See: [Metonymy](#))

of my Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

²⁹ But I say to you, I may certainly not drink again from this fruit of the vine until that day when I may drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father."

Matthew 26:30

General Information:

In verse 31, Jesus quotes the prophet Zechariah to show that in order to fulfill prophecy, all of his disciples will leave him.

ULT

³⁰ And having sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples as they walk to the Mount of Olives.

And having sung a hymn (ULT)

a song of praise to God

Matthew 26:31

will be caused to stumble in me (ULT)

Alternate translation: "will leave me"

for it is written (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "for the prophet Zechariah wrote long ago in the scriptures" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³¹ Then Jesus said to them, "You all will be caused to stumble in me in this very night, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'"

I will strike (ULT)

Here, **I** refers to God. It is implied that God will cause or allow people to harm and kill Jesus. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the shepherd...the sheep of the flock (ULT)

These are metaphors that refer to Jesus and the disciples. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the sheep of the flock will be scattered (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "they will scatter all the sheep of the flock" or "the sheep of the flock will run off in all directions" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 26:32

after...I am raised up (ULT)

Here to be **raised up** is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³² But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

after...am raised up (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "after God raises me up" or "after God brings me back to life" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 26:33

will be caused to stumble (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Matthew 26:31](#).

ULT

³³ But answering, Peter said to him,
“{Even} if all will be caused to stumble
in you, I will never be caused to
stumble.”

Matthew 26:34

Truly I say to you (ULT)

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

before the rooster crows (ULT)

A **rooster** often **crows** about the time the sun comes up, so the hearers might have understood these words as a metonym for the sun coming up. However, the actual crowing of a rooster is an important part of the story later on, so keep the word **rooster** in the translation. (See: [Metonymy](#))

the rooster (ULT)

a male chicken, a bird that calls out loudly around the time the sun comes up

crows (ULT)

This is the common English word for what a rooster does to make his loud call.

you will deny me three times (ULT)

Alternate translation: "you will say three times that you are not my follower"

ULT

³⁴ Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, in this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."

Matthew 26:35

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁵ Peter says to him, “Even if it might be necessary for me to die with you, I will certainly not deny you.” And all the disciples said likewise.

Matthew 26:36

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus praying in Gethsemane.

ULT

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane and says to the disciples, "Sit here while, having gone over there, I might pray."

Matthew 26:37

he began to be grieved (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he became very sad"

ULT

³⁷ And having taken along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be grieved and to be troubled.

Matthew 26:38

My soul is deeply sorrowful (ULT)

Here, **soul** refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "I am very sad" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

to the point of death (ULT)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "and I feel as if I could even die" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

38 Then he says to them, "My soul is deeply sorrowful, to the point of death. Remain here and watch with me."

Matthew 26:39

he fell on his face (ULT)

He purposely lay face down on the ground to pray. (See: [Idiom](#))

My Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God that shows the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

³⁹ And having gone a little farther, he fell on his face, praying and saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me. Yet, not as I will, but as you."

let this cup pass away from me (ULT)

Jesus speaks of the work that he must do, including dying on the cross, as if it were a bitter liquid that God has commanded him to drink from a cup. The word **cup** is an important word in the New Testament, so try to use an equivalent for that in your translation. (See: [Metaphor](#))

this cup (ULT)

Here, **cup** is a metonym that stands for the cup and the contents within it. (See: [Metonymy](#))

this cup (ULT)

The contents in the cup are a metaphor for the suffering that Jesus will have to endure. Jesus is asking the Father if it is possible for him not to have to experience the death and suffering that Jesus knows will soon happen. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Yet, not as I will, but as you (ULT)

This can be expressed as a full sentence. Alternate translation: "But do not do what I want; instead, do what you want" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Matthew 26:40**he says to Peter, “So, were you not able...to watch (ULT)**

Jesus is speaking to Peter, but the **you** is plural, referring to Peter, James, and John. (See: [Forms of You](#))

So, were you not able to watch with me for one hour (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to scold Peter, James, and John. Alternate translation: “I am disappointed that you could not stay awake with me for one hour!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴⁰ And he comes to the disciples and finds them sleeping, and he says to Peter, “So, were you not able to watch with me for one hour?”

Matthew 26:41

you might not enter into temptation (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **temptation**, you can express it as a verb. Alternate translation: “no one tempts you to sin” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁴¹ Watch and pray so that you might not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed {is} willing, but the flesh {is} weak.”

The spirit indeed {is} willing, but the flesh {is} weak (ULT)

Here, **spirit** is a metonym that stands for a person’s desires to do good. (See: [Metonymy](#))

The spirit indeed {is} willing, but the flesh {is} weak (ULT)

Flesh stands for the needs and desires of a person’s body. Jesus means that the disciples may have the desire to do what God wants, but as humans they are weak and often fail. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Matthew 26:42

having gone away (ULT)

Alternate translation: “after Jesus went away”

a second time (ULT)

The first time is described in [Matthew 26:39](#). (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

My Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

if this is not able to pass away unless I might drink it (ULT)

“if the only way this can pass away is if I drink it.” Jesus speaks of the work that he must do as if it were a bitter liquid that God has commanded him to **drink**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

if...this (ULT)

Here, **this** refers to the cup and the contents within it, a metaphor for suffering, as in [Matthew 26:39](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

unless I might drink it (ULT)

“unless I drink from it” or “unless I drink from this cup of suffering.” Here, **it** refers to the cup and the contents within it, a metaphor for suffering, as in [Matthew 26:39](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

let your will be done (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “may what you want happen” or “do what you want to do” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴² Again, having gone away a second time, he prayed, saying, “My Father, if this is not able to pass away unless I might drink it, let your will be done.”

Matthew 26:43

were...their eyes...weighed down (ULT)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “they were very sleepy” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

43 And having come again, he found them sleeping, for their eyes were weighed down.

Matthew 26:44

a third time (ULT)

The first time is described in [Matthew 26:39](#). (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

44 And having left them again, having gone away, he prayed a third time, having said the same words again.

Matthew 26:45

Are you still sleeping and taking your rest (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to scold the disciples for going to sleep.
Alternate translation: "I am disappointed that you are still sleeping and resting!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the hour has approached (ULT)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "the time has come" (See: [Idiom](#))

the Son of Man is being betrayed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "someone is betraying the Son of Man" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

is being betrayed into the hands of sinners (ULT)

Here, **hands** refers to power or control. Alternate translation: "betrayed into the power of sinners" or "betrayed so that sinners will have power over him" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Behold (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

ULT

⁴⁵ Then he comes to the disciples and says to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour has approached, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners."

Matthew 26:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁶ Get up, that we might go. Behold, the one betraying me has approached."

Matthew 26:47

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of when Judas betrayed Jesus and the religious leaders arrested him.

And as he is still speaking (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And while Jesus was still speaking"

clubs (ULT)

large pieces of hard wood for hitting people

ULT

47 And as he is still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the Twelve, came, and with him, a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

Matthew 26:48

Now (ULT)

Here, **Now** is used to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew tells background information about Judas and the signal he planned to use to betray Jesus. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

48 Now the one betraying him gave them a signal, saying, "Whomever I might kiss is him. Seize him."

saying, "Whomever I might kiss is him. Seize him (ULT)

You can state this direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "saying that whomever he kissed was the one they should seize." (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

Whomever I might kiss (ULT)

Alternate translation: "The one I kiss" or "The man whom I kiss"

I might kiss (ULT)

This was a respectful way to greet one's teacher.

Matthew 26:49

having come up to Jesus (ULT)

Alternate translation: "when Judas came up to Jesus"

he kissed him (ULT)

ULT

⁴⁹ And immediately, having come up to Jesus, he said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and he kissed him.

"he met him with a kiss." Good friends would kiss each other on the cheek, but a disciple would probably kiss his master on the hand to show respect. No one knows for sure how Judas **kissed** Jesus.

Matthew 26:50

they laid hands (ULT)

Here, **they** refers to the people with clubs and swords that came with Judas and the religious leaders.

they laid hands on Jesus and seized him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they grabbed Jesus, and arrested him"

ULT

50 But Jesus said to him, "Friend, for that which you are here." Then having come, they laid hands on Jesus and seized him.

Matthew 26:51

And behold (ULT)

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

ULT

51 And behold, one of those with Jesus, having stretched out {his} hand, drew his sword, and having struck the servant of the high priest, cut off his ear.

Matthew 26:52

those who have taken up a sword (ULT)

The word **sword** is a metonym for the act of killing someone with a sword. (See: [Metonymy](#))

those who have taken up a sword (ULT)

You can state the implied information explicitly. Alternate translation: “who pick up a sword to kill others” or “who want to kill other people” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

a sword will perish by a sword (ULT)

Alternate translation: “a sword will die by means of the sword” or “a sword—it is with the sword that someone will kill them”

ULT

⁵² Then Jesus says to him, “Return your sword to its place, for all those who have taken up a sword will perish by a sword.”

Matthew 26:53

Or do you think that I am not able to call upon my Father, and he will send me more than 12 legions of angels at once (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to remind the person with the sword that Jesus could stop those who are arresting him. Alternate translation: “Surely you know that I could upon my Father, and he would send me more than 12 legions of angels at once.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵³ Or do you think that I am not able to call upon my Father, and he will send me more than 12 legions of angels at once?

do you think (ULT)

Here, **you** is singular and refers to the person with the sword. (See: [Forms of You](#))

my Father (ULT)

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

more than 12 legions of angels (ULT)

The word **legion** is a military term that refers to a group of about 6,000 soldiers. Jesus means God would send enough angels to easily stop those who are arresting Jesus. The exact number of angels is not important. Alternate translation: “more than 12 really large groups of angels” (See: [Numbers](#))

Matthew 26:54

How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, that this must happen (ULT)

Jesus uses a question to explain why he is letting these people arrest him. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵⁴ How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, that this must happen?"

How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, that this must happen (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "But if I did that, I would not be able to fulfill what God said in the scriptures must happen" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 26:55

Have you come out with swords and clubs to seize me, as against a robber (ULT)

Jesus is using this question to point out the wrong actions of those arresting him. Alternate translation: "You know that I am not a robber, so it is wrong for you to come out to me bringing swords and clubs" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵⁵ At that hour Jesus said to the crowd, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to seize me, as against a robber? Every day I was sitting teaching in the temple, and you did not arrest me."

clubs (ULT)

large pieces of hard wood for hitting people

in the temple (ULT)

It is implied that Jesus was not in the actual **temple**. He was in the courtyard around the temple. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 26:56

the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "I would fulfill all that the prophets wrote in the scriptures" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵⁶ But all this has happened so that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples, having left him, fled.

having left him (ULT)

If your language has a word that means they left him when they should have stayed with him, use it here.

Matthew 26:57

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus' trial before the council of Jewish religious leaders.

ULT

57 Now those who had seized Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had been gathered together.

Matthew 26:58

But Peter was following him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But Peter followed Jesus"

the courtyard of the high priest (ULT)

an open area near the high priest's house

And having entered inside (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And after Peter went inside"

ULT

⁵⁸ But Peter was following him from a distance to the courtyard of the high priest. And having entered inside, he sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

Matthew 26:59

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

they might put him to death (ULT)

Here, **they** refers to the chief priests and the members of the council.

they might put him to death (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they might have a reason to execute him"

ULT

59 Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death.

Matthew 26:60

two, having come forward (ULT)

Alternate translation: "two men who had come forward" or "two witnesses who came forward"

ULT

⁶⁰ But they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. But later two, having come forward,

Matthew 26:61

said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days (ULT)

If your language does not allow quotes within quotes you can rewrite it as a single quote. Alternate translation: “This man said that he is able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.” (See: [Quotations and Quote Margins](#))

ULT

⁶¹ said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.’”

This man said (ULT)

Alternate translation: “This man Jesus said”

in three days (ULT)

“within three days,” before the sun goes down three times, not “after three days,” after the sun has gone down the third time

Matthew 26:62

What is it that they are testifying against you (ULT)

The chief priest is not asking Jesus for information about what the witnesses said. He is asking Jesus to prove what the witnesses said is wrong. Alternate translation: "What is your response to what the witnesses are testifying against you?"

ULT

⁶² And having stood up, the high priest said to him, "Do you answer nothing? What is it that they are testifying against you?"

Matthew 26:63

the Son of God (ULT)

This is an important title that describes the relationship between the Christ and God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

the living God

Here, **living** contrasts the **God** of Israel to all the false gods and idols that people worshiped. Only the God of Israel is alive and has power to act. See how you translated this in [Matthew 16:16](#).

ULT

63 But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to him, "I command you by the living God, so that you might tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

Matthew 26:64

You have said it yourself (ULT)

This is an idiom that Jesus uses to mean “yes” without being completely clear about what he means. Alternate translation: “You are saying it” or “You are admitting it” (See: [Idiom](#))

But I say to you, from now on you will see (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural. Jesus is speaking to the high priest and to the other persons there. (See: [Forms of You](#))

from now on you will see the Son of Man (ULT)

The phrase **from now on** could: (1) be an idiom that means they will see the Son of Man in his power at some time in the future. (2) means that from the time of Jesus’ trial and onward, Jesus is showing himself to be the Messiah who is powerful and victorious.

the Son of Man (ULT)

Jesus is speaking about himself in third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

sitting at the right hand of the Power (ULT)

Here, **Power** is metonym that represents God. (See: [Metonymy](#))

sitting at the right hand of the Power (ULT)

To sit at the **right hand of God** is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: “sitting in the place of honor beside the all-powerful God” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

of Man...coming on the clouds...of heaven (ULT)

Alternate translation: “riding to earth on the clouds of heaven”

ULT

⁶⁴ Jesus says to him, “You have said it yourself. But I say to you, from now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Matthew 26:65

the high priest tore his robe (ULT)

Tearing clothing was a sign of anger and sadness. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

He has blasphemed (ULT)

The reason the high priest called Jesus' statement **blasphemy** is probably that he understood Jesus' words in [Matthew 26:64](#) as a claim to be equal with God. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Why do we still have need of witnesses (ULT)

The high priest uses this question to emphasize that he and the members of the council do not need to hear from any more witnesses. Alternate translation: "We do not need to hear from any more witnesses!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

now you have heard (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural and refers to the members of the council. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

65 Then the high priest tore his robe, saying, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still have need of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy."

Matthew 26:66

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶⁶ What do you think?" And they, answering, said, "He is deserving of death."

Matthew 26:67

Then they spit (ULT)

This could mean: (1) some of the men spit. (2) the soldiers spit.

they spit in his face (ULT)

This was done as an insult.

ULT

67 Then they spit in his face and beat him, and they slapped him,

Matthew 26:68

Prophecy to us (ULT)

Here, **Prophecy to us** means to tell by means of God's power. It does not mean to tell what will happen in the future.

ULT

68 saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who is the one who struck you?"

Christ (ULT)

Those hitting Jesus do not really think he is the **Christ**. They call him this to mock him. (See: [Irony](#))

Matthew 26:69

General Information:

These events happen at the same time as Jesus' trial before the religious leaders.

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of how Peter denies three times that he knows Jesus, as Jesus said he would do.

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

ULT

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and one servant girl came to him, saying, "You were also with Jesus of Galilee."

Matthew 26:70

I do not know what you are saying (ULT)

Peter was able to understand what the servant girl was saying. He used these words to deny that he had been with Jesus.

ULT

70 But he denied it in front of them all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."

Matthew 26:71

But when he had gone out (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But when Peter went out"

the gateway (ULT)

opening in the wall around a courtyard

says to those there (ULT)

Alternate translation: "said to the people who were sitting there"

ULT

⁷¹ But when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and says to those there, "This one was with Jesus of Nazareth."

Matthew 26:72

And he again denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man!”

Alternate translation: “And he denied it again by swearing, ‘I do not know the man!’”

ULT

⁷² And he again denied it with an oath,
“I do not know the man!”

Matthew 26:73

from among them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "one of those who were with Jesus"

also...for...your speech makes you evident (ULT)

You can translate this as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "We can tell you are from Galilee because you speak like a Galilean"

ULT

73 But after a little while, those who had been standing by, having approached, said to Peter, "Surely you are also from among them, for even your speech makes you evident."

Matthew 26:74**to curse (ULT)**

Alternate translation: "to call down a curse on himself"

a rooster crowed (ULT)

A **rooster** is a bird that calls out loudly around the time the sun comes up. The sound a rooster makes is called "crowing." See how you translated this in [Matthew 26:34](#).

ULT

74 Then he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know the man," and immediately a rooster crowed.

Matthew 26:75

And Peter remembered the words of Jesus that he had said, “Before the rooster crows you will deny me three times.”

You can state this direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “Peter remembered that Jesus told him that before the rooster crowed, he would deny Jesus three times.” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the words of Jesus that he had said, “Before the rooster crows you will deny me three times.” And having gone outside, he wept bitterly.

Matthew 27

Matthew 27 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

“Delivered him to Pilate the governor”

The Jewish leaders needed to get permission from Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, before they could kill Jesus. This was because Roman law did not allow them to kill Jesus themselves. Pilate wanted to set Jesus free, but they wanted him to free a very bad prisoner named Barabbas.

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried ([Matthew 27:60](#)) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Sarcasm

The soldiers said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ([Matthew 27:29](#)) to mock Jesus. They did not think that he was the king of the Jews. (See: [Irony](#))

Matthew 27:1

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus' trial before Pilate.

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

ULT

¹ Now when it had become morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus so as to put him to death.

took counsel...against Jesus so as to put him to death (ULT)

The Jewish leaders were planning how they could convince the Roman leaders to kill Jesus. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 27:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² And having bound him, they led him away and delivered him to Pilate the governor.

Matthew 27:3

General Information:

This event happened after Jesus' trial in front of the council of Jewish religious leaders, but we do not know if it happened before or during Jesus' trial before Pilate. (See: [Order of Events](#))

Connecting Statement:

The author has stopped telling the story of Jesus' trial so he can tell the story of how Judas killed himself.

Then Judas, who had betrayed him, having seen (ULT)

If your language has a way of showing that a new story is starting, you may want to use that here.

that he was condemned (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "that the Jewish leaders had condemned Jesus" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the 30 shekels of silver (ULT)

This was the money that the chief priests had given Judas to betray Jesus. See how you translated it in [Matthew 26:15](#).

ULT

³ Then Judas, who had betrayed him, having seen that he was condemned, having repented, he returned the 30 shekels of silver to the chief priests and elders,

Matthew 27:4

innocent blood (ULT)

This is an idiom that refers to the death of an **innocent** person.
Alternate translation: "a person who does not deserve to die" (See: [Idiom](#))

What {is that} to us (ULT)

The Jewish leaders use this question to emphasize that they do not care about what Judas said. Alternate translation: "That is not our problem!" or "That is your problem!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ saying, "I have sinned, having betrayed innocent blood." But they said, "What {is that} to us? See to that yourself."

