



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Notes**

**Revelation**

**Version 58**

[en]

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# **unfoldingWord® Translation Notes**

## **Revelation**

## Introduction to Revelation

### Part 1: General Introduction

#### Outline of the Book of Revelation

Opening (1:1-20)

Letters to the seven churches (2:1-3:22)

Vision of God in heaven, and a vision of the Lamb (4:1-11)

The seven seals (6:1-8:1)

The seven trumpets (8:2-13:18)

Worshippers of the Lamb, the martyrs, and the harvest of wrath (14:1-20)

The seven bowls (15:1-18:24)

Worship in heaven (19:1-10)

The Lamb's judgment, the destruction of the beast, the thousand years, the destruction of Satan, and the final judgment (20:11-15)

The new creation and the new Jerusalem (21:1-22:5)

Jesus' promise to return, the witness from the angels, John's closing words, Christ's message to his church, the invitation and the warning (22:6-21)

#### Who wrote the Book of Revelation?

The author identified himself as John. This was probably the Apostle John. He wrote the Book of Revelation while on the island of Patmos. The Romans exiled John there for teaching people about Jesus.

#### What is the Book of Revelation about?

John wrote the Book of Revelation to encourage believers to remain faithful even when they are suffering. John described visions he had of Satan and his followers fighting against and killing believers. In the visions God causes many terrible things to happen on the earth to punish wicked people. In the end, Jesus defeats Satan and his followers. Then Jesus comforts those who were faithful. And the believers will live forever with God in the new heavens and earth.

#### How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by one of its traditional titles, "Revelation," "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," "The Revelation to Saint John," or "The Apocalypse of John." Or they may choose a possibly clearer title, such as "The Things that Jesus Christ Showed to John." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

#### What type of writing is the Book of Revelation?

John used a special style of writing to describe his visions. John described what he saw by using many symbols. This style of writing is called symbolic prophecy or apocalyptic literature. (See: [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

### Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

#### Are the events of Revelation past or future?

Since early Christian times, scholars have interpreted Revelation differently. Some scholars think John described events that happened during his time. Some scholars think John described events happening from his time until

the return of Jesus. Other scholars think John described events that will happen in a short period of time just before Christ returns.

Translators will not need to decide how to interpret the book before they translate it. Translators should leave the prophecies in the tenses that are used in the ULT.

## Are there any other books in the Bible like Revelation?

No other book of the Bible is like the Book of Revelation. But, passages in Ezekiel, Zechariah, and especially Daniel are similar in content and style to Revelation. It may be beneficial to translate Revelation at the same time as Daniel since they have some imagery and style in common.

## Part 3: Important Translation Issues

### Does one need to understand the Book of Revelation to translate it?

One does not need to understand all of the symbols in the Book of Revelation to translate it properly. Translators should not give possible meanings for the symbols or numbers in their translation. (See: [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

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

The scriptures use these 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 Revelation into English, the ULT uses the following principles:

- The meaning in two passages indicates moral holiness. Here, the ULT uses “holy.” (See: 14:12; 22:11)
- Usually the meaning in Revelation indicates a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In these cases, the ULT uses “believer” or “believers.” (See: 5:8; 8:3, 4; 11:18; 13:7; 16:6; 17:6; 18:20, 24; 19:8; 20:9)
- 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.”

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

### Periods of time

John referred to various periods of time in Revelation. For example, there are many references to forty-two months, seven years, and three and a half days. Some scholars think these time periods are symbolic. Other scholars think these are actual time periods. The translator should treat these time periods as referencing actual periods of time. It is then up to the interpreter to determine their significance or what they may represent.

### What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Revelation?

For the following verses, some 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.

- “‘I am the alpha and the omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty’” (1:8). Some versions add the phrase “the Beginning and the End.”
- “the elders prostrated themselves and worshiped” (5:14). Some older versions read, “the twenty-four elders prostrated themselves and worshiped the one who lives forever and ever.”



- “so that a third of it [the earth] was burned up” (8:7). Some older versions do not include this phrase.
- “the one who is and who was” (11:17). Some versions add the phrase “and who is to come.”
- “they are blameless” (14:5). Some versions add the phrase “before the throne of God” (14:5).
- “the one who is and who was, the Holy One” (16:5). Some older versions read, “O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be.”
- “The nations will walk by the light of that city” (21:24). Some older versions read, “The nations that are saved will walk by the light of that city.”
- “Blessed are those who wash their robes” (22:14). Some older versions read “Blessed are those who do his commandments.”
- “God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city” (22:19). Some older versions read, “God will take away his share in the book of life and in the holy city.”

