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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Hebrews

Introduction to Hebrews

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Hebrews

Jesus is superior to God's prophets and angels (1:1-4:13)

Jesus is superior to the priests who serve in the temple in Jerusalem (4:14-7:28)

Jesus' ministry is superior to the old covenant that God made with his people (8:1-10:39)

What faith is like (11:1-40)

Encouragement to be faithful to God (12:1-29)

Concluding encouragements and greetings (13:1-25)

Who wrote the Book of Hebrews?

No one knows who wrote Hebrews. Scholars have suggested several different people who could possibly be the author. Possible authors are Paul, Luke, and Barnabas. The date of writing is also not known. Most scholars think it was written before A.D. 70. Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70, but the writer of this letter spoke about Jerusalem as if it had not yet been destroyed.

What is the Book of Hebrews about?

In the Book of Hebrews, the author shows that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. The author did this in order to encourage the Jewish Christians and to explain that Jesus is better than anything that the old covenant had to offer. Jesus is the perfect High Priest. Jesus was also the perfect sacrifice. Animal sacrifices became useless because Jesus' sacrifice was once and for all time. Therefore, Jesus is the one and only way for people to be accepted by God.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Hebrews." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Letter to the Hebrews" or "A Letter to the Jewish Christians." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Can readers understand this book without knowing about the sacrifices and the work of the priests required in the Old Testament?

It would be very difficult for readers to understand this book without understanding these matters. Translators might consider explaining some of these Old Testament concepts in notes or in an introduction to this book.

How is the idea of blood used in the Book of Hebrews?

Beginning in [Hebrews 9:7](#), the idea of blood is often used as metonymy to represent the death of any animal that was sacrificed according to God's covenant with Israel. The author also used blood to represent the death of Jesus Christ. Jesus became the perfect sacrifice so that God would forgive people for sinning against him. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Beginning in [Hebrews 9:19](#), the author used the idea of sprinkling as a symbolic action. Old Testament priests sprinkled the blood of the animals sacrificed. This was a symbol of the benefits of the animal's death being applied

to the people or to an object. This showed that the people or the object was acceptable to God. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How are the ideas of “holy” and “sanctify” represented in Hebrews in the ULT?

The scriptures use such words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating into English, the ULT uses the following principles: * Sometimes the meaning in a passage implies moral holiness. Especially important for understanding the gospel is the fact that God views Christians as sinless because they are united to Jesus Christ. Another related fact is that God is perfect and faultless. A third fact that Christians are to conduct themselves in a blameless, faultless manner in life. In these cases, the ULT uses “holy,” “holy God,” “holy ones,” or “holy people.” * Sometimes the meaning indicates a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In these cases, the ULT uses “believer” or “believers.” (See: 6:10; 13:24) * Sometimes the meaning implies the idea of someone or something set apart for God alone. In these cases, the ULT uses “sanctify,” “set apart,” “dedicated to,” or “reserved for.” (See: 2:11; 9:13; 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12)

The UST will often be helpful as translators think about how to represent these ideas in their own versions.

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

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULT text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading. * “you crowned him with glory and honor” (2:7). Some older versions read, “you crowned him with glory and honor and you have put him over the works of your hands.” * “those who did not unite in faith with those who obeyed” (4:2). Some older versions read, “those who heard it without joining faith to it.” * “Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come” (9:11). Some modern versions and older versions read, “Christ came as a high priest of the good things that are to come.” * “on those who were prisoners” (10:34). Some older versions read, “of me in my chains.” * “They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were killed with the sword” (11:37). Some older versions read, “They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were tempted. They were killed with the sword.” * “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned” (12:20). Some older versions read, “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned or shot with an arrow.”

(See: [Textual Variants](#))

Hebrews 1

Hebrews 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter describes how Jesus is more important to us than the angels are.

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 1:5, 7-13, which are words from the Old Testament.

“Our ancestors”

The writer wrote this letter to Christians who had grown up as Jews. This is why the letter is called “Hebrews.”

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

The author uses rhetorical questions as a way of proving Jesus is better than the angels. Both he and the readers know the answers to the questions, and the writer knows that as the readers think about the answers to the questions, they will realize that God’s Son is more important than any of the angels.

Poetry

Jewish teachers, like the Old Testament prophets, would put their most important teachings in the form of poetry so that the hearers would be able to learn and remember them.

Hebrews 1:1

General Information:

Although this letter does not mention the recipients to whom it was sent, the author wrote particularly to Hebrews (Jews), who would have understood the many Old Testament references.

ULT

¹ God, having spoken long ago to {our} fathers through the prophets at many times and in many ways,

General Information:

This prologue lays the background for the whole book: the unsurpassing greatness of the Son—the Son is greater than all. The book begins with emphasizing that the Son is better than the prophets and the angels.

Hebrews 1:2

in these last days (ULT)

The phrase **these last days** refers to the time when Jesus began his ministry, extending until God establishes his complete rule in his creation. Alternate translation: “in these final days”

ULT

² in these last days, has spoken to us through a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the ages;

a Son (ULT)

Son here is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

heir of all things (ULT)

The author speaks of the Son as if he will inherit wealth and property from his Father. Alternate translation: “to possess all things” (See: [Metaphor](#))

through whom also he made the ages (ULT)

Alternate translation: “it is through the Son that God also made all things”

Hebrews 1:3

the brightness of {his} glory (ULT)

God's **glory** is associated with a very bright light. The author is saying that the Son embodies that light and fully represents God's glory. Alternate translation: "the light of his glory"

glory, the exact representation of his being

The phrase **exact representation of his being** is similar in meaning to **brightness of his glory**. The **of his** embodies the character and essence of God and fully represents everything that God is. Alternate translation: "of his glory and is just like God" or "of his glory, and what is true about God is true about the Son"

ULT

³ who, being the brightness of {his} glory and exact representation of his being, upholding all things by the word of his power and having made cleansing for sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

by the word of his power (ULT)

Here, **word** refers to a message or command. Alternate translation: "his powerful word" or "his powerful command" (See: [Metonymy](#))

having made cleansing for sins (ULT)

The abstract noun **cleansing** can be expressed as a verb: "making clean." Alternate translation: "after he had finished making us clean from sins" or "after he had finished purifying us from our sins" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

having made cleansing for sins (ULT)

The author speaks of forgiving **sins** as if it were making a person clean. Alternate translation: "he had made it possible for God to forgive our sins" (See: [Metaphor](#))

sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (ULT)

To sit **at the right hand** of God is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "he sat down at the place of honor and authority beside the Majesty on high" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

of the Majesty on high (ULT)

Here, **Majesty on high** refers to God. Alternate translation: "of God Most High" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 1:4

having become (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the Son has become"

just as he has inherited a more excellent name than them (ULT)

Here, **name** refers to honor and authority. Alternate translation: "as the honor and authority he has inherited is superior to their honor and authority" (See: [Metonymy](#))

he has inherited (ULT)

The author speaks of receiving honor and authority as if he **has inherited** wealth and property from his father. Alternate translation: "he has received" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ having become far superior to the angels just as he has inherited a more excellent name than them.

Hebrews 1:5

**For to which of the angels did he ever say,
“You are my son, today I have fathered you
(ULT)**

This question emphasizes that God does not call any of the **angels** his **son**. Alternate translation: “For God never said to any of the angels ‘You are my son, and I today I have become your father!’” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ For to which of the angels did he ever say, “You are my son, today I have fathered you”? Or again, “I will be as a father to him, and he will be as a son to me”?

You are my son...I...have fathered you (ULT)

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

Hebrews 1:6

And let all God's angels worship him (ULT)

The quotation, **And let all God's angels worship him**, comes from one of the books that Moses wrote.

the firstborn (ULT)

Here, **the firstborn** refers to Jesus. The author refers to him as the **firstborn** to emphasize his importance and authority over everyone else. It does not imply that there was a time before Jesus existed or that God has other sons like Jesus. Alternate translation: "his honored Son, his only Son" (See: [Metaphor](#))

he says (ULT)

Alternate translation: "God says"

ULT

⁶ But again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "And let all God's angels worship him."

Hebrews 1:7

He who makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire (ULT)

The quotation, **He who makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire**, is from the Psalms.

ULT

⁷ And with regard to the angels he says, "He who makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire."

He who makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire (ULT)

This could mean: (1) God has made his **angels** to be **spirits** who serve him with power like flames of fire. (2) God makes the wind and **flames of fire** his messengers and **servants**. In the original language the word for **angels** is the same as "messengers," and the word for **spirits** is the same as "wind." With either possible meaning, the point is that the angels serve the Son because he is superior. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 1:8

General Information:

This scriptural quotation comes from the Psalms.

But to the Son {he says (ULT)

Alternate translation: "But God says this to the Son"

the Son (ULT)

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

Your throne, O God, {is} forever {and} ever (ULT)

The Son's **throne** represents his rule. Alternate translation: "You are God, and your reign will last forever and ever" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the scepter of righteousness {is} the scepter of his kingdom (ULT)

Here, **scepter** refers to the Son's rule. Alternate translation: "And you will rule over the people of your kingdom with justice" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ But to the Son {he says}, "Your throne, O God, {is} forever {and} ever, and the scepter of righteousness {is} the scepter of his kingdom.

Hebrews 1:9

has anointed you...with the oil of exultation more than your companions (ULT)

Here, **oil of exultation** refers to the joy that the Son felt when God honored him. Alternate translation: “has honored you and made you more joyful than anyone else” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of exultation more than your companions.”

Hebrews 1:10

And in the beginning, O Lord, you laid the earth's foundation, and the heavens are the work of your hands (ULT)

This quotation comes from another Psalm.

ULT

¹⁰ "And in the beginning, O Lord, you laid the earth's foundation, and the heavens are the work of your hands."

in the beginning (ULT)

Alternate translation: "before anything existed"

laid the earth's foundation (ULT)

The author speaks of God creating the earth as if he built a building on a **foundation**. Alternate translation: "you created the earth" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the heavens are the work of your hands (ULT)

Here, **hands** refer to God's power and action. Alternate translation: "You made the heavens" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 1:11

They will perish (ULT)

Alternate translation: "The heavens and earth will disappear" or "The heavens and earth will no longer exist"

they will all wear out like a garment (ULT)

The author speaks of the heavens and earth as if they were a piece of clothing that will get old and eventually become useless. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

11 They will perish, but you will continue and they will all wear out like a garment.

Hebrews 1:12

you will roll them up like a cloak (ULT)

The author speaks of the heavens and earth as if they were a robe or another kind of outer garment. (See: [Simile](#))

and they will be changed like a garment (ULT)

The author speaks of the heavens and earth as if they were clothing that a person could take off in order to put on other clothing. (See: [Simile](#))

they will be changed (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “you will change them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

your...years...will not end (ULT)

Periods of time are used to represent God’s eternal existence. Alternate translation: “your life will never end” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 And you will roll them up like a cloak, and they will be changed like a garment. But you are the same, and your years will not end.”

Hebrews 1:13

General Information:

This quotation comes from another Psalm.

But to which of the angels has he said at any time, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet (ULT)”

ULT

13 But to which of the angels has he said at any time, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”?

The author uses a question to emphasize that God has never said this to an angel. Alternate translation: “But God has never said to an angel at any time, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet!’” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

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 make your enemies a footstool for your feet (ULT)

Here Christ’s **enemies** are spoken of as if they will become an object on which a king rests his **feet**. This image represents defeat and dishonor for his enemies. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 1:14

Are they not all ministering spirits, being sent for service for the sake of those who are going to inherit salvation (ULT)

The author uses this question to remind the readers that angels are not as powerful as Christ, but they have a different role. Alternate translation: "All angels are spirits who are being sent for service for the sake of those who are going to inherit inherit salvation." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits, being sent for service for the sake of those who are going to inherit salvation?

for the sake of those who are going to inherit salvation (ULT)

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "for those whom God will save" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 2

Hebrews 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is about how Jesus is better than Moses, the greatest Israelite.

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 2:6-8, 12-13, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Brothers

The author probably uses the term “brothers” to refer to Christians who grew up as Jews.

Hebrews 2:1

Connecting Statement:

This is the first of five urgent warnings the author gives.

us (ULT)

Here, **us** refers to the author and includes his audience. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

ULT

¹ Therefore it is far more necessary for us to give attention to what we have heard, so that we might not drift away from it.

so that we might not drift away from it (ULT)

This could mean: (1) people who stop believing in God's word are spoken of as if they were drifting away, like a boat drifts from its position in the water. Alternate translation: "so that we do not stop believing it" (2) people who stop obeying God's words are spoken of as if they were drifting away, like a boat drifts from its position in the water. Alternate translation: "so that we do not stop obeying it" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 2:2

For if the message spoken through angels (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “For if the message that God spoke through the angels” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

² For if the message spoken through angels became reliable, and every transgression and disobedience received just punishment,

For if the...message (ULT)

The author is certain that these things are true. Alternate translation: “Because the message”

every transgression and disobedience received just punishment (ULT)

Here, **transgression** and **disobedience** stand for the people who are guilty of these sins. Alternate translation: “every person who sins and disobeys will receive just punishment” (See: [Metonymy](#))

transgression and disobedience (ULT)

These words **transgression** and **disobedience** mean basically the same thing. (See: [Doublet](#))

Hebrews 2:3

how will we escape, having ignored so great a salvation (ULT)

The author uses this question to emphasize that the people will certainly receive punishment if they refuse God's **salvation** through Christ. Alternate translation: "then God will certainly punish us if we do not pay attention to his message about how God will save us!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ how will we escape, having ignored so great a salvation? This, first having been received to be spoken by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard it;

having ignored (ULT)

Alternate translation: "pay no attention to" or "consider unimportant"

so great...a salvation (ULT)

The abstract noun **salvation** can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "the amazing way that God saves us" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

how will we escape, having ignored so great a salvation (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "The Lord himself first announced the message about how God will save us and then those who heard the message confirmed it to us" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Hebrews 2:4

according to his will (ULT)

Alternate translation: "in just the way he wanted to do it"

ULT

⁴ God also testifying to it by signs and wonders and various miracles, and by the distributions of the Holy Spirit according to his will.

Hebrews 2:5

For {it was} not to angels that {God} subjected (ULT)

Alternate translation: "For God did not make the angels rulers over"

the world that is coming (ULT)

Here, **the world** refers to the people who live there. And **is coming** means that this is the world in the next age after Christ returns. Alternate translation: "the people who will live in the new world" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ For {it was} not to angels that {God} subjected the world that is coming, about which we are speaking.

Hebrews 2:6

General Information:

This verse begins a quotation from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament. It continues on through verse 8.

What is man, that you remember him or a son of man, that you care for him (ULT)

This rhetorical question emphasizes the insignificance of humans and expresses surprise that God would pay attention to them. Alternate translation: “Humans are insignificant, and yet you think about them and take care of them!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

a son of man (ULT)

The idiom **a son of man** refers to human beings. Alternate translation: “any human being” (See: [Idiom](#))

a son of man (ULT)

The verb may be supplied from the previous question. Alternate translation: “what is a son of man” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁶ Instead, someone has somewhere testified, saying, “What is man, that you remember him or a son of man, that you care for him?”

Hebrews 2:7

You made him a little lower than the angels (ULT)

The author speaks of people being less important than **angels** as if the people are standing in a position that is **lower** than the angels' position. Alternate translation: "You made him to be less important than the angels" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor. ^[1]

You made him a little lower...you crowned him (ULT)

Here, these two phrases do not refer to a specific person but to humans in general. Alternate translation: "You made humans a little lower ... you crowned them" (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

him...him (ULT)

Here, both occurrences of **him** include both males and females. Alternate translation: "men and women ... them" (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

you crowned him with glory and honor (ULT)

The gifts of **glory** and **honor** are spoken of as if they were a wreath of leaves placed on the head of a victorious athlete. Alternate translation: "you have given them great glory and honor" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 2:8

his feet...to him (ULT)

Here, **his** and **him** do not refer to a specific person but to humans in general. Alternate translation: “their feet ... to them” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

⁸ You subjected everything under his feet.” For in subjecting all things, he left nothing not subjected to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.

You subjected everything under his feet (ULT)

The author speaks of humans having control over everything as if they have stepped on everything with their **feet**. Alternate translation: “You have given them control over everything” (See: [Metaphor](#))

he left nothing not subjected to him (ULT)

This double negative **nothing not** means that all things will be **subjected** to Christ. Alternate translation: “God made everything subject to them” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

everything...all things...to him...we do not yet see...subjected (ULT)

Alternate translation: “we know that humans are not in control of everything yet”

Hebrews 2:9

who was made (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “whom God made” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

who was made...somewhat less than the angels...crowned with glory and honor (ULT)

See how you translated these words in [Hebrews 2:7](#).

he might taste death (ULT)

The experience of **death** is spoken of as if it were food that people can **taste**. Alternate translation: “he might experience death” or “he might die” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made somewhat less than the angels, crowned with glory and honor because of {his} suffering of death, so that by God's grace he might taste death on behalf of everyone.

Hebrews 2:10

having brought many sons into glory (ULT)

The gift of **glory** is spoken of here as if it were a place to which people could be **brought**. Alternate translation: “having saved many sons” (See: [Metaphor](#))

many sons (ULT)

Here, **sons** refers to believers in Christ, including males and females. Alternate translation: “many believers” (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

the author of their salvation (ULT)

This could mean: (1) the word translated here as **author** can mean “founder” and speaks of Jesus as the one who establishes salvation, or makes it possible for God to save people. Alternate translation: “the one who makes their salvation possible” (2) the word translated here as **author** can mean “prince” or “leader” and speaks of Jesus as the leader who goes before the people and leads them to salvation. Alternate translation: “the one who leads people to salvation” (See: [Metaphor](#))

to perfect (ULT)

Becoming mature and completely trained is spoken of as if a person were made “perfect”, perhaps complete in all his body parts. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 For it was proper for him, for whom all things {exist} and through whom all things {exist}, having brought many sons into glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

Hebrews 2:11

General Information:

This verse is a prophetic quotation that comes from a Psalm of King David.

the one...who sanctifies (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the one who makes others holy” or “the one who makes others pure from sin”

those who are being sanctified (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom he makes holy” or “those whom he makes pure from sin” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

from one (ULT)

You can state clearly who that **one** is. Alternate translation: “have one source, God himself” or “have the same Father” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

he is not ashamed (ULT)

Alternate translation: “Jesus is not ashamed”

he is not ashamed to call them brothers (ULT)

This double negative **not ashamed** means that he will claim them as his **brothers**. Alternate translation: “is pleased to call them his brothers” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

brothers (ULT)

Here, **brothers** refers to all who have believed in Jesus, including both men and women. (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

ULT

11 For both the one who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified {are} all from one. For this reason, he is not ashamed to call them brothers,

Hebrews 2:12

I will proclaim your name to my brothers (ULT)

Here, **name** refers to the person's reputation and what they have done. Alternate translation: "I will proclaim to my brothers the great things you have done" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹² saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers, I will praise you in the midst of the assembly."

in the midst of the assembly (ULT)

Alternate translation: "when believers come together to worship God"

Hebrews 2:13

General Information:

The prophet Isaiah wrote these quotations.

And again (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And a prophet wrote in another scripture passage what Christ said about God:"

the children (ULT)

This speaks about those who believe in Christ as if they were **children**. Alternate translation: "those who are like my children" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 And again, "I will trust in him." And again, "Behold, {here am} I and the children whom God has given me."

Hebrews 2:14

the children (ULT)

This speaks about those who believe in Christ as if they were **children**. See how you translated **children** in [verse 13](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

share in flesh and blood (ULT)

The phrase **flesh and blood** refers to people's human nature. Alternate translation: "are all human beings" (See: [Idiom](#))

and...he likewise...shared in the same (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Jesus in the same way shared in flesh and blood" or "Jesus became human in the same way they did"

through death (ULT)

You can state the abstract noun **death** as a verb. Alternate translation: "by dying" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

who has the power of death (ULT)

You can state the abstract noun **death** as a verb. Alternate translation: "has the power to cause people to die" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, he likewise also shared in the same, so that through death he might abolish the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,

Hebrews 2:15

**might free those, as many as all {their} lives
were held in slavery by the fear of death (ULT)**

The **fear of death** is spoken of as if it had taken someone into **slavery**. Taking away someone's fear is spoken of as it were freeing that person from slavery. Alternate translation: "this was so he might free all people. For we lived like slaves because we were afraid of dying" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁵ and might free those, as many as all {their} lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.

Hebrews 2:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁶ For of course {it is} not angels he is concerned with, but {it is} the descendant of Abraham he is concerned with.

Hebrews 2:17

he was obligated (ULT)

Alternate translation: "it was necessary for Jesus"

to become like {his} brothers (ULT)

Here, **brothers** refers to people in general. Alternate translation: "to become like human beings"

ULT

17 So he was obligated to become like {his} brothers in all ways, so that he would be a merciful and faithful high priest concerning the things of God to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

to make propitiation for the sins of the people (ULT)

Christ's death on the cross means that God can forgive sins. Alternate translation: "he would make it possible for God to forgive people's sins"

Hebrews 2:18

having been tempted (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “when Satan tempted him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

who are tempted (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “whom Satan is tempting” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 For in that he himself suffered, having been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

Hebrews 3

Hebrews 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 3:7-11,15, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Brothers

The author probably uses the term “brothers” to refer to Christians who grew up as Jews.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Harden your hearts

A person who hardens his heart is a person who will not listen to or obey God. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Rhetorical questions

The author uses rhetorical questions as a way of warning his readers. Both he and the readers know the answers to the questions, and the writer knows that as the readers think about the answers to the questions, they will realize that they need to listen to God and obey him.

Hebrews 3:1

Connecting Statement:

This second warning is longer and more detailed and includes chapters 3 and 4. The writer begins by showing that Christ is better than his servant Moses.

holy brothers (ULT)

Here, **brothers** refer to fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: “holy brothers and sisters” or “my holy fellow believers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

partakers of a heavenly calling (ULT)

Here, **heavenly** represents God. Alternate translation: “God has called us together” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the apostle (ULT)

Here the word **apostle** means someone who has been sent. In this passage, it does not refer to any of the twelve apostles. Alternate translation: “the one whom God sent and is the high priest”

of our confession (ULT)

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun **confession** is expressed as the verb “confess.” Alternate translation: “whom we confess” or “in whom we believe” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹ Therefore, holy brothers, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider carefully the apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus,

Hebrews 3:2

in his house (ULT)

The Hebrew people to whom God revealed himself are spoken of as if they were a **house**. Alternate translation: "to all of God's people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² being faithful to the one who appointed him, as also Moses {was} in his house.

Hebrews 3:3

he...has been considered worthy (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God has considered Jesus" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ For he has been considered worthy of greater glory than Moses, just as much greater honor than the house has the one who built it.

Hebrews 3:4

the one...who built everything (ULT)

God's acts of creating the world are spoken of as if he had **built** a house. (See: [Metaphor](#))

every...house is built by someone (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "every house has someone who built it" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ For every house is built by someone, but the one who built everything {is} God.