Matthew 27:5

having thrown down the shekels of silver in the temple (ULT)

This could mean: (1) he threw **the pieces of silver** while in the **temple** courtyard. (2) he was standing in the temple courtyard, and he threw **the pieces of silver** into the **temple**.

ULT

⁵ And having thrown down the shekels of silver in the temple, he departed and having gone out, he hanged himself.

Matthew 27:6

It is not lawful to put this (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Our laws do not allow us to put this"

to put this (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to put this silver"

the treasury (ULT)

This is the place they kept the money they used to provide for things needed for the temple and the priests. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the price of blood (ULT)

This is an idiom that means money paid to a person who helped kill someone. Alternate translation: "money paid for a man to die" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁶ Now the chief priests, having taken the shekels of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put this into the treasury, because it is the price of blood."

Matthew 27:7

the field of the potter (ULT)

This was a **field** that was bought to bury strangers who died in Jerusalem.

ULT

⁷ But having taken counsel, they bought with the money the field of the potter for a burial place for strangers.

Matthew 27:8

that field has been called (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “people call that field” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to this day (ULT)

This means to the time that Matthew is writing this book.

ULT

⁸ For this reason that field has been called “Field of Blood” to this day.

Matthew 27:9

General Information:

The author quotes Old Testament scripture to show that Judas' suicide was a fulfillment of prophecy.

Then what had been spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "This fulfilled what the prophet Jeremiah spoke" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the price of the one whose price had been set by the sons of Israel (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "the price the people of Israel set on him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the sons of Israel (ULT)

This refers to those among the people of **Israel** who paid to kill Jesus. Alternate translation: "some of the people of Israel" or "the leaders of Israel" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ Then what had been spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, saying, "And they took the 30 shekels of silver, the price of the one whose price had been set by the sons of Israel,

Matthew 27:10

had directed me (ULT)

Here, **me** refers to Jeremiah.

ULT

¹⁰ and they gave it for the field of the potter, as the Lord had directed me.”

Matthew 27:11

Connecting Statement:

This continues the story of Jesus' trial before Pilate, which began in [Matthew 27:2](#).

Now (ULT)

If your language has a way of continuing a story after a break from the main story line, you may want to use it here.

the governor (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Pilate"

It {is as} you say (ULT)

This could mean: (1) Jesus implied that he is the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "Yes, as you said, I am" or "Yes. It is as you said" (2) Jesus was saying that Pilate, not Jesus, was the one calling him the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "You yourself have said so" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

11 Now Jesus was stood before the governor, and the governor questioned him, saying, "Are you the King of the Jews?" But Jesus said, "It {is as} you say."

Matthew 27:12

And when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "And when the chief priests and elders accused him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² And when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he answered nothing.

Matthew 27:13

Do you not hear everything they are bringing against you (ULT)

Pilate asks this question because he is surprised that Jesus remains silent. Alternate translation: "I am surprised that you do not answer these people who accuse you of doing bad things!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹³ Then Pilate says to him, "Do you not hear everything they are bringing against you?"

Matthew 27:14

he did not answer him not even with one word, so as to amaze the governor greatly (ULT)

“he did not say even one word; this greatly amazed the governor.”
This is an emphatic way of saying that Jesus was completely silent.

ULT

¹⁴ But he did not answer him not even with one word, so as to amaze the governor greatly.

Matthew 27:15

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line so Matthew can give information to help the reader understand what happens beginning in [Matthew 27:17](#). (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

15 Now at the festival it had become the custom of the governor to release to the crowd one prisoner whom they chose.

the festival (ULT)

This is the festival for the Passover celebration.

to the crowd one prisoner whom they chose (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “one prisoner whom the crowd would choose” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Matthew 27:16

they were holding...a notorious prisoner (ULT)

Alternate translation: "there was a notorious prisoner"

notorious (ULT)

well known for doing something bad

ULT

¹⁶ Now at that time they were holding a notorious prisoner named Barabbas.

Matthew 27:17

when...were gathered together...they (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "when the crowd gathered" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

who is called Christ (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "whom some people call the Christ" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Who do you want that I might release for you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"

Matthew 27:18

they had handed him over to him (ULT)

“the Jewish leaders had brought Jesus to him.” They had done this so that Pilate would judge Jesus.

ULT

18 For he had known that they had handed him over to him because of envy.

Matthew 27:19

But while he was sitting (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But while Pilate was sitting"

while...was sitting...he...on the judgment seat (ULT)

"while he was sitting on the judge's seat." This is where a judge would sit while making a decision.

sent word (ULT)

Alternate translation: "sent a message"

much...I suffered...today (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I have been very upset today"

ULT

19 But while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, saying, "Nothing to you and to that righteous one. For I suffered much today by way of a dream about him."

Matthew 27:20

Now (ULT)

Here, **now** is used to mark a break in the main story line. Matthew tells background information about why the crowd chose Barabbas. (See: [Background Information](#))

but would kill Jesus (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “but have the Roman soldiers kill Jesus” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds so that they would ask for Barabbas, but would kill Jesus.

Matthew 27:21

said to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "asked the crowd"

ULT

²¹ But answering, the governor said to them, "Which from the two do you want that I would release to you?" But they said, "Barabbas."

Matthew 27:22

who is called Christ (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "whom some people call the Christ" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²² Pilate says to them, "What then should I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all answer, "Crucify him."

Matthew 27:23

did he do (ULT)

Alternate translation: "has Jesus done"

they...cried out (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the crowd cried out"

ULT

²³ But he said, "For what evil did he do?" But they cried out even louder, saying, "Crucify him."

Matthew 27:24

washed {his} hands in front of the crowd (ULT)

Pilate does this as a sign that he is not responsible for Jesus' death.
(See: [Symbolic Action](#))

the blood (ULT)

Here, **blood** refers to a person's death. Alternate translation: "the death" (See: [Metonymy](#))

See to it yourselves (ULT)

Alternate translation: "This is your responsibility"

ULT

24 But Pilate, having seen that he is not helping, but instead a riot is starting, having taken water, washed {his} hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent from the blood of this man. See to it yourselves."

Matthew 27:25

His blood be on us and on our children (ULT)

Here, **blood** is a metonym that stands for a person's death. (See: [Metonymy](#))

His blood be on us and on our children (ULT)

The phrase **be on us and our children** is an idiom that means they accept the responsibility of what is happening. Alternate translation: "Yes! We and our descendants will be responsible for executing him" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁵ And answering, all the people said,
"His blood be on us and on our
children!"

Matthew 27:26

Then he released Barabbas to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Then Pilate released Barabbas to the crowd"

but having scourged Jesus, he handed him over so that he would be crucified (ULT)

It is implied that Pilate ordered his soldiers to scourge Jesus. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

but having scourged Jesus, he handed him over so that he would be crucified (ULT)

It is implied that Pilate ordered his soldiers to scourge Jesus. Handing Jesus over to be crucified is a metaphor for ordering his soldiers to crucify Jesus. Alternate translation: "he ordered his soldiers to scourge Jesus and to crucify him" (See: [Metaphor](#))

having scourged Jesus

Alternate translation: "having beaten Jesus with a whip" or "having whipped Jesus"

ULT

²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them, but having scourged Jesus, he handed him over so that he would be crucified.

Matthew 27:27

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus' crucifixion and death.

the whole cohort (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the entire group of soldiers"

ULT

²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor, having taken Jesus into the Praetorium, gathered before him the whole cohort.

Matthew 27:28

And having stripped him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And having pulled off his clothes"

scarlet (ULT)

bright red

ULT

²⁸ And having stripped him, they put a scarlet robe on him.

Matthew 27:29

a crown of thorns (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a crown made of thorny branches" or "a crown made of branches with thorns on them"

his...a reed in...right hand (ULT)

They gave Jesus a stick to hold to represent a scepter that a king holds. They did this to mock Jesus.

Hail, King of the Jews (ULT)

They were saying this to mock Jesus. They were calling Jesus **King of the Jews**, but they did not really believe he was a king. And yet what they were saying was true. (See: [Irony](#))

Hail (ULT)

Alternate translation: "We honor you" or "May you live a long time"

ULT

29 And having woven together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and a reed in his right hand, and having knelt down before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Matthew 27:30

And having spat on him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And using their spit, the soldiers spat on Jesus"

ULT

³⁰ And having spat on him, they took the reed and kept striking him on his head.

Matthew 27:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³¹ And when they had mocked him, they took the robe off him and put his own garments on him and led him away to crucify him.

Matthew 27:32

coming out (ULT)

This means Jesus and the soldiers came out of the city. Alternate translation: "as they came out of Jerusalem" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³² Now coming out, they found a man from Cyrene named Simon, whom they forced so that he would carry his cross.

they found a man (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the soldiers saw a man"

whom they forced so that he would carry his cross (ULT)

Alternate translation: "whom the soldiers forced to go with them so that he could carry Jesus' cross"

Matthew 27:33

a place called Golgotha (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “a place that people called Golgotha” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

33 And having come to a place called Golgotha, which is saying, “The Place of a Skull,”

Matthew 27:34

wine mixed with gall to drink (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "wine, which they had mixed with gall" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

gall (ULT)

the bitter, yellow liquid that bodies use in digestion

ULT

³⁴ they gave him wine mixed with gall to drink. But having tasted it, he was not willing to drink it.

Matthew 27:35

his garments (ULT)

These were the clothes Jesus had been wearing. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁵ Now having crucified him, they divided up his garments by casting lots,

Matthew 27:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁶ and sitting down, they kept guard over him there.

Matthew 27:37

his...the charge (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a written explanation of why he was being crucified"

ULT

³⁷ And above his head they placed the charge against him, which had been written, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Matthew 27:38

Then two robbers are being crucified with him (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "Then the soldiers crucified two robbers with Jesus" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁸ Then two robbers are being crucified with him, one at his right and one at his left.

Matthew 27:39

shaking their heads (ULT)

They did this to make fun of Jesus. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

³⁹ But those who are passing by were insulting him, shaking their heads

Matthew 27:40

If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross (ULT)

They did not believe that Jesus is **the Son of God**, so they wanted him to prove it if it was true. Alternate translation: "If you are the Son of God, prove it by coming down from the cross" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴⁰ and saying, "You who are destroying the temple and rebuilding it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!"

the Son...of God (ULT)

This is an important title for the Christ that describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Matthew 27:41

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴¹ Likewise also the chief priests,
mocking him with the scribes and
elders, said,

Matthew 27:42

He saved others; he is not able to save himself (ULT)

This could mean: (1) the Jewish leaders do not believe that Jesus **saved others** or that he can **save himself**. (2) they believe he did save others but are laughing at him because now he cannot **save himself**. (See: [Irony](#))

ULT

⁴² "He saved others; he is not able to save himself. He is the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him."

He is the King of Israel (ULT)

The leaders are mocking Jesus. They call him **King of Israel**, but they do not really believe he is king. Alternate translation: "He says that he is the King of Israel" (See: [Irony](#))

Matthew 27:43

Connecting Statement:

The Jewish leaders continue mocking Jesus.

For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. You can state this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "For Jesus even said that he is the Son of God." (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#))

ULT

⁴³ He has trusted in God; let him rescue him now, if he wants him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

of God...the Son (ULT)

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Matthew 27:44

the robbers who were being crucified with him (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the robbers that the soldiers crucified with Jesus” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴⁴ In the same way, the robbers who were being crucified with him also were reviling him.

Matthew 27:45

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

from...the sixth hour...hour...until...ninth (ULT)

Alternate translation: "from about noon ... for three hours" or "from about twelve o'clock midday ... until about three o'clock in the afternoon"

darkness happened over all the land (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **darkness**, you can express it as a verb. Alternate translation: "it became dark over the whole land" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour darkness happened over all the land until the ninth hour.

Matthew 27:46

Jesus cried out (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Jesus called out" or "Jesus shouted"

Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani (ULT)

These words are what Jesus cried out in his own language.

Translators usually leave these words as is. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))

ULT

46 But about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Matthew 27:47

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁷ But some of those who had been standing there, having heard it, were saying, "He calls for Elijah."

Matthew 27:48

one of them (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) one of the soldiers. (2) one of those who stood by and watched.

a sponge (ULT)

This is a sea animal that is harvested and used to take up and hold liquids. These liquids can later be pushed out.

gave it to him to drink (ULT)

Alternate translation: "gave it to Jesus"

ULT

48 And immediately one of them, having run and having taken a sponge, having both filled it with sour wine and having put it on a reed, gave it to him to drink.

Matthew 27:49

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁹ But the rest were saying, "Leave him alone. We may see whether Elijah comes to save him."

Matthew 27:50

released {his} spirit (ULT)

Here, **spirit** refers to that which gives life to a person. This phrase is a way of saying that Jesus died. Alternate translation: “he died, giving his spirit over to God” or “he breathed his last breath” (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

50 But Jesus, having cried out again with a loud voice, released {his} spirit.

Matthew 27:51

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of the events that happened when Jesus died.

behold (ULT)

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

the curtain of the temple was split in two (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the curtain of the temple tore in two” or “God caused the curtain of the temple to tear in two” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was split in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook, and the rocks were split apart.

Matthew 27:52

And the tombs were opened, and many of the bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “And God opened the tombs and raised the bodies of many godly people who had died” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵² And the tombs were opened, and many of the bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.

many of the bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised (ULT)

Here to be **raised** is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: “God put life back into the dead bodies of many godly people who had fallen asleep” (See: [Idiom](#))

who had fallen asleep (ULT)

This is a polite way of referring to dying. Alternate translation: “who had died” (See: [Euphemism](#))

Matthew 27:53

And having come out from the tombs after his resurrection, they entered into the holy city and appeared to many

The order of the events that Matthew describes (beginning with the words “The tombs were opened” in verse 52) is unclear. After the earthquake when Jesus died and the **tombs** were opened (1) the saints came back to life, and then, after Jesus came back to life, the saints entered Jerusalem, where many people saw them. (2) Jesus came back to life, and then the saints came back to life and entered the city, where many people saw them.

ULT

⁵³ And having come out from the tombs after his resurrection, they entered into the holy city and appeared to many.

Matthew 27:54

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

those with him watching Jesus (ULT)

“those who were guarding Jesus.” This refers to the other soldiers who were guarding Jesus with the centurion. Alternate translation: “the other soldiers with him who were guarding Jesus” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the Son of God (ULT)

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

54 Now the centurion and those with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things that had happened, became very afraid, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

Matthew 27:55

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵⁵ Now many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for him were there looking on from a distance.

Matthew 27:56

Magdalene...mother...of the sons of Zebedee (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the mother of James and John” or “the wife of Zebedee”

ULT

⁵⁶ Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

Matthew 27:57

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus' burial.

Arimathea (ULT)

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

ULT

⁵⁷ Now when it became evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was discipled by Jesus.

Matthew 27:58

Then Pilate commanded it to be given to him (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "Then Pilate ordered the soldiers to give the body of Jesus to Joseph" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵⁸ He, having approached Pilate, asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded it to be given to him.

Matthew 27:59

in a clean linen cloth (ULT)

in a clean, fine, costly cloth

ULT

⁵⁹ And Joseph, having taken the body,
wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

Matthew 27:60

that he had cut into the rock (ULT)

It is implied that Joseph had workers who **cut** the tomb **into the rock**. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

And having rolled a large stone against (ULT)

Most likely Joseph had other people there to help him roll the **stone**. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

60 and laid it in his own new tomb that he had cut into the rock. And having rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, he went away.

Matthew 27:61

opposite the tomb (ULT)

Alternate translation: "across from the tomb"

ULT

⁶¹ Now Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

Matthew 27:62

the Preparation (ULT)

This is the day that people got everything ready for the Sabbath.

were gathered together...with Pilate (ULT)

Alternate translation: "met with Pilate"

ULT

62 Now the next day, which was after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together with Pilate,

Matthew 27:63**that deceiver...yet living (ULT)**

Alternate translation: "Jesus, the deceiver, when he was alive"

said...After three days I am being raised up (ULT)

This has a quotation within a quotation. You can state this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "he said that after three days he will rise again." or "he said that after three day he would rise again." (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#))

ULT

63 saying, "Sir, we remember that that deceiver, yet living, said, 'After three days I am being raised up.'"

Matthew 27:64

command...the tomb to be made secure (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "command your soldiers to guard the tomb" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the third day (ULT)

(See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

⁶⁴ Therefore, command the tomb to be made secure until the third day.

Otherwise his disciples, having come, might steal him and might say to the people, 'He has been raised up from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first."

his disciples, having come, might steal him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "his disciples may come and steal his body"

might say to the people, 'He has been raised up from the dead,' and (ULT)

This has a quotation within a quotation. You can state this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "might tell the people that he has been raised from the dead, and" (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#))

from the dead (ULT)

"from among all those who have died." This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To rise from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

and the last deception will be worse than the first (ULT)

You can state the understood information clearly. Alternate translation: "and if they deceive people by saying that, it will be worse than the way he deceived people before when he said that he was the Christ" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Matthew 27:65

a guard (ULT)

This consisted of four to sixteen Roman soldiers.

ULT

⁶⁵ And Pilate said to them, "Take a guard. Go, make it as secure as you know how."

Matthew 27:66

the...having sealed...stone (ULT)

This could mean: (1) they put a cord around **the stone** and attached it to the rock wall on either side of the entrance to the tomb. (2) they put seals between **the stone** and the wall.

ULT

66 And they, having gone, made the tomb secure, having sealed the stone with the guard.

with the guard (ULT)

Alternate translation: "and having told the soldiers to stand where they could keep people from tampering with the tomb"

Matthew 28

Matthew 28 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried ([Matthew 28:1](#)) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

“Make disciples”

The last two verses ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)) are commonly known as “The Great Commission” because they contain a very important command given to all Christians. Christians are to “make disciples” by going to people, sharing the gospel with them and training them to live as Christians.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

An angel of the Lord

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about angels in white clothing with the women at Jesus’ tomb. Two of the authors called them men, but that is only because the angels looked human. Two of the authors wrote about two angels, but the other two authors wrote about only one of them. It is best to translate each of these passages as it appears in the ULT without trying to make the passages all say exactly the same thing. (See: [Matthew 28:1-2](#) and [Mark 16:5](#) and [Luke 24:4](#) and [John 20:12](#))

Matthew 28:1

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Now late on the Sabbath, at the dawning toward the first {day} of the week (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Now after the Sabbath ended, as the sun came up on Sunday morning"

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

Mary Magdalene...other (ULT)

"the other woman named Mary." This is **Mary** the mother of James and Joseph ([Matthew 27:56](#)).