(See: [Textual Variants](#))

# Revelation 1

## Revelation 1 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This chapter explains how the Book of Revelation records the vision John received on the island of Patmos.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page to make them easier to read. The ULT does this with the quoted words in verse 7.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Seven churches

John wrote this book to seven actual churches in Asia Minor, which is now the country of Turkey.

#### White

The Bible often speaks of something that belongs to a person as being “white.” This is metaphor and metonym for that person living rightly and pleasing God. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#) and [righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness](#))

#### “Him who is, and who was, and who is to come”

God exists now. He has always existed. He will always exist. Your language may have a different way of saying this.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Blood

Blood is a metonym for death. Jesus “has released us from our sins by his blood.” John means that Jesus saved us from our sins by dying for us. (See: [Metonymy](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### “He is coming with the clouds”

Jesus went into the clouds when he went up to heaven after God raised him from the dead. When Jesus returns, he will also be “with the clouds.” It is not clear whether he will be sitting or riding on clouds or coming in the clouds or “with the clouds” in some other way. Your translation should express this in a way that is natural in your language.

#### “One like a son of man”

This refers to Jesus. You should translate the words “son of man” using the same words as you did in the Gospels for when Jesus called himself the “Son of Man.”

## **“The angels of the seven churches”**

The word “angels” here can also mean “messengers.” This might refer to heavenly beings, or to the messengers or leaders of these seven churches. John uses the same word “angel” (singular) in verse 1 and in many other places throughout the book. Your translation should also use the same word.

## Revelation 1:1

### General Information:

This is an introduction to the book of Revelation. It explains that it is a revelation from Jesus Christ and it gives a blessing to those who read it.

### his servants (ULT)

Here, **his servants** refers to people who believe in Christ.

### what must soon happen (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the events that must happen soon"

### he made it known (ULT)

Alternate translation: "communicated it"

### to his servant John (ULT)

The Apostle **John** wrote this book and was referring to himself here. Alternate translation: "to me, John, his servant" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> {This is} the revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave him to show his servants what must soon happen. And he made it known, having sent through his angel to his servant John,

## Revelation 1:2

### about the word of God (ULT)

Alternate translation: "concerning the message that God spoke"

### the testimony of Jesus Christ (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) the **testimony** that John has given about Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "he has also given testimony about Jesus Christ" (2) the **testimony** that Jesus Christ has given about himself.

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> who testified about the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, as much as he saw.

## Revelation 1:3

### the one who reads (ULT)

Here, **the one who reads** does not refer to a specific person. It refers to anyone **who reads** it aloud. Alternate translation: “anyone who reads aloud” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

### who keep what is written in it (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “who keep what John has written in it” or “who obey what they read in it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### the time is near

Alternate translation: “the things that must happen will soon happen”

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> Blessed {is} the one who reads and those who listen to the words of this prophecy and who keep what is written in it, for the time {is} near.

## Revelation 1:4

### General Information:

This is the beginning of John's letter. Here he names himself as the writer and greets the people he is writing to.

### Grace to you and peace from the one who is, and who was, and who is coming, and from the seven spirits who {are} before his throne (ULT)

This is a wish or blessing. John speaks as if **Grace** and **peace** were things that God could give, although they are really ways in which he hopes God will act for his people. Alternate translation: "May the one who is, and who was, and who is coming, and the seven spirits who {are} before his throne treat you kindly and enable you to live peacefully and securely" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

### the one who is (ULT)

Alternate translation: "God, who is"

### who is coming (ULT)

Existing in the future is spoken of as **coming**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### seven spirits (ULT)

The number **seven** is a symbol of completeness and perfection. The **seven spirits** refers either to the Spirit of God or to seven spirits who serve God. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> John, to the seven churches that {are} in Asia: Grace to you and peace from the one who is, and who was, and who is coming, and from the seven spirits who {are} before his throne,

## Revelation 1:5

### and from Jesus Christ (ULT)

This verse continues the blessing from [Revelation 1:4](#). “and may grace be to you and peace also from Jesus Christ”

### the...firstborn from the dead (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the first person to be raised from death”

### from the dead (ULT)

The phrase **the dead** describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back **from** among them speaks of becoming alive again.

### us...has released (ULT)

Alternate translation: “has set us free”

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To the one who loves us and has released us from our sins by his blood



## Revelation 1:6

### has made us a kingdom, priests (ULT)

Alternate translation: “has set us apart and begun to rule over us and he has made us priests”

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> and has made us a kingdom, priests for his God and Father—to him {be} the glory and the power forever. Amen.

### and...for his God...Father (ULT)

Here, **God** and **Father** refers to one person. Alternate translation: “for God, his Father”

### Father (ULT)

Here, **Father** is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

### to him {be} the glory and the power (ULT)

This is a wish or prayer. This could mean: (1) John prays that people honor his **glory** and **power**. (2) John prays that Jesus will be honored and will be able to rule completely over everyone and everything. (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

### the power (ULT)

Here, **the power** probably refers to Jesus’ authority as king.