Hebrews 3:5

in his entire house (ULT)

The Hebrew people to whom God revealed himself are spoken of as if they were a **house**. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:2](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ And Moses {was} faithful as a servant in his entire house, for a testimony of what will be spoken of in the future;

for a testimony of what will be spoken of in the future (ULT)

Here, **testimony** probably refers to all of Moses' work. Alternate translation: "and Moses' life and work pointed to the things that will be spoken of in the future" (See: [Metonymy](#))

will be spoken of in the future (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus would say in the future" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Hebrews 3:6

a Son (ULT)

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

over his house (ULT)

This speaks about God's people as if they were a **house**. Alternate translation: "who rules over God's people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

whose house we are (ULT)

This speaks of God's people as if they are a **house**. Alternate translation: "and we are God's people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

if we hold fast to the confidence and the boasting of {our} hope (ULT)

You can state the abstract nouns **confidence** and **hope** as verbs. Alternate translation: "if we continue to be courageous and joyfully expect God to do what he has promised" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁶ but Christ, as a Son over his house—
whose house we are if we hold fast to
the confidence and the boasting of
{our} hope.

Hebrews 3:7

General Information:

This quotation comes from the Old Testament in the book of Psalms.

if you hear his voice (ULT)

God's **voice** represents him speaking. Alternate translation: "when you hear God speak" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says:
"Today, if you hear his voice,

Hebrews 3:8

your hearts (ULT)

Here, **hearts** is a metonym for a person's mind. Alternate translation: "the way you think" (See: [Metonymy](#))

do not harden your hearts (ULT)

The phrase **harden your hearts** is a metaphor for being stubborn. Alternate translation: "do not be stubborn" (See: [Metaphor](#))

as in the rebellion, in the day of testing in the wilderness (ULT)

You can state the abstract nouns **rebellion** and **testing** as verbs. Alternate translation: "as when your ancestors rebelled against God and tested him in the wilderness" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of testing in the wilderness

Hebrews 3:9

General Information:

This quotation is from the Psalms.

your fathers (ULT)

Here, **your** is plural and refers to the people of Israel. (See: [Forms of You](#))

by testing {me (ULT)}

Here, **me** refers to God.

ULT

⁹ where your fathers tested {me} by testing {me}, and they saw my works

Hebrews 3:10

I was displeased with (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I was angry with" or "I was greatly unhappy with"

They are always being led astray in {their} hearts (ULT)

Here, **being led astray in their hearts** is a metaphor for not being loyal to God. Alternate translation: "They have always rejected me" or "They have always refused to obey me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

in {their} hearts (ULT)

Here, **hearts** is a metonym for minds or desires. Alternate translation: "in the way they think" (See: [Metonymy](#))

have not known my ways (ULT)

Here, **my ways** speaks of a manner of conducting one's life as if it were a way or a path. Alternate translation: "They have not understood how I want them to conduct their lives" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 for 40 years. Therefore I was displeased with that generation and I said, 'They are always being led astray in {their} hearts and they have not known my ways.'

Hebrews 3:11

If they will enter into my rest (ULT)

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were **rest** that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "They will never enter the place of rest" or "I will never allow them to experience my blessings of rest" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 As I swore in my wrath, 'If they will enter into my rest ...!'"

Hebrews 3:12

brothers (ULT)

Here, **brothers** refers to fellow Christians, including males and females. Alternate translation: “brothers and sisters” or “fellow believers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 Be careful, brothers, so that there will not be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God.

so that there will not be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God (ULT)

Refusing to believe and obey God is spoken of as if the heart did not believe and it physically fell **away from** God. Alternate translation: “there will not be any of you who refuse to believe the truth and who stop obeying the living God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

an evil heart of unbelief (ULT)

Here, **heart** is a metonym that represents a person’s mind or will. Alternate translation: “an evil attitude of not believing God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the living God (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the true God who is really alive”

Hebrews 3:13

as long as it is called “today (ULT)

Alternate translation: “while there is still opportunity,”

no one among you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the deceitfulness of sin will not harden any of you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

no one among you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (ULT)

Being stubborn is spoken of as being **hardened** or having a hard heart. The hardness is a result of being deceived by sin. Alternate translation: “no one among you will be deceived by sin and become stubborn” or “you do not sin, deceiving yourselves so that you become stubborn” (See: [Metaphor](#))

by the deceitfulness of sin (ULT)

You can translate the abstract noun **deceitfulness** as the verb “deceive.” Alternate translation: “because you are deceived by sin” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹³ Instead, encourage one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” so that no one among you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 3:14

General Information:

This continues the quotation from the same psalm that was also quoted in [Hebrews 3:7](#).

For...we have become (ULT)

Here, **we** refers to both the writer and the readers. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

if...the beginning of {our} confidence...we firmly hold to (ULT)

Alternate translation: "if we continue, as we first did, to confidently trust in him"

the beginning (ULT)

Alternate translation: "from when we first begin to believe in him"

until the end (ULT)

Here, **the end** is a polite way of referring to when a person dies. Alternate translation: "until we die" (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we firmly hold to the beginning of {our} confidence until the end.

Hebrews 3:15

it has been said (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the writer wrote” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

if you hear his voice (ULT)

God’s **voice** represents him speaking. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:7](#). Alternate translation: “when you hear God speak” (See: [Metonymy](#))

as in the rebellion (ULT)

You can state **rebellion** as a verb. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:8](#). Alternate translation: “as when your ancestors rebelled against God” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

15 About this it has been said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion.”

Hebrews 3:16

all those (ULT)

The phrase, **all those** refers to the disobedient Israelites. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

For which ones who heard rebelled? {Was it} not all those who came out from Egypt through Moses (ULT)

The author uses these two questions to teach his readers. The questions can be joined as one statement, if needed. Alternate translation: "All those who came out of Egypt with Moses heard God, yet they still rebelled." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

16 For which ones who heard rebelled?
{Was it} not all those who came out
from Egypt through Moses?

Hebrews 3:17

**And with whom was he angry for 40 years?
{Was it} not with those who sinned, whose
dead bodies fell in the wilderness (ULT)**

The author uses these two questions to teach his readers. The questions can be joined as one statement, if needed. Alternate translation: "For 40 years, God was angry with those who sinned, and he let them die in the wilderness." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁷ And with whom was he angry for 40 years? {Was it} not with those who sinned, whose dead bodies fell in the wilderness?

Hebrews 3:18

And to whom did he swear that they would not enter into his rest, if not to those who disobeyed (ULT)

The author uses this question to teach his readers. Alternate translation: "And it was to those who disobeyed that he swore they would not enter his rest." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁸ And to whom did he swear that they would not enter into his rest, if not to those who disobeyed?

they would not enter into his rest (ULT)

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were **rest** that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "they would not come into the place of rest" or "they would not experience his blessings of rest" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 3:19

because of unbelief (ULT)

You can translate the abstract noun **unbelief** with a verbal phrase.
 Alternate translation: “because they did not believe him” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

19 And we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

Hebrews 4

Hebrews 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter tells why Jesus is the greatest high priest.

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 4:3-4, 7, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

God's rest

The word **rest** seems to refer to at least two things in this chapter. It refers to a place or time when God will allow his people to rest from their work ([Hebrews 4:3](#)), and it refers to God resting on the seventh day ([Hebrews 4:4](#)).

Hebrews 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Chapter 4 continues the warning to believers starting in [Hebrews 3:7](#). God, through the writer, gives believers a rest of which God's rest in the creation of the world is a picture.

Therefore (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Because what I have just said is true" or "Since God will certainly punish those who do not obey"

lest while there remains a promise of entering into his rest, any of you might seem to have failed to attain it (ULT)

God's **promise** is spoken of as if it were a gift that God left behind when he visited the people. Alternate translation: "so that none of you fail to enter into God's rest, which he promised to us" or "so that God will allow you all to enter into his rest as he promised us" (See: [Metaphor](#))

of entering into his rest (ULT)

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were **rest** that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "to enter the place of rest" or "to experience God's blessings of rest" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹ Therefore, let us be afraid lest while there remains a promise of entering into his rest, any of you might seem to have failed to attain it.

Hebrews 4:2

For we also are having good news proclaimed {to us} just as to them also (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “For we also heard the good news just as they did” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

just as to them also (ULT)

Here, **them** refers to the Hebrews’ ancestors who were alive during the time of Moses.

But the message of the hearing did not benefit them, not having been united with faith in those who heard it (ULT)

The author is talking about a second group of people **who heard the message** but who did not believe it. You can state this in positive form. Alternate translation: “But that message benefited only those who believed and obeyed it” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

² For we also are having good news proclaimed {to us} just as to them also. But the message of the hearing did not benefit them, not having been united with faith in those who heard it. ^[1]

Hebrews 4:3

General Information:

This quotation is from a psalm.

we...enter...who have believed...into rest (ULT)

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were **rest** that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: “we who have believed will enter the place of rest” or “we who have believed will experience God’s blessings of rest” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ For we who have believed enter into rest, just as he said, “As I swore in my wrath, They will never enter into my rest.” Even so, {his} works were finished from the foundation of the world.

just as he said (ULT)

Alternate translation: “just as God said”

As I swore in my wrath (ULT)

Alternate translation: “As I swore when I was very angry”

They will never enter into my rest (ULT)

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were **rest** that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: “They will never enter the place of rest” or “They will never experience my blessings of rest” (See: [Metaphor](#))

his} works...were finished (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “he finished creating” or “he finished his works of creation” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

from the foundation of the world (ULT)

The author speaks of the **world** as if it were a building set on a **foundation**. Alternate translation: “at the beginning of the world” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 4:4

the seventh {day (ULT)

The word **seventh** is the ordinal number for “seven.” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

This quotation is from Moses’ writings.

ULT

⁴ For he has somewhere spoken thus about the seventh {day}: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.”

Hebrews 4:5

They will never enter into my rest (ULT)

This quotation is from the same psalm as the quotation in verse [3](#).

They will never enter into my rest (ULT)

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were **rest** that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: “God still allows some people to enter his place of rest” or “God still allows some people to experience his blessings of rest” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ And again in this {same passage},
“They will never enter into my rest.”

Hebrews 4:6

it remains for some to enter into it (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God still allows some people to enter his place of rest” or “God still allows some people to experience his blessings of rest” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ Therefore, because it remains for some to enter into it, and those who previously had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in, because of {their} disobedience.

Hebrews 4:7

General Information:

Here we find out that this quotation from the Psalms was written by David ([Hebrews 3:7-8](#)).

if you hear his voice (ULT)

God's commands to Israel are spoken of as if he had given them in an audible **voice**. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:7](#). Alternate translation: "if you hear God speaking" (See: [Metaphor](#))

your hearts (ULT)

Here, **hearts** is a metonym for a person's mind. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:8](#). (See: [Metonymy](#))

do not harden your hearts (ULT)

The phrase **harden your hearts** is a metaphor for being stubborn. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:8](#). Alternate translation: "do not be stubborn" or "do not refuse to listen" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ He has again set a certain day calling it "Today," speaking through David after so much time, just as it had been said, "Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

Hebrews 4:8

if...Joshua had given them rest (ULT)

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were **rest** that **Joshua** could give. Alternate translation: “if Joshua had brought the Israelites to the place where God would give them rest” or “if the Israelites during the time of Joshua had experienced God’s blessings of rest” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken about another day after this.

Hebrews 4:9

there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “there is still a Sabbath rest that God has reserved for his people” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁹ Therefore there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

a Sabbath rest (ULT)

Eternal peace and security are spoken of as if they were the **Sabbath** day, the Jewish day of worship and **rest** from working. Alternate translation: “an eternal rest” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 4:10

the one...who has entered into his rest (ULT)

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they are a place to enter. Alternate translation: “the person who enters into God’s place of rest” or “the person who experiences God’s blessings of rest” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁰ For the one who has entered into his rest has himself also rested from his works, just as God {did} from his own.

Hebrews 4:11

let us be eager...to enter into that rest (ULT)

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were a place **to enter**. Alternate translation: "we should also do everything we can to rest with God where he is" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 Therefore let us be eager to enter into that rest, so that no one might fall into the same kind of disobedience.

one might fall into the same kind of disobedience (ULT)

Here, **disobedience** is spoken of as if it were a hole that a person could physically **fall into** by accident. (See: [Metaphor](#))

into the same...might fall...kind of disobedience (ULT)

You can reword this passage to express the abstract noun **disobedience** with the verb "disobey." Alternate translation: "will disobey in the same way as they did" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Hebrews 4:12

is living...the Word of God (ULT)

Here, **the Word of God** refers to anything that God has communicated to humanity, whether through speech or through written messages. Alternate translation: “the words of God are living”

is living...and active (ULT)

This speaks about God’s word as if it were alive. It means when God speaks, it is powerful and effective. (See: [Personification](#))

sharper than any two-edged sword (ULT)

A **two-edged sword** 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. (See: [Metaphor](#))

two-edged sword (ULT)

a **sword** with a blade that is sharp on both edges

and piercing to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow (ULT)

This continues speaking about God’s word as if it were a sword. Here the sword is so sharp that it can cut through and divide parts of the human that are very difficult or even impossible to divide. This means that there is nothing inside us that we can hide from God. (See: [Metaphor](#))

and...of soul...spirit (ULT)

The **soul** and the **spirit** are two different but closely related nonphysical parts of a human. The **soul** is what causes a person to be alive. The **spirit** is the part of a person that causes him to be able to know and believe in God.

and...of both joints...marrow (ULT)

The **joints** are what hold bones together. The **marrow** is the center part of the bone.

able to judge (ULT)

This speaks about God’s word as if it were a person who could decide whether a person’s thoughts were right or wrong. Alternate translation: “exposes” (See: [Personification](#))

the thoughts and intentions of the heart (ULT)

Here, **heart** here is a metonym for “inner self.” Alternate translation: “what a person is thinking and intends to do” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹² For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:13

nothing created is hidden before God (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “nothing that God has created can hide from him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

everything...is} bare and laid open (ULT)

This speaks about all things as if they were a person standing **bare**, or a container that is **open**. Alternate translation: “everything is completely exposed” (See: [Metaphor](#))

is} bare and laid open (ULT)

The two words **bare** and **open** mean basically the same thing and emphasize that nothing is hidden from God. (See: [Doublet](#))

to the eyes of him to whom we {must give} account (ULT)

God is spoken of as if he had **eyes**. Alternate translation: “to God, who will judge how we have lived” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 And nothing created is hidden before God. Instead, everything {is} bare and laid open to the eyes of him to whom we {must give} account.

Hebrews 4:14

who has passed through the heavens (ULT)

Alternate translation: "who has entered where God is"

the Son of God (ULT)

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

let us firmly hold to {our} profession (ULT)

Belief and trust are spoken of as if they were objects that a person could grasp **firmly**. Alternate translation: "let us continue to believe confidently in him" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 Therefore, having a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us firmly hold to {our} profession.

Hebrews 4:15

not...we do...have a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but being tempted (ULT)

This double negative **not ... not** means that, in fact, Jesus does feel sympathy with people. Alternate translation: “we have a high priest who can feel sympathy when we are weak, and who was tempted” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but being tempted in all ways according to {our} likeness without sin.

being tempted...in all ways according to {our} likeness (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “who has endured temptation in every way that we have” or “whom the devil has tempted in every way that he tempts us, yet” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

without sin (ULT)

Alternate translation: “but he did not sin”

Hebrews 4:16

to the throne (ULT)

Here, **the throne** refers to God ruling as king. Alternate translation: “to where our gracious God is sitting on his throne” (See: [Metonymy](#))

we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help (ULT)

Here, **mercy** and **grace** are spoken of as if they were objects that can be given or can be found. Alternate translation: “God may be merciful and gracious and help us in time of need” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 Let us then approach with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

Hebrews 5

Hebrews 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is a continuation of the teaching of the previous chapter.

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 5:5-6.

Special concepts in this chapter

High priest

Only a high priest could offer sacrifices so that God could forgive sins, so Jesus had to be a high priest. The law of Moses commanded that the high priest be from the tribe of Levi, but Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. God made him a priest like the priest Melchizedek, who lived at the time of Abraham, before there was a tribe of Levi.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Milk and solid food

The writer speaks of Christians who are only able to understand simple things about Jesus as if they were babies, who drink only milk and cannot eat solid food. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 5:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer describes the sinfulness of the Old Testament priests, then he shows that Christ has a better kind of priesthood, not based on Aaron's priesthood but on the priesthood of Melchizedek.

having been chosen from among men (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God chooses from among the people" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

is appointed (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God appoints" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

men on the behalf of...is appointed (ULT)

Alternate translation: "is appointed to represent the people"

ULT

¹ For every high priest having been chosen from among men on the behalf of men is appointed in the things concerning God, so that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins;

Hebrews 5:2

who are being deceived (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “whom others have deceived” or “who believe what is false” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

who are being deceived (ULT)

Alternate translation: “who believe false things and so behave badly”

is subject to weakness (ULT)

The high priest’s own **weakness** is spoken of as if it were another person who rules over him. Alternate translation: “is spiritually weak” or “is controlled by his weakness” (See: [Metaphor](#))

weakness (ULT)

the desire to sin

ULT

² being able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and who are being deceived, because he also is subject to weakness.

Hebrews 5:3

he is obligated (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God also requires him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ And because of this, he is obligated, just as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins.

Hebrews 5:4

takes {this} honor (ULT)

Here, **honor** is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could grasp in his hands. (See: [Metaphor](#))

takes {this} honor (ULT)

The **honor** or praise and respect that people gave to the high priest stand for his task. (See: [Metonymy](#))

when called by God, just as also Aaron {was (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God called him, just as he called Aaron" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ And no one takes {this} honor for himself, but {only} when called by God, just as also Aaron {was}.

Hebrews 5:5

You are my Son; today I have become your Father (ULT)

This quotation is from the Psalms in the Old Testament.

Christ...speaking to him {said (ULT)

Alternate translation: "God said to him"

ULT

⁵ In the same way also, Christ did not honor himself to become high priest. Instead, the one speaking to him {said}, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father."

You are my Son; today I have become your Father (ULT)

These two clauses mean essentially the same thing. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 1:5](#). (See: [Parallelism](#))

Son (ULT)

Son is important title that describe the relationship between Jesus and God the Father. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Hebrews 5:6

General Information:

This prophecy is from a Psalm of David.

also...he...says (ULT)

You can state clearly to whom God is speaking. Alternate translation: "he also says to Christ" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

in another {place} (ULT)

Alternate translation: "in another place in the scriptures"

after the order of Melchizedek (ULT)

Here, **the order of Melchizedek** rules and practices that **Melchizedek** followed and the authority he had as a priest of God. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"

ULT

⁶ {It is} just as he also says in another {place}, "You {are} a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

Hebrews 5:7

during the days of his flesh (ULT)

Here, **the days** stands for a period of time, and **flesh** stands for Jesus' earthly life. Alternate translation: "while he lived on earth" (See: [Metonymy](#))

prayers...and requests (ULT)

Both **prayers** and **requests** mean basically the same thing. (See: [Doublet](#))

the one who is able to save him from death (ULT)

This could mean: (1) God was **able to save** Christ so that he would not die. Alternate translation: "to save him from dying" (2) God was **able to save** Christ after Christ's death by making him alive again. If possible, translate this in a way that allows both interpretations.

was heard (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God heard him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ He, during the days of his flesh, offered up both prayers and requests with loud cries and tears to the one who is able to save him from death and was heard because of {his} godly life.

Hebrews 5:8

a son (ULT)

Here, **son** is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

⁸ Even though being a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.

Hebrews 5:9

Connecting Statement:

In verse 11 the writer begins his third warning. He warns these believers that they are still not mature and encourages them to learn God's word so they can understand right from wrong.

ULT

⁹ And having been made perfect, he became, for all those who obey him, the source of eternal salvation,

having been made perfect (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God made him perfect" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

having been made perfect (ULT)

Here, **made perfect** means being made mature, able to honor God in all aspects of life.

he became, for all those who obey him, the source of eternal salvation (ULT)

You can state the abstract noun **salvation** as a verb. Alternate translation: "now he saves all who obey him and causes them to live forever" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Hebrews 5:10

having been designated by God (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God designated him” or “God appointed him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

according to the order of Melchizedek (ULT)

Here, **the order of Melchizedek** means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: “to be the sort of high priest that Melchizedek was”

ULT

¹⁰ having been designated by God {as} high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 5:11

the message to us (ULT)

Here, the plural pronoun **us** includes both the author and the people to whom he is writing. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

you have become dull in hearing (ULT)

The ability to understand and obey is spoken of as if it were the ability to listen. And the ability to listen is spoken of as if it were a metal tool that becomes **dull** with use. Alternate translation: "you have trouble understanding it" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 Concerning him the message to us {is} great, but hard to say since you have become dull in hearing.

Hebrews 5:12

of the basic principles (ULT)

Here, **principles** means a guideline or standard for making decisions. Alternate translation: “of the basic truths”

you have come to have need of milk (ULT)

Teaching about God that is easy to understand is spoken of as if it were **milk**, the only food that infants can take. Alternate translation: “you have become like babies and can drink only milk” (See: [Metaphor](#))

of milk, not solid food (ULT)

Teaching about God that is difficult to understand is spoken of as if it were **solid food**, suitable for adults. Alternate translation: “of milk instead of solid food that adults can eat” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² For even though by this time you ought to be teachers, you again have need of one to teach you some of the basic principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to have need of milk, not solid food!

Hebrews 5:13

who takes...milk (ULT)

Here, **takes** stands for “drinks.” Alternate translation: “who drinks milk” (See: [Metonymy](#))

because he is a little child (ULT)

Spiritual maturity is compared with the kind of food that a growing **child** eats. Solid food is not for a tiny baby, and that is a figure describing a young Christian who only learns simple truths; but later, more solid food is given to the little child, just as when a person matures he can learn about matters that are more difficult. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 For anyone who takes milk {is} inexperienced with the message of righteousness, because he is a little child.

Hebrews 5:14

**who by practice have trained {their} senses
for distinguishing both of good and of evil
(ULT)**

People trained to understand something are spoken of as if their ability to understand had been **trained**. Alternate translation: “who are mature and can distinguish between good and evil” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by practice have trained {their} senses for distinguishing both of good and of evil.

Hebrews 6

Hebrews 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Abrahamic Covenant

In the covenant that God made with Abraham, God promised to make Abraham's descendants into a great nation. He also promised to protect Abraham's descendants and to give them land of their own. (See: [covenant](#))

Hebrews 6:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer continues with what immature Hebrew believers need to do to become mature Christians. He reminds them of the foundational teachings.

having left the beginning of the message of Christ, let us go forward to maturity (ULT)

This speaks about the basic teachings as if they were the beginning of a journey and the mature teachings as if they were the end of a journey. Alternate translation: “let us stop only discussing what we first learned and start understanding more mature teachings as well” (See: [Metaphor](#))

not laying again the foundation (ULT)

Basic teachings are spoken of as if they were a building whose construction begins by laying a **foundation**. Alternate translation: “let us not repeat the basic teachings” (See: [Metaphor](#))

dead works (ULT)

Sinful deeds are spoken of as if they belonged to the world of the **dead**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹ So then, having left the beginning of the message of Christ, let us go forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,

Hebrews 6:2

teaching about baptisms, and laying on of hands, and resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment (ULT)

The writer continues from the previous verse speaking about basic teachings as if they were a building whose construction begins by laying a foundation. Alternate translation: “nor the basic teaching about baptisms, and laying on of hands, and resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² teaching about baptisms, and laying on of hands, and resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

laying on...of hands (ULT)

The practice of **laying on of hands** was done to set someone apart for special service or position.

Hebrews 6:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ And this we will do if God permits.