ULT

¹ Now late on the Sabbath, at the dawning toward the first {day} of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

Matthew 28:2

behold (ULT)

The word **behold** here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows. Your language may have a way of doing this.

And...a great earthquake happened, for an angel of the Lord, having descended from heaven...having come near, rolled away the stone (ULT)

This could mean: (1) the **earthquake happened** because the **angel** came down and **rolled away the stone**. (2) all these events happened at the same time.

a...earthquake...great (ULT)

a sudden and violent shaking of the ground

ULT

² And behold, a great earthquake happened, for an angel of the Lord, having descended from heaven and having come near, rolled away the stone and sat on it.

Matthew 28:3

his appearance (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the angel's appearance"

was...like lightning (ULT)

This is a simile that emphasizes how bright in appearance the angel was. Alternate translation: "was bright like lightning" (See: [Simile](#))

his clothing white like snow (ULT)

The verb "was" from the previous phrase can be repeated. Alternate translation: "his clothing was white like snow" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

his clothing white like snow (ULT)

This is a simile that emphasizes how bright and white the angel's clothes were. Alternate translation: "his clothing was very white, like snow" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

³ Now his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white like snow.

Matthew 28:4

became like dead men (ULT)

This is a simile that means the soldiers fell down and did not move.
Alternate translation: "fell to the ground and lay there like dead men" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁴ But the guards were shaken from the fear of him and became like dead men.

Matthew 28:5

to the women (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary"

who has been crucified (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the people and the soldiers crucified" or "whom they had crucified" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ But answering, the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus, who has been crucified."

Matthew 28:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ He is not here, for he has been raised up, just as he said. Come see the place where he was lying.

Matthew 28:7

tell his disciples, 'He has been raised up from the dead. And behold, he is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see him.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. You can state this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead and that Jesus has gone ahead of you to Galilee where you will see him." (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#))

ULT

⁷ And having gone quickly, tell his disciples, 'He has been raised up from the dead. And behold, he is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see him.' Behold, I have told you."

He has been raised up (ULT)

Alternate translation: "He has come back to life"

from the dead (ULT)

From among all those who have died. This expression describes all **dead** people together in the underworld.

he is going ahead of you...you will see him (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural. It refers to the women and the disciples. (See: [Forms of You](#))

I have told you (ULT)

Here, **you** is plural and refers to the women. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Matthew 28:8

And having quickly left (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And after Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary quickly left"

ULT

⁸ And having quickly left the tomb with fear and great joy, they ran to tell his disciples.

Matthew 28:9

behold (ULT)

The word **behold** here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows. Your language may have a way of doing this.

Greetings (ULT)

This is an ordinary greeting, much like “Hello” in English.

took hold of his feet (ULT)

Alternate translation: “got down on their knees and held onto his feet”

ULT

⁹ And behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Greetings!” But they, having approached, took hold of his feet and worshiped him.

Matthew 28:10

my brothers (ULT)

This refers to Jesus' disciples.

ULT

10 Then Jesus says to them, "Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers so that they would depart to Galilee, and there they will see me."

Matthew 28:11

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of the reaction of the Jewish religious leaders when they heard of Jesus' resurrection.

Now (ULT)

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

they (ULT)

Here this refers to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.

behold (ULT)

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of doing this.

ULT

11 Now while they were going, behold, some of the guards, having gone into the city, told the chief priests all the things that had happened.

Matthew 28:12

and having taken counsel (ULT)

“decided on a plan among themselves.” The priests and elders decided to give the money to the soldiers.

ULT

12 And having gathered together with the elders and having taken counsel, they gave a large amount of money to the soldiers,

Matthew 28:13**Say, 'His disciples came ... while we were sleeping.'**

If your language does not allow quotations within quotations you may translate this as a single quote. Alternate translation: "Tell others that Jesus' disciples came ... while you were sleeping" (See: [Quotations and Quote Margins](#))

ULT

¹³ saying, "Say, 'His disciples, having come by night, stole him while we are sleeping.'"

Matthew 28:14

And if this report would be heard by the governor (ULT)

Alternate translation: "If the governor hears that you were asleep when Jesus' disciples took his body"

ULT

¹⁴ And if this report would be heard by the governor, we will persuade him and keep you free from care."

the governor (ULT)

"Pilate" ([Matthew 27:2](#))

And...we will persuade him...keep you free from care (ULT)

Alternate translation: "do not worry. We will talk to him so that he does not punish you."

Matthew 28:15

did as they had been instructed (ULT)

You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: “did what the priests had told them to do” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

this report...among the Jews even until today (ULT)

Alternate translation: “Many Jews heard this report and continue to tell others about it even today”

even until today (ULT)

This refers to the time Matthew wrote the book.

ULT

15 And they, having taken the money, did as they had been instructed. And this report was reported widely among the Jews even until today.

Matthew 28:16

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus meeting with his disciples after his resurrection.

ULT

16 Now the 11 disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them.

Matthew 28:17

they worshiped him, but some doubted (ULT)

This could mean: (1) they all worshiped Jesus even though some of them doubted. (2) some of them worshiped Jesus, but others did not worship him because they doubted.

ULT

17 And having seen him, they worshiped him, but some doubted.

but some doubted (ULT)

You can state this explicitly what the disciples doubted. Alternate translation: “some doubted that he was really Jesus and that he had become alive again” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Matthew 28:18

All authority has been given to me (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "My Father has given me all authority" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 And having come, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on the earth."

in heaven and on the earth (ULT)

Here, **heaven** and **earth** are used together to mean everyone and everything in heaven and earth. (See: [Merism](#))

Matthew 28:19

of all the nations (ULT)

Here, **nations** refers to the people. Alternate translation: “of all the people in every nation” (See: [Metonymy](#))

in the name (ULT)

Here, **name** refers to authority. Alternate translation: “by the authority” (See: [Metonymy](#))

of the Father...of the Son (ULT)

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

19 Having gone, therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;

Matthew 28:20

behold (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

even to the end of the age (ULT)

Alternate translation: "until the end of this age" or "until the end of the world"

ULT

²⁰ teaching them to obey all things that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age."



unfoldingWord® Translation Academy

Version 25

Abstract Nouns

Description

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Go back to: [Matthew 6:13](#); [6:14](#); [6:15](#); [7:13](#); [7:14](#); [9:35](#); [10:21](#); [12:18](#); [12:20](#); [24:12](#); [26:41](#); [27:45](#))

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: [Matthew 1 General Notes](#); 1:16; 1:18; 1:20; 1:22; 2:5; 2:16; 2:17; 2:18; 2:23; 3:3; 3:6; 3:10; 3:12; 3:13; 3:16; 4:1; 4:4; 4:6; 4:7; 4:10; 4:12; 4:14; 4:24; 5:4; 5:6; 5:9; 5:10; 5:13; 5:14; 5:18; 5:19; 5:21; 5:24; 5:25; 5:27; 5:29; 5:31; 5:32; 5:33; 5:38; 5:43; 6:1; 6:4; 6:5; 6:7; 6:10; 6:29; 6:30; 6:33; 7:1; 7:2; 7:7; 7:19; 7:25; 8:3; 8:8; 8:9; 8:12; 8:13; 8:16; 8:17; 8:24; 8:28; 8:33; Notes; 9:2; 9:5; 9:15; 9:16; 9:17; 9:22; 9:25; 9:29; 9:30; 9:32; 9:33; 10:18; 10:19; 10:22; 10:26; 10:30; 11:5; 11:7; 11:10; 11:19; 11:20; 11:21; 11:23; 11:27; 12:13; 12:22; 12:25; 12:31; 12:32; 12:33; 12:37; 12:39; 12:44; Notes; 13:6; 13:11; 13:12; 13:19; 13:35; 13:40; 13:44; 13:47; 13:57; Notes; 14:8; 14:9; 14:11; 14:20; 14:36; 15:12; 15:13; 15:22; 15:24; 15:28; 15:31; 16:4; 16:21; 17:2; 17:18; 17:22; 17:23; 18:6; 18:8; 18:9; 18:16; 18:24; 18:25; 18:34; 19:11; 19:12; 19:13; 19:25; 20:9; 20:18; 20:19; 20:23; 20:28; 21:2; 21:4; 21:13; 21:21; 21:42; 21:43; 21:44; 22:3; 22:4; 22:8; 22:10; 22:14; 22:29; 22:30; 22:31; 23:5; 23:7; 23:8; 23:10; 23:12; 23:37; 24:2; 24:6; 24:9; 24:13; 24:14; 24:15; 24:22; 24:29; 24:40; 24:43; 24:48; 25:5; 25:10; 25:29; 25:32; 25:34; 25:41; 26:2; 26:3; 26:9; 26:13; 26:24; 26:28; 26:31; 26:32; 26:42; 26:45; 26:54; 26:56; 27:3; 27:8; 27:9; 27:12; 27:15; 27:17; 27:20; 27:22; 27:33; 27:34; 27:38; 27:44; 27:51; 27:52; 27:58; 27:64; 28:5; 28:15; 28:18)

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**.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

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**. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

(Go back to: [Matthew 2:6](#); [11:21](#); [11:23](#); [23:37](#))

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: [Matthew 1:18](#); [1:19](#); [1:22](#); [2:7](#); [2:13](#); [2:15](#); [2:16](#); [3:3](#); [3:4](#); [3:9](#); [4:13](#); [4:18](#); [5:14](#); [5:18](#); [5:21](#); [5:23](#); [5:41](#); [6:1](#); [6:5](#); [7:1](#); [7:19](#); [7:22](#); [8:4](#); [8:10](#); [8:16](#); [8:20](#); [8:31](#); [9:21](#); [9:27](#); [10:11](#); [10:25](#); [11:17](#); [11:18](#); [11:22](#); [11:24](#); [12:4](#); [12:7](#); [12:10](#); [12:18](#); [12:38](#); [12:41](#); [12:42](#); [Notes](#); [13:1](#); [13:2](#); [13:11](#); [13:14](#); [13:17](#); [13:19](#); [13:20](#); [13:22](#); [13:24](#); [13:32](#); [13:33](#); [13:44](#); [13:45](#); [13:54](#); [14:4](#); [14:6](#); [14:12](#); [14:13](#); [14:31](#); [15:2](#); [15:6](#); [15:7](#); [15:21](#); [15:22](#); [16:18](#); [17:10](#); [17:15](#); [17:24](#); [17:27](#); [18:10](#); [18:17](#); [18:19](#); [18:20](#); [18:34](#); [19:12](#); [19:25](#); [20:24](#); [21:2](#); [21:4](#); [21:8](#); [21:12](#); [21:15](#); [21:23](#); [22:4](#); [22:7](#); [22:16](#); [22:17](#); [22:29](#); [22:46](#); [23:5](#); [23:27](#); [24:1](#); [24:2](#); [24:3](#); [25:11](#); [25:13](#); [25:15](#); [25:29](#); [26:6](#); [26:31](#); [26:52](#); [26:55](#); [26:65](#); [27:1](#); [27:6](#); [27:11](#); [27:26](#); [27:32](#); [27:35](#); [27:40](#); [27:54](#); [27:60](#); [28:17](#))

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:

[Connecting Words and Phrases](#)

[Introduction of a New Event](#)

(Go back to: [Matthew 1:22](#); [3:4](#); [4:12](#); [8:30](#); [10:2](#); [Notes](#); [14:13](#); [15:29](#); [16:22](#); [19:1](#); [26:3](#); [26:48](#); [27:15](#); [27:20](#))

Biblical Distance

Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man’s hand.
- The **span** or handspan was the width of a man’s hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man’s forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **“long” cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as “furlong,” which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

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

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

The metric values in the table below are close but not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact length from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Metric Measure
handbreadth	8 centimeters
span	23 centimeters
cubit	46 centimeters
“long” cubit	54 centimeters
stadia	185 meters

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as “.46 meters” or even as “46 centimeters,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a meter,” “45 centimeters,” or “50 centimeters.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as “about ten kilometers” from Jerusalem.

When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

Translation Strategies

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

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 25:10 below.

They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half. (Exodus 25:10 ULT)

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

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half kubits**; its width will be **one kubit and a half**; and its height will be **one kubit and a half**.”

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

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement. For example, if you measure things using the standard meter length, you could translate it as below.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half cubits (one meter)**; its width will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**; and its height will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**.”

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

[¹] two and a half cubits
[²] one cubit and a half

(Go back to: [Matthew 6:27](#))

Biblical Money

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of money in the Bible?*

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals, such as silver and gold, and would pay a certain weight of that metal in order to buy things. Later, people started to make coins that each contained a standard amount of a certain metal. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

Unit in OT	Metal	Weight
daric	gold coin	8.4 grams
shekel	various metals	11 grams
talent	various metals	33 kilograms

Unit in NT	Metal	Day's Wage
denarius/denarii	silver coin	1 day
drachma	silver coin	1 day
mite	copper coin	1/64 day
shekel	silver coin	4 days
talent	silver	6,000 days

Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see Biblical Weight. The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament.

- (1) Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
- (3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
- (4) Use the biblical term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

(5) Use the biblical term and explain it in a footnote.

Translation Strategies Applied

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

█ The one owed 500 denarii, and the other, 50. (Luke 7:41b ULT)

Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

█ "The one owed **500 denali**, and the other, **50**."

Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.

█ "The one owed **500 silver coins**, and the other, **50**."

(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.

█ "The one owed **500 days' wages**, and the other, **50**."

(4) Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2"

The footnotes would look like:

█ [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii**,¹ and the other, **50**." (Luke 7:41 ULT)

█ ^[1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

[Translate Unknowns](#)

(Go back to: [Matthew 17:24](#); [17:27](#); [18:24](#); [18:28](#); [20:2](#); [20:10](#); [20:13](#); [22:19](#); [25:15](#); [25:20](#); [25:28](#))

Biblical Volume

Description

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Principles

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

When the unit of measure is stated

Translation Strategies

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

Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **six gallons**, and **six and a half bushels** of seed will yield only **20 quarts**.”

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **one bath (six gallons)**, and **one homer (six and a half bushels)** of seed will yield only **an ephah (20 quarts)**.”

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in footnotes.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only 22 liters¹, and 220 liters² of seed will yield only 22 liters³.”

The footnotes would look like:

- [1] one bath
- [2] one homer
- [3] one ephah

When the unit of measure is implied

Sometimes the Hebrew does not specify a particular unit of volume but only uses a number. In these cases, many English versions, including the ULT and UST, add the word “measure.”

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 measures** of wine, there were only 20. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.
- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”
- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.
- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Haggai 2:16 below.

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty measures** of wine, there were only **20**. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.

When you came to a heap of **20** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”

When you came to a heap of **20 amounts** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty amounts** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.

When you came to a heap of **20 baskets** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 jars** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

When you came to a heap for **20 liters** of grain, there were only **ten liters**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 liters** of wine, there were only **20 liters**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-fraction]]

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

(Go back to: [Matthew 13:33](#))

Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the reason-result relationship?*

Reason-and-Result Relationships

Description

A reason-and-result relationship is a logical relationship in which one event is the **reason** or cause for another event. The second event, then, is the **result** of the first event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

A reason-and-result relationship can look forward — “I did Y because I wanted X to happen.” But usually it is looking backward — “X happened, and so I did Y.” Also, it is possible to state the reason either before or after the result. Many languages have a preferred order for the reason and the result, and it will be confusing for the reader if they are in the opposite order. Common words used to indicate a reason-and-result relationship in English are “because,” “so,” “therefore,” and “for.” Some of these words can also be used to indicate a goal relationship, so translators need to be aware of the difference between a goal relationship and a reason-and-result relationship. It is necessary for translators to understand how the two events are connected, and then communicate them clearly in their language.

If the reason and result are stated in different verses, it is still possible to put them in a different order. If you change the order of the verses, then put the verse numbers together at the beginning of the group of verses that were rearranged like this: 1-2. This is called a Verse Bridge.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

The Jews were amazed, **because** Saul had tried to kill believers, and now he believed in Jesus!
(Story 46 Frame 6 OBS)

The **reason** is the change in Saul — that he had tried to kill people who believed in Jesus, and now he himself believed in Jesus. The **result** is that the Jews were amazed. “Because” connects the two ideas and indicates that what follows it is a reason.

Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves.
(Matthew 8:24a ULT)

The **reason** is the great storm, and the **result** is that the boat was covered with the waves. The two events are connected by “so that.” Notice that the term “so that” often indicates a goal relationship, but here the relationship is reason-and-result. This is because the sea cannot think and therefore does not have a goal.

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

The **result** is that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. The **reason** is because he rested on the seventh day from his work.

“Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20b ULT)

The **result** is that the poor are blessed. The **reason** is that the kingdom of God is theirs.

But he raised up in their place their sons that Joshua circumcised, being uncircumcised, **because** they had not been circumcised on the way. (Joshua 5:7 ULT)

The **result** is that Joshua circumcised the boys and men who had been born in the wilderness. The **reason** was that they had not been circumcised while they were journeying.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses reason-and-result relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

- (1) If the order of the clauses is confusing for the reader, then change the order.
- (2) If the relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a more clear connecting word.
- (3) If it is more clear to put a connecting word in the clause that does not have one, then do so.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

(1) God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done in his creation. **That is why** he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20 ULT)

- (1) The kingdom of God belongs to you who are poor. **Therefore**, the poor are blessed.
- (2) Blessed are the poor, **because** yours is the kingdom of God.
- (3) **The reason that** the poor are blessed **is because** yours is the kingdom of God.

Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves. (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

- (1) Behold, the boat was covered with the waves **because** a great storm arose on the sea.
- (2) Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **with the result that** the boat was covered with the waves.
- (3) Behold, **because** a great storm arose on the sea, the boat was covered with the waves.

Since he was not able to find out anything for certain because of the noise, he ordered that he be brought into the fortress. (Acts 21:34b ULT)

- (1) The captain ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress, **because** he could not tell anything because of all the noise.
- (2) **Because** the captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.
- (3) The captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, **so** he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

(Go back to: [Matthew 21:40](#))

Connecting Words and Phrases

Description

This page answers the question: *How do connecting words work to join parts of the text in different ways?*

As humans, we write our thoughts in phrases and sentences. We usually want to communicate a series of thoughts that are connected to each other in different ways. **Connecting words and phrases** show how these thoughts are related to each other. For example, we can show how the following thoughts are related by using the Connecting Words in bold type:

- It was raining, **so** I opened my umbrella.
- It was raining, **but** I did not have an umbrella. **So** I got very wet.