## Revelation 1:7

### General Information:

In verse 7, John is quoting from Daniel and Zechariah.

### every eye (ULT)

Since people see with their eyes, the word **eye** is used to refer to people. Alternate translation: “every person” or “everyone” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

### and...him...those who pierced (ULT)

Alternate translation: “even those who pierced him will see him”

### who pierced him (ULT)

Jesus’ hands and feet were **pierced** when he was nailed to the cross. Here it refers to the people who killed him. Alternate translation: “killed him” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### who pierced (ULT)

Alternate translation: “who made a hole in”

### ULT

<sup>7</sup> Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of him. Yes, Amen.

## Revelation 1:8

### the alpha and the omega (ULT)

The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet are **alpha** and **omega**. This could mean: (1) Christ is the one who began all things and who will end all things. (2) Christ is the one who has always lived and who always will live. If your readers would misunderstand this, you may consider using the first and last letters of your alphabet. Alternate translation: “the A and the Z” or “the first and the last” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

8 “I am the alpha and the omega,” says the Lord God, “the one who is, and who was, and who is coming, the Almighty.”  
[1]

### the alpha and the omega (ULT)

Here, **the alpha and the omega** refers to the eternal nature of Jesus. (See: [Merism](#))

### who is coming (ULT)

Existing in the future is spoken of as **coming**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### says the Lord God (ULT)

Some languages would move **says the Lord God** to the beginning or the end of the whole sentence. (See: [Quotations and Quote Margins](#))

## Revelation 1:9

### General Information:

John explains how his vision began and the instructions the Spirit gave him.

### your (ULT)

Here, **your** refers to the believers in the seven churches. (See: [Forms of You](#))

### ULT

<sup>9</sup> I, John—your brother and a fellow partaker in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance {that are} in Jesus—was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

### I, John—your brother and the one who shares with you in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are in Jesus—was

You can state this as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: “I, John, am your brother who shares with you in God’s kingdom and also suffers and patiently endures trials along with you because we belong to Jesus. I was”

### because of the word of God (ULT)

Alternate translation: “because I told others the word of God”

### the word of God (ULT)

Translate this as in [Revelation 1:2](#). Alternate translation: “the message that God spoke”

### Jesus...the testimony (ULT)

Translate this as in [Revelation 1:2](#). Alternate translation: “the testimony that God has given about Jesus”

## Revelation 1:10

### I was in the Spirit (ULT)

John speaks of being influenced by God's Spirit as if he were **in the Spirit**. Alternate translation: "I was influenced by the Spirit" or "The Spirit influenced me" (See: [Idiom](#))

#### ULT

**10** I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day,  
and I heard behind me a loud voice like  
a trumpet,

### the Lord's day (ULT)

Here, **the Lord's day** refers to the day of worship for believers in Christ.

### a loud voice like a trumpet (ULT)

The **voice** was so **loud** that it sounded **like a trumpet**. (See: [Simile](#))

### a trumpet (ULT)

A **trumpet** is an instrument for producing music or for calling people to gather together for an announcement or meeting.

## Revelation 1:11

### Smyrna...Pergamum...Thyatira...Sardis... Philadelphia...Laodicea (ULT)

These are names of cities in the region of western Asia that today is modern Turkey. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

#### ULT

<sup>11</sup> saying, "Write what you see in a scroll and send it to the seven churches—to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

## Revelation 1:12

### Connecting Statement:

John begins to explain what he saw in his vision.

### the voice that (ULT)

The **voice** refers to the person speaking. Alternate translation: “who” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

#### ULT

**12** And I turned around to see the voice that was speaking with me, and having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,

## Revelation 1:13

### a son of man (ULT)

The expression **son of man** describes a human figure, someone who looks human. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### a golden sash (ULT)

A **sash** was a strip of cloth worn around the chest. This one may have been woven from golden threads.

#### ULT

**13** and in the middle of the lampstands {there was one} like a son of man, wearing a robe reaching to his feet and with a golden sash having been wrapped around {his} chest.



## Revelation 1:14

### head...his...head...and hair {were} white as wool—white as snow (ULT)

Here, **wool** and **snow** are examples of things that are very **white**. (See: [Simile](#))

#### ULT

<sup>14</sup> Now his head and hair {were} white as wool—white as snow—and his eyes {were} as a flame of fire,

### were} white as wool—white as snow (ULT)

The repetition of **white as** emphasizes that they were very white. (See: [Doublet](#))

### wool (ULT)

The word **wool** refers to the hair of a sheep or goat. It was known to be very white.