Hebrews 6:4

for those who were once enlightened (ULT)

Understanding is spoken of as if it were illumination. Alternate translation: “those who once understood the message about Christ” (See: [Metaphor](#))

having tasted...the heavenly gift (ULT)

Experiencing salvation is spoken of as if it were tasting food. Alternate translation: “who experienced God’s saving power” (See: [Metaphor](#))

having become sharers of the Holy Spirit (ULT)

The **Holy Spirit**, who comes to believers, is spoken of as if he were an object that people could share. Alternate translation: “who received the Holy Spirit” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ For {it is} impossible for those who were once enlightened and having tasted the heavenly gift, and having become sharers of the Holy Spirit,

Hebrews 6:5

who have tasted the good word of God (ULT)

Learning God's message is spoken of as if it were tasting food.
Alternate translation: "who learned God's good message" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ and who have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

the powers...of the age to come (ULT)

This means the power of God when his kingdom is fully present in all the world. In this sense, **the powers** refer to God himself, who holds all power. Alternate translation: "learned how God will work powerfully in the future" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 6:6

to restore them again to repentance (ULT)

Alternate translation: "it is impossible to bring them back to repent again"

while crucifying the Son of God for themselves (ULT)

When people turn away from God, it is as though they crucify Jesus again. Alternate translation: "it is like they crucify for themselves the very Son of God again" (See: [Metaphor](#))

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](#))

ULT

⁶ but having fallen away—to restore them again to repentance while crucifying the Son of God for themselves and publicly shaming him.

Hebrews 6:7

land...that has drunk the...rain (ULT)

Farmland that benefits from much **rain** is spoken of as if it were a person who drinks in the rainwater. Alternate translation: “the land that absorbs the rain” (See: [Personification](#))

produces plants (ULT)

Farmland that **produces** crops is spoken of as if it gives birth to them. Alternate translation: “that produces plants” (See: [Personification](#))

receives a blessing from God (ULT)

Rain and crops are seen as proof that **God** has helped the farmland. The farmland is spoken of as if it were a person who could receive God’s **blessing**. (See: [Personification](#))

a blessing from God (ULT)

Here, **blessing** means help from God, not spoken words.

ULT

⁷ For land that has drunk the rain that often comes upon it and produces plants useful to those for whom it was also cultivated receives a blessing from God;

Hebrews 6:8

close to a curse (ULT)

This speaks of **a curse** as if it were a place to which a person could draw near. Alternate translation: "is in danger of God cursing it" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the end of which {is} for burning (ULT)

The farmer will burn all the worthless things in the field.

ULT

⁸ but bearing thorns and thistles, {it is} worthless and close to a curse, the end of which {is} for burning.

Hebrews 6:9

we are convinced (ULT)

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun **we**, he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation: “I am convinced” or “I am certain” (See: [Pronouns](#))

of things better (ULT)

Here, **better things** means they are doing better than those who have rejected God, disobeyed him, and now can no longer repent so that God will forgive them ([Hebrews 6:4-6](#)). Alternate translation: “that you are doing better things than what I have mentioned”

accompanying salvation (ULT)

You can state the abstract noun **salvation** as a verb. Alternate translation: “things that concern God saving you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁹ But concerning you, beloved ones, we are convinced of things better and accompanying salvation, even if we speak thus.

Hebrews 6:10

For God {is} not unjust, to forget (ULT)

This double negative **not unjust** can mean that God in his justice will remember what good things his people have done. Alternate translation: "For God is just and therefore will certainly remember" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

10 For God {is} not unjust, to forget your work and the love that you have shown for his name, having served the saints and serving them.

for his name (ULT)

God's **name** is a metonym that stands for God himself. Alternate translation: "for him" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 6:11

we long for (ULT)

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun **we**, he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation: "I greatly desire" (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

11 And we long for each of you to show the same diligence toward the assurance of {your} hope to the end

diligence (ULT)

careful, hard work

to the end (ULT)

You can state explicitly the implicit meaning of **the end**. Alternate translation: "to the end of your lives" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the...toward...assurance of {your} hope (ULT)

Alternate translation: "in order to have complete certainty that you will receive what God has promised you"

Hebrews 6:12

imitators (ULT)

An "imitator" is someone who copies the behavior of someone else.

who...inherit the promises (ULT)

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "who ... receive what God promised them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² so that you might not become lazy, but imitators of those who by faith and patience inherit the promises.

Hebrews 6:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 For God, having made a promise to Abraham, swore by himself, since he had no one greater by {whom} to swear,

Hebrews 6:14

saying (ULT)

God said

I will certainly increase you (ULT)

Here, **increase** stands for giving descendants. Alternate translation: "I will give you many descendants" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁴ saying, "I will most certainly bless you, and I will certainly increase you."

Hebrews 6:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁵ And in this way, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.

Hebrews 6:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁶ For men swear by someone greater,
and the oath {is} for confirmation of the
end of each of their disputes.

Hebrews 6:17

to the heirs of the promise (ULT)

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: “to those who would receive what he promised” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the...the unchangeable quality...of...his... purpose (ULT)

Alternate translation: “that his purpose would never change” or “that he would always do what he said he would do”

ULT

17 When God, wanting even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable quality of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath

Hebrews 6:18

who have fled for refuge (ULT)

Believers who trust in God for him to protect them are spoken of as if they were running to a safe place. Alternate translation: “we, who have trusted him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

we, who have fled for refuge, might have a strong encouragement to hold firmly to the hope set before us (ULT)

Trust in God is spoken of as if **encouragement** were an object that could be presented to a person and that person could **hold** on to it. Alternate translation: “we who have fled for refuge will continue to trust in God just as he encouraged us to do” (See: [Metaphor](#))

set before us (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “that God has placed before us” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 so that by two unchangeable things—in which {it is} impossible for God to lie—we, who have fled for refuge, might have a strong encouragement to hold firmly to the hope set before us;

Hebrews 6:19

Connecting Statement:

Having finished his third warning and encouragement to the believers, the writer of Hebrews continues his comparison of Jesus as priest to Melchizedek as priest.

as an anchor...of the soul, both reliable and steadfast (ULT)

Just as **an anchor** keeps a boat from drifting in the water, Jesus keeps us secure in God's presence. Alternate translation: "that causes us to live securely in God's presence" (See: [Metaphor](#))

an anchor...of the soul, both reliable and steadfast (ULT)

Here the words **reliable** and **steadfast** mean basically the same thing and emphasize the complete reliability of the anchor. Alternate translation: "an anchor for the soul that is completely reliable" (See: [Doublet](#))

which...and entering into the inner place {behind} the curtain (ULT)

Here, **which** refers back to our "hope" in the previous verse. This hope is spoken of as if it were a person who could go into the most holy place of the temple. (See: [Personification](#))

the inner place {behind} (ULT)

The **inner place** was the most holy place in the temple. It was thought to be the place where God was most intensely present among his people. In this passage, this place stands for heaven and God's throne room. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁹ which we have as an anchor of the soul, both reliable and steadfast, and entering into the inner place {behind} the curtain,

Hebrews 6:20

according to the order of Melchizedek (ULT)

The **order of Melchizedek** means that Christ as a priest has things in common with **Melchizedek** as a priest. Alternate translation: “in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest”

ULT

²⁰ where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered in, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7

Hebrews 7 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 7:17, 21, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

High priest

Only a high priest could offer sacrifices so that God could forgive sins, so Jesus had to be a high priest. The law of Moses commanded that the high priest be from the tribe of Levi, but Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. God made him a priest like the priest Melchizedek, who lived at the time of Abraham, before there was a tribe of Levi.

Hebrews 7:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer of Hebrews continues his comparison of Jesus as priest to Melchizedek as priest.

of Salem (ULT)

Salem was the name of a city during the time of Abraham. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings (ULT)

This refers to when **Abraham** and his men went and defeated the armies of four kings in order to rescue his nephew, Lot, and his family. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹ For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,

Hebrews 7:2

to whom (ULT)

Alternate translation: "and it was to Melchizedek"

king of righteousness...king...of peace (ULT)

Alternate translation: "righteous king ... peaceful king"

ULT

² to whom also Abraham gave a tenth of everything, first indeed translated as "king of righteousness," and then also "king of Salem," that is, "king of peace,"

Hebrews 7:3

He is without father, without mother, without ancestors, with neither beginning of days nor end of life

It is possible to think from this passage that Melchizedek was neither born nor did he die. However, it is likely that all the writer means is that the Scriptures provide no information about Melchizedek's ancestry, birth, or death.

ULT

³ without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.

Hebrews 7:4

Connecting Statement:

The writer states that the priesthood of Melchizedek is better than Aaron's priesthood and then reminds them that the priesthood of Aaron did not make anything perfect.

this one {was (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Melchizedek was"

ULT

⁴ But see how great this one {was}, to whom the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth from the plunder.

Hebrews 7:5

those indeed from the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood (ULT)

The author says this because not all of Levi's **sons** became priests.
Alternate translation: "the descendants of Levi who became priests"
(See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

from the people (ULT)

Alternate translation: "from the people of Israel"

from their brothers (ULT)

Here, **brothers** means they are all related to each other through Abraham. Alternate translation: "from their relatives"

they have come from the loins of Abraham (ULT)

The phrase **from the loins of Abraham** is a way of saying that they were descendants of Abraham. Alternate translation: "they, too, are descendants of Abraham" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ And those indeed from the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood have a command according to the law to collect tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, even though they have come from the loins of Abraham.

Hebrews 7:6

Melchizedek...whose descent was not traced from them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the one who was not a descendant of Levi"

the one having the promises (ULT)

The things that God promised to do for Abraham are spoken of as if they were objects that he could possess.

Alternate translation: "the one to whom God had spoken his promises" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ But Melchizedek, whose descent was not traced from them, received tithes from Abraham, and blessed the one having the promises.

Hebrews 7:7

the lesser is blessed by the greater (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the more important person blesses the less important person” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ But without any argument, the lesser is blessed by the greater.

Hebrews 7:8

in this case...in that case (ULT)

These phrases are used to compare the Levite priests with Melchizedek. Your language may have a way to emphasize that the author is making a comparison.

ULT

⁸ And in this case, mortal men receive tithes, but in that case it is testified that he lives on.

it is testified that he lives on (ULT)

It is never explicitly written in scripture that Melchizedek dies. The author of Hebrews speaks of this absence of information about Melchizedek's death in scripture as if it were a positive statement that he is still alive. (See: [Metaphor](#))

it is testified that he lives on (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "scripture shows that he lives on" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Hebrews 7:9

Levi, the one receiving tithes, also paid tithes through Abraham (ULT)

Since **Levi** had not been born yet, the author speaks of him as still being in Abraham's body when Abraham met Melchizedek. In this way, the author argues that Levi **paid tithes** to Melchizedek through **Abraham**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ And, so to speak, Levi, the one receiving tithes, also paid tithes through Abraham,

Hebrews 7:10

still...he was...in the loins of his father (ULT)

Since Levi had not been born yet, the author speaks of him as still being in Abraham's body. In this way, the author argues that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁰ because he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met Abraham.

Hebrews 7:11

Now

Here, **So** is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

what further need {was there} for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and to not be called according to the order of Aaron (ULT)

This question emphasizes that it was unexpected that priests come after **the order of Melchizedek**. Alternate translation: “no one would have needed another priest, one who was like Melchizedek and not like Aaron, to arise.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

to arise (ULT)

Alternate translation: “to come” or “to appear”

according to the order of Melchizedek (ULT)

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with **Melchizedek** as a priest. Alternate translation: “in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest”

to not be called according to the order of Aaron (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “not be after the manner of Aaron” or “who is not a priest like Aaron” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

11 So if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need {was there} for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and to not be called according to the order of Aaron?

Hebrews 7:12

For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity a change of the law also happens (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “For when God changed the priesthood, he also had to change the law” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity a change of the law also happens.

Hebrews 7:13

whom (ULT)

Here, **whom** refers to Jesus.

about whom...these things are spoken (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “about whom I am speaking” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹³ For he about whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has attended to the altar.

Hebrews 7:14

For (ULT)

For is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

our Lord is risen from Judah (ULT)

The words **our Lord** refer to Jesus.

from Judah (ULT)

Alternate translation: "from the tribe of Judah"

ULT

14 For {it is} clear that our Lord is risen from Judah, a tribe toward which Moses said nothing concerning priests.

Hebrews 7:15

General Information:

This quote comes from a psalm of King David.

this is even more clear (ULT)

Alternate translation: "we can understand even more clearly"

if...another priest arises (ULT)

Alternate translation: "if another priest comes"

according to the likeness of Melchizedek (ULT)

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with **Melchizedek** as a priest. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"

ULT

¹⁵ And this is even more clear, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek,

Hebrews 7:16

who...not according to a law...became {a priest (ULT)

Alternate translation: "his becoming priest was not based on a law"

a law of fleshly command (ULT)

The idea of human descent is spoken of as if it had only to do with the flesh of one's body. Alternate translation: "the law of human descent" or "the law about priests' descendants becoming priests" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁶ who became {a priest}, not according to a law of fleshly command, but according to the power of an indestructible life.

Hebrews 7:17

For he is testified to (ULT)

This speaks about scripture as if it were a person who could witness about something. Alternate translation: “For God witnesses about him through the scriptures” or “For this is what was written about him in the scripture” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

17 For he is testified to: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

according to the order of Melchizedek (ULT)

There were two groups of priests. One was made up of the descendants of Levi. The other was made up of **Melchizedek** and Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: “according to the line of Melchizedek” or “according to the priesthood of Melchizedek”

Hebrews 7:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁸ For on the one hand, annulment of the former commandment happens because it {is} weak and useless

Hebrews 7:19

nothing...the law made...perfect (ULT)

Here, **the law** is spoken of as if it were a person who could act. Alternate translation: “no one could become perfect by obeying the law” (See: [Personification](#))

is} the introduction...of a better hope (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God has introduced a better hope” or “God has given us reason for a more confident hope” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

through which we come near to God (ULT)

Worshiping God and having his favor are spoken of as to **come near** to him. Alternate translation: “and because of this hope we approach God” or “and because of this hope we worship God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand {is} the introduction of a better hope, through which we come near to God.

Hebrews 7:20

General Information:

This quote comes from the same psalm of David as [Hebrews 7:17](#).

And by as much as not without an oath (ULT)

You can state this clearly who made this **oath**. Alternate translation: “And God did not choose this new priest without swearing an oath!” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

And by as much as not without an oath (ULT)

The double negative **not without** emphasizes that Jesus became a priest through an oath. Alternate translation: “And it was because God swore an oath that the Lord became the new priest!” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

²⁰ And by as much as not without an oath,—for they without an oath are become priests,

Hebrews 7:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ but he with an oath-taking, through God saying to him, “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You {are} a priest forever’”—

Hebrews 7:22

Connecting Statement:

The writer then assures these Jewish believers that Christ has the better priesthood because he lives forever and the priests that descended from Aaron all died.

has become the guarantee of a better covenant (ULT)

Alternate translation: "has told us that we can be sure that there will be a better covenant"

ULT

²² in the same way also, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Hebrews 7:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ And they, on the one hand, who became priests are many, since death prevents them from continuing,

Hebrews 7:24

he has a permanent priesthood (ULT)

A priest's work is spoken of as if it were an object that Jesus possesses. This can be worded to avoid the abstract noun **priesthood**. Alternate translation: "he is a priest permanently" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²⁴ but Jesus, on the other hand, since he remains forever, he has a permanent priesthood.

Hebrews 7:25

Therefore (ULT)

You can make explicit what **Therefore** implies. Alternate translation: "Because Christ is our high priest who lives forever," (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

those who approach God through him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "those who come to God because of what Jesus has done"

ULT

²⁵ Therefore he is also able to save completely those who approach God through him, always living to intercede for them.

Hebrews 7:26

having become higher than the heavens (ULT)

The author speaks of possessing more honor and power than anyone else as if it were position that is up above all things. Alternate translation: "God has given him more honor and power than anyone else" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁶ For such a high priest is indeed suitable for us: holy, innocent, pure, separated from sinners, and having become higher than the heavens;

Hebrews 7:27

his own...he did...himself (ULT)

Here, **his own** refers to the Levitical priests. The second **he** and the word **himself** refer to Christ.

ULT

²⁷ who does not have each day the need, even as the high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people, for he did this, having offered himself once for all.

Hebrews 7:28

the law...appoints {as} high priests men having weaknesses (ULT)

Here, **the law** is a metonym for the men who appointed the **high priests** according to the law of Moses. The focus is not on the men who did this, but on the fact that they did this according to the law.

Alternate translation: “according to the law, men appoint as high priests men who have weaknesses” or “for according to the law, men who have weaknesses are appointed as high priests” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁸ For the law appoints {as} high priests men having weaknesses, but the word of the oath, which {came} after the law, a Son, made perfect forever.

men...having weaknesses (ULT)

Alternate translation: “men who are spiritually weak” or “men who are weak against sin”

the word...of the oath, which {came} after the law, a Son (ULT)

Here, **the word of the oath** represents God who made the oath. Alternate translation: “God appointed a Son by his oath, which he made after he gave the law” or “after he had given the law, God swore an oath and appointed his Son” (See: [Metonymy](#))

a Son (ULT)

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

made perfect (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “who has completely obeyed God and become mature” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Hebrews 8

Hebrews 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The author finishes describing how and why Jesus is the most important high priest. Then he begins to speak about how the new covenant is better to the covenant God made with Moses. (See: [covenant](#))

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 8:8-12, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

New covenant

The author tells how Jesus has established a new covenant that is better than the covenant that God established with the Israelites. (See: [covenant](#))

Hebrews 8:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer, having shown that Christ's priesthood is better than the earthly priesthood, shows that the earthly priesthood was a pattern of heavenly things. Christ has a superior ministry, a superior covenant.

ULT

¹ Now the point of the things being said {is} this: We have a high priest who has sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

Now (ULT)

Now does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

We have a high priest (ULT)

The author is including the readers here, so the word **We** is inclusive. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

has sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty (ULT)

To sit at the **right hand** of God is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Hebrews 1:3](#). Alternate translation: "sat down at the place of honor and authority beside the throne of the Majesty" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

Hebrews 8:2

**the true tabernacle that the Lord, not a man,
set up**

People built the earthly **tabernacle** out of animal skins fastened to a wooden framework, and they set it up in the manner of a tent. Here, **true tabernacle** means the heavenly tabernacle that God created.

ULT

² a servant of the holy {place} and the true tabernacle that the Lord, not a man, set up.

Hebrews 8:3

For every high priest...is appointed (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "For God appoints every priest" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore {it is} necessary also for this one to have something that he might offer.

Hebrews 8:4

Now (ULT)

Now does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

according to the law (ULT)

Alternate translation: “as God requires in the law”

ULT

⁴ Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the law;

Hebrews 8:5

who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things (ULT)

The words **copy** and **shadow** are metaphors meaning that something is not the real thing but it is similar to the real thing. Alternate translation: “who serve what is a vague image of the heavenly things” or “who serve what is only similar to the heavenly things” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to complete the tabernacle, for he says, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain.”

a copy and shadow...of the heavenly things (ULT)

The words **copy** and **shadow** have similar meanings and emphasize that the priesthood and the earthly temple were only images of Christ, the true high priest, and the heavenly temple. (See: [Doublet](#))

just as Moses was warned by God when he was about (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “just as God warned Moses when Moses was about” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

when he was about to complete the tabernacle (ULT)

Moses did not construct the **tabernacle** himself. He ordered the people to construct it. Alternate translation: “when he was about to command the people to construct the tabernacle” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

See that (ULT)

Alternate translation: “Make sure that”

the pattern (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the design”

that was shown to you (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “that I showed you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

on the mountain (ULT)

You can make explicit that the **mountain** refers to Mount Sinai. Alternate translation: “on Mount Sinai” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Hebrews 8:6

Connecting Statement:

This section begins to show that the new covenant is better than the old covenant with Israel and Judah.

he has received (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God has given Christ" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

better...the mediator of a...covenant (ULT)

This means Christ caused a **better covenant** between God and humans to exist.

which is enacted on better promises (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "which God made based on better promises" or "in which God promised better things when he made this covenant" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ But now he has received a much better ministry, just as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which is enacted on better promises.

Hebrews 8:7

first {covenant...for a second (ULT)

The words **first** and **second** are ordinal numbers. Alternate translation: "old covenant ... for a new covenant" (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

was faultless (ULT)

Alternate translation: "had been perfect"

ULT

⁷ For if that first {covenant} was faultless, no place would have been sought for a second.

Hebrews 8:8

General Information:

In this quotation the prophet Jeremiah foretold of a new covenant that God would make.

with them (ULT)

Alternate translation: “with the people of Israel”

Behold (ULT)

Alternate translation: “Look” or “Listen” or “Pay attention to what I am about to tell you”

the house of Israel and with the house of Judah (ULT)

The people of **Israel** and **Judah** are spoken of as if they were houses. Alternate translation: “the people of Israel and with the people of Judah” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ For finding fault with them, he says,
“Behold, the days are coming—says the Lord— when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;

Hebrews 8:9

when I took them by their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt (ULT)

This metaphor represents God's great love and concern as if he were holding their hands in order to physically **lead them out** of **Egypt**. Alternate translation: "when I led them out of Egypt like a father leads his young child" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not continue in my covenant, and I disregarded them— says the Lord.

Hebrews 8:10

General Information:

This is a quotation from the prophet Jeremiah.

with the house of Israel (ULT)

The people of **Israel** are spoken of as if they were a **house**. Alternate translation: “the people of Israel” (See: [Metaphor](#))

after those days (ULT)

Alternate translation: “after that time”

I will put my laws into their minds (ULT)

God’s **laws** are spoken of as if they were objects that could be placed somewhere. People’s ability to think is spoken of as if it were a place. Alternate translation: “I will enable them to understand my laws” (See: [Metaphor](#))

I will write them on their hearts (ULT)

Here, **hearts** is a metonym for a person’s inner being. (See: [Metonymy](#))

I will write them on their hearts (ULT)

The phrase **write them on their hearts** is a metaphor for enabling people to obey the law. Alternate translation: “I will also put them in their hearts” or “I will enable them to obey my law” (See: [Metaphor](#))

into...I will be their...God (ULT)

Alternate translation: “I will be the God they worship”

into...they will be my...people (ULT)

Alternate translation: “they will be the people for whom I care”

ULT

10 For this {is} the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days— says the Lord. I will put my laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Hebrews 8:11

General Information:

This continues the quotation from the prophet Jeremiah.

they will certainly not teach each one his fellow citizen, and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord (ULT)

ULT

11 And they will certainly not teach each one his fellow citizen, and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

You can state this direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "they will not need to teach their neighbors or brothers to know me" (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

fellow citizen...brother (ULT)

Both **fellow citizen** and **brother** mean the same thing and refer to fellow Israelites. (See: [Doublet](#))

Know the Lord...they will all know me (ULT)

Know here stands for acknowledging God. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 8:12

toward their evil deeds (ULT)

Here, **evil deeds** stands for the people who committed these evil deeds. Alternate translation: “to those who did evil deeds” (See: [Metonymy](#))

their sins I will certainly not remember any longer (ULT)

Here, **remember** stands for “think about.” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

12 For I will be merciful toward their evil deeds, and their sins I will certainly not remember any longer.”

Hebrews 8:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹³ By saying, “new,” he has made the first obsolete, and what has been made obsolete and the disappearance of what grows old {is} near.