Connecting words or phrases can connect phrases or clauses within a sentence. They can connect sentences to each other. They can also connect entire chunks to one another in order to show how the chunk before relates to the chunk after the connecting word. Very often, the connecting words that connect entire chunks to one another are either conjunctions or adverbs.

It was raining, but I did not have an umbrella, so I got very wet.

Now I must change my clothes. Then I will drink a cup of hot tea and warm myself by the fire.

In the above example, the word **now** connects the two short chunks of text, showing the relationship between them. The speaker must change his clothes, drink hot tea, and warm himself because of something that happened earlier (that is, he got wet in the rain).

Sometimes people might not use a connecting word because they expect the context to help the readers understand the relationship between the thoughts. Some languages do not use connecting words as much as other languages do. They might say:

- It was raining. I did not have an umbrella. I got very wet.

You (the translator) will need to use the method that is most natural and clear in the target language. But in general, using connecting words whenever possible helps the reader to understand the ideas in the Bible most clearly.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You need to understand the relationship between paragraphs, between sentences, and between parts of sentences in the Bible, and how connecting words and phrases can help you to understand the relationship between the thoughts that they are connecting.
- Each language has its own ways of showing how thoughts are related.
- You need to know how to help readers understand the relationship between the thoughts in a way that is natural in your language.

Translation Principles

- You need to translate in a way that readers can understand the same relationship between thoughts that the original readers would have understood.
- Whether or not a connecting word is used is not as important as readers being able to understand the relationship between the ideas.

The Different Types of Connections

Listed below are different types of connections between ideas or events. These different types of connections can be indicated by using different connecting words. When we write or translate something, it is important to use the right connecting word so that these connections are clear for the reader. If you would like additional information, simply click the colored, hyperlinked word to be directed to a page containing definitions and examples for each type of connection.

- Sequential Clause — a time relationship between two events in which one happens and then the other happens.
- Simultaneous Clause — a time relationship between two or more events that occur at the same time.
- Background Clause — a time relationship in which the first clause describes a long event that is happening at the time when the beginning of the second event happens, which is described in the second clause.
- Exceptional Relationship — one clause describes a group of people or items, and the other clause excludes one or more items or people from the group.
- Hypothetical Condition — the second event will only take place if the first one takes place. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.
- Factual Condition — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true, so that the condition is guaranteed to happen.
- Contrary-to-Fact Condition — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain that it is not true. See also: [Hypothetical Statements](#).
- Goal Relationship — a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first.
- [Reason and Result Relationship](#) — a logical relationship in which one event is the reason for the other event, the result.
- Contrast Relationship — one item is being described as different or in opposition to another.

Examples from the Bible

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT)

The word “instead” introduces something that contrasts with what was said before. The contrast here is between what Paul did not do and what he did do. The word “then” introduces a sequence of events. It introduces something that Paul did after he returned to Damascus.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

The word “therefore” links this section with the section before it, signaling that the section that came before gave the reason for this section. “Therefore” usually links sections larger than one sentence. The word “and” links only two actions within the same sentence, that of breaking commandments and teaching others. In this verse the word “but” contrasts what one group of people will be called in God’s kingdom with what another group of people will be called.

We place nothing as a stumbling block in front of anyone, **so that** our ministry might not be discredited. **Instead**, we commend ourselves in everything as God’s servants. (2 Corinthians 6:3-4 ULT)

Here the words “so that” connect what follows as the reason for what came before; the reason that Paul does not place stumbling blocks is that he does not want his ministry brought into disrepute. “Instead” contrasts what Paul does (prove by his actions that he is God’s servant) with what he said he does not do (place stumbling blocks).

General Translation Strategies

See each type of Connecting Word above for specific strategies

If the way the relationship between thoughts is shown in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, then consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).
- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be strange to use one and people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.
- (3) Use a different connecting word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).

Jesus said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Then immediately they left the nets and followed him. (Mark 1:17-18 ULT)

They followed Jesus because he told them to. Some translators may want to mark this clause with the connecting word "so."

Jesus said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." **So**, immediately they left the nets and followed him.

- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be odd to use one, and if people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Some languages would prefer not to use connecting words here because the meaning is clear without them and using them would be unnatural. They might translate like this:

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments, teaching others to do so as well, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT) (Galatians 1:16-18 ULT)

Some languages might not need the words "instead" or "then" here. They might translate like this:

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me. I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. After three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days.

- (3) Use a different connecting word.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Instead of a word like “therefore,” a language might need a phrase to indicate that there was a section before it that gave the reason for the section that follows. Also, the word “but” is used here because of the contrast between the two groups of people. But in some languages, the word “but” would show that what comes after it is surprising because of what came before it. So “and” might be clearer for those languages. They might translate like this:

Because of that, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.
And whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

(Go back to: [Matthew 10:17](#); [10:28](#); [12:42](#))

Copy or Borrow Words

Description

Sometimes the Bible includes things that are not part of your culture and for which your language may not have a word. The Bible also includes people and places for which you may not have names.

When that happens you can “borrow” the word from the Bible in a familiar language and use it in your translation in your own language. This means that you basically copy it from the other language. This page tells how to “borrow” words. (There are also other ways to translate words for things that are not in your language. See [Translate Unknowns](#).)

This page answers the question: *What does it mean to borrow words from another language and how can I do it?*

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

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Examples From the Bible

Seeing one fig tree along the roadside, he went to it. (Matthew 21:19a ULT)

If there are no fig trees where your language is spoken, there might not be a name for this kind of tree in your language.

Above him were the **seraphim**; each one had six wings; with two each covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (Isaiah 6:2 ULT)

Your language might not have a name for this kind of creature.

The declaration of the word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of **Malachi**. (Malachi 1:1 ULT)

Malachi might not be a name that people who speak your language use.

Translation Strategies

There are several things to be aware of when borrowing words from another language.

- Different languages use different scripts, such as the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Devanagari, and Korean scripts. These scripts use different shapes to represent the letters in their alphabets.
- Languages that use the same script might pronounce the letters in that script differently. For example, when speaking German, people pronounce the letter “j” the same way that people pronounce the letter “y” when speaking English.
- Languages do not all have the same sounds or combinations of sounds. For example, many languages do not have the soft “th” sound in the English word “think,” and some languages cannot start a word with a combination of sounds like “st” as in “stop.”

There are several ways to borrow a word.

- (1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.
- (2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.
- (3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.

<div style="background-color: #ccc; width: 10px; height: 40px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <div style="background-color: #ccc; width: 10px; height: 40px;"></div>	<p>.A man's name in Hebrew letters — זְפַנְיָה</p> <p>"Zephaniah" — The same name in Roman letters</p>
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(2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.

<div style="background-color: #ccc; width: 10px; height: 40px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <div style="background-color: #ccc; width: 10px; height: 40px;"></div>	<p>Zephaniah — This is a man's name.</p> <p>"Zephaniah" — The name as it is spelled in English, but you can pronounce it according to the rules of your language.</p>
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(3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

<div style="background-color: #ccc; width: 10px; height: 40px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <div style="background-color: #ccc; width: 10px; height: 40px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <div style="background-color: #ccc; width: 10px; height: 40px;"></div>	<p>Zephaniah — If your language does not have the "z," you could use "s." If your writing system does not use "ph" you could use "f." Depending on how you pronounce the "i" you could spell it with "i" or "ai" or "ay."</p> <p>"Sefania"</p> <p>"Sefanaia"</p> <p>"Sefanaya"</p>
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(Go back to: [Matthew 27:46](#))

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](#)

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

[Quotations and Quote Margins](#)

Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it. If the kind of quote used in that context is not natural for your language, follow these strategies.

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, **“Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”** (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him to tell no one, but **to go and show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for his cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.**

- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

And he commanded him **to tell no one**, but, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him, **“Tell no one.** But go and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_quotations.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Quotes within Quotes](#)

(Go back to: [Matthew 2:7](#); [2:12](#); [4:3](#); [4:6](#); [9:5](#); [11:18](#); [11:19](#); [12:13](#); [12:47](#); [13:30](#); [13:51](#); [14:4](#); [17:26](#); [19:5](#); [21:21](#); [22:4](#); [22:32](#); [24:26](#); [26:48](#); [26:75](#))

Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

Description

In some languages, phrases that modify a noun can be used with the noun for two different purposes. They can either (1) distinguish the noun from other similar items, or (2) they can give more information about the noun. That information could be new to the reader, or a reminder about something the reader might already know. Other languages use modifying phrases with a noun only for distinguishing the noun from other similar things. When people who speak these languages hear a modifying phrase along with a noun, they assume that its function is to distinguish one item from another similar item.

This page answers the question: *When a phrase is used with a noun, what is the difference between phrases that distinguish the noun from others and phrases that simply inform or remind?*

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

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

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

Some languages use a comma to mark the difference between (1) making a distinction between similar items and (2) giving more information about an item. Without the comma, the sentence below communicates that it is making a distinction:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister who was very thankful**.
 - If her sister was usually thankful, the phrase “who was thankful” could distinguish this sister of Mary’s from another sister who was not usually thankful.

With the comma, the sentence is giving more information:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister, who was very thankful**.
 - This same phrase can be used to give us more information about Mary’s sister. It tells us about how Mary’s sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish one sister from another sister.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Many source languages of the Bible use phrases that modify a noun both for distinguishing the noun from another similar item and also for giving more information about the noun. You (the translator) must be careful to understand which meaning the author intended in each case.
- Some languages use phrases that modify a noun only for distinguishing the noun from another similar item. When translating a phrase that is used for giving more information, translators who speak these languages will need to separate the phrase from the noun. Otherwise, people who read it or hear it will think that the phrase is meant to distinguish the noun from other similar items.

Examples From the Bible

Examples of words and phrases that are used to distinguish one item from other possible items:

(These usually do not cause any problem in translation.)

■ The curtain is to separate **the holy place** from **the most holy place**. (Exodus 26:33b ULT)

The words “holy” and “most holy” distinguish two different places from each other and from any other place.

A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to **the woman who bore him**. (Proverbs 17:25 ULT)

The phrase “who bore him” distinguishes which woman the son is bitterness to. He is not bitterness to all women, but to his mother.

Examples of words and phrases that are used to give added information or a reminder about an item:

(These are a translation issue for languages that do not use these.)

... for **your righteous judgments** are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

The word “righteous” simply reminds us that God’s judgments are righteous. It does not distinguish his righteous judgments from his unrighteous judgments, because all of his judgments are righteous.

How can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is the reason that Abraham did not think that Sarah could bear a son. He was not distinguishing one woman named Sarah from another woman named Sarah who was a different age, and he was not telling anyone something new about her age. He simply did not think that a woman who was that old could bear a child.

I will wipe away mankind **whom I have created** from the surface of the earth. (Genesis 6:7 ULT)

The phrase “whom I have created” is a reminder of the relationship between God and mankind. It is the reason God had the right to wipe away mankind. There is not another mankind that God did not create.

Translation Strategies

If readers would understand the purpose of a phrase with a noun, then consider keeping the phrase and the noun together. For languages that use words or phrases with a noun only to distinguish one item from another, here are some strategies for translating phrases that are used to inform or remind.

- (1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.
- (2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information. It may be by adding a small word, or by changing the way the voice sounds. Sometimes changes in the voice can be shown with punctuation marks, such as parentheses or commas.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.

I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

By saying “worthless idols,” David was commenting about all idols and giving his reason for hating those who serve them. He was not distinguishing worthless idols from valuable idols.

>

Because idols are worthless, I hate those who serve them.

... for your **righteous** judgments are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

... for your judgments are good **because they are righteous**.

Can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is a reminder of Sarah’s age. It tells why Abraham was asking the question. He did not expect that a woman who was that old could bear a child.

>

Can Sarah bear a son **even when she is 90 years old**?

I will call on Yahweh, **who is worthy to be praised**. (2 Samuel 22:4a ULT) There is only one Yahweh. The phrase “who is worthy to be praised” gives a reason for calling on Yahweh.

I will call on Yahweh, because **he is worthy to be praised**

(2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information.

You are my Son, **whom I love**. I am pleased with you. (Luke 3:22 ULT)

You are my Son. **I love you** and I am pleased with you.

Receiving my love, you are my Son. I am pleased with you.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Double Negatives](#)

(Go back to: [Matthew 10:28](#))

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: [Matthew 5:20](#); [10:29](#); [12:24](#); [13:34](#); [13:57](#); [18:3](#); [23:23](#); [24:22](#))

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: [Matthew 5:12](#); [11:29](#); [21:21](#); [22:37](#); [22:38](#); [23:33](#))

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: [Matthew 4:7](#); [5:25](#); [6:30](#); [7:10](#); [8:20](#); [9:12](#); [9:28](#); [10:8](#); [10:21](#); [10:32](#); [10:33](#); [11:9](#); [12:48](#); [13:8](#); [13:16](#); [13:23](#); [15:34](#); [16:5](#); [16:17](#); [19:9](#); [20:28](#); [20:33](#); [22:21](#); [22:42](#); [23:18](#); [25:10](#); [25:15](#); [25:27](#); [25:37](#); [25:38](#); [25:43](#); [25:46](#); [26:5](#); [26:39](#); [27:64](#); [28:3](#))

End of Story

Description

There are different types of information that may be given at the end of a story. Often this is background information. This background information is different from the actions that make up the main part of the story. A book of the Bible is often made up of many smaller stories that are part of the larger story of the book itself. For example, the story of Jesus' birth is a smaller story in the larger story of the book of Luke. Each of these stories, whether large or small, can have background information at the end of it.

This page answers the question: *What kinds of information are given at the end of a story?*

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

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

[Background Information](#)

The following are purposes for end of story information:

- to summarize the story
- to give a comment about what happened in the story
- to connect a smaller story to the larger story it is a part of
- to tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends
- to tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends
- to tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of presenting these kinds of information. If you (the translator) do not use your language's ways of doing this, readers may not know:

- that this information is ending the story
- what the purpose of the information is
- how the information is related to the story

Translation Strategies

- Translate the particular kind of information at the end of a story the way your language expresses that kind of information.
- Translate it so that people will understand how it relates to the story it is part of.
- If possible, translate the end of the story in a way that people will know where that story ends and the next begins.

Examples From the Bible

- To summarize the story

Then the rest of the men should follow, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. **In this way it happened that all of us were brought safely to the land.** (Acts 27:44 ULT)

- To give a comment about what happened in the story

Many of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of everyone. Then they counted the value of them, and found it was 50,000 pieces of

silver. **So the word of the Lord was spreading and prevailing with power.** (Acts 19:19-20 ULT)

- To tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoiced in God my savior." **And Mary stayed with her about three months and then returned to her house.** (Luke 1:46-47, 56 ULT)

- To tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends

All who those who heard it were amazed concerning the things that were spoken to them by the shepherds. **But Mary kept all the things, pondering them in her heart.** (Luke 2:18-19 ULT)

- To tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

"Woe to you, experts in the Jewish law, because you have taken away the key of knowledge; you do not enter in yourselves, and you hinder those who are entering." **After he went from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to fiercely oppose him and argued against him about many things, lying in wait to trap him in something from his mouth.** (Luke 11:52-54 ULT)

(Go back to: [Matthew 4:23](#); [7:28](#); [9:35](#))

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: [Matthew 1:18](#); [1:25](#); [2:18](#); [2:20](#); [5:31](#); [9:20](#); [9:24](#); [24:19](#); [24:34](#); [26:24](#); [27:50](#); [27:52](#))

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

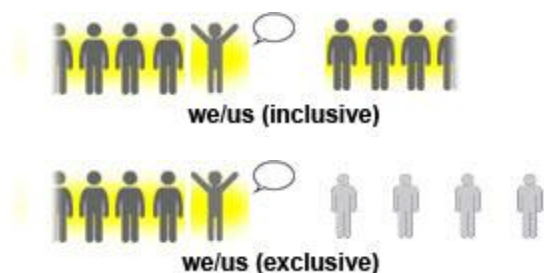
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also 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: [Matthew 3:15](#); [6:11](#); [7:22](#); [8:25](#); [8:31](#); [17:4](#); [17:19](#); [20:18](#))

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: [Matthew 8:20](#); [10:23](#); [11:15](#); [11:19](#); [11:27](#); [12:6](#); [12:8](#); [12:32](#); [12:39](#); [12:40](#); [12:41](#); [12:42](#); [13:9](#); [13:37](#); [13:41](#); [13:43](#); [16:4](#); [16:13](#); [16:27](#); [17:9](#); [17:12](#); [17:22](#); [17:23](#); [19:28](#); [20:18](#); [20:19](#); [20:28](#); [23:10](#); [24:27](#); [24:30](#); [24:31](#); [24:33](#); [24:37](#); [24:44](#); [25:21](#); [25:23](#); [25:31](#); [25:34](#); [25:40](#); [25:41](#); [26:2](#); [26:24](#); [26:45](#); [26:64](#))

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: [Matthew 2:13](#); [3:2](#); [4:10](#); [5:11](#); [5:20](#); [5:21](#); [5:23](#); [5:25](#); [5:27](#); [5:29](#); [5:33](#); [5:36](#); [5:38](#); [5:40](#); [5:43](#); [5:46](#); [6:1](#); [6:3](#); [6:5](#); [6:8](#); [6:14](#); [6:16](#); [6:19](#); [6:22](#); [6:25](#); [6:27](#); [7:1](#); [7:7](#); [7:11](#); [8:11](#); [9:5](#); [9:6](#); [10:7](#); [10:8](#); [10:9](#); [10:11](#); [10:12](#); [10:13](#); [10:14](#); [10:19](#); [10:20](#); [10:22](#); [10:40](#); [11:10](#); [11:14](#); [11:17](#); [11:21](#); [11:22](#); [11:23](#); [11:28](#); [12:28](#); [12:31](#); [12:34](#); [13:11](#); [13:16](#); [13:17](#); [14:16](#); [15:5](#); [16:19](#); [16:28](#); [17:27](#); [18:8](#); [18:9](#); [18:12](#); [18:13](#); [18:14](#); [18:18](#); [18:35](#); [19:8](#); [20:22](#); [21:32](#); [21:43](#); [23:8](#); [23:11](#); [26:10](#); [26:40](#); [26:53](#); [26:64](#); [26:65](#); [28:7](#))

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

Generic noun phrases refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things. This happens frequently in proverbs, because proverbs tell about things that are true about people in general.

This page answers the question: *What are generic noun phrases and how can I translate them?*

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

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

Can **a man** walk on hot coals without scorching his feet?
So is **the man who goes in to his neighbor's wife;**
the one who touches her will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28-29 ULT)

The phrases in bold above do not refer to a specific man. They refer to any man who does these things.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of showing that noun phrases refer to something in general. You (the translator) should refer to these general ideas in ways that are natural in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The **righteous person** is kept away from trouble and it comes upon **the wicked** instead. (Proverbs 11:8 ULT)

The bold phrases above do not refer to a specific person but to anyone who does what is right or anyone who is wicked.