### his eyes {were} as a flame of fire (ULT)

John describes **his eyes** as being full of light like **a flame of fire**. Alternate translation: “his eyes were glowing like a flame of fire” (See: [Simile](#))

## Revelation 1:15

### his feet {were} like polished bronze, as (ULT)

Objects made of **bronze** are **polished** to make them shine and reflect light. Alternate translation: “his feet were very shiny like polished bronze” (See: [Simile](#))

### were} like polished bronze, as having been refined in a furnace (ULT)

The **bronze** would be **refined** first by melting it in a **furnace**, and then polished. Alternate translation: “like bronze that has been purified in a hot furnace and polished” (See: [Order of Events](#))

### a furnace (ULT)

Here, **furnace** refers to a strong container for holding a very hot fire. People would put metal in it, and the hot fire would melt away any impurities that were in the metal.

### the sound of many rushing waters

The **sound** of **his voice** was very loud, like the sound of a large, fast flowing river, of a large waterfall, or of loud waves in the sea.

#### ULT

<sup>15</sup> and his feet {were} like polished bronze, as having been refined in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many rushing waters,

## Revelation 1:16

### his...a sharp, double-edged sword coming out of...mouth (ULT)

The blade of the **sword** was sticking out of his mouth. The sword itself was not in motion.

### a sharp, double-edged sword (ULT)

This refers to a **sword** that is sharpened on both edges so it can cut in both directions.

#### ULT

<sup>16</sup> and having seven stars in his right hand and a sharp, double-edged sword coming out of his mouth and his face shining as the sun at its strength.

## Revelation 1:17

### I fell at his feet as a dead man (ULT)

John lay down facing the ground. He was probably very frightened and was showing Jesus great respect. (See: [Simile](#))

### his...he placed...right hand on me (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he touched me with his right hand"

### I am the first and the last (ULT)

Here, **the first and the last** refers to the eternal nature of Jesus—he existed before anything else and will continue to exist after everything else is gone. (See: [Merism](#))

#### ULT

**17** And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as a dead man, and he placed his right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last

## Revelation 1:18

### I have the keys of death and of Hades (ULT)

Having the power over something is spoken of as having **the keys** to it. Alternate translation: "I have the power over death and over Hades" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### I have the keys of death and of Hades (ULT)

The implied information is that he can give life to those who have died and let them out of **Hades**. Alternate translation: "I have the power to give life to people who have died and to let them out of Hades" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### ULT

**18** and the one who lives; and I became dead, but behold, I live forever {and} ever, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

## Revelation 1:19

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, write down what you have seen and what is and what is about to happen after these things.

## Revelation 1:20

### of the seven stars (ULT)

These **stars** are symbols that represent the **seven** angels of the **seven** churches. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### lampstands (ULT)

These **lampstands** are symbols that represent the seven churches. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:12](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### the seven...the angels of...churches (ULT)

Here, **angels** could refer to: (1) heavenly angels who protect the seven churches. (2) human messengers to the seven churches, either messengers who went from John to the churches or the leaders of those churches.

### the seven...of...churches (ULT)

This refers to **seven churches** that actually existed in Asia Minor at that time. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11](#).

#### ULT

**20** The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”

## Revelation 2

### Revelation 2 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Chapters 2 and 3 together are usually called the “seven letters to the seven churches.” You may wish to set each letter apart. The reader can then easily see that they are separate letters.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULT does this with the quoted words of verse 27.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Poverty and wealth

The Christians in Smyrna were poor because they did not have much money. But they were rich spiritually because God would reward them for their suffering. (See: [spirit](#), [wind](#), [breath](#))

#### “The devil is about to”

People were about to take some of the Christians in Smyrna and throw them into prison and even kill some of them ([Revelation 2:10](#)). John does not say who these people were. But he does speak of them harming the Christians as if Satan himself were harming them. (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### Balaam, Balak, and Jezebel

Balaam, Balak, and Jezebel were people who lived long before Jesus was born. They all tried to harm the Israelites either by cursing them or by making them want to stop obeying God.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### “Let the one who has an ear, hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches”

The writer knew that almost all of his readers had physical ears. The ear here is a metonym for hearing what God says and desiring to obey him. (See: [Metonymy](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### “The angel of the church”

The word **angel** here can also mean “messenger.” This might refer to the messenger or leader of the church. See how you translated “angel” in [Revelation 1:20](#).

#### “The words of the one who”

The verses with these words can be difficult to translate. They do not make complete sentences. You may need to add “These are” to the beginning of these verses. Also, Jesus used these words to speak of himself as if he were



speaking of another person. Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking of other people. Jesus began speaking in [Revelation 1:17](#). He continues to speak through the end of Chapter 3.