Hebrews 9

Hebrews 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter describes how Jesus is better than the temple and all its laws and rules. This chapter will be difficult to understand if the first five books of the Old Testament have not yet been translated.

Special concepts in this chapter

Will

A will is a legal document that describes what will happen to a person's property after he dies.

Blood

In the Old Testament, God had commanded the Israelites to offer sacrifices so that he would forgive their sins. Before they could offer these sacrifices, they had to kill animals and then offer not only the animal's body but also its blood. Shedding blood is a metaphor for killing an animal or person. Jesus offered his life, his blood, as a sacrifice when he allowed men to kill him. The writer of the Book of Hebrews is saying in this chapter that this sacrifice is better than the sacrifices of the Old Testament. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [covenant](#))

Return of Christ

Jesus will return to finish the work that he began when he died so that God would forgive his people's sins. He will finish saving those people who are waiting for him. (See: [save](#), [saved](#), [safe](#), [salvation](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

First covenant

This refers to the covenant that God made with Moses. However, before he made this covenant, God had made a covenant with Abraham. But this was the first covenant that God had made with the people of Israel. You may decide to translate "the first covenant" as "the earlier covenant."

Hebrews 9:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer makes clear to these Jewish believers that the laws and the tabernacle of the old covenant were only pictures of the better, new covenant.

Now (ULT)

Now marks a new part of the teaching.

the first {covenant} (ULT)

See how you translated **first covenant** in [Hebrews 8:7](#).

had...regulations (ULT)

Alternate translation: "had detailed instructions" or "had rules"

ULT

¹ Now indeed the first {covenant} had regulations for worship and an earthly holy {place}.

Hebrews 9:2

For (ULT)

The author is continuing the discussion from [Hebrews 8:7](#).

a tabernacle...was prepared (ULT)

A **tabernacle** was constructed and made ready for use. You can state this idea in active form. Alternate translation: “the Israelites prepared a tabernacle” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

² For a tabernacle was prepared, the first {tent}, in which {were} both the lampstand and the table, and the presentation of the bread, which is called the holy {place}.

the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the presence

These objects are all accompanied by the definite article **the**, because these are specific things that the author assumes that his readers already know about.

the presentation of the bread (ULT)

You can reworded the abstract noun **presentation** to express it with the verb “display” or “present.” Alternate translation: “the bread on display before God” or “the bread the priests presented to God” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Hebrews 9:3

behind...the second curtain (ULT)

The first curtain was the outer wall of the tabernacle, so the **second curtain** was the curtain between the “holy place” and the “most holy place.”

ULT

³ And behind the second curtain {was} a tent which is called the Holy of Holies,

second (ULT)

The word **second** is the ordinal word for number two. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Hebrews 9:4

in which {was} (ULT)

Alternate translation: "inside the ark of the covenant was"

the rod of Aaron that had budded (ULT)

This was the **rod** that **Aaron** had when God proved to the people of Israel that he had chosen Aaron as his priest by making Aaron's rod bud. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the...had budded (ULT)

Alternate translation: "from which leaves and flowers had grown"

of the covenant...the tablets (ULT)

Here, **tablets** are flat pieces of stone that had writing on them. This refers to the stone tablets on which the ten commandments were written.

ULT

⁴ having a golden altar for incense and the ark of the covenant, being covered completely with gold, in which {was} a golden jar holding the manna, and the rod of Aaron that had budded, and the tablets of the covenant.

Hebrews 9:5

glorious cherubim are overshadowing the atonement lid (ULT)

When the Israelites were making the ark of the covenant, God commanded them to carve two **cherubim** facing each other, with their wings touching, over the **atonement lid** of the ark of the covenant. Here they are spoken of as providing shade for the ark of the covenant. Alternate translation: “glorious cherubim covered the atonement lid with their wings”

ULT

⁵ And above it, glorious cherubim are overshadowing the atonement lid, about which it is not now {the time} to speak in detail.

cherubim (ULT)

Here, **cherubim** refers to the carved figures of two cherubim. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 9:6

these things...when...are thus prepared (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “after the priests prepared these things” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ And when these things are thus prepared, the priests always enter into the first tent, performing {their} services;

Hebrews 9:7

enters}, {and} not without blood (ULT)

You can state the double negative **not without** in positive form.
 Alternate translation: “enters, and he always brings blood” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

blood (ULT)

This is the **blood** of the bull and goat that the high priest had to sacrifice on the Day of Atonement.

ULT

⁷ but into the second {tent}, only once a year the high priest {enters}, {and} not without blood that he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people.

Hebrews 9:8

into the holy {place (ULT)}

Here, **the holy place** could refer to: (1) the inner room of the tabernacle on earth. (2) God's presence in heaven.

while the first tabernacle still has a place (ULT)

This could mean: (1) the outer room of the **tabernacle** was still standing. (2) the earthly **tabernacle** and the sacrificial system still existed. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ The Holy Spirit shows that the way into the holy {place} is not yet visible while the first tabernacle still has a place,

Hebrews 9:9

which {is} a symbol (ULT)

Alternate translation: "and this first tabernacle is a picture"

for the present time

Alternate translation: "for now"

are offered (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "that the priests now offer" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

not being able according to conscience to perfect the worshiper (ULT)

The writer speaks of a person's **conscience** as if it were an object that could be made better and better until it was without fault. A person's conscience is his knowledge of right and wrong. It is also his awareness of whether or not he has done wrong. If he knows he has done wrong, we say that he feels guilty. Alternate translation: "are not able to make the worshiper free from guilt" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the worshiper (ULT)

The writer appears to refer to only one **worshiper**, but he means all those who came to worship God at the tabernacle. (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

⁹ which {is} a symbol for the present time, in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered, not being able according to conscience to perfect the worshiper,

Hebrews 9:10

until the time of reformation (ULT)

Alternate translation: "until God created the new order"

ULT

¹⁰ only concerning food and drink and various washings, regulations of the body, imposed until the time of reformation.

Hebrews 9:11

Connecting Statement:

Having described the service of the tabernacle under God's law, the writer makes clear that Christ's service under the new covenant is better because it is sealed with his blood. It is better also because Christ has entered the true "tabernacle," that is, God's own presence in heaven, instead of entering, as other high priests, into the earthly tabernacle, which was only an imperfect copy.

ULT

11 But Christ, having come as a high priest of the good things that have come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by human hands, that is not of this creation; ^[1]

the...of...good things (ULT)

Here, **good things** does not refer to material things. It means the good things that God promised in his new covenant.

the greater and more perfect tabernacle (ULT)

This refers to the heavenly tent or **tabernacle**, which is more important and more perfect than the earthly tabernacle.

not made by human hands (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "that humans hands did not make" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

made by human hands (ULT)

Here, **hands** refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "humans" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Hebrews 9:12

holy {place} (ULT)

God's presence in heaven is spoken of as if it were the **holy place**, the innermost room in the tabernacle. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² and not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered into the holy {place} once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:13

the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes on those who have become unclean (ULT)

The priest would throw small amounts of the **ashes** on the **unclean** people.

for the cleansing of {their} flesh (ULT)

Here, **flesh** refers to the entire body. Alternate translation: "for the cleansing of their bodies" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes on those who have become unclean sanctify them for the cleansing of {their} flesh,

Hebrews 9:14

how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (ULT)

The author uses this exclamation to emphasize that Christ's sacrifice was the most powerful. Alternate translation: "then certainly Christ's blood will cleanse our conscience even more from dead works to serve the living God! Because, through the eternal Spirit, he offered himself without blemish to God!" (See: [Exclamations](#))

ULT

¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse your ^[2] conscience from dead works to serve the living God!

the blood of Christ (ULT)

The **blood** of Christ refers to his death. (See: [Metonymy](#))

without blemish (ULT)

A **blemish** is a small sin or moral fault spoken of here as if it were a small, unusual spot or defect on Christ's body. (See: [Metaphor](#))

your conscience (ULT)

Here, **conscience** refers to a person's feeling of guilt. Believers no longer have to feel guilty for the sins they have committed because Jesus sacrificed himself and has forgiven them. (See: [Metonymy](#))

will...cleanse (ULT)

Here, **cleanse** stands for the action of relieving our consciences from guilt for the sins we have committed. (See: [Metaphor](#))

dead works (ULT)

Sinful deeds are spoken of as if they belonged to the world of the **dead**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 9:15

for this reason (ULT)

Alternate translation: “as a result” or “because of this”

he is the mediator of a new covenant (ULT)

Here being a **mediator** means Christ caused the **new covenant** between God and humans to exist.

the first covenant (ULT)

See how you translated **first covenant** in [Hebrews 8:7](#).

for redemption of those under the first covenant from their transgressions (ULT)

Here, **their transgressions** is a metonym for: (1) the guilt of their transgressions. Alternate translation: “to take away the guilt of those who were under the first covenant” (2) the punishment for their transgressions. Alternate translation: “to take away the punishment for the transgressions of those who were under the first covenant” (See: [Metonymy](#))

those who are called (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom God has chosen to be his children” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

of the eternal inheritance (ULT)

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 And for this reason, he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, a death having taken place for redemption of those under the first covenant from their transgressions, those who are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Hebrews 9:16

there is} a necessity for the death of the one who made it to be proven (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “someone must prove that the person who made the will has died”

ULT

¹⁶ For where {there is} a covenant, {there is} a necessity for the death of the one who made it to be proven.

Hebrews 9:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁷ For a covenant {is} valid on the basis of a death, because it never has force when the one who made it is alive.

Hebrews 9:18

So not even the first {covenant} was established without blood (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “So God did not even establish the first covenant without blood” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁸ So not even the first {covenant} was established without blood.

So not even the first {covenant} was established without blood (ULT)

You can state the double negative **not even ... without** in positive form. Alternate translation: “So God established even the first covenant with blood” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

first {covenant} (ULT)

See how you translated **first covenant** in [Hebrews 8:7](#).

blood (ULT)

The death of animals sacrificed to God is spoken of as if it were nothing but **blood**. Alternate translation: “the death of animals sacrificed to God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 9:19

having taken the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and red wool and hyssop, he sprinkled both the scroll itself and all the people (ULT)

The priest dipped the **hyssop** in the **blood** and the **water** and then shook the hyssop so drops of blood and water would fall on the scroll and on the **people**. Sprinkling was a symbolic action done by the priests by which they applied the benefits of the covenant to people and to objects. Here the scroll and the people's acceptability to God are renewed. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

¹⁹ For every command according to the law had been spoken by Moses to all the people, having taken the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and red wool and hyssop, he sprinkled both the scroll itself and all the people,

hyssop (ULT)

Hyssop was a woody shrub with flowers in summer, used in ceremonial sprinkling.

Hebrews 9:20

the blood of the covenant (ULT)

Here, **blood** refers to the death of the animals sacrificed to carry out the covenant's requirements. Alternate translation: "the death of the animals that brings into effect the covenant" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁰ saying, "This {is} the blood of the covenant that God has commanded for you."

Hebrews 9:21

he sprinkled (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Moses sprinkled"

he sprinkled (ULT)

Sprinkling was a symbolic action done by the priests by which they applied the benefits of the covenant to people and to objects. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 9:19](#). (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

²¹ And in the same manner, he sprinkled the blood on both the tabernacle and on all the containers of the service.

on all the containers of the service (ULT)

A container is an object that can hold things. Here it may refer to any kind of utensil or tool. Alternate translation: "all the utensils used in the service"

the blood (ULT)

Here the animal **blood** refers to the animal's death. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 9:22

almost everything is cleansed with blood (ULT)

Making something acceptable to God is spoken of as if it were cleansing that thing. Alternate translation: “almost everything is made acceptable to God by being cleansed with blood” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²² And according to the law, almost everything is cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

almost everything is cleansed with blood (ULT)

You can state this idea in active form. Alternate translation: “the priests use blood to cleanse almost everything” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (ULT)

Here, **shedding of blood** refers to something dying as a sacrifice to God. Alternate translation: “without the death of something, there is no forgiveness” (See: [Metonymy](#))

without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (ULT)

This double negative can mean that all forgiveness comes through the shedding of blood. Alternate translation: “forgiveness only comes when something dies as a sacrifice” or “God only forgives when something dies as a sacrifice” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

forgiveness (ULT)

You can state explicitly the implied meaning. Alternate translation: “forgiveness of the sins of the people” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Hebrews 9:23

Connecting Statement:

The writer emphasizes that Christ (now in heaven interceding for us) had to die only once for sins and that he will return to earth a second time.

**it is} a necessary...for...on the one hand...the
copies of the things in the heavens to be
cleansed with these (ULT)**

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the priests must use these animal sacrifices to cleanse what are copies of things that are in heaven” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

**but on the other hand, the heavenly things themselves, with much better
sacrifices than these (ULT)**

That is, the **sacrifices** to cleanse the **heavenly things** are better than the sacrifices used to cleanse the earthly copies. You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “as for the heavenly things themselves, God had to cleanse them with much better sacrifices” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

23 Therefore {it is} a necessary on the one hand for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but on the other hand, the heavenly things themselves, with much better sacrifices than these.

Hebrews 9:24

made with hands...a holy {place} (ULT)

Here, **with hands** means “by humans.” Alternate translation: “the most holy place made by humans” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

made with hands...a holy {place} (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the most holy place, which humans made” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

of the true one (ULT)

Alternate translation: “of the true most holy place”

ULT

²⁴ For Christ did not enter into a holy {place} made with hands, a copy of the true one—but into heaven itself, to appear now in the presence of God for us.

Hebrews 9:25

And not (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And he did not enter heaven"

with the blood of another (ULT)

This means with the **blood** of an animal victim, not with his own blood.

ULT

²⁵ And not in order to offer himself many times, even as the high priest enters into the holy {place} each year with the blood of another;

Hebrews 9:26

since (ULT)

Alternate translation: "since if he had to offer himself often,"

for the annulment of sin through the sacrifice of himself (ULT)

Doing away with **sin** represents having God forgive it. Alternate translation: "to cause God to forgive sins by sacrificing himself" or "to sacrifice himself so that God can forgive sin" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁶ since it is necessary for him to suffer many times from the foundation of the world. But now he has appeared once at the end of the ages for the annulment of sin through the sacrifice of himself.

Hebrews 9:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ And just as men are appointed to die once, and after that, the judgment,

Hebrews 9:28

Christ, having been offered once (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “Christ offered himself once” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to...the...bear...sins (ULT)

The act of making us innocent rather than guilty for our sins is spoken of as if our **sins** were physical objects that Christ could carry away from us. Alternate translation: “so that God would forgive the sins” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the...sins (ULT)

Here, **sins** mean the guilt that people have before God because of the sins they committed. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁸ so also, Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time apart from sin, for salvation to those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Hebrews 10

Hebrews 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, the writer finishes describing how Jesus' sacrifice was better than the sacrifices offered in the Temple. (See: [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#))

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 10:5-7, 15-17, 37-38, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

God's judgment and reward

Holy living is important for Christians. God will hold people accountable for how they lived their Christian life. Even though there will not be eternal condemnation for Christians, ungodly actions do and will have consequences. In addition, faithful living will be rewarded. (See: [holy](#), [holiness](#), [unholy](#), [sacred](#), [godly](#), [godliness](#), [ungodly](#), [godless](#), [ungodliness](#), [godlessness](#) and [faithful](#), [faithfulness](#), [trustworthy](#) and [reward](#), [prize](#), [deserve](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"

The sacrifices themselves had no redeeming power. They were effective because they were a display of faith, which was credited to the person offering the sacrifice. It was ultimately the sacrifice of Jesus which then makes these sacrifices "take away sins." (See: [redeem](#), [redeemer](#), [redemption](#) and [faith](#))

"The covenant that I will make"

It is unclear whether this prophecy was being fulfilled as the author was writing or whether it was to occur later. The translator should try to avoid making a claim about the time this covenant begins. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophecy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [covenant](#))

Hebrews 10:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer shows the weakness of the law and its sacrifices, why God gave the law, and the perfection of the new priesthood and Christ's sacrifice.

a shadow...the law, having...of the good things that are coming (ULT)

This speaks about **the law** as if it were a **shadow**. The author means the law is not the **good things** that God had promised. It only hints at the good things that God is going to do. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the...not the very image of...things (ULT)

Alternate translation: "not the real things themselves"

ULT

¹ For the law, having a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the very image of those things—is never able to make perfect those who approach with the same sacrifices that they continually bring every year.

Hebrews 10:2

**would they not have ceased being offered,
because no one would still have
consciousness of sins, those who worship
having been cleansed once for all (ULT)**

The author uses a question to state that the sacrifices were limited in their power. Alternate translation: “they would have ceased being offered because no one would still have consciousness of sins, those who worship having been cleansed once for all.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² Otherwise, would they not have ceased being offered, because no one would still have consciousness of sins, those who worship having been cleansed once for all?

would they not have ceased being offered (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “they would have ceased offering those sacrifices” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

those who worship having been cleansed once for all (ULT)

Here **having been cleansed** represents no longer being guilty of sin. Alternate translation: “those who worship no longer being guilty of sin” (See: [Metaphor](#))

those who worship having been cleansed once for all (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the sacrifices would have taken away their sin” or “God would have made them no longer guilty of sin” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

no one would still have consciousness of sins (ULT)

Alternate translation: “they would no longer think that they are guilty of sin” or “would know that they are no longer guilty of sin”

Hebrews 10:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ But with those sacrifices {there is} a reminder of sins every year.

Hebrews 10:4

For {it is} impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (ULT)

Here, **sins** are spoken of as if they were objects that animal **blood** could sweep away as it flowed. Alternate translation: “For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to cause God to forgive sins” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ For {it is} impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

the blood of bulls and goats (ULT)

Here, **blood** refers to these animals dying as sacrifices to God. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 10:5

General Information:

Christ's words when he was on earth were foretold in this quotation from a psalm of David.

you did not desire (ULT)

Here, **you** is singular and refers to God. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁵ Therefore, entering into the world, he says, "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me;

Hebrews 10:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ in whole burnt offerings and
concerning sin {offerings} you did not
take pleasure.

Hebrews 10:7

Then I said (ULT)

Here, **I** refers to Christ.

ULT

⁷ Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—
{as} it is written about me in a section of
a scroll— to do your will, O God.’”

Hebrews 10:8

General Information:

Though changing the wording slightly, the author repeats these quotations from a psalm of David for emphasis.

Sacrifices...offerings (ULT)

See how you translated the words **Sacrifices** and **offerings** in [Hebrews 10:5](#).

whole burnt offerings...sin offerings (ULT)

See how you translated **whole burnt offerings** and **sin offerings** in [Hebrews 10:6](#).

which...are offered (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “that priests offer” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ When he says above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor did you take pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law),

Hebrews 10:9

Behold (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

He takes away the first {practice} in order to establish the second {practice} (ULT)

Stopping the **first practice** is spoken of as if it were an object that could be taken away. Starting the **second practice** is spoken of as establishing that practice. Alternate translation: "He stops people atoning for sins the first way in order to atone for sins the second way" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the first {practice}...the second {practice} (ULT)

The words **first** and **second** are ordinal numbers. Alternate translation: "the old practice ... the new practice" (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

⁹ then he said, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He takes away the first {practice} in order to establish the second {practice}.

Hebrews 10:10

we are sanctified (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God has sanctified us” or “God has dedicated us to himself” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁰ By that will, we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ (ULT)

The abstract noun **offering** can be expressed with the verb “offer” or “sacrifice.” Alternate translation: “because Jesus Christ offered his body as a sacrifice” or “because Jesus Christ sacrificed his body” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Hebrews 10:11

never are able to take away sins (ULT)

This speaks of **sins** as if they are objects that a person can **take away**. Alternate translation: “can never cause God to forgive sins” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 And indeed every priest stands every day ministering, and repeatedly offering the same sacrifices that never are able to take away sins.

Hebrews 10:12

sat down at the right hand of God (ULT)

To sit at the **right hand of God** is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Hebrews 1:3](#). Alternate translation: “he sat down at the place of honor and authority beside God” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

12 But he, having offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, sat down at the right hand of God;

Hebrews 10:13

until his enemies might be made a footstool for his feet (ULT)

The humiliation of Christ's **enemies** is spoken of as if they were made a place for him to rest **his feet**. Alternate translation: "until God humiliates Christ's enemies and they become like a stool for his feet" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ waiting from then until his enemies might be made a footstool for his feet.

until his enemies might be made a footstool for his feet (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "until God makes Christ's enemies like a stool for his feet" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Hebrews 10:14

those who are being sanctified (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom God is sanctifying” or “those whom God has dedicated to himself”
(See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

14 For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Hebrews 10:15

General Information:

This is a quotation from the prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament.

ULT

15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us,
for after saying,

Hebrews 10:16

with them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "with my people"

after those days (ULT)

Alternate translation: "when the time of the first covenant with my people has finished"

putting my laws in their hearts (ULT)

Here, **hearts** is a metonym for a person's inner being. (See: [Metonymy](#))

putting my laws in their hearts (ULT)

The phrase **put them in their hearts** is a metaphor for enabling people to obey the law. Alternate translation: "I will enable them to obey my laws" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord. putting my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."

Hebrews 10:17

General Information:

This continues the quotation from the prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament.

Their sins and lawless deeds I will remember no longer.”

This is the second part of the Holy Spirit’s testimony ([Hebrews 10:15-16](#)).

Their sins and their lawless deeds (ULT)

The words **sins** and **lawless deeds** mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize how bad the sin is. Alternate translation: “The things they did that were forbidden and how they broke the law” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

17 And {then}, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will certainly not still remember.”

Hebrews 10:18

Now (ULT)

Now is used to draw attention to the important point that follows. It does not mean “at this moment.”

where...there is} forgiveness for these (ULT)

You can reword this to express the abstract noun **forgiveness** with the verb “forgive.” Alternate translation: “when God has forgiven these things” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

there is} no longer sacrifice for sin (ULT)

You can reword this to express the abstract noun **sacrifice** with the verb “make offerings.” Alternate translation: “people no longer need to make offerings for sin” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

18 Now where {there is} forgiveness for these, {there is} no longer sacrifice for sin.

Hebrews 10:19

Connecting Statement:

Having made it clear that there is only one sacrifice for sin, the writer continues with the picture of the most holy place in the temple, where only the high priest could enter each year with the blood of the sacrifice for sins. He reminds the believers that they now worship God in his presence as if they were standing in the most holy place.

ULT

19 Therefore, brothers, having confidence to enter the holy {place} by the blood of Jesus,

brothers (ULT)

Here, **brothers** refers to all believers in Christ whether male or female. Alternate translation: “brothers and sisters” or “fellow believers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the holy {place} (ULT)

Here, **the holy place** refers to the presence of God, not the most holy place in the old tabernacle. (See: [Metaphor](#))

by the blood of Jesus (ULT)

Here, **blood of Jesus** refers to the death of Jesus. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 10:20

a new and living way (ULT)

This could mean: (1) the **new way** to God that Jesus has provided results in believers **living** forever. (2) Jesus is alive, and he is the **way** believers enter into the presence of God.

ULT

²⁰ which has established for us a new and living way through the curtain, that is, his flesh,

through the curtain (ULT)

The **curtain** in the earthly temple represented the separation between people and God's true presence. (See: [Metaphor](#))

his flesh (ULT)

Here, **flesh** stands for the body of Jesus, and his body stands for his sacrificial death. Alternate translation: "by means of his death" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 10:21

and a great priest over the house of God (ULT)

This must be translated in such a way as to make it clear that Jesus is this **great priest**.