People curse **the man who refuses to sell grain**. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

This does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who refuses to sell grain.

Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

The phrase "a good man" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who is good. The phrase "a man who makes evil plans" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who makes evil plans.

Translation Strategies

If your language can use the same wording as in the ULT to refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things, consider using the same wording. If not, here are some strategies you might use.

- (1) Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.
- (2) Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.
- (3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."
- (4) Use the plural form, as in "people."

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the word “the” in the noun phrase.

Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

“Yahweh gives favor to **the good man**, but he condemns **the man who makes evil plans**.” (Proverbs 12:2)

(2) Use the word “a” in the noun phrase.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

“People curse **a man** who refuses to sell grain.”

(3) Use the word “any,” as in “any person” or “anyone.”

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

“People curse **any man** who refuses to sell grain.”

(4) Use the plural form, as in “people” (or in this sentence, “men”).

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

“People curse **men** who refuse to sell grain”

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

“People curse **whoever** refuses to sell grain.”

Next we recommend you learn about:

[When Masculine Words Include Women](#)

(Go back to: [Matthew 4:24](#); [5:43](#))

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: [Matthew 10:19](#))

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

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

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see [Borrow Words](#).
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

Saul was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.
- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
- (3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
- (4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
- (5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, "For out of the water I drew him." (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like 'drawn out')**, and she said, "For out of the water I drew him."

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?" Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?"
Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called "Saul" before Acts 13 and "Paul" after Acts 13. You could translate his name as "Paul" all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** ¹

The footnote would look like:

^[1] Most versions say "Saul" here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called "Paul."

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write "Saul" where the source text has "Saul" and "Paul" where the source text has "Paul."

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

(Go back to: [Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew](#); [Matthew 1:3](#); [1:23](#); [2:22](#); [2:23](#); [4:25](#); [8:28](#); [12:42](#); [14:3](#); [14:34](#); [15:39](#); [16:17](#); [21:1](#); [22:16](#); [27:57](#))

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: [Matthew 2:3](#); [3:5](#); [5:29](#); [5:30](#); [7:3](#); [8:34](#); [9:35](#); [16:26](#); [18:8](#); [18:9](#); [19:24](#); [23:9](#); [23:24](#))

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: [Matthew 11:21](#); [11:23](#))

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: [Matthew 3:12](#); [5:2](#); [5:3](#); [5:25](#); [5:29](#); [5:30](#); [7:23](#); [8:2](#); [8:8](#); [8:9](#); [8:20](#); [9:30](#); [10:8](#); [10:27](#); [11:5](#); [11:11](#); [11:29](#); [12:19](#); [12:40](#); [12:42](#); [13:35](#); [13:38](#); [14:13](#); [14:19](#); [14:30](#); [15:8](#); [15:28](#); [16:21](#); [16:22](#); [16:28](#); [17:6](#); [17:18](#); [17:23](#); [18:10](#); [18:35](#); [19:29](#); [20:12](#); [20:22](#); [20:23](#); [20:28](#); [21:13](#); [21:32](#); [22:44](#); [23:4](#); [23:15](#); [23:35](#); [24:11](#); [24:12](#); [24:31](#); [24:51](#); [25:8](#); [25:21](#); [25:23](#); [26:18](#); [26:25](#); [26:29](#); [26:32](#); [26:38](#); [26:39](#); [26:43](#); [26:45](#); [26:64](#); [27:4](#); [27:6](#); [27:25](#); [27:52](#))

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: [Matthew 8:3](#))

Introduction of a New Event

Description

When people tell a story, they tell about an event or a series of events. Often they put certain information at the beginning of the story, such as who the story is about, when it happened, and where it happened. This information that the writer gives before the events of the story begin is called the setting of the story. Some new events in a story also have a setting because they might involve new people, new times, and new places. In some languages, people also tell if they saw the event or heard about it from someone else.

This page answers the question: *How do we introduce a new event in a story?*

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

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

[Order of Events](#)

When your people tell about events, what information do they give at the beginning? Is there a certain order that they put it in? In your translation, you will need to follow the way your language introduces new information at the beginning of a story or a new event rather than the way the source language did that. In this way your translation will sound natural and communicate clearly in your language.

Examples From the Bible

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, **there was a certain priest named Zechariah**, from the division of Abijah. And **his wife was** from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. (Luke 1:5 ULT)

The verses above introduce a story about Zechariah. The first bolded phrase tells when it happened, and the next two bolded phrases introduce the main people. The next two verses go on to explain that Zechariah and Elizabeth were old and did not have any children. All of this is the setting. Then the phrase “And it happened that” in Luke 1:8 helps to introduce the first event in this story:

And it happened that in his performing as priest before God, in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, he came up by lot to enter into the temple of the Lord to burn incense. (Luke 1:8-9 ULT)

The birth of Jesus Christ happened in the following way. His mother, Mary, was engaged to marry Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18 ULT)

The bolded sentence above makes it explicit that a story about Jesus is being introduced. The story will tell about how the birth of Jesus happened.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, learned men from the east arrived in Jerusalem. (Matthew 2:1 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that the events concerning the learned men happened **after** Jesus was born.

Now in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea. (Matthew 3:1-22 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that John the Baptist came preaching around the time of the previous events. It is probably very general and refers to when Jesus lived in Nazareth.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to John, to be baptized by him. (Matthew 3:13 ULT)

The word “then” shows that Jesus came to the Jordan River some time after the events in the previous verses.

Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**.
This man came to Jesus at night. (John 3:1-2a ULT)

The author first introduced the new person and then told about what he did and when he did it. In some languages, it might be more natural to tell about the time first.

6 Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. 7 Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)

Verse 6 is a statement of the events that happen in the rest of chapter 7. Chapter 6 already told about how God told Noah that there would be a flood, and how Noah prepared for it. Chapter 7 verse 6 introduces the part of the story that tells about Noah and his family and the animals going into the ship, the rain starting, and the rain flooding the earth. Some languages might need to make it clear that this verse simply introduces the event, or move this verse after verse 7. Verse 6 is not one of the events of the story. The people went into the ship before the flood came.

Translation Strategies

If the information given at the beginning of a new event is clear and natural to your readers, consider translating it as it is in the ULT or UST. If not, consider one of these strategies:

- (1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.
- (2) If readers would expect certain information but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase to fill in that information, such as: "another time" or "someone."
- (3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language's way of showing that it is a summary.
- (4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, indicate that the event would actually happen later in the story.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.

Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**.
This man came to Jesus at night. (John 3:1-2a ULT)

There was a **man whose name was Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**. One night he came to Jesus.

One night **a man named Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**, came to Jesus.

As he passed by, **he saw Levi the son of Alpheus, sitting** at the tax collector's tent, and he said to him ... (Mark 2:14a ULT)

As he passed by, **Levi the son of Alpheus was sitting** at the tax collector's tent. Jesus saw him and said to him ...

As he passed by, **there was a man sitting** at the tax collector's tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ...

As he passed by, **there was a tax collector** sitting at the tax collector's tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ...

(2) If readers would expect certain information, but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase such as "another time," or "someone."

Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT) — If people expect to be told something about when the new event happened, the phrase "after that" can help them see that it happened after the events already mentioned.

After that, when Noah was 600 years old, the flood came upon the earth.

Again he began to teach beside the sea. (Mark 4:1a ULT) — In chapter 3 Jesus was teaching at someone's house. Readers may need to be told that this new event happened at another time, or that Jesus actually went to the sea.

Another time Jesus began to teach people again beside the sea.

Jesus went to the sea and **began to teach people again** there.

(3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language's way of showing that it is a summary.

Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT)

Now this is what happened when Noah was 600 years old and the flood came upon the earth.

This part tells about what happened when the flood came upon the earth. It happened when Noah was 600 years old.

(4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, show that the event will actually happen later in the story.

Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)

Now this is what happened when Noah was 600 years old. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because **God had said that the waters of the flood would come.**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Background Information](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-participants]]

(Go back to: [Matthew 8:1](#); [11:1](#); [15:1](#))

Irony

Description

Irony is a figure of speech in which the sense that the speaker intends to communicate is actually the opposite of the literal meaning of the words. Sometimes a person does this by using someone else's words, but in a way that communicates that he does not agree with them. People do this to emphasize how different something is from what it should be, or how someone else's belief about something is wrong or foolish. It is often humorous.

This page answers the question: *What is irony and how can I translate it?*

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

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

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "People who are well do not have need of a physician, but those who have sickness. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
(Luke 5:31-32 ULT)

When Jesus spoke of "righteous people," he was not referring to people who were truly righteous, but to people who wrongly believed that they were righteous. By using irony, Jesus communicated that they were wrong to think that they were better than others and did not need to repent.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

If someone does not realize that a speaker is using irony, he will think that the speaker actually believes what he is saying. He will understand the passage to mean the opposite of what it was intended to mean.

Examples From the Bible

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9b ULT)

Here Jesus praises the Pharisees for doing something that is obviously wrong. Through irony, he communicates the opposite of praise: He communicates that the Pharisees, who take great pride in keeping the commandments, are so far from God that they do not even recognize that their traditions are breaking God's commandments. The use of irony makes the Pharisee's sin more obvious and startling.

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. **"Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled."** (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

People worshiped idols as if their idols had knowledge or power, and Yahweh was angry at them for doing that. So he used irony and challenged their idols to tell what would happen in the future. He knew that the idols could not do this, but by speaking as if they could, he mocked the idols, making their inability more obvious, and rebuked the people for worshiping them.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work?
Can you find the way back to their houses for them?
Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then; "the number of your days is so large!" (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Job thought that he was wise. Yahweh used irony to show Job that he was not so wise. The two phrases in bold above are irony. They emphasize the opposite of what they say, because they are so obviously false. They

emphasize that Job could not possibly answer God's questions about the creation of light because Job was not born until many, many years later.

Already you are satisfied! Already you have become rich! **You began to reign** apart from us, and I wish you really did reign, so that we also might reign with you. (1 Corinthians 4:8 ULT)

The Corinthians considered themselves to be very wise, self-sufficient, and not in need of any instruction from the Apostle Paul. Paul used irony, speaking as if he agreed with them, to show how proudly they were acting and how far from being wise they really were.

Translation Strategies

If the irony would be understood correctly in your language, translate it as it is stated. If not, here are some other strategies.

- (1) Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.
- (2) The irony is **not** found in the literal words of the speaker, but instead the true meaning is found in the opposite of the literal meaning of the speaker's words.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

You think that you are doing well when you reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!
You act like it is good to reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!

I did not come to call **the righteous**, but sinners to repentance. (Luke 5:32 ULT)

I did not come to call **people who think that they are righteous** to repentance, but to call sinners to repentance.

- (2) Translate the actual, intended meaning of the statement of irony.

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

You are doing a terrible thing when you reject the commandment of God so you may keep your tradition!

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. **"Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled."** (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

'Present your case,' says Yahweh; 'present your best arguments for your idols,' says the King of Jacob. Your idols **cannot bring us their own arguments or come forward to declare to us what will happen** so we may know these things well. We cannot hear them because **they cannot speak** to tell us their earlier predictive declarations, so we cannot reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work?

Can you find the way back to their houses for them?

**Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then;
the number of your days is so large!** (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You act like you know how light and darkness were created, as if you were there; as if you are as old as creation, but you are not!**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Litotes](#)

(Go back to: [Matthew 8:12](#); [9:13](#); [11:25](#); [26:68](#); [Notes](#); [27:29](#); [27:42](#))

Litotes

Description

Litotes is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses a strong positive meaning by using two negative words or a negative word with a word that means the opposite of the meaning he intends. A few examples of negative words are “no,” “not,” “none,” and “never.” The opposite of “good” is “bad.” Someone could say that something is “not bad” to mean that it is extremely good.

This page answers the question: *What is litotes?*

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use litotes. People who speak those languages might not understand that a statement using litotes actually strengthens the positive meaning. Instead, they might think that it weakens or even cancels the positive meaning.

Examples From the Bible

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**, (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

By using litotes, Paul emphasized that his visit with them was **very** useful.

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

By using litotes, Luke emphasized that there was a **lot** of excitement or anxiety among the soldiers about what happened to Peter. (Peter had been in prison, and even though there were soldiers guarding him, he escaped when an angel let him out. So they were very agitated.)

But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are **not the least** among the leaders of Judah,
for from you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel. (Matthew 2:6 ULT)

By using litotes, the prophet emphasized that Bethlehem would be a **very important city**.

Translation Strategies

If the litotes would be understood correctly, consider using it.

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**. (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

“For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you **did much good**.”

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

“Now when it became day, there was **great excitement** among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter.”

or:

“Now when it became day, the soldiers were **very concerned** because of what had happened to Peter.”

(Go back to: [Matthew 2:6](#); [17:20](#))

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: [Matthew 5:18](#); [8:11](#); [11:25](#); [12:40](#); [23:15](#); [23:35](#); [28:18](#))

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: [Matthew 2:6](#); [3:3](#); [3:7](#); [3:8](#); [3:10](#); [3:11](#); [3:12](#); [4:16](#); [4:19](#); [5:6](#); [5:13](#); [5:14](#); [5:16](#); [5:28](#); [5:29](#); [5:34](#); [5:35](#); [6:2](#); [6:3](#); [6:12](#); [6:20](#); [6:22](#); [6:23](#); [6:27](#); [6:28](#); [6:29](#); [6:30](#); [7:3](#); [7:6](#); [7:7](#); [7:13](#); [7:15](#); [7:16](#); [7:17](#); [7:19](#); [7:20](#); [8:22](#); [10:6](#); [10:8](#); [10:25](#); [10:26](#); [10:38](#); [10:39](#); [11:7](#); [11:10](#); [11:25](#); [11:28](#); [11:29](#); [12:20](#); [12:25](#); [12:27](#); [12:30](#); [12:33](#); [12:34](#); [12:35](#); [12:39](#); [12:44](#); [12:49](#); [12:50](#); [13:13](#); [13:15](#); [13:19](#); [13:20](#); [13:21](#); [13:22](#); [13:23](#); [13:42](#); [13:50](#); [Notes](#); [15:13](#); [15:14](#); [15:24](#); [15:27](#); [Notes](#); [16:4](#); [16:6](#); [16:11](#); [16:18](#); [16:19](#); [16:23](#); [16:24](#); [16:25](#); [18:7](#); [18:9](#); [18:18](#); [19:5](#); [19:6](#); [19:8](#); [19:12](#); [19:21](#); [20:28](#); [20:33](#); [21:13](#); [21:29](#); [21:42](#); [21:43](#); [21:44](#); [23:4](#); [23:13](#); [23:16](#); [23:17](#); [23:19](#); [23:24](#); [23:25](#); [23:26](#); [23:32](#); [23:33](#); [23:37](#); [24:4](#); [24:5](#); [24:8](#); [24:11](#); [24:24](#); [24:33](#); [24:43](#); [25:24](#); [25:26](#); [25:33](#); [26:31](#); [26:39](#); [26:42](#); [27:26](#))

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: [Matthew 2:3](#); [2:11](#); [3:2](#); [3:5](#); [3:7](#); [3:17](#); [4:4](#); [4:17](#); [4:23](#); [5:3](#); [5:8](#); [5:10](#); [5:17](#); [5:19](#); [5:28](#); [5:29](#); [5:30](#); [6:9](#); [6:10](#); [6:21](#); [6:33](#); [7:12](#); [7:21](#); [7:22](#); [7:24](#); [8:8](#); [8:11](#); [8:12](#); [8:16](#); [8:34](#); [9:4](#); [10:6](#); [10:7](#); [10:9](#); [10:12](#); [10:13](#); [10:14](#); [10:15](#); [10:19](#); [10:22](#); [10:27](#); [10:34](#); [10:38](#); [11:11](#); [11:13](#); [11:15](#); [11:20](#); [11:21](#); [11:22](#); [11:23](#); [11:24](#); [11:26](#); [11:29](#); [12:19](#); [12:25](#); [12:26](#); [12:28](#); [12:32](#); [12:34](#); [12:36](#); [12:41](#); [12:42](#); [13:9](#); [13:11](#); [13:15](#); [13:19](#); [13:20](#); [13:24](#); [13:27](#); [13:31](#); [13:33](#); [13:38](#); [13:43](#); [13:44](#); [13:47](#); [13:52](#); [14:3](#); [15:8](#); [15:11](#); [15:18](#); [15:23](#); [16:18](#); [16:19](#); [16:24](#); [16:28](#); [17:5](#); [17:22](#); [18:1](#); [18:3](#); [18:4](#); [18:5](#); [18:7](#); [18:16](#); [18:18](#); [18:20](#); [18:35](#); [19:1](#); [19:8](#); [19:12](#); [19:14](#); [19:23](#); [19:28](#); [19:29](#); [20:21](#); [20:23](#); [21:9](#); [21:10](#); [21:16](#); [21:25](#); [21:31](#); [21:42](#); [21:43](#); [22:13](#); [22:37](#); [22:40](#); [22:46](#); [23:2](#); [23:13](#); [23:30](#); [23:35](#); [23:37](#); [23:38](#); [23:39](#); [24:5](#); [24:7](#); [24:9](#); [24:14](#); [24:30](#); [24:35](#); [24:36](#); [24:48](#); [25:1](#); [25:13](#); [25:30](#); [25:32](#); [25:34](#); [26:27](#); [26:29](#); [26:34](#); [26:39](#); [26:41](#); [26:45](#); [26:52](#); [26:64](#); [27:9](#); [27:24](#); [27:25](#); [28:19](#))

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: [Matthew 11:5](#); [11:25](#); [12:7](#); [13:49](#); [15:31](#); [19:21](#); [21:14](#); [22:32](#); [23:29](#); [25:8](#); [25:37](#); [25:46](#); [26:9](#); [26:11](#))

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: [Matthew 9:20](#); [10:1](#); [11:1](#); [13:8](#); [14:20](#); [14:21](#); [15:38](#); [16:9](#); [16:10](#); [18:12](#); [18:21](#); [18:22](#); [18:24](#); [18:28](#); [19:29](#); [26:15](#); [26:53](#))

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](#)

[Connecting Words and Phrases](#)

[Introduction of a New Event](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-versebridge]]

(Go back to: [Matthew 2:16](#); [9:21](#); [10:5](#); [14:1](#); [14:3](#); [14:4](#); [27:3](#))

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: [Matthew 10:2](#); [16:21](#); [17:23](#); [20:3](#); [20:5](#); [20:6](#); [20:19](#); [22:25](#); [22:26](#); [26:42](#); [26:44](#); [27:64](#))

Parables

A parable is a short story that teaches something(s) that is true, and delivers the lesson in a way that is easy to understand and hard to forget.