## Revelation 2:1

### General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Ephesus.

### To the angel (ULT)

Here, **angel** could refer to: (1) a heavenly angel who protects this church. (2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the churches. See how you translated "angel" in [Revelation 1:20](#)

#### ULT

**1** "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, says these things:

### stars (ULT)

These **stars** are symbols. They represent the seven angels of the seven churches. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:16](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### of the seven golden lampstands (ULT)

The **golden lampstands** are symbols that represent the seven churches. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:12](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

## Revelation 2:2

### I know...your hard labor and your patient endurance (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract nouns **labor** and **endurance**, you can express them with the verbs “work” and “endure.” Alternate translation: “I know ... that you work very hard and that you endure patiently” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

### and...are not (ULT)

Alternate translation: “but are not apostles”

### you have found them {to be} false (ULT)

Alternate translation: “you have recognized that those people are false apostles”

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> “I know your works and your hard labor and your patient endurance, and that you are not able to tolerate evil people, and you have tested those who call themselves apostles but are not, and you have found them {to be} false;

## Revelation 2:3

### because of my name (ULT)

Here, **name** is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: “because of me” or “because you believe in my name” or “because you believe in me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### have not grown weary (ULT)

Being discouraged is spoken of as growing **weary**. Alternate translation: “you have not become discouraged” or “you have not quit” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> and you have patient endurance and have suffered because of my name and have not grown weary.

## Revelation 2:4

### I have against you that (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I disapprove of you because" or "I am angry with you because"

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> But I have against you that you have left behind your first love.

### you have left behind your first love (ULT)

To stop doing something is spoken of as leaving it **behind**, and **love** is spoken of as if it is an object that can be left behind. AT "you have stopped loving me as you did at the beginning" (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Revelation 2:5

### from where you have fallen (ULT)

No longer loving as much as they used to is spoken of as haven **fallen**. Alternate translation: “how much you have changed” or “how much you used to love me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### But if not (ULT)

Alternate translation: “If you do not repent”

### I will remove your lampstand (ULT)

The **lampstands** are symbols that represent the seven churches. See how you translated “lampstand” in [Revelation 1:12](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> Therefore, remember from where you have fallen and repent and do the first works. But if not, I will come to you and I will remove your lampstand from its place—if you do not repent.

## Revelation 2:6

### of the Nicolaitans (ULT)

The **Nicolaitans** were people who followed the teachings of a man named Nicolaus. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> But you have this, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

## Revelation 2:7

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. Here, the phrase **has an ear** is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. Alternate translation: “Let the one who is willing to listen, listen to” or “The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers, I will grant to him to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”””

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. Alternate translation: “If you are willing to listen, listen to” or “If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

### To the one who conquers (ULT)

This refers anyone **who conquers**. Alternate translation: “To anyone who resists evil” or “To those who do not agree to do evil” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

### To the one...the...paradise...of God (ULT)

This is a symbol for heaven. Alternate translation: “God’s garden”



## Revelation 2:8

### General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Smyrna.

### to the angel (ULT)

Here, **angel** could refer to: (1) a heavenly angel who protects this church. (2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the churches. See how you translated "angel" in [Revelation 1:20](#)

### Smyrna (ULT)

**Smyrna** is the name of a city in a part of western Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

### The first and the last (ULT)

Here, the **first and the last** refers to the eternal nature of Jesus. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:17](#). (See: [Merism](#))

#### ULT

**8** "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: 'The first and the last, the one who became dead but came to life again, says these things:'

## Revelation 2:9

### I know your affliction and {your} poverty (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract nouns **affliction** and **poverty**, you can express them as verbs. Alternate translation: “I know how you have suffered and how poor you are” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> “I know your affliction and {your} poverty (but you are rich), and the slander of those who say they themselves are Jews, but they are not, but {are} a synagogue of Satan.

### the slander of those who say they themselves are Jews (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **slander**, you can express it as a verb. Alternate translation: “how people have slandered you—those who say they are Jews” or “how people have said terrible things about you—those who say they are Jews” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

### and...they are not (ULT)

Alternate translation: “but they are not real Jews”

### a synagogue of Satan (ULT)

People who gather to obey or honor **Satan** are spoken of as if they were **a synagogue**, a place of worship and teaching for the Jews. (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Revelation 2:10

### the devil is about to throw some of you into prison (ULT)

Here, **the devil** is a metonym for the people who obey the devil.  
Alternate translation: "the devil will soon cause others to put some of you in prison" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### Become faithful until death (ULT)

The use of the word **until** does not mean that you should stop being faithful at death. Alternate translation: "Be faithful to me even if they kill you"

### the crown of life (ULT)

Here, **the crown of life** could refer to: (1) a crown that shows that Christ has given the believers eternal life. (2) true life as a prize like a winner's crown. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>10</sup> Do not fear at all what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Become faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

## Revelation 2:11

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. Here, the phrase **has an ear** is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: “Let the one who is willing to listen, listen to” or “The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**11** Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will certainly not be hurt by the second death.””