ULT

²¹ and a great priest over the house of God,

over the house (ULT)

Alternate translation: "in charge of the house"

the house of God (ULT)

This speaks about God's people as if they were a literal **house** for him. Alternate translation: "all the people of God" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 10:22

let us approach (ULT)

Here, **approach** stands for worshiping God, as a priest would go up to God's altar to sacrifice animals to him. (See: [Metonymy](#))

with true hearts (ULT)

Here, **true hearts** stands for the genuine will and motivation of the believers. Alternate translation: "with sincerity" or "with sincerely" (See: [Metonymy](#))

in full assurance of faith (ULT)

Alternate translation: "and with a confident faith" or "and trusting completely in Jesus"

our} hearts having been sprinkled clean (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "as if had he made our hearts clean with his blood" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

our} hearts having been sprinkled clean (ULT)

Here, **hearts** is a metonym for the conscience, the awareness of right and wrong. (See: [Metonymy](#))

our} hearts having been sprinkled clean (ULT)

Being made **clean** is a metaphor for being forgiven and being given the status of righteousness. (See: [Metaphor](#))

having been sprinkled clean (ULT)

Sprinkling was a symbolic action done by the priests by which they applied the benefits of the covenant to people and to objects. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 9:19](#). (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

our} bodies having been washed with pure water (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "as if he had washed our bodies in pure water" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

our} bodies having been washed with pure water (ULT)

This **washing** stands for the believer being made acceptable to God. (See: [Metaphor](#))

our} bodies having been washed with pure water (ULT)

If the translator understands this phrase as referring to Christian baptism, then **water** is literal, not figurative. But if **water** is taken as literal, then **pure** is figurative, standing for the spiritual purity that baptism is said here to accomplish. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²² let us approach with true hearts in full assurance of faith, {our} hearts having been sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and {our} bodies having been washed with pure water.

Hebrews 10:23

Let us hold tightly the confession of {our} hope (ULT)

Here, **hold tightly** is a metaphor that refers to a person determining to do something and refusing to stop. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²³ Let us hold tightly the confession of {our} hope without wavering, because the one who has promised {is} faithful.

Let us hold tightly the confession of {our} hope (ULT)

You can translate the abstract nouns **confession** and **hope** as verbs. Alternate translation: “Let us be determined to continue confessing the things that we confidently expect from God” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

without wavering (ULT)

Being uncertain about something is spoken of as if he were **wavering** or leaning from side to side. Alternate translation: “without being unsure” or “without doubting” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 10:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ And let us consider one another, to stimulate love and good deeds,

Hebrews 10:25

not abandoning our own meeting together (ULT)

You can make explicit that the people met to worship. Alternate translation: “let us not stop coming together to worship” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁵ not abandoning our own meeting together, just as {is} the habit of some, but encouraging, and even more as you see the day approaching.

as you see the day approaching (ULT)

Here, **the day** refers to when Jesus will return. (See: [Metonymy](#))

as you see the day approaching (ULT)

A future time is spoken of as if it were an object coming closer to the speaker. Alternate translation: “as you know that Christ will return soon” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 10:26

Connecting Statement:

The writer now gives his fourth warning.

if...deliberately...we...keep on sinning (ULT)

Alternate translation: "if we know we are sinning but we do it again and again"

ULT

²⁶ For if we deliberately keep on sinning after we receive the knowledge of the truth, a sacrifice for sins no longer remains,

after we receive the knowledge of the truth (ULT)

Here, **knowledge of the truth** is spoken of as if it were an object that could be given by one person to another. Alternate translation: "after we have learned the truth" (See: [Metaphor](#))

of the truth (ULT)

This refers to the **truth** about God. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

a sacrifice for sins no longer remains (ULT)

No one is able to give a new **sacrifice** because Christ's sacrifice is the only one that works. Alternate translation: "no one can offer a sacrifice for which God will forgive our sins" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

for sins...a sacrifice (ULT)

Here, **sacrifice for sins** stands for "an effective way to sacrifice animals to take away sins"

Hebrews 10:27

of judgment (ULT)

Here, **judgment**, refers to when God will judge. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

of fiery zeal being about to consume the enemies (ULT)

God's **zeal** is spoken of as if it were fire that would burn up his **enemies**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and of fiery zeal being about to consume the enemies.

Hebrews 10:28

two or three witnesses (ULT)

It is implied that this means “of at least two or three witness.” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁸ Anyone who has rejected the law of Moses dies without mercy at {the testimony of} two or three witnesses.

Hebrews 10:29

How much worse punishment do you think will deserve the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has considered the blood of the covenant—by which he was sanctified—{as} profane, and has insulted the Spirit of grace (ULT)

The author is emphasizing the greatness of the **punishment** for those who reject Christ. Alternate translation: “This was severe punishment. But the punishment will be even greater for anyone who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has considered the blood of the covenant—by which he was sanctified—{as} profane, and has insulted the Spirit of grace!” (See: [Exclamations](#))

ULT

²⁹ How much worse punishment do you think will deserve the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has considered the blood of the covenant—by which he was sanctified—{as} profane, and has insulted the Spirit of grace!

who has trampled underfoot the Son of God (ULT)

Disregarding Christ and scorning him are spoken of as if someone had walked on him. Alternate translation: “has rejected the Son of God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the Son of God (ULT)

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

has considered the blood of the covenant...as} profane (ULT)

This shows how the person has trampled the Son of God. Alternate translation: “treated the blood of the covenant ... as unholy”

the blood of the covenant (ULT)

Here, **blood** stands for Christ’s death, by which God established the new **covenant**. (See: [Metonymy](#))

the blood of the covenant...as} profane...by which he was sanctified (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the blood by which God sanctified him as profane” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the...the...Spirit...of grace (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the Spirit of God, who provides grace”

Hebrews 10:30

we know (ULT)

The word **we** here refers to the writer and all believers. These two quotations come from the law that Moses gave in the Old Testament. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

Vengeance {is} mine; I will pay back...the one...The Lord will judge his...people (ULT)

These two quotations come from the law that Moses gave in the Old Testament.

Vengeance {is} mine (ULT)

Vengeance is spoken of as if it were an object that belongs to God, who has the right to do as he wishes with what he owns. God has the right to take vengeance on his enemies. (See: [Metaphor](#))

I will pay back (ULT)

God taking vengeance is spoken of as if he were paying back the harmful things that someone has done to others. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁰ For we know the one who said, "Vengeance {is} mine; I will pay back." And again, "The Lord will judge his people."

Hebrews 10:31

to fall into the hands (ULT)

Receiving God's full punishment is spoken of as if the person were **to fall** into God's **hands**. Alternate translation: "to receive the full punishment" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

31 {It is} a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

to fall into the hands (ULT)

Here, **hands** refers to God's power to judge. Alternate translation: "into the judgment" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 10:32

the former days (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the time in the past"

having been enlightened (ULT)

Learning the truth is spoken of as if God shined a light on the person. Alternate translation: "after you had learned the truth about Christ" (See: [Metaphor](#))

having been enlightened (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "after God had shown you the truth about Christ" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³² But remember the former days, in which, having been enlightened, you endured a great struggle of suffering,

Hebrews 10:33

being publicly exposed to both ridicule and persecution (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “people ridiculed you both by insulting and by persecuting you in public” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

partners of those...having become (ULT)

Alternate translation: “you joined those”

ULT

³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to both ridicule and persecution, and other times having become partners of those who are being treated in this way.

Hebrews 10:34

a better and everlasting possession (ULT)

God's eternal blessings are spoken of as a **possession**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁴ For you also showed compassion to the prisoners, and you accepted with joy the seizure of your possessions, knowing yourselves to have a better and everlasting possession. ^[1]

Hebrews 10:35

General Information:

In 10:37 is a quotation from the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament.

So do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward (ULT)

A person no longer having **confidence** is spoken of as if the person were to **throw away** his confidence, like a person would discard something worthless. Alternate translation: “do not stop being confident, because you will receive a great reward for being confident” (See: [Metaphor](#))

So do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward (ULT)

You can translate the abstract noun **confidence** with the adjective “confident” or the adverb “confidently.” Alternate translation: “do not stop confidently trusting in God, who will reward you greatly” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³⁵ So do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

Hebrews 10:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁶ For you have need of endurance so that, having done the will of God, you might receive the promise.

Hebrews 10:37

For in a very little {while (ULT)

You can make explicit who is speaking. Alternate translation: “As God said in the scriptures, ‘For in a very little while’” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

in a very little while

Alternate translation: “very soon”

ULT

37 “For in a very little {while}, the one who is coming will come and will not delay.

Hebrews 10:38

General Information:

In 10:38 the author quotes from the prophet Habakkuk, which directly follows the quotation from the prophet Isaiah in 10:37.

**righteous one...my...righteous one...if he
would shrink back...with him (ULT)**

Here, **my righteous one**, **he**, and **him** refer to any of God's people in general. Alternate translation: "my faithful people ... If any one of them shrinks ... with that person" or "my faithful people ... If they shrink ... with them" (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

righteous one...my...soul (ULT)

Here, both occurrences of **my** refer to God.

ULT

³⁸ But my righteous one will live by faith, and if he would shrink back, my soul is not pleased with him."

Hebrews 10:39

of shrinking back to destruction (ULT)

A person who loses courage and faith are spoken of as if he were stepping back in fear from something. And **destruction** is spoken of as if it were a destination. Alternate translation: “who stop trusting God, which will cause him to destroy us” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁹ But we are not of shrinking back to destruction, but of faith to the preservation of the soul.

to the preservation of the soul (ULT)

Living eternally with God is spoken of as if it were keeping one's **soul**. Alternate translation: “so that his soul will live with God forever” (See: [Metaphor](#))

to the preservation of the soul (ULT)

Here, **soul** refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “so that he will live with God forever” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Hebrews 11

Hebrews 11 General Notes

Structure

The writer begins this chapter by telling what faith is. Then he gives many examples of people who had faith and how they lived.

Important concepts in this chapter

Faith

In both the old and new covenants, God required faith. Some people with faith performed miracles and were very powerful. Other people with faith suffered greatly.

Hebrews 11:1

Connecting Statement:

The author tells three things about faith in this brief introduction.

Now (ULT)

Now is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here the author starts to explain the meaning of “faith.”

ULT

¹ Now faith is assurance {of things}
being hoped for, proof of things not
being seen.

is...faith...assurance {of things} being hoped for (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “when we have faith, we are sure of the things we hope for” or “faith is what allows a person to confidently expect certain things”

of things} being hoped for (ULT)

Here **things being hoped for** refers specifically to the sure promises of God, especially the certainty that all believers in Jesus will live with God forever in heaven.

proof of things not being seen (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “proof of what we still have not seen” or “proof of what still have not happened” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Hebrews 11:2

For by this (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Because they were certain about events that had not happened"

ULT

² For by this the elders were approved.

the elders were approved (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God approved of our ancestors because they had faith" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the elders (ULT)

The author is speaking to the Hebrews about their Hebrew ancestors. Alternate translation: "our ancestors" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Hebrews 11:3

the ages to have been prepared by the command of God (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “that God created the universe by commanding it to exist” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ By faith we understand the ages to have been prepared by the command of God—what is seen was not made from what is visible.

what is visible was not made out of things that were visible

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God did not create what we see out of things that were visible”

Hebrews 11:4

Connecting Statement:

The writer then gives many examples (mostly from Old Testament writings) of people who lived by faith even though they did not receive what God had promised while they lived on the earth.

he was attested to be righteous (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God declared him to be righteous” or “God declared that Abel was righteous” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

he still speaks (ULT)

Reading the scriptures and learning about Abel’s faith is spoken of as if Abel himself were still speaking. Alternate translation: “we still learn from what Abel did” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he was attested to be righteous, God testifying because of his gifts, and through faith, having died, he still speaks.

Hebrews 11:5

By faith Enoch was taken up, not seeing death (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "It was by faith that Enoch did not die because God took him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

seeing...death (ULT)

This speaks of **death** as if it were an object that people can see. It means to experience death. Alternate translation: "dying" (See: [Metaphor](#))

before...his} removal (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "before God took him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

he was reported to have pleased God (ULT)

You can state this in active form. This could mean: (1) God said that Enoch had pleased him. (2) people said that Enoch pleased God. (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken up, not seeing death, and "He was not found, because God took him." For before {his} removal, he was reported to have pleased God.

Hebrews 11:6

Now without faith (ULT)

Now does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

without...faith {it is} impossible to please him (ULT)

You can state the double negative **without ... impossible** in positive form. Alternate translation: “a person can please God only if he has faith in God” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

the one who comes to God (ULT)

Wanting to worship God and belong to his people is spoken of as if the person is literally coming **to God**. Alternate translation: “that anyone who wants to belong to God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

of those who seek...is a rewarder (ULT)

Alternate translation: “he rewards those who seek”

of those who seek him (ULT)

People who learn about God and make an effort to obey him are spoken of as if they were seeking to find him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ Now without faith {it is} impossible to please him, for it is necessary for the one who comes to God to believe that he exists and is a rewarder of those who seek him.

Hebrews 11:7

having been given a divine message (ULT)

You can state this in active form and in other terms. Alternate translation: “because God told him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

about things not yet being seen (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “about things no one had ever seen before” or “about events that had not happened yet” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the world (ULT)

Here, **the world** refers to the world’s human population. Alternate translation: “the people living in the world at that time” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the...became an heir of...righteousness (ULT)

Noah receiving **righteousness** is spoken of as if he were inheriting property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: “received from God the righteousness” (See: [Metaphor](#))

that is according to faith (ULT)

Alternate translation: “that God gives to those who have faith in him”

ULT

⁷ By faith Noah, having been given a divine message about things not yet being seen, having become reverently obedient, built an ark for salvation of his household, through which he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that is according to faith.

Hebrews 11:8

being called (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “when God called him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to go out to a place (ULT)

Alternate translation: “to leave his home to go to the place”

that he was going to receive for an inheritance (ULT)

The land that God promised to give Abraham’s descendants is spoken of as if it were **an inheritance** that Abraham was **going to receive**. Alternate translation: “that God would give him for an inheritance” (See: [Metaphor](#))

went out (ULT)

Alternate translation: “he left his home”

ULT

⁸ By faith, Abraham, being called, obeyed to go out to a place that he was going to receive for an inheritance and went out, not knowing where he is going.

Hebrews 11:9

he lived in a land of promise as a foreigner (ULT)

You can express the abstract noun **promise** with the verb “promised.” Alternate translation: “he lived as a foreigner in the land God had promised to him” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁹ By faith he lived in a land of promise as a foreigner, having lived in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the fellow heirs of the same promise,

the fellow heirs (ULT)

This speaks about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as if they were **fellow heirs** that would receive an inheritance from their father. Alternate translation: “heirs together” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 11:10

the city having foundations (ULT)

Having **foundations** indicates that the city is permanent. Alternate translation: “the eternal city” (See: [Metonymy](#))

whose architect and builder {is} God (ULT)

Alternate translation: “which God designed and built” or “which God would design and build”

architect (ULT)

An **architect** a person who designs buildings and cities.

ULT

10 for he was looking forward to the city having foundations, whose architect and builder {is} God.

Hebrews 11:11

It was by faith, even though Sarah herself was barren, that Abraham received ability to father a child. This happened even though he was too old, since he considered

The verbs **received** and **considered** could be either masculine or feminine. Some versions interpret this verse as referring to Abraham. "By faith Abraham, even though Sarah herself was beyond the time of full age, received power to bear children, since he considered"

ULT

¹¹ By faith, even Sarah herself received ability for the conception of a descendant, even beyond the time of full age, since she considered {to be} faithful the one who had promised. ^[1]

By faith (ULT)

You can express the abstract noun **faith** with the verb "believe." This could mean: (1) this happened because of Abraham's faith. Alternate translation: "It was because Abraham believed God" (2) this happened because of Sarah's faith. Alternate translation: "It was because Sarah believed God" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

received ability for the conception of a descendant (ULT)

Alternate translation: "received ability to become a father" or "received ability to have a child"

since she considered {to be} faithful the one who had promised (ULT)

Alternate translation: "because he believed God, who had given the promise, to be faithful"

Hebrews 11:12

were born...just as the stars of the sky in number, and countless as the sand along the shore of the sea (ULT)

This simile means Abraham had very many descendants. (See: [Simile](#))

as countless as sand by the seashore

Here, **countless as the sand along the shore of the sea** means that just as there are so many grains of **sand** on the seashore that no one can count them all, Abraham had so many descendants that no one can count them all.

ULT

¹² Therefore, also from one {man}—and he being made dead—these were born, just as the stars of the sky in number, and countless as the sand along the shore of the sea.

Hebrews 11:13

without receiving the promises (ULT)

This speaks of **the promises** as if they are objects that a person receives. Alternate translation: “without receiving what God had promised them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

seeing and greeting them from far off (ULT)

Future promised events are spoken of as if they were travelers arriving from far away. Alternate translation: “after learning what God will do in the future” (See: [Metaphor](#))

having confessed (ULT)

Alternate translation: “they acknowledged” or “they accepted”

they are foreigners and exiles on the earth (ULT)

Here, **foreigners** and **exiles** mean basically the same thing. This emphasizes that this earth was not their true home. They were waiting for their true home that God would make for them. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

13 In faith all these died without receiving the promises, but seeing and greeting them from far off, and having confessed that they are foreigners and exiles on the earth.

Hebrews 11:14

a homeland (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a country for them to belong to"

ULT

¹⁴ For those who say such things make it clear that they seek a homeland.

Hebrews 11:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁵ And if indeed they had been thinking of that one from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.

Hebrews 11:16

a heavenly one (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a heavenly country" or "a country in heaven"

God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God (ULT)

You can express this in active form. Alternate translation: "God is not ashamed that they call him their God" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God (ULT)

The writer expressed this in a negative form to stress that God was proud to be **their God**. You can express this in positive form. Alternate translation: "God is proud to have them say that he is their God" (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

16 But now, they desire a better one, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Hebrews 11:17

being tested (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “when God tested him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

17 By faith Abraham, being tested, offered Isaac, even the one who had received the promises offered up {his} one and only {son}.

Hebrews 11:18

To him it had been said (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God had said to him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 To him it had been said, “Through Isaac your descendants will be named,”

your descendants will be named (ULT)

Here, **named** means assigned or designated. Alternate translation: “your descendants will be designated” (See: [Metonymy](#))

your descendants will be named (ULT)

You can state this sentence in active form. Alternate translation: “I will designate your descendants” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Hebrews 11:19

God is able to raise up even from the dead (ULT)

Alternate translation: "God was able to cause Isaac to live again"

to raise up even from the dead (ULT)

Here, **to raise up** is to make alive again. The words **from the dead** speak of all dead people together in the underworld.

in a parable (ULT)

Here the phrase **in a parable** means that what the author says next is not to be understood literally. God did not bring Isaac back from death literally. But because Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac when God stopped him, it was as if God brought him back from the dead. Alternate translation: "in a manner of speaking"

from there (ULT)

Alternate translation: "from the dead"

him...he received...back (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Abraham received Isaac back"

ULT

¹⁹ having reasoned that God is able to raise up even from the dead, and in a parable, he received him back from there.

Hebrews 11:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ By faith also, concerning what is coming, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau.

Hebrews 11:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ By faith Jacob, when he is dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, {leaning} on the end of his staff.

Hebrews 11:22

coming to an end (ULT)

Here, **an end** is a polite way of referring to death. Alternate translation: “when he was about to die” (See: [Euphemism](#))

spoke about the departure of the sons of Israel from Egypt (ULT)

Alternate translation: “spoke of when the children of Israel would leave Egypt”

of the sons of Israel (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the Israelites” or “the descendants of Israel”

instructed them about his bones (ULT)

Joseph died while in Egypt. He wanted his people to take **his bones** with them when they left Egypt so they could bury his bones in the land that God promised them. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²² By faith Joseph, coming to an end, spoke about the departure of the sons of Israel from Egypt and instructed them about his bones.

Hebrews 11:23

Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²³ By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents because they saw {he was} a beautiful child, and they were not afraid of the command of the king.

Hebrews 11:24

having become great (ULT)

Alternate translation: "having become an adult"

refused to be called (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "refused to allow people to call him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁴ By faith Moses, having become great, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Hebrews 11:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ Instead, he chose to suffer with the people of God, rather than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin.

Hebrews 11:26

the reproach of the Christ (ULT)

You can reword the abstract noun **reproach** with the verb “disrespect.” Alternate translation: “the experience of people disrespecting him because he did what Christ would want” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²⁶ He reasoned that the reproach of the Christ {was} greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking away to {his} reward.

he was looking away...to {his} reward (ULT)

Fully concentrating on achieving a goal is spoken of as if a person were staring at an object and refusing to look away. Alternate translation: “doing what he knew would earn him a reward in heaven” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 11:27

the...he endured as if he were seeing...unseen one (ULT)

Moses is spoken of as if he saw God, who is invisible. (See: [Simile](#))

the one who is invisible

Alternate translation: "the one no one can see"

ULT

²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not having feared the anger of the king, for he endured as if he were seeing the unseen one.

Hebrews 11:28

he performed the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood (ULT)

This was the first **Passover**. Moses kept it by obeying God's commands concerning the Passover and by commanding the people to obey them every year. Alternate translation: "he commanded the people to obey God's commands concerning the Passover and to sprinkle blood on their doors" or "he established the Passover and the sprinkling of blood"

ULT

²⁸ By faith he performed the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch them.

the sprinkling of the blood (ULT)

Here, **the sprinkling of the blood** refers to God's command to the Israelites to kill a lamb and spread its* *blood** on the doorposts of every house where Israelites lived. This would prevent the destroyer from harming their firstborn sons. This was one of the Passover commands. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

not...would...touch (ULT)

Here, **touch** refers to harming or to killing someone. Alternate translation: "would not harm" or "would not kill" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 11:29

they passed through the Sea of Reeds (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the Israelites passed through the Sea of Reeds"

they were swallowed up (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "the water swallowed up the Egyptians" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

they were swallowed up (ULT)

The Egyptians are spoken of as if an animal **swallowed** them as it would swallow water or food. Alternate translation: "the Egyptians drowned in the water" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁹ By faith they passed through the Sea of Reeds as if over dry land. When the Egyptians took this attempt, they were swallowed up.

Hebrews 11:30

having been encircled for seven days (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the Israelites had marched around them for seven days” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, having been encircled for seven days.

Hebrews 11:31

having received the spies with peace (ULT)

Alternate translation: "who had peacefully received the spies"

ULT

³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who disobeyed, having received the spies with peace.