This page answers the question: *What is a parable?*

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

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

Description

A parable is a short story that is told to teach something(s) that is true. Though the events in a parable could happen, they did not actually happen. They are told only to teach the lesson(s) that the listener is meant to learn. Parables rarely contain the names of specific people. (This may help you identify what is a parable and what is an account of a real event.) Parables often use figures of speech such as [simile](#) and [metaphor](#).

Then he also told them a parable. "A blind man is not able to guide a blind man, is he? Would not both fall into a pit?" (Luke 6:39 ULT)

This parable teaches that if a person does not have spiritual understanding, he cannot help someone else to understand spiritual things.

Examples From the Bible

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket but, rather, on the lampstand, and it shines for everyone in the house. Let your light shine before people in such a way that they see your good deeds and praise your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:15-16 ULT)

This parable teaches us not to hide the way we live for God from other people.

>

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all other seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

This parable teaches that the kingdom of God may seem small at first, but it will grow and spread throughout the world.

Translation Strategies

(1) If a parable is hard to understand because it has unknown objects in it, you can replace the unknown objects with objects that people in your culture know. However, be careful to keep the lesson the same.

(2) If the teaching of the parable is unclear, consider telling a little about what it teaches in the introduction, such as "Jesus told this story about being generous."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If a parable is hard to understand because it has unknown objects in it, you can replace the unknown objects with objects that people in your culture know. However, be careful to keep the lesson the same.

Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the **lampstand**?" (Mark 4:21 ULT)

If people do not know what a lampstand is, you could substitute something else that people put a light on so it can give light to the house.

Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on **a high shelf?**"

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and **sowed** in his field. It is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

To sow seeds means to toss them so that they scatter on the ground. If people are not familiar with sowing, you can substitute planting.

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and **planted** in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

(2) If the teaching of the parable is unclear, consider telling a little about what it teaches in the introduction, such as "Jesus told this story about being generous."

Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the lampstand?" (Mark 4:21 ULT)

Jesus told them a parable about why they should witness openly. Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the lampstand?" (Mark 4:21 ULT)

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

Then Jesus presented another parable to them about how the kingdom of God grows. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

(Go back to: [Matthew 11:17](#); [12:29](#); [12:45](#); [13:24](#); [13:31](#); [13:33](#); [13:44](#); [13:47](#); [13:52](#); [18:13](#); [18:23](#); [18:28](#); [18:30](#); [18:32](#); [20:1](#); [20:3](#); [20:5](#); [20:8](#); [20:11](#); [20:13](#); [20:15](#); [21:28](#); [21:33](#); [21:35](#); [21:38](#); [22:1](#); [22:4](#); [22:5](#); [22:8](#); [22:11](#); [24:43](#); [25:1](#); [25:7](#); [25:10](#); [25:14](#); [25:17](#); [25:19](#); [25:22](#); [25:24](#); [25:26](#); [25:28](#))

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: [Matthew 3:3](#); [4:16](#); [6:24](#); [8:17](#); [10:26](#); [10:27](#); [11:30](#); [12:20](#); [12:25](#); [13:13](#); [13:14](#); [13:16](#); [13:34](#); [21:44](#); [24:7](#); [24:31](#); [24:50](#); [25:24](#); [25:26](#))

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: [Matthew 6:28](#); [6:29](#); [6:30](#); [6:34](#); [8:15](#); [8:27](#); [11:19](#); [13:22](#))

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: [Matthew 8:4](#))

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: [Matthew 8:20](#); [Notes](#); [9:12](#); [9:15](#); [9:37](#); [10:24](#); [10:29](#); [10:39](#); [11:19](#); [12:25](#); [12:33](#); [15:26](#); [24:28](#); [24:48](#))

Quotations and Quote Margins

Description

This page answers the question: *What are quote margins and where should I put them?*

When saying that someone said something, we often tell who spoke, whom they spoke to, and what they said. The information about who spoke and whom they spoke to is called the quote margin. What the person said is the quotation. (This is also called a quote.) In some languages the quote margin may come first, last, or even in between two parts of the quotation.

The quote margins are bolded below.

- **She said**, "The food is ready. Come and eat."
- "The food is ready. Come and eat," **she said**.
- "The food is ready," **she said**. "Come and eat."

Also in some languages, the quote margin may have more than one verb meaning "said."

But his mother **answered** and **said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John." (Luke 1:60 ULT)

When writing that someone said something, some languages put the quote (what was said) in quotation marks called inverted commas (" "). Some languages use other symbols around the quotation, such as these angle quote marks (« »), or something else.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to put the quote margin where it is most clear and natural in their language.
- Translators need to decide whether they want the quote margin to have one or two verbs meaning "said."
- Translators need to decide which marks to use around the quotation.

Examples From the Bible

Quote margin before the quote

Then Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in her days." (Luke 1:18 ULT)

Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and **they said to him**, "Teacher, what should we do?" (Luke 3:12 ULT)

So **he said to them**, "Collect nothing more than what you have been ordered." (Luke 3:13 ULT)

Quote margin after the quote

Yahweh relented concerning this. "It will not happen," **he said**. (Amos 7:3 ULT)

Quote margin between two parts of the quote

"I will hide my face from them," **he said**, "and I will see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful." (Deuteronomy 32:20 ULT)

For look, days are coming—**this is Yahweh’s declaration**—when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah. (Jeremiah 30:3a ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.
- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning “said.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.

He said, “Therefore, those among you who are leaders should go down with us. If there is something wrong with the man, let them accuse him.” (Acts 25:5 ULT)

“Therefore, those who can should go there with us,” **he said**. “If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him.”

“Therefore, those who can should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him,” **he said**.

“Therefore, those who can,” **he said**, “should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him.”

- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning “said.”

But his mother **answered and said**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.” (Luke 1:60 ULT)

But his mother **replied**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.”

But his mother **said**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.”

But his mother **answered** like this. “No. Rather, he will be called John,” she **said**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Direct and Indirect Quotations](#)

(Go back to: [Matthew 26:61; 28:13](#))

Quotes within Quotes

Description

A quotation may have a quote within it, and quotes that are inside of other quotes can also have quotes within them. When a quote has quotes within it, we say there are “layers” of quotation, and each of the quotes is a layer. When there are many layers of quotes inside of quotes, it can be hard for listeners and readers to know who is saying what. Some languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes to make it easier.

This page answers the question: *What is a quote within a quote, and how can I help the readers understand who is saying what?*

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

[Direct and Indirect Quotations](#)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

When there is a quote within a quote, the listener needs to know who the pronouns refer to. For example: if a quote that is inside a quote has the word “I,” the listener needs to know whether “I” refers to the speaker of the inner quote or the outer quote.

Some languages make this clear by using different kinds of quotes when there are quotes within quotes.

They may use direct quotes for some and indirect quotes for others.

Some languages do not use indirect quotes.

Examples From the Bible

A quotation with only one layer

But Paul said, “I, however, was indeed born a citizen.” (Acts 22:28b ULT)

Quotations with two layers

Jesus answered and said to them, “Be careful that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name. They will say, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will lead many astray.” (Matthew 24:4-5 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to his disciples. The second layer is what other people will say.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king.” (John 18:37b ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to Pilate. The second layer is what Pilate said about Jesus.

A quotation with three layers

Abraham said, “... I said to her, ‘You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, **“He is my brother.”**’” (Genesis 20:11a, 13 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Abraham responded to Abimelech. The second layer is what Abraham had told his wife. The third layer is what he wanted his wife to say. (We have bolded the third layer.)

A quotation with four layers

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: **'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal- Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'**"'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

The outermost layer is what the messengers said to the king. The second layer is what the man who had met the messengers told them. The third is what that man wanted the messengers to say to the king. The fourth is what Yahweh said. (We have bolded the fourth layer.)

Translation Strategies

Some languages use only direct quotes. Other languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes. In those languages it might sound strange and perhaps even be confusing if there are many layers of direct quotes.

- (1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes.
- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. (See [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#).)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes. In the example below we have bolded the indirect quotes in the ULT and the quotes that we have changed to direct quotes below it.

Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul, saying, "There is a certain man was left here as a prisoner by Felix. So I am uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked **if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there to be judged concerning these things**. But when Paul appealed **to keep him in custody for the decision of the emperor**, I ordered him **to be held in custody until when I could send him to Caesar**." (Acts 25:14b, 20-21 ULT)

Festus presented Paul's case to the king. He said, "A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner. I was uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked him, **'Will you go to Jerusalem to be judged there concerning these things?'** But when Paul said, **'I want to be kept in custody for the emperor's decision,'** I told the guard, **'Keep him in custody until when I can send him to Caesar.'**"

- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. In English the word "that" can come before indirect quotes. It is bolded in the examples below. The pronouns that changed because of the indirect quote are also bolded.

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Speak to them and say, 'During the evenings you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be satisfied with bread. And you will know that I am Yahweh your God.'" (Exodus 16:11-12 ULT)

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Tell them **that** during the evenings **they** will eat meat, and in the morning **they** will be satisfied with bread. And **they** will know that I am Yahweh **their** God."

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'""'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

They told him **that** a man had come to meet **them** who said to **them**, "Go back to the king who sent you, and tell him **that** Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

(Go back to: [Matthew 15:6](#); [21:25](#); [21:26](#); [22:24](#); [26:18](#); [27:43](#); [27:63](#); [27:64](#); [28:7](#))

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: [Matthew 3:7](#); [3:14](#); [5:46](#); [5:47](#); [6:25](#); [6:26](#); [6:27](#); [6:28](#); [6:30](#); [7:3](#); [7:4](#); [7:9](#); [7:10](#); [7:11](#); [7:16](#); [7:22](#); [8:26](#); [8:27](#); [8:29](#); [Notes](#); [9:4](#); [9:5](#); [9:11](#); [9:15](#); [10:29](#); [11:7](#); [11:8](#); [11:9](#); [11:16](#); [11:23](#); [12:3](#); [12:5](#); [12:11](#); [12:26](#); [12:27](#); [12:29](#); [12:34](#); [12:48](#); [13:27](#); [13:54](#); [13:55](#); [13:56](#); [14:31](#); [15:2](#); [15:3](#); [15:16](#); [15:17](#); [15:33](#); [16:8](#); [16:9](#); [16:10](#); [16:11](#); [16:26](#); [17:17](#); [17:25](#); [18:12](#); [18:33](#); [19:4](#); [19:5](#); [19:17](#); [19:25](#); [20:13](#); [20:15](#); [21:16](#); [21:20](#); [21:25](#); [21:28](#); [21:42](#); [22:12](#); [22:18](#); [22:20](#); [22:31](#); [22:32](#); [22:43](#); [22:45](#); [23:17](#); [23:19](#); [23:33](#); [24:2](#); [24:45](#); [26:8](#); [26:10](#); [26:22](#); [26:25](#); [26:40](#); [26:45](#); [26:53](#); [26:54](#); [26:55](#); [26:65](#); [27:4](#); [27:13](#))

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: [Matthew 3:16](#); [7:24](#); [7:26](#); [9:36](#); [10:16](#); [11:17](#); [13:24](#); [13:33](#); [13:43](#); [13:44](#); [13:47](#); [17:2](#); [17:20](#); [18:3](#); [18:4](#); [19:14](#); [23:27](#); [23:37](#); [24:27](#); [25:32](#); [28:3](#); [28:4](#))

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: [Matthew 2:11](#); [3:4](#); [4:9](#); [8:2](#); [8:12](#); [9:18](#); [10:14](#); [13:42](#); [13:50](#); [15:25](#); [18:26](#); [18:29](#); [21:8](#); [22:13](#); [22:44](#); [24:51](#); [25:30](#); [26:64](#); [26:65](#); [27:24](#); [27:39](#))

Symbolic Prophecy

Description

Symbolic prophecy is a type of message that God gave to a prophet so that the prophet would tell others. These messages use images and symbols to show what God will do in the future.

The main books that have these prophecies are Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation. Shorter examples of symbolic prophecy are also found in other Scriptures, such as in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

The Bible tells both how God gave each message and what the message was. When God gave the messages, he often did so in miraculous ways such as in dreams and visions. (See Dream and Vision for help translating “dreams” and “visions.”) When prophets saw these dreams and visions, they often saw images and symbols about God and heaven. Some of these images included a throne, golden lamp stands, a powerful man with white hair and white clothes, and eyes like fire and legs like bronze. Some of these images were seen by more than one prophet.

The prophecies about the world also contain images and symbols. For example, in some of the prophecies, strong animals represent kingdoms, horns represent kings or kingdoms, a dragon or serpent represents the devil, the sea represents the nations, and weeks represent longer periods of time. Some of these images were also seen by more than one prophet.

The prophecies tell about the evil in this world, how God will judge the world and punish sin, and how God will establish his righteous kingdom in the new world he is creating. They also tell about things that will happen concerning heaven and hell.

Much of prophecy in the Bible is presented as poetry. In some cultures people assume that if something is said in poetry, then it might not be true or very important. However, the prophecies in the Bible are true and very important, whether they are presented in poetic forms or non-poetic forms.

Sometimes the past tense is used in these books for events that happened in the past. However, sometimes the past tense is used for events that would happen in the future. There are two reasons for this. When prophets told about things that they saw in a dream or vision, they often used the past tense because their dream was in the past. The other reason for using the past tense to refer to future events was to emphasize that those events would certainly happen. The events were so certain to happen, it was as if they had already happened. We call this second use of the past tense “the predictive past.” (See Predictive Past.)

Some of these things happened after the prophets told about them, and some of them will happen at the end of this world.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some of the images are hard to understand because we have never seen things like them before.
- Descriptions of things that we have never seen or that do not exist in this world are hard to translate.
- In places where God or the prophet used the past tense, readers may have difficulty knowing whether he was talking about something that had already happened or something that would happen later.

Translation Principles

- Translate the images in the text. Do not try to interpret them and translate their meaning.

This page answers the question: *What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?*

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

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

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

- When an image appears in more than one place in the Bible, and it is described in the same way, try to translate it the same way in all those places.
- If either poetic forms or non-poetic forms would imply to your readers that the prophecy is not true or is unimportant, use a form that would not imply those things.
- Sometimes it is difficult to understand in what order the events described in the various prophecies happen. Simply write them as they appear in each prophecy.
- Translate tense in a way that the readers can understand what the speaker meant. If readers would not understand the predictive past, it is acceptable to use the future tense.
- Some of the prophecies were fulfilled after the prophets wrote about them. Some of them have not been fulfilled yet. Do not clarify in the prophecy when these prophecies were fulfilled or how they were fulfilled.

Examples From the Bible

The following passages describe powerful beings that Ezekiel, Daniel, and John saw. Images mentioned in these visions include hair that is white as wool, a voice like many waters, a golden belt, and legs or feet like polished bronze. Though the prophets saw various details, it would be good to translate the details that are the same in the same way. The bolded phrases in the passage from Revelation also occur in the passages from Daniel and Ezekiel.

In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a son of man, wearing a robe that reached down to his feet and he wore a golden sash across his chest. **His head and hair were as white as wool**—as white as snow—and his eyes were like a flame of fire. **His feet were like polished bronze**, like bronze that had been refined in a furnace, and **his voice was like the sound of many rushing waters**. He had seven stars in his right hand, and a sword with two sharp edges was coming out of his mouth. His face was shining like the sun at its strongest. (Revelation 1:13-16 ULT)

As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow, and **the hair of his head was like pure wool**. (Daniel 7:9 ULT)

I looked up and saw a man dressed in linen, with a belt around his waist made of pure gold from Uphaz. His body was like topaz, his face was like lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and **his feet were like polished bronze**, and the sound of his words was like the sound of a great crowd. (Daniel 10:5-6 ULT)

Behold! The glory of the God of Israel came from the east; **his voice was like the sound of many waters**, and the earth shone with his glory! (Ezekiel 43:2 ULT)

The following passage shows the use of the past tense to refer to past events. The bolded verbs refer to past events.

The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, that he **saw** concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. (Isaiah 1:1 ULT)

Hear, heavens, and give ear, earth; for Yahweh **has spoken**: (Isaiah 1:2a ULT)

"I **have nourished** and **brought up** children, but they **have rebelled** against me." (Isaiah 1:2b ULT)

The following passage shows the future tense and different uses of the past tense. The bolded verbs are examples of the predictive past, where the past tense is used to show that the events certainly will happen.

The gloom will be dispelled from her who was in anguish. In an earlier time he humiliated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the later time he will make it glorious, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness **have seen** a great light; those who have lived in the land of the shadow of death, the light **has shone** on them. (Isaiah 9:1-2 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- If the prophecy uses the past tense to talk about the future and this would be misunderstood in your language, use the strategies in Predictive Past.
- If the images in the prophecy are of things that are unknown in your culture, use the strategies in [Translate Unknowns](#).

(Go back to: [Matthew 24 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

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: [Matthew 4:3](#); [6:11](#); [6:31](#); [7:9](#); [10:10](#); [11:10](#); [11:29](#); [12:18](#); [12:21](#); [12:34](#); [13:16](#); [15:26](#); [16:17](#); [24:22](#); [24:35](#); [26:38](#); [26:41](#))

Textual Variants

Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However, people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, or some mistook one word for another that looked like it. Occasionally, they added words or even whole sentences, either by accident or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles include some of these sentences that were added. In the ULT, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

Bible scholars have read many old copies and compared them with each other. For each place in the Bible where there was a difference, they have figured out which wordings are most likely correct. The translators of the ULT based the ULT on wordings that scholars say are most likely correct. Because people who use the ULT may have access to Bibles that are based on other copies, the ULT translators have sometimes included information about some of the differences between them, either in the ULT footnotes or in the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes.

Translators are encouraged to translate the text in the ULT and to write about added sentences in footnotes, as is done in the ULT. However, if the local church really wants those sentences to be included in the main text, translators may put them in the text and include a footnote about them.

This page answers the question: *Why does the ULT have missing or added verses, and should I translate them?*

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

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

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

Examples From the Bible

Matthew 18:10-11 ULT has a footnote about verse 11.

¹⁰ See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ ^[1]

[1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

John 7:53-8:11 is not in the best earliest manuscripts. It has been included in the ULT, but it is marked off with square brackets ([]) at the beginning and end, and there is a footnote after verse 11.

53 [Then everyone went to his own house ... 11 She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."] ^[2]

[2] Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

Translation Strategies

When there is a textual variant, you may choose to follow the ULT or another version that you have access to.