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: “If you are willing to listen, listen to” or “If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

### The one who conquers (ULT)

This refers anyone **who conquers**. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: “Anyone who resists evil” or “Those who do not agree to do evil” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

### will not be hurt by the second death

Alternate translation: “will not experience the second death” or “will not die a second time”

## Revelation 2:12

### General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Pergamum.

### to the angel (ULT)

Here, **angel** could refer to: (1) a heavenly angel who protects this church. (2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the churches. See how you translated "angel" in [Revelation 1:20](#)

### Pergamum (ULT)

**Pergamum** is the name of a city in a part of western Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

### the sword with two sharp edges

This refers to a **sword** which is sharpened on both edges so that it can cut both directions. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:16](#)

#### ULT

**12** "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: 'The one who has the double-edged, sharp sword says these things:'

## Revelation 2:13

### the throne of Satan {is (ULT)

Here, **the throne of Satan** could mean: (1) Satan's power and evil influence on people. (2) the place where Satan rules. (See: [Metonymy](#))

### you hold tightly to my name (ULT)

Here, **name** is a metonym for the person. Alternate translation: "you are holding on tightly to me" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### you hold tightly to my name (ULT)

Firmly believing is spoken of as holding on **tightly**. Alternate translation: "you firmly believe in me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### you did not deny {your} faith in me (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **faith**, you can express it with the verb "believe." Alternate translation: "you continued to tell people that you believe in me" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

### of Antipas (ULT)

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

#### ULT

**13** "I know where you live, where the throne of Satan {is}, and yet you hold tightly to my name, and you did not deny {your} faith in me, even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan lives.

## Revelation 2:14

### But I have a few things against you (ULT)

See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 2:4](#). Alternate translation: "I disapprove of you because of a few things you have done" or "I am angry with you because of a few things you did"

### some who hold tightly to the teaching of Balaam, who (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) people who teach what **Balaam** taught. (2) people who do what **Balaam** taught. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### Balak (ULT)

**Balak** was the name of a king in the Old Testament. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

### who taught Balak to throw a stumbling block before the sons of Israel (ULT)

Something that leads people to sin is spoken of as a stone in the road that people stumble on. Alternate translation: "who showed Balak how to cause the people of Israel to sin" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### to be sexually immoral (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to sin sexually" or "to commit sexual sin"

#### ULT

**14** But I have a few things against you; that you have there some who hold tightly to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to throw a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat food sacrificed to idols and to be sexually immoral.

## Revelation 2:15

### of the Nicolaitans (ULT)

The **Nicolaitans** was the name for a group of people who followed the teachings of a man named Nicolaus. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:6](#) (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

#### ULT

**15** So, in the same way, you also have {some} holding tightly to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.



## Revelation 2:16

### But if {you do} not (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this phrase, you can supply the verb from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "If you do not repent, I" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

### will wage war against them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "fight against them"

### with the sword of my mouth (ULT)

This refers to the **sword** in [Revelation 1:16](#). Although symbols in apocalyptic language are not normally to be replaced with the item they represent, translators may choose whether or not to show that this as a symbol represents God's word, as the UST does. This symbol indicates that Christ will defeat his enemies by giving a simple command. Alternate translation: "with the sword in my mouth, which is the word of God" (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

**16** Repent, therefore! But if {you do} not, I will quickly come to you and will wage war against them with the sword of my mouth.

## Revelation 2:17

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. Here, the phrase **has an ear** is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: “Let the one who is willing to listen, listen to” or “The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**17** Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers, I will give him of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone, a new name written which no one knows except the one who receives it.”””

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: “If you are willing to listen, listen to” or “If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

### To the one who conquers (ULT)

This refers to anyone **who conquers**. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: “To anyone who resists evil” or “To those who do not agree to do evil” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

## Revelation 2:18

### General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Thyatira.

### to the angel (ULT)

Here, **the angel** could refer to: (1) a heavenly angel who protects this church. (2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the churches. See how you translated "angel" in [Revelation 1:20](#)

#### ULT

**18** "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The Son of God, who has his eyes as a flame of fire and his feet like polished bronze, says these things:'

### Thyatira (ULT)

**Thyatira** is the name of a city in a part of western Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

### The Son of God (ULT)

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

### who has his eyes as a flame of fire (ULT)

His **eyes** are describes as being full of light like **a flame of fire**. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:14](#). Alternate translation: "whose eyes glow like a flame of fire" (See: [Simile](#))

### his feet like polished bronze (ULT)

Objects made of **bronze** are **polished** to make them shine and reflect light. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:15](#). Alternate translation: "whose feet are very shiny like polished bronze" (See: [Simile](#))

## Revelation 2:19

### your love and faith and service and patient endurance (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **love**, **faith**, **service**, and **endurance**, you can express them with verbs. Alternate translation: "how you have loved, trusted, served, and endured patiently" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

#### ULT

<sup>19</sup> "I know your works, and your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and your last works {are} greater than {your} first {works}."