Hebrews 11:32

what more might I say (ULT)

The author uses a question to emphasize that there are many examples that he could have quoted. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: “there are many more examples.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

will fail...me...the time (ULT)

Alternate translation: “I will not have enough time”

Barak (ULT)

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

ULT

³² And what more might I say? For the time will fail me, telling about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and also Samuel and the prophets,

Hebrews 11:33

who through faith (ULT)

Here, **who** does not mean that each person listed in 11:32 did all the things the author is about to mention. The author means in general these are the kinds of things that those with faith were able to do. Alternate translation: “people like these through faith”

ULT

³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, worked justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

who through faith conquered kingdoms (ULT)

Here, **kingdoms** refers to the people who lived in in them. Alternate translation: “who through faith defeated the people of foreign kingdoms”

stopped the mouths of lions (ULT)

The **mouths of the lions** represents the entire lions. (See: [Metonymy](#))

stopped the mouths of lions (ULT)

This phrase begins a list of some of the ways God saved believers from death. Preventing the **lions** from eating them is spoken of as stopping **the mouths** of the lions. Alternate translation: “kept lions from eating them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 11:34

extinguished the power of fire (ULT)

The **power of fire** represents being burned to death by fire. (See: [Metonymy](#))

extinguished the power of fire (ULT)

Preventing **fire** from burning them to death them is spoken of as extinguishing the **power of fire**. Alternate translation: “prevented fire from burning them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁴ extinguished the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were healed from illnesses, became mighty in battle, {and} defeated foreign armies.

escaped the edge of the sword (ULT)

The **edge of the sword** represents the entire sword and its ability to kill. (See: [Metonymy](#))

escaped the edge of the sword (ULT)

Avoiding being killed by **the sword** is spoken of as escaping the **edge of the sword**. Alternate translation: “avoided being killed by the sword” (See: [Metaphor](#))

were healed from illnesses (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “received healing from God” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Hebrews 11:35

Women received back their dead from resurrection (ULT)

You can state the abstract noun **resurrection** with a verb. Alternate translation: "Women received their dead back alive" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³⁵ Women received back their dead from resurrection, but others were tortured, not accepting release, so that they might experience a better resurrection;

Women received back their dead from resurrection (ULT)

The word **dead** is a nominal adjective. You can state this as a verb. Alternate translation: "Women received back alive those who had died" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

but others were tortured, not accepting release (ULT)

It is implied that their enemies would have released them from prison under certain conditions. Alternate translation: "but others were tortured rather than denying their faith in order to be released from prison" or "but others were tortured rather than doing what their enemies required of them in order to release them" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

but others were tortured, not accepting release (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "but others accepted torture rather than release from prison" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

resurrection...better (ULT)

This could mean: (1) these people will experience a **better** life in heaven than what they experienced in this world. (2) these people will have a **better resurrection** than those who did not have faith. Those with faith will live forever with God. Those without faith will live forever separated from God.

Hebrews 11:36

others...received trials of mocking and of whippings (ULT)

You can state these in active form. Alternate translation: “people mocked and whipped others” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁶ and others received trials of mocking and of whippings, and even of chains and of imprisonment.

others...received trials of mocking and of whippings, and even of chains and of imprisonment (ULT)

You can express the abstract nouns **mocking**, **whippings**, and **imprisonment** with verbs. Alternate translation: “God tested others by allowing their enemies to mock and whip them and even put them in chains and imprison them” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Hebrews 11:37

They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tested, they died with slaughter of the sword (ULT)

You can state these in active form. Alternate translation: "People threw stones at others and sawed others in two and killed others with the sword" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tested, they died with slaughter of the sword, they went about in sheepskins {and} in goatskins, destitute, oppressed, mistreated; ^[2]

they went about (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they went from place to place" or "they lived all the time"

in sheepskins and goatskins

Alternate translation: "wearing only the skins of sheep and goats"

destitute (ULT)

Alternate translation: "having nothing" or "being very poor"

Hebrews 11:38

the world was not worthy (ULT)

Here, **the world** refers to the people who lived in the world.
Alternate translation: "the people of this world were not worthy"
(See: [Metonymy](#))

being caused to wander about (ULT)

They wandered about because they had no place to live.

ULT

³⁸ (of whom the world was not worthy),
being caused to wander about in
deserts and mountains and caves and
holes in the ground.

Hebrews 11:39

all these, having been commended because of {their} faith, did not receive the promise (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God honored all these because of their faith, but they did not themselves receive what God had promised” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁹ And all these, having been commended because of {their} faith, did not receive the promise,

the promise (ULT)

Here, **the promise** stands for “what God had promised them.” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 11:40

so that without us, they would not be made perfect (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "in order that God not would perfect them without also perfecting us" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴⁰ God having planned something better concerning us, so that without us, they would not be made perfect.

so that without us, they would not be made perfect (ULT)

You can state the double negative **without ... not** in positive form. Alternate translation: "in order that God would perfect both us and them together" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

Hebrews 12

Hebrews 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

After telling of the value discipline, the author begins a series of exhortations. (See; [exhort](#), [exhortation](#))

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 12:5-6, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Discipline

God wants his people to do what is right. When they do what is wrong, he needs to correct or punish them. He does this just as earthly fathers correct and punish children whom they love. (See: [discipline](#), [self-discipline](#))

Hebrews 12:1

we...us...let us run...us (ULT)

The word **we** and each occurrence of **us** refers to the author and his readers. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

Connecting Statement:

Because of this great number of Old Testament believers, the author talks of the life of faith that believers should live with Jesus as their example.

ULT

¹ Therefore, we also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, having laid aside every weight and the easily entangling sin, let us run with endurance the race that is placed before us,

we also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us (ULT)

The writer speaks about the Old Testament believers as if they were a **cloud** that surrounded the present-day believers. Alternate translation: "since there are so many examples of faithful people about whom we learn in the scriptures" (See: [Metaphor](#))

of witnesses (ULT)

Here, **witnesses** refers to the Old Testament believers in chapter 11 who lived faithful lives previously.

having laid aside every weight and the easily entangling sin (ULT)

Here, **every weight** and **the easily entangling sin** are spoken of as if a person could take them off himself and put them down. (See: [Metaphor](#))

weight...every (ULT)

Attitudes or habits that keep believers from trusting and obeying God are spoken of as if they were loads that would make it difficult for a person to carry while running. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the easily entangling sin (ULT)

Here, **sin** is spoken of as if it were a net or something else that can trip people up and make them fall. Alternate translation: "sin that makes obeying God difficult" (See: [Metaphor](#))

let us run with endurance the race that is placed before us (ULT)

Following Jesus is spoken of as if it were running a **race**. Alternate translation: "let us continue obeying what God has commanded us, just like a runner keeps going until the race is over" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 12:2

the founder and perfecter of the faith (ULT)

Jesus gives us faith and makes our faith perfect by causing us to reach our goal. Alternate translation: “the creator and finisher of our faith” or “the one who enables us to have faith from beginning to end”

because of the joy that is placed before him (ULT)

The **joy** that Jesus would experience is spoken of as if God the Father had **placed** it **before him** as a goal to reach. (See: [Metaphor](#))

despising its shame (ULT)

This means Jesus hated the **shame** of dying on a cross, even though he allowed that to happen.

and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (ULT)

To sit at the **right hand** of God is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Hebrews 1:3](#). Alternate translation: “and sat down at the place of honor and authority beside the throne of God” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

² looking away to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of the faith, who because of the joy that is placed before him, endured the cross, despising its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:3

you might not become weary in your souls, giving up (ULT)

The words **you** and **your** are plural and here refer to the readers.
(See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

in your souls (ULT)

Here, **souls** represents a person's thoughts and emotions. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ For think about the one who has endured such opposition by sinners against himself, so that you might not become weary in your souls, giving up.

Hebrews 12:4

not yet...You have...resisted...struggling against sin (ULT)

Here, **sin** is spoken of as if it were a person against whom someone fights in a battle. Alternate translation: "You have not yet bled from resisting the attacks of sinners" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

⁴ You have not yet resisted to the point of blood, struggling against sin,

to the point of blood (ULT)

Resisting opposition so much that one dies for it is spoken of as if one reached a certain place where he would die. (See: [Metaphor](#))

of blood (ULT)

Here, **blood** refers to death. Alternate translation: "of death" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 12:5

the exhortation that...you...addresses (ULT)

Old Testament scripture is spoken of as if it were a person who could exhort others. Alternate translation: “what God has instructed you in the scriptures to exhort you” (See: [Personification](#))

as sons...My son (ULT)

The word translated **sons** and **son** is specifically the word for a male child. In that culture the family line continued through the sons, not normally through the daughters. However, as stated by the UST and some English versions, the author is directing his words to both males and females. (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

My son, do not think lightly of the Lord’s discipline, nor be wearied when you are reproved by him (ULT)

Here the author is quoting from the book of Proverbs in the Old Testament, which was the words of Solomon to his male children.

do not think lightly of the Lord’s discipline, nor be wearied (ULT)

You can state this in positive form. Alternate translation: “take it very seriously when the Lord disciplines you, and remain encouraged” (See: [Litotes](#))

when you are reproved by him (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “when he corrects you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ and you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not think lightly of the Lord’s discipline, nor be wearied when you are reproved by him;”

Hebrews 12:6

whom...every son...he receives (ULT)

The word translated **son** is specifically the word for a male child. In that culture the family line continued through the sons, not normally through the daughters. (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

ULT

⁶ For whom the Lord loves, he disciplines, and he punishes every son whom he receives.

Hebrews 12:7

God offers himself to you as to sons (ULT)

This compares God disciplining his people to a father disciplining his **sons**. (See: [Simile](#))

God offers himself to you as to sons (ULT)

You can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: "God deals with you the same way a father deals with his sons" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

to sons...son {is there} (ULT)

You can translate **sons** and **son** to include males and females. Alternate translation: "to children ... child is there" (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

For what son {is there} whom {his} father does not discipline (ULT)

The author makes the point through this question that every good **father** disciplines his children. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "For every good father disciplines his children!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁷ {If} you endure in discipline, God offers himself to you as to sons. For what son {is there} whom {his} father does not discipline?

Hebrews 12:8

But if you are without discipline, of which all {men} have become partakers (ULT)

You can restate the abstract noun **discipline** with the verb “disciplining.” Alternate translation: “So if you have not experienced God disciplining you like he disciplines all his children” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁸ But if you are without discipline, of which all {men} have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not {his} sons.

then you are illegitimate and not {his} sons (ULT)

Those whom God does not discipline are spoken of as if they are **sons** born to a man and a woman who are not married each other. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 12:9

not much...will we...more be subjected to the Father of spirits and live (ULT)

The author uses a question to emphasize that we should obey God **the Father**. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "even more so, we should obey the Father of spirits and live!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

to the Father of spirits (ULT)

The idiom **Father of spirits** contrasts with **fathers of our flesh** earlier in this verse. Alternate translation: "our spiritual Father" or "our Father in heaven" (See: [Idiom](#))

and...live (ULT)

Alternate translation: "so that we will live"

ULT

⁹ Furthermore, on the one hand, we had the fathers of our flesh {as} discipliners and we respected them; on the other hand, will we not much more be subjected to the Father of spirits and live?

Hebrews 12:10

to partake of his holiness (ULT)

This metaphor speaks of **holiness** as if it were an object that can be shared among people. Alternate translation: “so that we may become holy as God is holy” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 For on the one hand, they disciplined us for a few days according to what they think {best}, but he, on the other hand, for {our} benefit, to partake of his holiness.

Hebrews 12:11

the peaceful fruit...it produces...of righteousness (ULT)

Here, **fruit** here is a metaphor for “result” or “outcome.” Alternate translation: “it produces the peaceful result of righteousness” or “it produces righteousness, which results in peace” (See: [Metaphor](#))

for those who have been trained by it (ULT)

The discipline or correction done by the Lord is spoken of as if it were the Lord himself. Alternate translation: “for those who have been trained by God” (See: [Personification](#))

for those who have been trained by it (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “whom God has trained by disciplining them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹¹ Now every discipline does not seem to be joy at the time, but pain, but afterward it produces the peaceful fruit of righteousness for those who have been trained by it.

Hebrews 12:12

strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are paralyzed (ULT)

Possibly this continues the metaphor about the race in [Hebrews 12:1](#). It is in this way that the author speaks about living as Christians and helping others. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are paralyzed,

Hebrews 12:13

make straight paths for your feet (ULT)

Possibly this continues the metaphor about the race in [Hebrews 12:1](#). It is in this way that the author speaks about living as Christians and helping others. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that the lame might not be sprained, but rather might be healed.

straight paths (ULT)

Living so as to honor and please God is spoken of as if it were a **straight** path to follow. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the lame might not be sprained (ULT)

In this metaphor of running a race, **lame** represents another person in the race who is hurt and wants to quit. This, in turn, represent the Christians themselves. Alternate translation: “whoever is weak and wants to quit will not sprain his ankle” (See: [Metaphor](#))

not...might...be sprained (ULT)

Someone who stops obeying God is spoken of as if he injured his foot or ankle on a path. (See: [Metaphor](#))

not...might...be sprained (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “will not sprain his ankle” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

but rather might be healed (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “but instead become strong” or “but instead God will heal him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Hebrews 12:14

Pursue peace with all {men} (ULT)

Here, **peace** is spoken of as if it were something that a person must chase after. Alternate translation: “Seek to be at peace with everyone” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 Pursue peace with all {men}, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord,

Pursue peace with all {men} (ULT)

You can translate the abstract noun **peace** with an adverb. Alternate translation: “Try to live peacefully with everyone” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord (ULT)

You can express the double negative *without ... no one** as a positive encouragement. Alternate translation: “also work hard to be holy, because only holy people will see the Lord” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

and the holiness (ULT)

You can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: “also pursue the holiness” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Hebrews 12:15

no one is lacking from the grace of God (ULT)

You can state the double negative **no one ... lacking** in positive form.
Alternate translation: "everyone receives enough of God's grace"
(See: [Double Negatives](#))

not any root of bitterness is growing up to cause trouble, and by this many might become defiled (ULT)

Hateful or resentful attitudes are spoken of as if they were a plant that is bitter to the taste. Alternate translation: "that no one becomes like a bitter root, which when it grows causes trouble and harms many people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁵ exercising care that no one is lacking from the grace of God, not any root of bitterness is growing up to cause trouble, and by this many might become defiled,

Hebrews 12:16

Esau (ULT)

Esau, who was told about in the writings of Moses, was Isaac's first son and Jacob's brother.

ULT

16 not any sexually immoral or profane one such as Esau, who in exchange for one meal sold his own birthright.

Hebrews 12:17

he was rejected (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “his father, Isaac, refused to bless him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

because he found no opportunity for repentance (ULT)

You can translate the abstract noun **repentance** with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “because it was not possible for him to repent” or “because it was not possible for him to change his decision” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

even though he sought it with tears (ULT)

Here, **he** refers to Esau.

ULT

17 For you know that even afterwards, desiring to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, because he found no opportunity for repentance, even though he sought it with tears.

Hebrews 12:18

Connecting Statement:

The author gives a contrast between what believers in Moses' time had while living under the law and what present day believers have after coming to Jesus under the new covenant. He illustrates the experience of the Israelites by describing how God appeared to them at Mount Sinai.

ULT

18 For you have not come to what that can be touched and to a blazing fire and to darkness and to gloom and to a storm,

not...you have...come to (ULT)

Here, **you** refers to the Hebrew believers to whom the author wrote.

For you have not come to what that can be touched (ULT)

You can state the implicit information explicitly. Alternate translation: "For you have not come, as the people of Israel came, to a mountain that can be touched" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

not...what that can be touched (ULT)

This means that believers in Christ have not come to a physical mountain like Mount Sinai that a person can touch. You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "you have not come come a mountain that you can touch" or "you have not come come a mountain that you can perceive with your senses" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Hebrews 12:19

**and to a voice of words whose hearers begged
for not a word to be added to them (ULT)**

Here, **voice** refers to someone speaking. (See: [Metonymy](#))

**and to a voice of words whose hearers begged
for not a word to be added to them (ULT)**

You can state the phrase **be added** in active form. Alternate translation: “or where God was speaking in such a way that those who heard him begged him not to speak another word to them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁹ and to a trumpet blast and to a voice of words whose hearers begged for not a word to be added to them.

Hebrews 12:20

what was commanded (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “what God commanded” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

it must be stoned (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “you must stone it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ For they could not endure what was commanded: “If even an animal might touch the mountain, it must be stoned.”
[1]

Hebrews 12:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ And what appeared was so fearful
{that} Moses said, "I am terrified and
trembling."

Hebrews 12:22

Mount Zion (ULT)

The writer speaks of **Mount Zion**, the location of the Temple in Jerusalem, as if it were heaven itself, the residence of God. (See: [Metaphor](#))

to myriads of angels (ULT)

Alternate translation: “to an uncountable number of angels”

ULT

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the assembly

Hebrews 12:23

of the firstborn (ULT)

Here, **the firstborn** is plural and speaks of believers in Christ as if they were firstborn sons. This emphasizes their special place and privilege as God's people. (See: [Metaphor](#))

who have been registered in heaven (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "whose names God has written in heaven" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

made perfect (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God has made perfect" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²³ and to the church of the firstborn,
who have been registered in heaven,
and to God, the Judge of all, and to the
spirits of the righteous ones made
perfect,

Hebrews 12:24

the mediator of a new covenant (ULT)

This means **Jesus** caused the **new covenant** between God and humans to exist. See how you translated this phrase in [Hebrews 9:15](#).

ULT

²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood speaking better than Abel's.

to the sprinkled blood speaking better than Abel's (ULT)

The **blood** of Jesus and the blood of Abel are spoken of as if they were people calling out. Alternate translation: "to the sprinkled blood of Jesus that says better things than the blood of Abel" (See: [Personification](#))

Abel's (ULT)

Abel was the son of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. Cain, also their son, murdered Abel.

to the sprinkled blood (ULT)

Here, **blood** stands for Jesus' death, as Abel's blood stands for his death. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hebrews 12:25

Connecting Statement:

Having contrasted the Israelites' experience at Mount Sinai with the believers' experience after Christ died, the writer reminds believers that they have the same God who warns them today. This is the fifth main warning given to believers.

you do not refuse (ULT)

The word **you** continues to refer to believers. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you do not refuse the one who is speaking (ULT)

You can state this in positive form. Alternate translation: "you pay attention to the one who is speaking" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

we (ULT)

The word **we** continues to refer to the writer and the readers who are believers. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

if...they did not escape (ULT)

You can state the implicit information explicitly. Alternate translation: "if the people of Israel did not escape judgment" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

on earth...the one...who warns them (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) Moses, who warned them here **on earth**. (2) God, who warned them at Mount Sinai.

we who turn away from the one from heaven (ULT)

Rejecting God is spoken of as if a person were changing direction and **turn away from** him. Alternate translation: "if we reject the one who is warning" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁵ See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused the one who warns them on earth, much less we who turn away from the one from heaven;

Hebrews 12:26

the voice of whom at that time shook the earth (ULT)

Alternate translation: “when God spoke at that time, the sound of his voice caused the earth to shake”

ULT

²⁶ the voice of whom at that time shook the earth, but now he has promised, saying, “Once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heavens.”

the earth...Once more I will shake not only... but also the heavens (ULT)

This quotation is from the prophet Haggai in the Old Testament.

shook...will shake (ULT)

Translate **shook** and **shake** with words for what an earthquake does when it moves the ground. This refers back to [Hebrews 12:18-21](#) and what happened when the people saw the mountain where Moses received the law from God.

Hebrews 12:27

indicates the removal of the things that are shaken (ULT)

You can translate the abstract noun **removal** with the verbal phrase “take away.” Alternate translation: “to the taking away of the things that can be shaken” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²⁷ But this {phrase}, “Once more,” indicates the removal of the things that are shaken, that is, of what has been created, so that what is not shaken might remain.

indicates the removal of the things that are shaken, that is, of what has been created (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “means that God will remove the things that he can shake, that is, the things that he created” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

of the things that are shaken (ULT)

Translate **shaken** with the word for what an earthquake does when it moves the ground. This refers back to [Hebrews 12:18-21](#) and what happened when the people saw the mountain where Moses received the law from God. See how you translated “shook” and “shake” in [Hebrews 12:26](#).

of what has been created (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “of what God has created” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

what is not shaken (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the things that do not shake” or “the things that cannot shake” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Hebrews 12:28

receiving an unshakeable kingdom (ULT)

You can add the words **because we are** to make clear the logical connection between this statement and the next statement.

Alternate translation: “because we are receiving an unshakeable kingdom” or “because God is making us members of his kingdom which cannot be shaken” (See: [Connecting Words and Phrases](#))

ULT

28 Therefore, receiving an unshakeable kingdom, let us have gratitude, through which we may worship in a manner pleasing to God, with reverence and awe,

let us have gratitude (ULT)

Alternate translation: “let us give thanks”

with reverence and awe (ULT)

The words **reverence** and **awe** share similar meanings and emphasize the greatness of reverence due to God.

Alternate translation: “with great respect and dread” (See: [Doublet](#))

Hebrews 12:29

our God {is} a consuming fire (ULT)

God is spoken of here as if he were a **fire** that can burn up anything.
(See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁹ for indeed our God {is} a consuming fire.

Hebrews 13

Hebrews 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The author finishes the list of exhortations he began in chapter 12. Then he asks the readers to pray for him and ends the letter.

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 13:6, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Hospitality

God wants his people to invite other people to come to their homes to eat food and even to sleep. His people should do this even if they do not know well the people they are inviting. In the Old Testament, Abraham and his nephew Lot both showed hospitality to people they did not know. Abraham served a costly meal to them, and then Lot invited them to sleep in his house. They learned later that those people were actually angels.

Hebrews 13:1

Connecting Statement:

In this closing section, the author gives specific instructions to believers on how they are supposed to live.

ULT

¹ Let brotherly love continue.

Let brotherly love continue (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Continue to show your love for other believers as you would for members of your family"

Hebrews 13:2

Do not forget (ULT)

You can state this in positive form. Alternate translation: “Be sure to remember” (See: [Litotes](#))

hospitality (ULT)

Alternate translation: “to welcome and show kindness to strangers”

ULT

² Do not forget hospitality, for through this, some have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

Hebrews 13:3

as if you were bound with them (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “as if someone tied you to them” or “as if you were in prison with them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

and} those who are mistreated (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “and those whom others are mistreating” or “and those who are suffering” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

as if you also were with them in body (ULT)

This phrase encourages believers to think about other people’s suffering as they would think about their own suffering. Alternate translation: “as if you were the one suffering” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ Remember the prisoners, as if you were bound with them, {and} those who are mistreated, as if you also were with them in body.

Hebrews 13:4

Marriage {is} honorable in all (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “Everyone should consider that marriage is a good and honorable thing” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the marriage bed {is} pure (ULT)

Here, **the marriage bed** is a polite way to refer to the act of sexual union of a married couple. (See: [Euphemism](#))

the marriage bed {is} pure (ULT)

This refers to the act of sexual union as if it were only the bed of a married couple. Alternate translation: “let husbands and wives honor their marriage relationship to one another and not sleep with other people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ Marriage {is} honorable in all, and the marriage bed {is} pure, for God will judge sexually immoral people and adulterers.

Hebrews 13:5

Your} conduct {is to be} free from the love of money (ULT)

Here, **conduct** refers to a person's character or the way he lives, and **free from the love of money** refers to not greatly desiring to have more money. A person who loves money is not content with the amount of money he has. Alternate translation: "Let your conduct not be affected by the love of money" or "Do not greatly wish to have more money" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ {Your} conduct {is to be} free from the love of money, being content with the things you have, for he himself has said, "I will never leave you, nor never will I forsake you."