- (1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.
- (2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The translation strategies are applied to Mark 7:14-16 ULT, which has a footnote about verse 16.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." ¹⁶ ^[1]

^[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." ¹⁶ ^[1]

^[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man. ¹⁶ If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." ^[1]

^[1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

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

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

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

(Go back to: [Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew](#); [Matthew 19:9](#))

Translate Unknowns

While working to translate the Bible, you (the translator) might find yourself asking: “How do I translate words like lion, fig tree, mountain, priest, or temple when people in my culture have never seen these things and we do not have a word for them?”

This page answers the question: *How can I translate ideas that my readers are not familiar with?*

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

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

Description

Unknowns are things that occur in the source text that are not known to the people of your culture. The unfoldingWord® Translation Words pages and the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes will help you understand what they are. After you understand them, you will need to find ways to refer to those things so that people who read your translation will understand what they are.

They said to him, “We have nothing here except five loaves of **bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread and do not know what it is.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God’s commands and historical facts accurately.

Examples From the Bible

So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals**. (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

They offered him wine mixed with **myrrh**, but he did not drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

■ Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
- (4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.
- (5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.

■ Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

■ Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but **inwardly they are very hungry and dangerous animals**.

"Ravenous wolves" is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See [Translating Metaphors](#).)

■ "We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

■ We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked grain seeds** and two fish.

- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

■ Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.

■ Your sins ... will be white like **milk**.

■ Your sins ... will be white like **the moon**.

- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **myrrh**. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT) — People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word “medicine.”

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **a medicine called myrrh**. But he refused to drink it.

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT) — People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).

We have nothing here except five loaves of **baked crushed seed bread** and two fish.

(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **wild dogs**

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked food** and two fish.

(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

to him who made **the sun and the moon**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

[How to Translate Names](#)

(Go back to: [Matthew 3:12](#); [6:28](#); [8:20](#); [9:17](#); [10:29](#); [12:1](#); [13:2](#); [13:31](#); [13:45](#); [23:23](#); [23:37](#); [26:7](#))

Translating Son and Father

Door43 supports Bible translations that represent these concepts when they refer to God.

Biblical Witness

“Father” and “Son” are names that God calls himself in the Bible.

The Bible shows that God called Jesus his Son:

After he was baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and ... a voice came out of the heavens saying, **“This is my beloved Son.** I am very pleased with him.” (Matthew 3:16-17 ULT)

The Bible shows that Jesus called God his Father:

Jesus ... said, “I praise you **Father**, Lord of heaven and earth ... no one knows the **Son** except the **Father**, and no one knows the **Father** except the **Son**.” (Matthew 11:25a, 27b ULT) (See also: John 6:26-57)

Christians have found that “Father” and “Son” are the ideas that most essentially describe the eternal relationship of the First and Second Persons of the Trinity to each other. The Bible indeed refers to them in various ways, but no other terms reflect the eternal love and intimacy between these Persons, nor the interdependent eternal relationship between them.

Jesus referred to God in the following terms:

Baptize them into **the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.** (Matthew 28:19b ULT)

The intimate, loving relationship between the Father and the Son is eternal, just as they are eternal. The Father **loves** the Son. (See John 3:35-36; 5:19-20 ULT)

I love the Father, and just as the Father commanded me, thus I do. (John 14:31 ULT)

No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son. (Luke 10:22b ULT)

The terms “Father” and “Son” also communicate that the Father and the Son are of the same essence; they are both eternal God.

Jesus said, “Father, ... glorify your Son so that the Son will glorify you ... I glorified you on the earth ... Now Father, glorify me ... with the glory that **I had with you before the world was made.**” (John 17:1, 4a, 5 ULT)

But in these last days, he [God the Father] has spoken to us through a Son, whom he appointed to be the heir of all things. Through him, he also made the universe. He is the brightness of God’s glory and **the very exact representation of his being.** He holds everything together by the word of his power. (Hebrews 1:2-3a ULT)

Jesus said to him, “I have been with you for so long and you still do not know me, Philip? **Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.** How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:9 ULT)

This page answers the question: *Why are these concepts important in referring to God?*

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

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

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

Human Relationships

Human fathers and sons are not perfect, but the Bible still uses those terms for the Father and Son, who are perfect.

Just as today, human father-son relationships during Bible times were never as loving or perfect as the relationship between Jesus and his Father. But this does not mean that the translator should avoid the concepts of father and son. The Scriptures use these terms to refer to God, the perfect Father and Son, as well as to sinful human fathers and sons. In referring to God as Father and Son, choose words in your language that are widely used to refer to a human “father” and “son.” In this way you will communicate that God the Father and God the Son are of the same divine essence (they are both God), just as a human father and son are of the same human essence (they are both human and share the same human characteristics).

Translation Strategies

(1) Think through all the possibilities within your language to translate the words “son” and “father.” Determine which words in your language best represent the divine “Son” and “Father.”

(2) If your language has more than one word for “son,” use the word that has the closest meaning to “only son” (or “first son” if necessary).

(3) If your language has more than one word for “father,” use the word that has the closest meaning to “birth father,” rather than “adoptive father.”

(See *God the Father* and *Son of God* pages in [unfoldingWord® Translation Words](#) for help translating “Father” and “Son.”)

(Go back to: [Matthew 3:17](#); [4:3](#); [4:6](#); [5:45](#); [5:48](#); [6:1](#); [6:6](#); [6:8](#); [6:14](#); [6:18](#); [6:26](#); [6:32](#); [7:11](#); [7:21](#); [8:29](#); [10:20](#); [10:29](#); [10:32](#); [11:25](#); [11:27](#); [12:50](#); [13:43](#); [14:33](#); [15:13](#); [16:16](#); [16:17](#); [16:27](#); [18:10](#); [18:14](#); [18:19](#); [18:35](#); [20:23](#); [23:9](#); [24:36](#); [25:34](#); [26:29](#); [26:39](#); [26:42](#); [26:53](#); [26:63](#); [27:40](#); [27:43](#); [27:54](#); [28:19](#))

When Masculine Words Include Women

In the Bible, sometimes the words “men,” “brothers,” and “sons” refer only to men. At other times, those words include both men and women. In those places where the writer meant both men and women, you (the translator) need to translate it in a way that does not limit the meaning to men.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate “brother” or “he” when it could refer to anyone, male or female?*

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

[Pronouns](#)

[Generic Noun Phrases](#)

Description

In some languages a word that normally refers to men can also be used in a more general way to refer to both men and women. For example, the Bible sometimes says “brothers” when it refers to both brothers and sisters.

Also in some languages, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can be used in a more general way for any person if it is not important whether the person is a man or a woman. In the example below, the pronoun is “his,” but it is not limited to males.

A wise son makes **his** father rejoice
but a foolish son brings grief to **his** mother. (Proverbs 10:1 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- In some cultures words like “man,” “brother,” and “son” can only be used to refer to men. If those words are used in a translation in a more general way, people will think that what is being said does not apply to women.
- In some cultures, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can only refer to men. If a masculine pronoun is used, people will think that what is said does not apply to women.

Translation Principles

When a statement applies to both men and women, translate it in such a way that people will be able to understand that it applies to both.

Examples From the Bible

Now we want you to know, **brothers**, the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 8:1 ULT)

This verse is addressing the believers in Corinth, not only men, but **men and women**.

Then said Jesus to his disciples, “If anyone wants to follow me, **he** must deny **himself**, take up **his** cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

Jesus was not speaking only of men, but of **men and women**.

Caution: Sometimes masculine words are used specifically to refer to men. Do not use words that would lead people to think that they include women. The words below are specifically about men.

Moses said, ‘If **someone** dies, not having children, **his brother** must marry **his** wife and have children for **his brother**.’ (Matthew 22:24 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If people would understand that that masculine words like “man,” “brother,” and “he” can include women, then consider using them. Otherwise, here are some ways for translating those words when they include women.

- (1) Use a noun that can be used for both men and women.
- (2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.
- (3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use nouns that can be used for both men and women.

The wise **man** dies just like the fool dies. (Ecclesiastes 2:16b ULT)

“The wise **person** dies just like the fool dies.”

“Wise **people** die just like fools die.”

- (2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.

For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia. (2 Corinthians 1:8) — Paul was writing this letter to both men and women.

“For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers and sisters**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia.”

- (3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

“If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”
(Matthew 16:24 ULT)

English speakers can change the masculine singular pronouns, “he,” “himself,” and “his” to plural pronouns that do not mark gender, “they,” “themselves,” and “their” in order to show that it applies to all people, not just men.

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“If **people** want to follow me, **they** must deny **themselves**, take up **their** cross, and follow me.”

(Go back to: [Matthew 25:40](#))



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 28

authority

Definition:

The term “authority” usually refers to a position of influence, responsibility, or rule over another person.

- Kings and other governing rulers have authority over the people they are ruling.
- The word “authorities” can refer to people, governments, or organizations that have authority over others.
- The word “authorities” can also refer to spirit beings who have power over people who have not submitted themselves to God’s authority.
- Masters have authority over their servants or slaves. Parents have authority over their children.
- Governments have the authority or right to make laws that govern their citizens.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “authority” can also be translated as “control” or “right” or “qualifications.”
- Sometimes “authority” is used with the meaning of “power.”
- When “authorities” is used to refer to people or organizations who rule people, it could also be translated as “leaders” or “rulers” or “powers.”
- The phrase “by his own authority” could also be translated as “with his own right to lead” or “based on his own qualifications.”
- The expression, “under authority” could be translated as “responsible to obey” or “having to obey others’ commands.”

(See also: dominion, king, ruler, power)

Bible References:

- Colossians 2:10
- Esther 9:29
- Genesis 41:35
- Jonah 3:6-7
- Luke 12:5
- Luke 20:1-2
- Mark 1:22
- Matthew 8:9
- Matthew 28:19
- Titus 3:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H8633, G08310, G14130, G18490, G18500, G20030, G27150, G52470

(Go back to: [Matthew 8 General Notes](#))

blasphemy, blaspheme, blasphemous

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “blasphemy” refers to speaking in a way that shows a deep disrespect for God or people. To “blaspheme” someone is to speak against that person so that others think something false or bad about him.

- Most often, to blaspheme God means to slander or insult him by saying things that are not true about him or by behaving in an immoral way that dishonors him.
- It is blasphemy for a human being to claim to be God or to claim that there is a God other than the one true God.
- Some English versions translate this term as “slander” when it refers to blaspheming people.

Translation Suggestions:

- To “blaspheme” can be translated as to “say evil things against” or to “dishonor God” or to “slander.”
- Ways to translate “blasphemy” could include “speaking wrongly about others” or “slander” or “spreading false rumors.”

(See also: dishonor, slander)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 1:12-14
- Acts 6:11
- Acts 26:9-11
- James 2:5-7
- John 10:32-33
- Luke 12:10
- Mark 14:64
- Matthew 12:31
- Matthew 26:65
- Psalms 74:10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1288, H1442, H2778, H5006, H5007, H5344, G09870, G09880, G09890

(Go back to: [Matthew 12 General Notes](#))

brother

Definition:

The term “brother” refers to a male sibling who shares at least one biological parent.

- In the Old Testament, the term “brothers” is also used as a general reference to relatives or associates, such as members of the same tribe, clan, occupation, or people group. When used in this way, the term can refer to both men and women.
- In the New Testament, the apostles often use the term “brothers” to refer to fellow Christians, including both men and women.
- A few times in the New Testament, the apostles used the term “sister” when referring specifically to a fellow Christian who was a woman, or to emphasize that both men and women are being included. For example, James emphasizes that he is talking about all believers when he refers to “a brother or sister who is in need of food or clothing.”

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term with the literal word that is used in the target language to refer to a natural or biological brother, unless this would give wrong meaning.
- In the Old Testament especially, when “brothers” is used very generally to refer to members of the same family, clan, or people group, possible translations could include “relatives” or “clan members” or “fellow Israelites.”
- In the context of referring to a fellow believer in Christ, this term could be translated as “brother in Christ” or “spiritual brother.”
- If both males and females are being referred to and “brother” would give a wrong meaning, then a more general kinship term could be used that would include both males and females.
- Other ways to translate this term so that it refers to both male and female believers could be “fellow believers” or “Christian brothers and sisters.”
- Make sure to check the context to determine whether only men are being referred to, or whether both men and women are included.

(See also: apostle, God the Father, sister, spirit)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:26
- Genesis 29:10
- Leviticus 19:17
- Nehemiah 3:1
- Philippians 4:21
- Revelation 1:9

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0251, H0252, H0264, H1730, H2992, H2993, H2994, H7453, G00800, G00810, G23850, G24550, G25000, G46130, G53600, G55690

(Go back to: [Matthew 12 General Notes](#))

Christ, Messiah

Facts:

The terms “Messiah” and “Christ” mean “Anointed One” and refer to Jesus, God’s Son.

- Both “Messiah” and “Christ” are used in the New Testament to refer to God’s Son, whom God the Father appointed to rule as king over his people, and to save them from sin and death.
- In the Old Testament, the prophets wrote prophecies about the Messiah hundreds of years before he came to earth.
- Often a word meaning “anointed (one)” is used in the Old Testament to refer to the Messiah who would come.
- Jesus fulfilled many of these prophecies and did many miraculous works that proves he is the Messiah; the rest of these prophecies will be fulfilled when he returns.
- The word “Christ” is often used as a title, as in “the Christ” and “Christ Jesus.”
- “Christ” also came to be used as part of his name, as in “Jesus Christ.”

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated using its meaning, “the Anointed One” or “God’s Anointed Savior.”
- Many languages use a transliterated word that looks or sounds like “Christ” or “Messiah.” (See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))
- The transliterated word could be followed by the definition of the term as in, “Christ, the Anointed One.”
- Be consistent in how this is translated throughout the Bible so that it is clear that the same term is being referred to.
- Make sure the translations of “Messiah” and “Christ” work well in contexts where both terms occur in the same verse (such as John 1:41).

(See also: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [Son of God](#), David, Jesus, anoint)

Bible References:

- 1 John 5:1-3
- Acts 2:35
- Acts 5:40-42
- John 1:40-42
- John 3:27-28
- John 4:25
- Luke 2:10-12
- Matthew 1:16

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:7** The **Messiah** was God’s Chosen One who would save the people of the world from sin.
- **17:8** As it happened, the Israelites would have to wait a long time before the **Messiah** came, almost 1,000 years.
- **21:1** From the very beginning, God planned to send the **Messiah**.
- **21:4** God promised King David that the **Messiah** would be one of David’s own descendants.
- **21:5** The **Messiah** would start the New Covenant.
- **21:6** God’s prophets also said that the **Messiah** would be a prophet, a priest, and a king.

- **21:9** The prophet Isaiah prophesied that the **Messiah** would be born from a virgin.
- **43:7** "But God raised him to life again to fulfill the prophecy which says, 'You will not let your **Holy One** rot in the grave.'"
- **43:9** "But know for certain that God has caused Jesus to become both Lord and **Messiah**!"
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus **Christ** so that God will forgive your sins."
- **46:6** Saul reasoned with the Jews, proving that Jesus was the **Messiah**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4899, G33230, G55470

(Go back to: [Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew](#); [Matthew 17 General Notes](#))

disciple

Definition:

The term “disciple” refers to a person who spends much time with a teacher, learning from that teacher’s character and teaching.

- The people who followed Jesus around, listening to his teachings and obeying them, were called his “disciples.”
- John the Baptist also had disciples.
- During Jesus’ ministry, there were many disciples who followed him and heard his teachings.
- Jesus chose twelve disciples to be his closest followers; these men became known as his “apostles.”
- Jesus’ twelve apostles continued to be known as his “disciples” or “the 12.”
- Just before Jesus went up to heaven, he commanded his disciples to teach other people about how to become Jesus’ disciples, too.
- Anyone who believes in Jesus and obeys his teachings is called a disciple of Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “disciple” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “follower” or “student” or “pupil” or “learner.”
- Make sure that the translation of this term does not refer only to a student who learns in a classroom.
- The translation of this term should also be different from the translation of “apostle.”

(See also: apostle, believe, Jesus, John (the Baptist), the twelve)

Bible References:

- Acts 6:1
- Acts 9:26-27
- Acts 11:26
- Acts 14:22
- John 13:23
- Luke 6:40
- Matthew 11:3
- Matthew 26:33-35
- Matthew 27:64

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **30:8** He (Jesus) gave the pieces to his **disciples** to give to the people. The **disciples** kept passing out the food, and it never ran out!
- **38:1** About three years after Jesus first began preaching and teaching publicly, Jesus told his **disciples** that he wanted to celebrate this Passover with them in Jerusalem, and that he would be killed there.
- **38:11** Then Jesus went with his **disciples** to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus told his **disciples** to pray that they would not enter into temptation.
- **42:10** Jesus said to his **disciples**, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So go, make **disciples** of all people groups by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3928, G31000, G31010, G31020

(Go back to: [Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew](#))

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: [Matthew 17 General Notes](#))

fruit, fruitful, unfruitful

Definition:

The term “fruit” literally refers to the part of a plant that can be eaten. Something that is “fruitful” has a lot of fruit. These terms are also used figuratively in the Bible.

- The Bible often uses “fruit” to refer to a person’s actions. Just as fruit on a tree shows what kind of tree it is, in the same way a person’s words and actions reveal what his character is like.
- A person can produce good or bad spiritual fruit, but the term “fruitful” always has the positive meaning of producing much good fruit.
- The term “fruitful” is also used figuratively to mean “prosperous.” This often refers to having many children and descendants, as well as having plenty of food and other wealth.
- In general, the expression “fruit of” refers to anything that comes from or that is produced by something else. For example, the “fruit of wisdom” refers to the good things that come from being wise.
- The expression “fruit of the land” refers generally to everything that the land produces for people to eat. This includes not only fruits such as grapes or dates, but also vegetables, nuts, and grains.
- The figurative expression “fruit of the Spirit” refers to godly qualities that the Holy Spirit produces in the lives of people who obey him.
- The expression “fruit of the womb” refers to “what the womb produces”—that is children.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term using the general word for “fruit” that is commonly used in the project language to refer to the edible fruit of a fruit tree. In many languages it may be more natural to use the plural “fruits” whenever it refers to more than one fruit.
- Depending on the context, the term “fruitful” could be translated as “producing much spiritual fruit” or “having many children” or “prosperous.”
- The expression “fruit of the land” could also be translated as “food that the land produces” or “food crops that are growing in that region.”
- When God created animals and people, he commanded them to “be fruitful and multiply,” which refers to having many offspring. This could also be translated as “have many offspring” or “have many children and descendants” or “have many children so that you will have many descendants.”
- The expression “fruit of the womb” could be translated as “what the womb produces” or “children a woman gives birth to” or just “children.” When Elizabeth says to Mary “blessed is the fruit of your womb,” she means “blessed is the child you will give birth to.” The project language may also have a different expression for this.
- Another expression “fruit of the vine,” could be translated as “vine fruit” or “grapes.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “will be more fruitful” could also be translated as “will produce more fruit” or “will have more children” or “will be prosperous.”
- The apostle Paul’s expression “fruitful labor” could be translated as “work that brings very good results” or “efforts that result in many people believing in Jesus.”
- The “fruit of the Spirit” could also be translated as “works that the Holy Spirit produces” or “words and actions that show that the Holy Spirit is working in someone.”