### your love and faith and service and patient endurance (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this phrase, you can state the implied objects of these terms explicitly. Alternate translation: "how you have loved me and others, trusted me, served me and others, and endured troubles patiently" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

## Revelation 2:20

### But I have this against you (ULT)

See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 2:4](#). Alternate translation: “But I disapprove of some of the things you are doing” or “But I am angry with you because of something you are doing”

### the woman Jezebel (ULT)

Jesus spoke of a certain **woman** in their church as if she were Queen **Jezebel**, because she did the same kinds of sinful things that Queen Jezebel had done long before that time. Alternate translation: “the woman who is just like Jezebel” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**20** But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and deceives my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

## Revelation 2:21

### I gave her time so that she might repent (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I gave her opportunity to repent" or "I waited for her to repent"

#### ULT

<sup>21</sup> And I gave her time so that she might repent, but she is not willing to repent of her immorality.

## Revelation 2:22

### **I will throw her onto a bed...I will throw into} great tribulation (ULT)**

Her having to lie in a **bed** would be the result of Jesus making her very sick. Alternate translation: "I will make her lie sick in bed ... I will make suffer greatly" or "I will make her very sick ... I will make suffer greatly" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### **ULT**

<sup>22</sup> Behold! I will throw her onto a bed, and those who commit adultery with her {I will throw into} great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.

### **those who commit adultery with her {I will throw into} great tribulation (ULT)**

Jesus speaks of causing people to suffer as throwing them into suffering. Alternate translation: "I will make those who commit adultery with her to suffer greatly" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### **unless they repent of her deeds (ULT)**

This implies that they have participated with her in her wicked behavior. By repenting of **her deeds**, they also **repent** of participating in her behavior. Alternate translation: "if they do not repent from doing the evil that she does" or "if they do not repent of participating in her deeds" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

## Revelation 2:23

### I will strike her children dead (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I will kill her children"

### her children (ULT)

Jesus spoke of her followers as if they were **her children**. Alternate translation: "her followers" or "the people who do what she teaches" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### kidneys and hearts (ULT)

The terms **kidneys** and **hearts** are metonym that represents feelings and desires. Alternate translation: "what people think and want" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### I will give to each one of you (ULT)

This phrase is an expression about punishment and reward. Alternate translation: "I will punish or reward each one of you" (See: [Idiom](#))

#### ULT

<sup>23</sup> And I will strike her children dead, and all the churches will know that I am the one who searches kidneys and hearts, and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.



## Revelation 2:24

### to as many as do not hold this teaching (ULT)

Believing a **teaching** is spoken of as holding the **teaching**. Alternate translation: “to everyone who does not believe this teaching” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### do not hold this teaching (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **teaching**, you can express it as a verb. Alternate translation: “do not hold to what she teaches” or “do not believe what she teaches” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

### deep things (ULT)

Secret things are spoken of as if they were **deep**. Alternate translation: “secret things” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**24** Now I say to you, the rest of those in Thyatira, to as many as do not hold this teaching, whoever has not known the deep things of Satan, as some call it—I do not put any other burden on you.

## Revelation 2:25

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>25</sup> However, hold on tightly to what you have until I come.

## Revelation 2:26

### the one who conquers (ULT)

This refers anyone **who conquers**. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: “anyone who resists evil” or “the person who does not agree to do evil” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

#### ULT

<sup>26</sup> And the one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations.

## Revelation 2:27

### He will rule ... break them into pieces

This is a prophecy from the Old Testament about a king of Israel, but Jesus applied it here to those to whom he gives authority over the nations.

#### ULT

<sup>27</sup> 'And he will shepherd them with a rod of iron, as jars of clay are broken into pieces,'

### he will shepherd them with a rod of iron (ULT)

Ruling harshly is spoken of as ruling **with a rod of iron**. Alternate translation: "he will rule them harshly as if striking them with an iron stick" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### as jars of clay are broken into pieces (ULT)

Breaking **jars of clay** to **pieces** is an image that represents either: (1) destroying evildoers. (2) defeating enemies. Alternate translation: "and he will defeat his enemies completely as if breaking clay jars into pieces" (See: [Simile](#))

## Revelation 2:28

### as I also have received {authority} from my Father (ULT)

Some languages may need to tell what was **received**. This could mean: (1) he received **authority** from his Father. (2) he received the morning star from his Father. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### ULT

<sup>28</sup> as I also have received {authority} from my Father, and I will give him the morning star.