Hebrews 13:6

The Lord is {my} helper, and I will not be made afraid. What will a man do to me (ULT)

This is a quotation from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament.
(See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

What will a man do to me (ULT)

The author uses a question to emphasize that he does not fear people because God is helping him. Alternate translation: "I will not fear what a man can do to me!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

What will a man do to me (ULT)

Here, **man** means any person in general. Alternate translation: "What can another person do to me?" (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

ULT

⁶ So then, we are confident to say, "The Lord is {my} helper, and I will not be made afraid. What will a man do to me?"

Hebrews 13:7

the result of {their} conduct (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the outcome of the way they behave"

imitate {their} faith (ULT)

Here the trust in God and the way of life led by these leaders are spoken of as **their faith**. Alternate translation: "trust and obey God in the same way they do" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ Consider your leaders, who spoke the Word of God to you, of whom considering the result of {their} conduct, imitate {their} faith.

Hebrews 13:8

**is} the same yesterday and today and forever
(ULT)**

Here, **yesterday** means all times in the past. Alternate translation:
“is the same in the past, the present, and in the future forever” (See:
[Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ Jesus Christ {is} the same yesterday
and today and forever.

Hebrews 13:9

General Information:

This section refers to animal sacrifices made by believers in God in Old Testament times, which covered their sins temporarily until the death of Christ came about.

Do not be carried away by various and strange teachings (ULT)

Being persuaded by **various and strange teachings** is spoken of as if a person were being carried away by a force. You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "Do not be persuaded by various and strange teachings" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Do not be carried away by various and strange teachings (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "Do not let others persuade you to believe their various strange teachings" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

by various and strange teachings (ULT)

Alternate translation: "by many, different teachings that are not the good news we told you"

it is good for...the heart to be confirmed by grace, not by foods that do not help those who walk by them (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "we become stronger when we think of how God has been kind to us, but we do not become stronger by obeying rules about food" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the heart to be confirmed (ULT)

Here, **heart** is a metonym for the "inner being." Alternate translation: "we should be strengthened inwardly" (See: [Metonymy](#))

by foods (ULT)

Here, **foods** stands for rules about food. (See: [Metonymy](#))

those who walk (ULT)

Living is spoken of as if it were walking. Alternate translation: "those who live by them" or "those who regulate their lives by them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ Do not be carried away by various and strange teachings. For it is good for the heart to be confirmed by grace, not by foods that do not help those who walk by them.

Hebrews 13:10

We have an altar (ULT)

Here, **altar** stands for “place of worship.” It also stands for the animals that the priests in the old covenant sacrificed, from which they took meat for themselves and their families. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

10 We have an altar from which those who serve in the tabernacle do not have the right to eat.

Hebrews 13:11

those...the blood of...animals is brought for sins by the high priest into the holy {place (ULT)}

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the high priest brings into the holy place the blood of the animals that the priests killed for sins” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹¹ For the blood of those animals is brought for sins by the high priest into the holy {place}, {but} the bodies of these are burned outside the camp.

but} the bodies of these are burned (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “while the priests burn the animals’ bodies” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

outside the camp (ULT)

Alternate translation: “away from where the people lived”

Hebrews 13:12

Connecting Statement:

There is a comparison here between Jesus' sacrifice and the tabernacle sacrifices of the Old Testament.

So (ULT)

Alternate translation: "In the same way" or "Because the bodies of the sacrifices were burned outside the camp" ([Hebrews 13:11](#))

outside the gate (ULT)

Here, **outside the gate** stands for "outside the city." (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹² So Jesus also suffered outside the gate, in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.

Hebrews 13:13

Let us therefore go to him outside the camp (ULT)

Obedying Jesus is spoken of as if a person were leaving **the camp** to go out where Jesus is. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ Let us therefore go to him outside the camp, bearing his reproach.

bearing his reproach (ULT)

Here, **reproach** is spoken of as if it were an object that had to be carried in one's hands or on one's back. Alternate translation: "while allowing others to insult us just like people insulted him" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hebrews 13:14

we are seeking (ULT)

Alternate translation: "we are waiting for"

ULT

¹⁴ For we do not have a permanent city here, but we are seeking one that is to come.

Hebrews 13:15

a sacrifice of praise (ULT)

Here, **praise** is spoken of as if it were a **sacrifice** of animals or incense. (See: [Metaphor](#))

of praise through all to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name (ULT)

Here, **praise** is spoken of as if it were **fruit** produced by the **lips** of people. Alternate translation: “praise to God in every situation that is produced by the lips of those who acknowledge his name” (See: [Metaphor](#))

of lips that acknowledge his name (ULT)

Here, **lips** represents people who speak. Alternate translation: “the lips of those who acknowledge his name” or “those who acknowledge his name” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

his name (ULT)

A person’s **name** represents that person. Alternate translation: “him” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

15 Through him, let us offer up a sacrifice of praise through all to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

Hebrews 13:16

the...let us not neglect...doing of good and sharing (ULT)

You can state this in positive form. Alternate translation: “let us always remember to do good and to help others” (See: [Litotes](#))

with such...sacrifices (ULT)

Doing good and helping others is spoken of as if they were **sacrifices** on an altar. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁶ But let us not neglect the doing of good and sharing, for God is pleased with such sacrifices.

Hebrews 13:17

keep watch over your souls (ULT)

The believers' **souls**, that is, the believers' spiritual well-being, are spoken of as if they were objects or animals that guards could **keep watch over**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

not with groaning (ULT)

Here, **groaning** stands for sadness or grief. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give account, in order that they might do this with joy and not with groaning, for this would be useless to you.

Hebrews 13:18

Connecting Statement:

The author closes with a blessing and greetings.

Pray for us (ULT)

Here, **us** refers to the author and his companions, but not to the readers. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

we are persuaded...that we have a good conscience (ULT)

Here, **good conscience** stands for being free from guilt. Alternate translation: “we are certain that we have no guilt” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

18 Pray for us, for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live rightly in all things.

Hebrews 13:19

so that I will be returned to you sooner (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “that God will quickly remove the things that stop my coming to you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

19 But I encourage you even more to do this, so that I will be returned to you sooner.

Hebrews 13:20

Now (ULT)

Now marks a new section of the letter. Here the author praises God and gives a final prayer for his readers.

brought back from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus

Alternate translation: "raised the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus, to life"

from the dead (ULT)

Here, **the dead** describes all dead people together in the underworld. To bring someone up from among them speaks of causing that person to become alive again.

the great shepherd of the sheep (ULT)

Christ in his role of leader and protector of those who believe in him is spoken of as if he were a **shepherd** of **sheep**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

by the blood of the eternal covenant (ULT)

Here, **blood** stands for the death of Jesus, which is the basis for the **covenant** that will last forever between God and all believers in Christ. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

20 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus, by the blood of the eternal covenant,

Hebrews 13:21

equip you with everything good to do his will

Alternate translation: "may he give you every good thing you need in order to do his will" or "may he make you capable of doing every good thing according to his will"

working in us (ULT)

The word **us** refers to the author and the readers. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

to do...to whom {be} the glory...forever...and} ever (ULT)

Alternate translation: "whom all people will praise forever"

ULT

²¹ may he equip you with everything good to do his will, working in us what {is} pleasing before him, through Jesus Christ, to whom {be} the glory forever {and} ever. Amen.

Hebrews 13:22

Now (ULT)

Now marks a new section of the letter. Here the author gives his final comments to his audience.

brothers (ULT)

Here, **brothers** refers to all the believers to whom the author is writing, whether male or female. Alternate translation: “fellow believers” (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

bear with the word of encouragement (ULT)

Alternate translation: “patiently consider what I have just written to encourage you”

the word of encouragement (ULT)

Here, **word** stands for a message. Alternate translation: “the encouraging message” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²² Now I encourage you, brothers, bear with the word of encouragement, for only in a few {words} I have written to you.

Hebrews 13:23

has been set free (ULT)

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “is no longer in prison” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²³ Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I will see you if he comes soon.

Hebrews 13:24

Those from Italy greet you (ULT)

This could mean: (1) the author is not in **Italy**, but there is a group of believers with him who have come from Italy. (2) the author is in **Italy** while writing this letter.

ULT

²⁴ Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you.

Italy (ULT)

Italy is the name of a region at that time. At that time, Rome was the capital city of Italy. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Hebrews 13:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ Grace {be} with you all.



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: [Hebrews 1:3](#); [2:3](#); [2:14](#); [3:1](#); [3:6](#); [3:8](#); [3:13](#); [3:15](#); [3:19](#); [4:11](#); [5:9](#); [6:9](#); [7:24](#); [9:2](#); [10:10](#); [10:18](#); [10:23](#); [10:35](#); [11:9](#); [11:11](#); [11:26](#); [11:35](#); [11:36](#); [12:8](#); [12:14](#); [12:17](#); [12:27](#))

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: [Hebrews 1:12](#); [2:2](#); [2:3](#); [2:9](#); [2:11](#); [2:18](#); [3:3](#); [3:4](#); [3:5](#); [3:13](#); [3:15](#); [4:2](#); [4:3](#); [4:6](#); [4:9](#); [4:13](#); [4:15](#); [5:1](#); [5:2](#); [5:3](#); [5:4](#); [5:7](#); [5:9](#); [5:10](#); [6:18](#); [7:7](#); [7:8](#); [7:11](#); [7:12](#); [7:13](#); [7:19](#); [7:28](#); [8:3](#); [8:5](#); [8:6](#); [9:2](#); [9:6](#); [9:9](#); [9:11](#); [9:15](#); [9:18](#); [9:22](#); [9:23](#); [9:24](#); [9:28](#); [10:2](#); [10:8](#); [10:10](#); [10:13](#); [10:14](#); [10:22](#); [10:29](#); [10:32](#); [10:33](#); [11:1](#); [11:2](#); [11:3](#); [11:4](#); [11:5](#); [11:7](#); [11:8](#); [11:16](#); [11:17](#); [11:18](#); [11:23](#); [11:24](#); [11:29](#); [11:30](#); [11:34](#); [11:35](#); [11:36](#); [11:37](#); [11:39](#); [11:40](#); [12:5](#); [12:11](#); [12:13](#); [12:17](#); [12:18](#); [12:19](#); [12:20](#); [12:23](#); [12:27](#); [13:3](#); [13:4](#); [13:9](#); [13:11](#); [13:19](#); [13:23](#))

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: [Hebrews 2:11](#); [6:11](#); [7:1](#); [7:20](#); [7:25](#); [8:5](#); [9:4](#); [9:22](#); [10:25](#); [10:26](#); [10:27](#); [10:28](#); [10:37](#); [11:2](#); [11:22](#); [11:28](#); [11:35](#); [12:18](#); [12:25](#); [13:6](#))

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: [Hebrews 12:28](#))

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "I do not know at what time I will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that he did not know at what time he would arrive.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
(Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, "**Go, show yourself to the priest ...**"

And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming**,
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**"
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, '**Look, here it is!**' or, '**There it is!**'

This page answers the question: *What are direct and indirect quotations?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Pronouns](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-quotations\]\]](#)

Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it. If the kind of quote used in that context is not natural for your language, follow these strategies.

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, **“Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”** (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him to tell no one, but **to go and show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for his cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.**

- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

And he commanded him **to tell no one**, but, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him, **“Tell no one.** But go and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_quotations.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Hebrews 8:11](#))

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.

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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: [Hebrews 7:5](#))

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: [Hebrews 2:8](#); [2:11](#); [4:2](#); [4:15](#); [6:10](#); [7:20](#); [9:7](#); [9:18](#); [9:22](#); [11:6](#); [11:40](#); [12:14](#); [12:15](#); [12:25](#))

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: [Hebrews 2:2](#); [4:13](#); [5:7](#); [6:19](#); [8:5](#); [8:11](#); [10:17](#); [11:13](#); [12:28](#))

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: [Hebrews 2:6](#); [5:6](#); [12:7](#); [12:14](#))

Euphemism

Description

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private.

This page answers the question: *What is a euphemism?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

... they found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa.
(1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

This means that Saul and his sons “were dead.” It is a euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples From the Bible

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so **he did not say specifically** what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

If euphemism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.
- (2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT) — Some languages might use euphemisms like these:

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **dig a hole**”

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **have some time alone**”

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **slept with a man?**”

(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

They found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

“They found Saul and his sons **dead** on Mount Gilboa.”

(Go back to: [Hebrews 3:14](#); [11:22](#); [13:4](#))

Exclamations

Description

Exclamations are words or sentences that show strong feeling such as surprise, joy, fear, or anger. In the ULT and UST, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end. The mark shows that it is an exclamation. The situation and the meaning of what the people said helps us understand what feelings they were expressing. In the example below from Matthew 8, the speakers were terribly afraid. In the example from Matthew 9, the speakers were amazed, because something happened that they had never seen before.

Save us, Lord; we are about to die! (Matthew 8:25b ULT)

When the demon had been driven out, the mute man spoke. The crowds were astonished and said, "This has never been seen before in Israel!" (Matthew 9:33 ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are ways of translating exclamations?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentencetypes]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages have different ways of showing that a sentence communicates strong emotion.

Examples From the Bible

Some exclamations have a word that shows feeling. The sentences below have "Oh" and "Ah." The word "oh" here shows the speaker's amazement.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33 ULT)

The word "Alas" below shows that Gideon was very frightened.

When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, "**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)

Some exclamations start with a question word such as "how" or "why," even though they are not questions. The sentence below shows that the speaker is amazed at how unsearchable God's judgments are.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

Some exclamations in the Bible do not have a main verb. The exclamation below shows that the speaker is disgusted with the person he is speaking to.

You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is "is" or "are."
- (2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling.
- (3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.
- (4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is “is” or “are.”

You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

“You **are** such a worthless person!”

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

“Oh, the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God **are** so deep!”

(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling. In the first suggested translation below, the word “wow” shows that they were astonished. In the second suggested translation, the expression “Oh no” shows that something terrible or frightening has happened.

They were extremely astonished, saying, “He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” (Mark 7:37 ULT)

“They were extremely astonished, saying, ‘**Wow!** He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.’”

Alas, oh my Lord Yahweh! For because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face! (Judges 6:22b ULT)

“**Oh no**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.

“**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)

“Lord Yahweh, **what will happen to me?** For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

“**Help**, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

“His judgments are **so** unsearchable and his ways are **far** beyond discovering!”

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, “**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)

Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. **He was terrified** and said, “**Alas**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(Go back to: [Hebrews 9:14](#); [10:29](#))

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

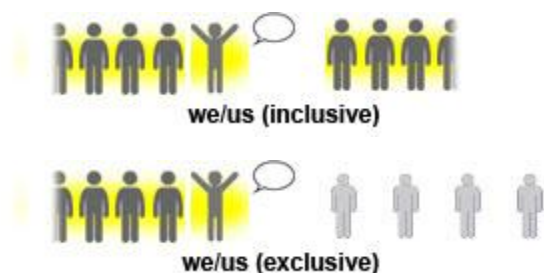
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also 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: [Hebrews 2:1](#); [3:14](#); [3:16](#); [5:11](#); [8:1](#); [10:30](#); [12:1](#); [12:3](#); [12:25](#); [13:18](#); [13:21](#))

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: [Hebrews 3:9](#); [10:5](#); [12:25](#))

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: [Hebrews 2:7](#); [2:8](#); [9:9](#); [10:38](#))

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-unknown]]

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see Borrow Words.
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

Saul was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

Translation Strategies

(1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

(2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.

(5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

(2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like ‘drawn out’)**, and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.”

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?”
Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called “Saul” before Acts 13 and “Paul” after Acts 13. You could translate his name as “Paul” all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** ¹

The footnote would look like:

^[1] Most versions say “Saul” here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called “Paul.”

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write “Saul” where the source text has “Saul” and “Paul” where the source text has “Paul.”

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

[1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-transliterate]]

(Go back to: [Introduction to Hebrews](#); [Hebrews 7:1](#); [11:32](#); [13:24](#))

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: [Hebrews 2:6](#); [2:14](#); [12:9](#))

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: [Hebrews 11:16](#); [12:5](#); [13:2](#); [13:16](#))

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: [Hebrews 1:2](#); [1:3](#); [1:4](#); [1:6](#); [1:7](#); [1:9](#); [1:10](#); [1:12](#); [1:13](#); [1:14](#); [2:1](#); [2:7](#); [2:8](#); [2:9](#); [2:10](#); [2:13](#); [2:14](#); [2:15](#); [Notes](#); [3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:4](#); [3:5](#); [3:6](#); [3:8](#); [3:10](#); [3:11](#); [3:12](#); [3:13](#); [3:18](#); [4:1](#); [4:3](#); [4:5](#); [4:7](#); [4:8](#); [4:9](#); [4:10](#); [4:11](#); [4:12](#); [4:13](#); [4:14](#); [4:16](#); [Notes](#); [5:2](#); [5:4](#); [5:11](#); [5:12](#); [5:13](#); [6:1](#); [6:2](#); [6:4](#); [6:5](#); [6:6](#); [6:8](#); [6:12](#); [6:17](#); [6:18](#); [6:19](#); [7:5](#); [7:6](#); [7:8](#); [7:9](#); [7:10](#); [7:19](#); [7:26](#); [8:5](#); [8:8](#); [8:9](#); [8:10](#); [Notes](#); [9:9](#); [9:12](#); [9:14](#); [9:15](#); [9:22](#); [9:26](#); [9:28](#); [10:1](#); [10:2](#); [10:4](#); [10:9](#); [10:11](#); [10:13](#); [10:16](#); [10:19](#); [10:20](#); [10:21](#); [10:22](#); [10:23](#); [10:25](#); [10:26](#); [10:27](#); [10:29](#); [10:30](#); [10:31](#); [10:32](#); [10:34](#); [10:35](#); [10:39](#); [11:4](#); [11:5](#); [11:6](#); [11:7](#); [11:8](#); [11:9](#); [11:13](#); [11:26](#); [11:29](#); [11:33](#); [11:34](#); [12:1](#); [12:2](#); [12:4](#); [12:8](#); [12:10](#); [12:11](#); [12:12](#); [12:13](#); [12:14](#); [12:15](#); [12:22](#); [12:23](#); [12:25](#); [12:29](#); [13:9](#); [13:13](#); [13:15](#); [13:16](#); [13:17](#); [13:18](#); [13:20](#))

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: [Introduction to Hebrews](#); [Hebrews 1:3](#); [1:4](#); [1:8](#); [1:10](#); [2:2](#); [2:5](#); [2:12](#); [3:1](#); [3:5](#); [3:7](#); [3:8](#); [3:10](#); [3:12](#); [3:15](#); [4:7](#); [4:12](#); [4:16](#); [5:4](#); [5:7](#); [5:13](#); [5:14](#); [6:5](#); [6:10](#); [6:14](#); [7:16](#); [7:28](#); [8:10](#); [8:11](#); [8:12](#); [9:5](#); [9:8](#); [9:13](#); [9:14](#); [9:15](#); [9:18](#); [9:20](#); [9:21](#); [9:22](#); [9:28](#); [10:4](#); [10:16](#); [10:19](#); [10:20](#); [10:22](#); [10:25](#); [10:29](#); [10:31](#); [11:7](#); [11:10](#); [11:18](#); [11:28](#); [11:33](#); [11:34](#); [11:38](#); [11:39](#); [12:3](#); [12:4](#); [12:19](#); [12:24](#); [13:4](#); [13:5](#); [13:7](#); [13:8](#); [13:9](#); [13:10](#); [13:12](#); [13:15](#); [13:17](#); [13:20](#); [13:22](#))

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: [Hebrews 11:35](#))

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:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-numbers\]\]](#)

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: [Hebrews 4:4](#); [8:7](#); [9:3](#); [10:9](#))

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: [Hebrews 1:5](#); [5:5](#))

Personification

Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples From the Bible

You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

- (1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
- (2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
- (3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

This page answers the question: *What is personification?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — God speaks of sin as if it were a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.

Sin is at your door, **waiting to attack you**.

(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — This can be translated with the word “as.”

Sin is crouching at the door, **just as a wild animal does as it waits to attack a person..**

(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Even the **winds and the sea obey him**. (Matthew 8:27b ULT) — The men speak of the “wind and the sea” as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus, just as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.

He even **controls the winds and the sea**.

NOTE: We have broadened our definition of “personification” to include “zoomorphism” (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and “anthropomorphism” (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics) because the translation strategies for them are the same.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-apostrophe\]\]](#)
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Hebrews 4:12](#); [6:7](#); [6:19](#); [7:17](#); [7:19](#); [12:4](#); [12:5](#); [12:11](#); [12:24](#))

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: [Hebrews 6:9](#); [6:11](#))

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: [Hebrews 1:5](#); [1:13](#); [1:14](#); [2:3](#); [2:6](#); [3:16](#); [3:17](#); [3:18](#); [7:11](#); [10:2](#); [11:32](#); [12:7](#); [12:9](#); [13:6](#))

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 lightning 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: [Hebrews 1:11](#); [1:12](#); [11:12](#); [11:27](#); [12:7](#))

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:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-unknown]]

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: [Introduction to Hebrews](#); [Hebrews 1:3](#); [1:13](#); [8:1](#); [9:19](#); [9:21](#); [10:12](#); [10:22](#); [12:2](#))

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: [Hebrews 9:11](#); [9:24](#); [10:39](#); [13:15](#))

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 Hebrews](#))

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: [Hebrews 1:2](#); [1:8](#); [3:6](#); [4:14](#); [5:5](#); [5:8](#); [6:6](#); [7:28](#); [10:29](#))

When Masculine Words Include Women

In the Bible, sometimes the words “men,” “brothers,” and “sons” refer only to men. At other times, those words include both men and women. In those places where the writer meant both men and women, you (the translator) need to translate it in a way that does not limit the meaning to men.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate “brother” or “he” when it could refer to anyone, male or female?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Pronouns](#)

[Generic Noun Phrases](#)

Description

In some languages a word that normally refers to men can also be used in a more general way to refer to both men and women. For example, the Bible sometimes says “brothers” when it refers to both brothers and sisters.

Also in some languages, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can be used in a more general way for any person if it is not important whether the person is a man or a woman. In the example below, the pronoun is “his,” but it is not limited to males.

A wise son makes **his** father rejoice
but a foolish son brings grief to **his** mother. (Proverbs 10:1 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- In some cultures words like “man,” “brother,” and “son” can only be used to refer to men. If those words are used in a translation in a more general way, people will think that what is being said does not apply to women.
- In some cultures, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can only refer to men. If a masculine pronoun is used, people will think that what is said does not apply to women.

Translation Principles

When a statement applies to both men and women, translate it in such a way that people will be able to understand that it applies to both.

Examples From the Bible

Now we want you to know, **brothers**, the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 8:1 ULT)

This verse is addressing the believers in Corinth, not only men, but **men and women**.

Then said Jesus to his disciples, “If anyone wants to follow me, **he** must deny **himself**, take up **his** cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

Jesus was not speaking only of men, but of **men and women**.

Caution: Sometimes masculine words are used specifically to refer to men. Do not use words that would lead people to think that they include women. The words below are specifically about men.

Moses said, ‘If **someone** dies, not having children, **his brother** must marry **his** wife and have children for **his brother**.’ (Matthew 22:24 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If people would understand that that masculine words like “man,” “brother,” and “he” can include women, then consider using them. Otherwise, here are some ways for translating those words when they include women.

- (1) Use a noun that can be used for both men and women.
- (2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.
- (3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use nouns that can be used for both men and women.

The wise **man** dies just like the fool dies. (Ecclesiastes 2:16b ULT)

“The wise **person** dies just like the fool dies.”

“Wise **people** die just like fools die.”