(See also: descendant, grain, grape, [Holy Spirit](#), vine, womb)

Bible References:

- Galatians 5:23
- Genesis 1:11
- Luke 8:15
- Matthew 3:8

- Matthew 7:17

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0004, H1061, H1063, H1069, H2233, H2981, H3581, H3759, H3899, H3978, H4022, H5108, H6509, H6529, H7019, H8393, H8570, G10810, G25900, G25920, G25930, G37030, G50520, G53520

(Go back to: [Matthew 3 General Notes; Notes](#))

glory, glorious, glorify

Definition:

The term “glory” is a general term for a family of concepts including value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, or majesty. The term “glorify” means to ascribe glory to someone or something, or to show or tell how glorious something or someone is.

- In the Bible, the term “glory” is especially used to describe God, who is more valuable, more worthy, more important, more honorable, more splendid, and more majestic than anyone or anything in the universe. Everything about his character reveals his glory.
- People can glorify God by telling about the wonderful things he has done. They can also glorify God by living in accordance with God’s character, because doing so shows to others his value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, and majesty.
- The expression to “glory in” means to boast about or take pride in something.

Old Testament

- The specific phrase “the glory of Yahweh” in the Old Testament usually refers to some perceptible manifestation of Yahweh’s presence in a particular location.

New Testament

- God the Father will glorify God the Son by revealing to all people the full extent of how glorious Jesus is.
- Everyone who believes in Christ will be glorified with him. This use of the term “glorify” carries a unique meaning. It means that when people who believe in Christ are raised to life, they will be changed physically to be like Jesus as he appeared after his resurrection.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “glory” could include “splendor” or “majesty” or “awesome greatness” or “extreme value.”
- The term “glorious” could be translated as “full of glory” or “extremely valuable” or “brightly shining” or “awesomely majestic.”
- The expression “give glory to God” could be translated as “honor God’s greatness” or “praise God because of his splendor” or “tell others how great God is.”
- The expression “glory in” could also be translated as “praise” or “take pride in” or “boast about” or “take pleasure in.”
- “Glorify” could also be translated as “give glory to” or “bring glory to” or “cause to appear great.”
- The phrase “glorify God” could also be translated as “praise God” or “talk about God’s greatness” or “show how great God is” or “honor God (by obeying him).”
- The term “be glorified” could also be translated as “be shown to be very great” or “be praised” or “be exalted.”

(See also: honor, majesty, exalt, obey, praise)

Bible References:

- Exodus 24:17
- Numbers 14:9-10
- Isaiah 35:2

- Luke 18:43
- Luke 2:9
- John 12:28
- Acts 3:13-14
- Acts 7:1-3
- Romans 8:17
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- Philippians 2:14-16
- Philippians 4:19
- Colossians 3:1-4
- 1 Thessalonians 2:5
- James 2:1-4
- 1 Peter 4:15-16
- Revelation 15:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “**Glor**y to God in heaven and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- **25:6** Then Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and all their **glor**y and said, “I will give you all this if you bow down and worship me.”
- **37:1** When Jesus heard this news, he said, “This sickness will not end in death, but it is for the **glor**y of God.”
- **37:8** Jesus responded, “Did I not tell you that you would see God’s **glor**y if you believe in me?”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0117, H0142, H0155, H0215, H1342, H1921, H1926, H1935, H1984, H3367, H3513, H3519, H3520, H6286, H6643, H7623, H8597, G13910, G13920, G17400, G17410, G27440, G48880

(Go back to: [Matthew 17 General Notes](#))

Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of the Lord, Spirit

Facts:

These terms all refer to the Holy Spirit, who is God. The one true God exists eternally as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit is also referred to as “the Spirit” and “Spirit of Yahweh” and “Spirit of truth.”
- Because the Holy Spirit is God, he is absolutely holy, infinitely pure, and morally perfect in all his nature and in everything he does.
- Along with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit was active in creating the world.
- When God’s Son, Jesus, returned to heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit to his people to lead them, teach them, comfort them, and enable them to do God’s will.
- The Holy Spirit guided Jesus and he guides those who believe in Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could simply be translated with the words used to translate “holy” and “spirit.”
- Ways to translate this term could also include “Pure Spirit” or “Spirit who is Holy” or “God the Spirit.”

(See also: holy, spirit, God, Lord, God the Father, [Son of God](#), gift)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 10:10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8
- Acts 8:17
- Galatians 5:25
- Genesis 1:1-2
- Isaiah 63:10
- Job 33:4
- Matthew 12:31
- Matthew 28:18-19
- Psalms 51:10-11

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:1** But **God’s Spirit** was there over the water.
- **24:8** When Jesus came up out of the water after being baptized, **the Spirit of God** appeared in the form of a dove and came down and rested on him.
- **26:1** After overcoming Satan’s temptations, Jesus returned in the power of **the Holy Spirit** to the region of Galilee where he lived.
- **26:3** Jesus read, “God has given me **his Spirit** so that I can proclaim good news to the poor, freedom to captives, recovery of sight for the blind, and release to the oppressed.”
- **42:10** “So go, make disciples of all people groups by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and **the Holy Spirit** and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”
- **43:3** They were all filled with the **Holy Spirit** and they began to speak in other languages.
- **43:8** “And Jesus has sent the **Holy Spirit** just as he promised he would do. The **Holy Spirit** is causing the things that you are now seeing and hearing.”
- **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. Then he will also give you the gift of the **Holy Spirit.**”
- **45:1** He (Stephen) had a good reputation and was full of the **Holy Spirit** and of wisdom.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3068, H6944, H7307, G00400, G41510

(Go back to: [Matthew 12 General 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: [Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew](#); [Matthew 15 General Notes](#))

parable

Definition:

The term “parable” usually refers to a short story or object lesson that is used to explain or teach a moral truth.

- Jesus used parables to teach his disciples. Although he also told parables to the crowds of people, he did not always explain the parable.
- A parable could be used to reveal truth to his disciples while hiding that truth from people like the Pharisees who did not believe in Jesus.
- The prophet Nathan told David a parable to show the king his terrible sin.
- The story of the Good Samaritan is an example of a parable that is a story. Jesus’ comparison of old and new wineskins is an example of a parable that was an object lesson to help the disciples understand Jesus’ teachings.

(See also: Samaria)

Bible References:

- Luke 5:36
- Luke 6:39
- Luke 8:4
- Luke 8:9-10
- Mark 4:1
- Matthew 13:3
- Matthew 13:10
- Matthew 13:13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1819, H4912, G38500, G39420

(Go back to: [Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew](#))

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: [Matthew 17 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

repent, repentance

Definition:

The terms “repent” and “repentance” refer to turning away from sin and turning back to God.

- To “repent” literally means to “change one’s mind.”
- In the Bible, “repent” usually means to turn away from a sinful, human way of thinking and acting, and to turn to God’s way of thinking and acting.
- When people truly repent of their sins, God forgives them and helps them start obeying him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “repent” can be translated with a word or phrase that means “turn back (to God)” or “turn away from sin and toward God” or “turn toward God, away from sin.”
- Often the term “repentance” can be translated using the verb “repent.” For example, “God has given repentance to Israel” could be translated as “God has enabled Israel to repent.”
- Other ways to translate “repentance” could include “turning away from sin” or “turning to God and away from sin.”

(See also: forgive, [sin](#), turn)

Bible References:

- Acts 3:19-20
- Luke 3:3
- Luke 3:8
- Luke 5:32
- Luke 24:47
- Mark 1:14-15
- Matthew 3:3
- Matthew 3:11
- Matthew 4:17
- Romans 2:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **16:2** After many years of disobeying God and being oppressed by their enemies, the Israelites **repented** and asked God to rescue them.
- **17:13** David **repented** of his sin and God forgave him.
- **19:18** They (prophets) warned people that God would destroy them if they did not **repent**.
- **24:2** Many people came out to the wilderness to listen to John. He preached to them, saying, “**Repent**, for the kingdom of God is near!”
- **42:8** “It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to **receive** forgiveness for their sins.”
- **44:5** “So now, **repent** and turn to God so that your sins will be washed away.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5150, H5162, H5164, G02780, G33380, G33400, G33410

(Go back to: [Matthew 18 General Notes](#))

Sabbath

Definition:

The term “Sabbath” refers to the seventh day of the week, which God commanded the Israelites to set apart as a day of rest and doing no work.

- After God finished creating the world in six days, he rested on the seventh day. In the same way, God commanded the Israelites to set aside the seventh day as a special day to rest and worship him.
- The command to “keep the Sabbath holy” is one of the ten commandments that God wrote on the stone tablets that he gave Moses for the Israelites.
- Following the Jewish system of counting days, the Sabbath begins on Friday at sundown and lasts until Saturday at sundown.
- Sometimes in the Bible the Sabbath is called “Sabbath day” rather than only the Sabbath.

Translation Suggestions:

- This could also be translated as “resting day” or “day for resting” or “day of not working” or “God’s day of rest.”
- Some translations capitalize this term to show that it is a special day, as in “Sabbath Day” or “Resting Day.”
- Consider how this term is translated in a local or national language.

(See also: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: rest)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 31:2-3
- Acts 13:26-27
- Exodus 31:14
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Lamentations 2:6
- Leviticus 19:3
- Luke 13:14
- Mark 2:27
- Matthew 12:2
- Nehemiah 10:32-33

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:5** “Always be sure to keep the **Sabbath day** holy. That is, do all your work in six days, for the seventh day is a day for you to rest and to honor me.”
- **26:2** Jesus went to the town of Nazareth where he had lived during his childhood. On the **Sabbath**, he went to the place of worship.
- **41:3** The day after Jesus was buried was a **Sabbath** day, and the Jews were not permitted to go to the tomb on that day.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4868, H7676, H7677, G43150, G45210

(Go back to: [Matthew 12 General Notes](#))

Satan, devil, evil one

Facts:

Although the devil is a spirit being that God created, he rebelled against God and became God's enemy. The devil is also called "Satan" and "the evil one."

- The devil hates God and all that God created because he wants to take the place of God and be worshiped as God.
- Satan tempts people to rebel against God.
- God sent his Son, Jesus, to rescue people from Satan's control.
- The name "Satan" means "adversary" or "enemy."
- The word "devil" means "accuser."

Translation Suggestions:

- The word "devil" could also be translated as "the accuser" or "the evil one" or "the king of evil spirits" or "the chief evil spirit."
- "Satan" could be translated as "Opponent" or "Adversary" or some other name that shows that he is the devil.
- These terms should be translated differently from demon and evil spirit.
- Consider how these terms are translated in a local or national language.

(See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: demon, evil, kingdom of God, tempt)

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:8
- 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20
- 1 Timothy 5:15
- Acts 13:10
- Job 1:8
- Mark 8:33
- Zechariah 3:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **21:1** The snake who deceived Eve was **Satan**. The promise meant that the Messiah who would come would defeat **Satan** completely.
- **25:6** Then **Satan** showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and all their glory and said, "I will give you all this if you bow down and worship me."
- **25:8** Jesus did not give in to **Satan's** temptations, so **Satan** left him.
- **33:6** So Jesus explained, "The seed is the word of God. The path is a person who hears God's word, but does not understand it, and the **devil** takes the word from him."
- **38:7** After Judas took the bread, **Satan** entered into him.
- **48:4** God promised that one of Eve's descendants would crush **Satan's** head, and **Satan** would wound his heel. This meant that **Satan** would kill the Messiah, but God would raise him to life again, and then the Messiah will crush the power of **Satan** forever.
- **49:15** God has taken you out of **Satan's** kingdom of darkness and put you into God's kingdom of light.

- **50:9** "The weeds represent the people who belong to the **evil one**. The enemy who planted the weeds represents the **devil**."
- **50:10** "When the world ends, the angels will gather together all the people who belong to the **devil** and throw them into a raging fire, where they will cry and grind their teeth in terrible suffering."
- **50:15** When Jesus returns, he will completely destroy **Satan** and his kingdom. He will throw **Satan** into hell where he will burn forever, along with everyone who chose to follow him rather than to obey God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7700, H7854, H8163, G11390, G11400, G11410, G11420, G12280, G41900, G45660, G45670

(Go back to: [Matthew 4 General Notes](#))

sign, proof, reminder

Definition:

The term “sign” usually refers an object, event, or action that communicates a special meaning.

- In the Bible, signs are sometimes given in connection to a promise or covenant that God has made:
 - The book of Genesis describes the rainbow God created in the sky as a sign (or reminder) to himself that he has promised he will never again destroy all life with a worldwide flood.
 - In the book of Genesis, God commanded the Israelites to circumcise their sons as a sign (or indicator) of the fact that he had made his covenant with them.
- Signs can reveal or point to something:
 - The book of Luke describes that an angel gave shepherds a sign that would help them know which baby in Bethlehem was the newborn Messiah.
 - Judas kissed Jesus as a sign to the religious leaders that Jesus was the one they should arrest.
- Signs can prove that something is true:
 - The book of Exodus describes the plagues that destroyed Egypt as signs that showed who Yahweh was and proved that he was greater than Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods.
 - The book of Acts describes the miracles performed by the prophets and apostles as signs that proved they were speaking God’s message.
 - The book of John describes the miracles that Jesus performed as signs that proved he was truly the Messiah.

Translation Suggestions:

- The frequent expression “signs and wonders” could be translated as “proofs and miracles” or “miraculous works that prove God’s power” or “amazing miracles that show how great God is.”
- Depending on its context, “sign” could also be translated as “signal” or “symbol” or “mark” or “evidence” or “proof” or “gesture.”
- To “make signs with the hands” could also be translated as “motion with the hands” or “gesture with the hands” or “make gestures.”
- In some languages, there may be one word for a “sign” that proves something and a different word for a “sign” that is a miracle.

(See also: miracle, apostle, [Christ](#), covenant, circumcise)

Bible References:

- Acts 2:18-19
- Exodus 4:8-9
- Exodus 31:12-15
- Genesis 1:14
- Genesis 9:12
- John 2:18
- Luke 2:12
- Mark 8:12
- Psalms 89:5-6

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0226, H0852, H2368, H2858, H4150, H4159, H4864, H5251, H5824, H6161, H6725, H6734, H7560, G03640, G08800, G12130, G12290, G17180, G17300, G17320, G17700, G39020, G41020, G45910, G45920, G49530, G49730, G52800

(Go back to: [Matthew 2 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: [Matthew 9 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

Son of God, the Son

Facts:

The term “Son of God” refers to Jesus, the Word of God, who came into the world as a human being. He is also often referred to as “the Son.”

- The Son of God has the same nature as God the Father, and is fully God.
- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all of one essence.
- Unlike human sons, the Son of God has always existed.
- In the beginning, the Son of God was active in creating the world, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Because Jesus is God’s Son, he loves and obeys his Father, and his Father loves him.

Translation Suggestions:

- For the term “Son of God,” it is best to translate “Son” with the same word the language would naturally use to refer to a human son.
- Make sure the word used to translate “son” fits with the word used to translate “father” and that these words are the most natural ones used to express a true father-son relationship in the project language.
- Using a capital letter to begin “Son” may help show that this is talking about God.
- The phrase “the Son” is a shortened form of “the Son of God,” especially when it occurs in the same context as “the Father.”

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [Christ](#), ancestor, God, God the Father, [Holy Spirit](#), Jesus, son, sons of God)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:10
- Acts 9:20
- Colossians 1:17
- Galatians 2:20
- Hebrews 4:14
- John 3:18
- Luke 10:22
- Matthew 11:27
- Revelation 2:18
- Romans 8:29

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **22:5** The angel explained, “The Holy Spirit will come to you, and the power of God will overshadow you. So the baby will be holy, the **Son of God.**”
- **24:9** God had told John, “The Holy Spirit will come down and rest on someone you baptize. That person is **the Son of God.**”
- **31:8** The disciples were amazed. They worshiped Jesus, saying to him, “Truly, you are **the Son of God.**”
- **37:5** Martha answered, “Yes, Master! I believe you are the Messiah, the **Son of God.**”
- **42:10** “So go, make disciples of all people groups by baptizing them in the name of the Father, **the Son**, and the Holy Spirit, and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”
- **46:6** Right away, Saul began preaching to the Jews in Damascus, saying, “Jesus is the **Son of God!**”

- **49:9** But God loved everyone in the world so much that he gave his only **Son** so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be punished for his sins, but will live with God forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0426, H0430, H1121, H1247, G23160, G52070

(Go back to: [Matthew 4 General Notes](#))

Son of Man, son of man

Definition:

The title “Son of Man” was used by Jesus to refer to himself. He often used this term instead of saying “I” or “me.”

- In the Bible, “son of man” could be a way of referring to or addressing a man. It could also mean “human being.”
- Throughout the Old Testament book of Ezekiel, God frequently addressed Ezekiel as “son of man.” For example he said, “You, son of man, must prophesy.”
- The prophet Daniel saw a vision of a “son of man” coming with the clouds, which is a reference to the coming Messiah.
- Jesus also said that the Son of Man will be coming back someday on the clouds.
- These references to the Son of Man coming on the clouds reveal that Jesus the Messiah is God.

Translation Suggestions:

- When Jesus uses the term “Son of Man” it could be translated as “the One who became a human being” or “the Man from heaven.”
- Some translators occasionally include “I” or “me” with this title (as in “I, the Son of Man”) to make it clear that Jesus was talking about himself.
- Check to make sure that the translation of this term does not give a wrong meaning (such as referring to an illegitimate son or giving the wrong impression that Jesus was only a human being).
- When used to refer to a person, “son of man” could also be translated as “you, a human being” or “you, man” or “human being” or “man.”

(See also: heaven, son, [Son of God](#), Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:56
- Daniel 7:14
- Ezekiel 43:6-8
- John 3:12-13
- Luke 6:5
- Mark 2:10
- Matthew 13:37
- Psalms 80:17-18
- Revelation 14:14

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0120, H0606, H1121, H1247, G04440, G52070

([Go back to: Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew](#))

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