- (2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.

For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia. (2 Corinthians 1:8) — Paul was writing this letter to both men and women.

“For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers and sisters**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia.”

- (3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

“If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”
(Matthew 16:24 ULT)

English speakers can change the masculine singular pronouns, “he,” “himself,” and “his” to plural pronouns that do not mark gender, “they,” “themselves,” and “their” in order to show that it applies to all people, not just men.

“If **people** want to follow me, **they** must deny **themselves**, take up **their** cross, and follow me.”

(Go back to: [Hebrews 2:7](#); [2:10](#); [2:11](#); [12:5](#); [12:6](#); [12:7](#); [13:6](#); [13:22](#))



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 28

covenant

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “covenant” refers to a formal, binding agreement between two parties that one or both parties must fulfill.

- This agreement can be between individuals, between groups of people, or between God and people.
- When people make a covenant with each other, they promise that they will do something, and they must do it.
- Examples of human covenants include marriage covenants, business agreements, and treaties between countries.
- Throughout the Bible, God made several different covenants with his people.
- In some of the covenants, God promised to fulfill his part without conditions. For example, when God established his covenant with mankind promising to never destroy the earth again with a worldwide flood, this promise had no conditions for people to fulfill.
- In other covenants, God promised to fulfill his part only if the people obeyed him and fulfilled their part of the covenant.

The term “new covenant” refers to the commitment or agreement God made with his people through the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus.

- God’s “new covenant” was explained in the part of the Bible called the “New Testament.”
- This new covenant is in contrast to the “old” or “former” covenant that God had made with the Israelites in Old Testament times.
- The new covenant is better than the old one because it is based on the sacrifice of Jesus, which completely atoned for people’s sins forever. The sacrifices made under the old covenant did not do this.
- God writes the new covenant on the hearts of those who become believers in Jesus. This causes them to want to obey God and to begin to live holy lives.
- The new covenant will be completely fulfilled in the end times when God establishes his reign on earth. Everything will once again be very good, as it was when God first created the world.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate this term could include, “binding agreement” or “formal commitment” or “pledge” or “contract.”
- Some languages may have different words for covenant depending on whether one party or both parties have made a promise they must keep. If the covenant is one-sided, it could be translated as “promise” or “pledge.”
- Make sure the translation of this term does not sound like people proposed the covenant. In all cases of covenants between God and people, it was God who initiated the covenant.
- The term “new covenant” could be translated as “new formal agreement” or “new pact” or “new contract.”
- The word “new” in these expressions has the meaning of “fresh” or “new kind of” or “another.”

(See also: [covenant](#), promise)

Bible References:

- Genesis 9:12
- Genesis 17:7
- Genesis 31:44
- Exodus 34:10-11
- Joshua 24:24-26

- 2 Samuel 23:5
- 2 Kings 18:11-12
- Mark 14:24
- Luke 1:73
- Luke 22:20
- Acts 7:8
- 1 Corinthians 11:25-26
- 2 Corinthians 3:6
- Galatians 3:17-18
- Hebrews 12:24

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:9** Then God made a **covenant** with Abram. A **covenant** is an agreement between two parties.
- **5:4** "I will make Ishmael a great nation, too, but my **covenant** will be with Isaac."
- **6:4** After a long time, Abraham died and all of the promises that God had made to him in the **covenant** were passed on to Isaac.
- **7:10** "The **covenant** promises God had promised to Abraham and then to Isaac now passed on to Jacob."
- **13:2** God said to Moses and the people of Israel, "If you will obey my voice and keep my **covenant**, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."
- **13:4** Then God gave them the **covenant** and said, "I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other gods."
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the **covenant** that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai.
- **21:5** Through the prophet Jeremiah, God promised that he would make a **New Covenant**, but not like the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai. In the **New Covenant**, God would write his law on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would forgive their sins. The Messiah would start the **New Covenant**.
- **21:14** Through the Messiah's death and resurrection, God would accomplish his plan to save sinners and start the **New Covenant**.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the **New Covenant** that is poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Do this to remember me every time you drink it."
- **48:11** But God has now made a **New Covenant** that is available to everyone. Because of this **New Covenant**, anyone from any people group can become part of God's people by believing in Jesus.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1285, H2319, H3772, G08020, G12420, G49340

(Go back to: [Hebrews 6 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

discipline, self-discipline

Definition:

The term “discipline” refers to training people to obey a set of guidelines for moral behavior.

- Parents discipline their children by providing moral guidance and direction for them and teaching them to obey.
- Similarly, God disciplines his children to help them produce healthy spiritual fruit in their lives, such as joy, love, and patience.
- Discipline involves instruction regarding how to live to please God, as well as punishment for behavior that is against God’s will.
- Self-discipline is the process of applying moral and spiritual principles to one’s own life.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “discipline” could be translated as “train and instruct” or “morally guide” or “punish for wrongdoing.”
- The noun “discipline” could be translated as “moral training” or “punishment” or “moral correction” or “moral guidance and instruction.”

Bible References:

- Ephesians 6:4
- Hebrews 12:5
- Proverbs 19:18
- Proverbs 23:13-14

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4148, G14680

(Go back to: [Hebrews 12 General Notes](#))

exhort, exhortation

Definition:

The term “exhort” means to strongly encourage and urge someone to do what is right. Such encouragement is called “exhortation.”

- The purpose of exhortation is to persuade other people to avoid sin and follow God’s will.
- The New Testament teaches Christians to exhort each other in love, not harshly or abruptly.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “exhort” could also be translated as “strongly urge” or “persuade” or “advise.”
- Make sure the translation of this term does not imply that the exhorter is angry. The term should convey strength and seriousness, but should not refer to angry speech.
- In most contexts, the term “exhort” should be translated differently than “encourage,” which means to inspire, reassure, or comfort someone.
- Usually this term will also be translated differently from “admonish,” which means to warn or correct someone for his wrong behavior.

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:3-4
- 1 Thessalonians 2:12
- 1 Timothy 5:2
- Luke 3:18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G38670, G38700, G38740, G43890

(Go back to: [Hebrews 12 General Notes](#))

faith

Definition:

In general, the term “faith” refers to a belief, trust or confidence in someone or something.

- To “have faith” in someone is to believe that what he says and does is true and trustworthy.
- To “have faith in Jesus” means to believe all of God’s teachings about Jesus. It especially means that people trust in Jesus and his sacrifice to cleanse them from their sin and to rescue them from the punishment they deserve because of their sin.
- True faith or belief in Jesus will cause a person to produce good spiritual fruits or behaviors because the Holy Spirit is living in him.
- Sometimes “faith” refers generally to all the teachings about Jesus, as in the expression “the truths of the faith.”
- In contexts such as “keep the faith” or “abandon the faith,” the term “faith” refers to the state or condition of believing all the teachings about Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, “faith” can be translated as “belief” or “conviction” or “confidence” or “trust.”
- For some languages these terms will be translated using forms of the verb “believe.” (See: [abstractnouns](#))
- The expression “keep the faith” could be translated by “keep believing in Jesus” or “continue to believe in Jesus.”
- The sentence “they must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith” could be translated by “they must keep believing all the true things about Jesus that they have been taught.”
- The expression “my true son in the faith” could be translated by something like “who is like a son to me because I taught him to believe in Jesus” or “my true spiritual son, who believes in Jesus.”

(See also: believe, [faithful](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:7
- Acts 6:7
- Galatians 2:20-21
- James 2:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:6** When Isaac was a young man, God tested Abraham’s **faith** by saying, “Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a sacrifice to me.”
- **31:7** Then he (Jesus) said to Peter, “You man of little **faith**, why did you doubt?”
- **32:16** Jesus said to her, “Your **faith** has healed you. Go in peace.”
- **38:9** Then Jesus said to Peter, “Satan wants to have all of you, but I have prayed for you, Peter, that your **faith** will not fail.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0529, H0530, G16800, G36400, G41020, G60660

(Go back to: [Hebrews 10 General Notes](#))

faithful, faithfulness, trustworthy

Definition:

To be “faithful” to God means to consistently live according to God’s teachings. It means to be loyal to him by obeying him. The state or condition of being faithful is “faithfulness.”

- A person who is faithful can be trusted to always keep his promises and to always fulfill his responsibilities to other people.
- A faithful person perseveres in doing a task, even when it is long and difficult.
- Faithfulness to God is the consistent practice of doing what God wants us to do.

Translation Suggestions:

- In many contexts, “faithful” can be translated as “loyal” or “dedicated” or “dependable.”
- In other contexts, “faithful” can be translated by a word or phrase that means “continuing to believe” or “persevering in believing and obeying God.”
- Ways that “faithfulness” could be translated could include “persevering in believing” or “loyalty” or “trustworthiness” or “believing and obeying God.”

(See also: believe, [faith](#), believe)

Bible References:

- Genesis 24:49
- Leviticus 26:40
- Numbers 12:7
- Joshua 2:14
- Judges 2:16-17
- 1 Samuel 2:9
- Psalm 12:1
- Proverbs 11:12-13
- Isaiah 1:26
- Jeremiah 9:7-9
- Hosea 5:7
- Luke 12:46
- Luke 16:10
- Colossians 1:7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:24
- 3 John 1:5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:5** Even in prison, Joseph remained **faithful** to God, and God blessed him.
- **14:12** Even so, God was still **faithful** to His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- **15:13** The people promised to remain **faithful** to God and follow his laws.
- **17:9** David ruled with justice and **faithfulness** for many years, and God blessed him. However, toward the end of his life he sinned terribly against God.
- **35:12** “The older son said to his father, ‘All these years I have worked **faithfully** for you!’”
- **49:17** But God is **faithful** and says that if you confess your sins, he will forgive you.
- **50:4** “If you remain **faithful** to me to the end, then God will save you.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0529, H0530, H0539, H0540, H0571, H0898, H2181, H4603, H4604, H4820, G05690, G05710, G41030

(Go back to: [Hebrews 10 General Notes](#))

godly, godliness, ungodly, godless, ungodliness, godlessness

Definition:

The term “godly” is used to describe a person who acts in a way that honors God and shows what God is like. “Godliness” is the character quality of honoring God by doing his will.

- A person who has godly character will show the fruits of the Holy Spirit, such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and self control.
- The quality of godliness shows that a person has the Holy Spirit and is obeying him.

The terms “ungodly” and “godless” describe people who are in rebellion against God. Living in an evil way, without thought of God, is called “ungodliness” or “godlessness.”

- The meanings of these words are very similar. However, “godless” and “godlessness” may describe a more extreme condition in which people or nations do not even acknowledge God or his right to rule them.
- God pronounces judgment and wrath on ungodly people, on everyone who rejects him and his ways.

Translation Suggestions:

- The phrase “the godly” could be translated as “godly people” or “people who obey God.” (See: [nominaladj](#))
- The adjective “godly” could be translated as “obedient to God” or “righteous” or “pleasing to God.”
- The phrase “in a godly manner” could be translated as “in a way that obeys God” or “with actions and words that please God.”
- Ways to translate “godliness” could include “acting in a way that pleases God” or “obeying God” or “living in a righteous manner.”
- Depending on the context, the term “ungodly” could be translated as “displeasing to God” or “immoral” or “disobeying God.”
- The terms “godless” and “godlessness” literally mean that the people are “without God” or “having no thought of God” or “acting in a way that does not acknowledge God.”
- Other ways to translate “ungodliness” or “godlessness” could be “wickedness” or “evil” or “rebellion against God”.

(See also evil, honor, obey, righteous, righteous)

Bible References:

- Job 27:10
- Proverbs 11:9
- Acts 3:12
- 1 Timothy 1:9-11
- 1 Timothy 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:12
- Hebrews 12:14-17
- Hebrews 11:7
- 1 Peter 4:18
- Jude 1:16

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H1100, H2623, H5760, H7563, G05160, G07630, G07640, G07650, G21240, G21500, G21520, G21530, G23160, G23170

(Go back to: [Hebrews 10 General Notes](#))

holy, holiness, unholy, sacred

Definition:

The terms “holy” and “holiness” refer to the character of God that is totally set apart and separated from everything that is sinful and imperfect.

- Only God is absolutely holy. He makes people and things holy.
- A person who is holy belongs to God and has been set apart for the purpose of serving God and bringing him glory.
- An object that God has declared to be holy is one that he has set apart for his glory and use, such as an altar that is for the purpose of offering sacrifices to him.
- People cannot approach him unless he allows them to, because he is holy and they are merely human beings, sinful and imperfect.
- In the Old Testament, God set apart the priests as holy for special service to him. They had to be ceremonially cleansed from sin in order to approach God.
- God also set apart as holy certain places and things that belonged to him or in which he revealed himself, such as his temple.

Literally, the term “unholy” means “not holy.” It describes someone or something that does not honor God.

- This word is used to describe someone who dishonors God by rebelling against him.
- A thing that is called “unholy” could be described as being common, profane or unclean. It does not belong to God.

The term “sacred” describes something that relates to worshiping God or to the pagan worship of false gods.

- In the Old Testament, the term “sacred” was oftentimes used to describe the stone pillars and other objects used in the worship of false gods. This could also be translated as “religious.”
- “Sacred songs” and “sacred music” refer to music that was sung or played for God’s glory. This could be translated as “music for worshiping Yahweh” or “songs that praise God.”
- The phrase “sacred duties” referred to the “religious duties” or “rituals” that a priest performed to lead people in worshiping God. It could also refer to the rituals performed by a pagan priest to worship a false god.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “holy” might include “set apart for God” or “belonging to God” or “completely pure” or “perfectly sinless” or “separated from sin.”
- To “make holy” is often translated as “sanctify” in English. It could also be translated as “set apart (someone) for God’s glory.”
- Ways to translate “unholy” could include “not holy” or “not belonging to God” or “not honoring to God” or “not godly.”
- In some contexts, “unholy” could be translated as “unclean.”

(See also: Holy Spirit, consecrate, sanctify, set apart)

Bible References:

- Genesis 28:22
- 2 Kings 3:2
- Lamentations 4:1
- Ezekiel 20:18-20
- Matthew 7:6

- Mark 8:38
- Acts 7:33
- Acts 11:8
- Romans 1:2
- 2 Corinthians 12:3-5
- Colossians 1:22
- 1 Thessalonians 3:13
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:16** He (God) blessed the seventh day and made it **holy**, because on this day he rested from his work.
- **9:12** "You are standing on **holy** ground."
- **13:1** "If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a **holy** nation."
- **13:5** "Always be sure to keep the Sabbath day **holy**."
- **22:5** "So the baby will be **holy**, the Son of God."
- **50:2** As we wait for Jesus to return, God wants us to live in a way that is **holy** and that honors him.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H2455, H2623, H4676, H4720, H6918, H6922, H6942, H6944, H6948, G00370, G00380, G00400, G00400, G00410, G00420, G04620, G18590, G21500, G24120, G24130, G28390, G37410, G37420

(Go back to: [Hebrews 10 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: [Hebrews 10 General Notes](#))

prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess

Definition:

A “prophet” is a man who speaks God’s messages to people. A woman who does this is called a “prophetess.”

- Often prophets warned people to turn away from their sins and obey God.
- A “prophecy” is the message that the prophet speaks. To “prophesy” means to speak God’s messages.
- Often the message of a prophecy was about something that would happen in the future.
- Many prophecies in the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.
- In the Bible the collection of books written by prophets are sometimes referred to as “the prophets.”
- For example the phrase, “the law and the prophets” is a way of referring to all the Hebrew scriptures, which are also known as the “Old Testament.”
- An older term for a prophet was “seer” or “someone who sees.”
- Sometimes the term “seer” refers to a false prophet or to someone who practices divination.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “prophet” could be translated as “God’s spokesman” or “man who speaks for God” or “man who speaks God’s messages.”
- A “seer” could be translated as “person who sees visions” or “man who sees the future from God.”
- The term “prophetess” could be translated as “spokeswoman for God” or “woman who speaks for God” or “woman who speaks God’s messages.”
- Ways to translate “prophecy” could include, “message from God” or “prophet message.”
- The term “prophesy” could be translated as “speak words from God” or “tell God’s message.”
- The figurative expression, “law and the prophets” could also be translated as “the books of the law and of the prophets” or “everything written about God and his people, including God’s laws and what his prophets preached.” (See: [synecdoche](#))
- When referring to a prophet (or seer) of a false god, it may be necessary to translate this as “false prophet (seer)” or “prophet (seer) of a false god” or “prophet of Baal,” for example.

(See also: Baal, divination, false god, false prophet, fulfill, [law](#), vision)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
- Acts 3:25
- John 1:43-45
- Malachi 4:4-6
- Matthew 1:23
- Matthew 2:18
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalm 51:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they trusted in God and believed that Moses was a **prophet** of God.
- **17:13** God was very angry about what David had done, so he sent the **prophet** Nathan to tell David how evil his sin was.
- **19:1** Throughout the history of the Israelites, God sent them **prophets**. The **prophets** heard messages from God and then told the people God’s messages.

- **19:6** All the people of the entire kingdom of Israel, including the 450 **prophets** of Baal, came to Mount Carmel.
- **19:17** Most of the time, the people did not obey God. They often mistreated the **prophets** and sometimes even killed them.
- **21:9** The **prophet** Isaiah **prophesied** that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- **43:5** "This fulfills the **prophecy** made by the **prophet** Joel in which God said, 'In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.'"
- **43:7** "This fulfills the **prophecy** which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.'"
- **48:12** Moses was a great **prophet** who proclaimed the word of God. But Jesus is the greatest **prophet** of all. He is the Word of God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2372, H2374, H4853, H5012, H5013, H5016, H5017, H5029, H5030, H5031, H5197, G24950, G43940, G43950, G43960, G43970, G43980, G55780

(Go back to: [Hebrews 10 General Notes](#))

redeem, redeemer, redemption

Definition:

The term “redeem” refers to buying back something or someone that has been previously owned or held captive. A “redeemer” is someone who redeems something or someone.

- God gave laws to the Israelites about how to redeem people or things. For example, someone could redeem a person who was in slavery by paying the price so that the slave could go free. The word “ransom” also refers to this practice.
- If someone’s land had been sold, a relative of that person could “redeem” or “buy back” that land so that it would stay in the family.
- These practices show how God redeems people who are in slavery to sin. When he died on the cross, Jesus paid the full price for people’s sins and redeemed all those who trust in him for salvation. People who have been redeemed by God are set free from sin and its punishment.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “redeem” could also be translated as “buy back” or “pay to free (someone)” or “ransom.”
- The term “redemption” could be translated as “ransom” or “freedom payment” or “buying back.”
- The words “ransom” and “redeem” have basically the same meaning, so some languages may have only one term to translate both these words. The word “ransom,” however, can also mean the payment necessary to “redeem” something or someone. The term “redeem” never refers to the actual payment itself.

(See also: free, ransom)

Bible References:

- Colossians 1:13-14
- Ephesians 1:7-8
- Ephesians 5:16
- Galatians 3:13-14
- Galatians 4:5
- Luke 2:38
- Ruth 2:20

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1350, H1353, H6299, H6302, H6304, H6306, H6561, H7069, G00590, G06290, G18050, G30840, G30850

(Go back to: [Hebrews 10 General Notes](#))

reward, prize, deserve

Definition:

The term “reward” refers to what a person receives because of something he has done, either good or bad. To “reward” someone is to give someone something he deserves. However, this is different than the concept of “wages,” which refers to payment (often money) given in exchange for work performed.

- A reward can be a good or positive thing that a person receives because he has done something well or because he has obeyed God.
- Sometimes a reward can refer to negative things that may result from bad behavior, such as the statement “the reward of the wicked.” In this context “reward” refers to the punishment or negative consequences they receive because of their sinful actions.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “reward” could be translated as “payment” or “something that is deserved” or “punishment.”
- To “reward” someone could be translated by to “repay” or to “punish” or to “give what is deserved.”
- Make sure the translation of this term does not refer to wages. A reward is not specifically about earning money as part of a job.

(See also: punish)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 32:6
- Isaiah 40:10
- Luke 6:35
- Mark 9:40-41
- Matthew 5:11-12
- Matthew 6:3-4
- Psalms 127:3-5
- Revelation 11:18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0319, H0866, H0868, H1576, H1578, H1580, H4909, H4991, H5023, H6118, H6468, H6529, H7938, H7939, H7999, G04690, G05140, G05910, G26030, G34050, G34060, G34080

(Go back to: [Hebrews 10 General Notes](#))

save, saved, safe, salvation

Definition:

The term “save” refers to keeping someone from experiencing something bad or harmful. To “be safe” means to be protected from harm or danger.

- In a physical sense, people can be saved or rescued from harm, danger, or death.
- In a spiritual sense, if a person has been “saved,” then God, through Jesus’ death on the cross, has forgiven him and rescued him from being punished in hell for his sin.
- People can save or rescue people from danger, but only God can save people from being punished eternally for their sins.

The term “salvation” refers to being saved or rescued from evil and danger.

- In the Bible, “salvation” usually refers to the spiritual and eternal deliverance granted by God to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus.
- The Bible also talks about God saving or delivering his people from their physical enemies.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “save” could include “deliver” or “keep from harm” or “take out of harm’s way” or “keep from dying.”
- In the expression “whoever would save his life,” the term “save” could also be translated as “preserve” or “protect.”
- The term “safe” could be translated as “protected from danger” or “in a place where nothing can harm.”
- The term “salvation” could also be translated using words related to “save” or “rescue,” as in “God’s saving people (from being punished for their sins)” or “God’s rescuing his people (from their enemies).”
- “God is my salvation” could be translated as “God is the one who saves me.”
- “You will draw water from the wells of salvation” could be translated as “You will be refreshed as with water because God is rescuing you.”

(See also: cross, deliver, punish, sin, Savior)

Bible References:

- Genesis 49:18
- Genesis 47:25-26
- Psalms 80:3
- Jeremiah 16:19-21
- Micah 6:3-5
- Luke 2:30
- Luke 8:36-37
- Acts 4:12
- Acts 28:28
- Acts 2:21
- Romans 1:16
- Romans 10:10
- Ephesians 6:17
- Philippians 1:28
- 1 Timothy 1:15-17
- Revelation 19:1-2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:8** Moses tried to **save** his fellow Israelite.
- **11:2** God provided a way to **save** the firstborn son of anyone who believed in him.
- **12:5** Moses told the Israelites, "Stop being afraid! God will fight for you today and **save** you."
- **12:13** The Israelites sang many songs to celebrate their new freedom and to praise God because he **saved** them from the Egyptian army.
- **16:17** This pattern repeated many times: the Israelites would sin, God would punish them, they would repent, and God would send a deliverer to **save** them.
- **44:8** "You crucified Jesus, but God raised him to life again! You rejected him, but there is no other way to be **saved** except through the power of Jesus!"
- **47:11** The jailer trembled as he came to Paul and Silas and asked, "What must I do to be **saved**?" Paul answered, "Believe in Jesus, the Master, and you and your family will be **saved**."
- **49:12** Good works cannot **save** you.
- **49:13** God will **save** everyone who believes in Jesus and receives him as their Master. But he will not **save** anyone who does not believe in him.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0983, H2421, H2502, H3444, H3467, H3468, H4190, H4422, H4931, H5338, H6308, H6403, H7682, H7951, H7965, H8104, H8199, H8668, G08030, G08040, G08060, G12950, G15080, G49820, G49910, G49920, G51980

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