### my Father (ULT)

Here, **Father** is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

### and I will give him (ULT)

Here, **him** refers to the one who conquers.

### the morning star (ULT)

This is a bright **star** that sometimes appears early in the **morning** just before dawn. It was a symbol of victory. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

## Revelation 2:29

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. Here, the phrase **has an ear** is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#).

Alternate translation: "Let the one who is willing to listen, listen to" or "The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>29</sup> Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'"

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: "If you are willing to listen, listen to" or "If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

## Revelation 3

### Revelation 3 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Chapters 2 and 3 together are usually called the “seven letters to the seven churches.” You may wish to set each letter apart. The reader can then easily see that they are separate letters.

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 verse 7.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Seven spirits of God

These spirits are the seven spirits of [Revelation 1:4](#).

#### Seven stars

These stars are the seven stars of [Revelation 1:20](#).

### Important metaphors in this chapter

#### Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking

Jesus speaks of his desire to have the Christians in Laodicea obey him as if he were a man asking people in a house to allow him to enter and eat with them ([Revelation 3:20](#)). (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### “Let the one who has an ear, hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches”

The speaker knew that almost all of his readers had physical ears. The ear here is a metonym for hearing what God says and desiring to obey him. (See: [Metonymy](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### “The angel of the church”

The word **angel** here can also mean “messenger.” This might refer to the messenger or leader of the church. See how you translated “angel” in [Revelation 1:20](#).

#### “The words of the one who”

The verses with these words can be difficult to translate. They do not make complete sentences. You may need to add “These are” to the beginning of these verses. Also, Jesus used these words to speak of himself as if he were speaking of another person. Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking of other people. Jesus began speaking in [Revelation 1:17](#). He continues to speak through the end of Chapter 3.

## Revelation 3:1

### General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Sardis.

### to the angel (ULT)

Here, **the angel** could refer to: (1) a heavenly angel who protects this church. (2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the churches. See how you translated "angel" in [Revelation 1:20](#).

#### ULT

**1** "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The one who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars says these things: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."

### Sardis (ULT)

**Sardis** is the name of a city in the western part of Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

### The one who holds the seven spirits (ULT)

The number **seven** is a symbol of completeness and perfection. The **seven spirits** refers either to the Spirit of God or to seven spirits who serve God. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:4](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### the seven stars (ULT)

These **stars** are symbols that represent the seven angels of the seven churches. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:16](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### you are alive, but you are dead (ULT)

Obeying and honoring God is spoken of as being **alive**; disobeying and dishonoring him is spoken of as being **dead**. (See: [Metaphor](#))



## Revelation 3:2

### Wake up and strengthen what remains, which is about to die (ULT)

The good deeds done by the believers in Sardis are spoken of as if they were alive but in danger of dying. Alternate translation: “Wake up and complete the work that remains, or what you have done will become worthless” or “Wake up. If you do not finish what you have started to do, your previous work will have been useless” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> Wake up and strengthen what remains, which is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.

### Wake up (ULT)

Being alert to danger is spoken of as waking up. Alternate translation: “Be alert” or “Be careful” (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Revelation 3:3

### what you have received and heard (ULT)

This phrase refers to God's word, which they believed. Alternate translation: "God's word that you heard and the truth that you believed" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### if...you do not wake up (ULT)

Being alert to danger is spoken of as waking up. See how you translated "wake up" on [Revelation 3:2](#). Alternate translation: "If you are not alert" or "If you are not careful" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### I will come as a thief (ULT)

Jesus will **come** at a time when people do not expect him, just as a **thief** comes when not expected. (See: [Simile](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard. And keep it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come as a thief, and you will certainly not know what hour I will come against you.

## Revelation 3:4

### a few names (ULT)

Here, **names** is a metonym for the people themselves. Alternate translation: “a few people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### have not stained their clothes (ULT)

Jesus speaks of sin in a person’s life as if it were dirty **clothes**. Alternate translation: “have not made their lives sinful like dirty clothes” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### they will walk with me (ULT)

People commonly spoke of living as “walking.” Alternate translation: “they will live with me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### in white (ULT)

Clothes that are **white** represent a pure life without sin. Alternate translation: “and they will be dressed in white, which shows that they are pure” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> But you have a few names in Sardis who have not stained their clothes, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

## Revelation 3:5

### The one who conquers (ULT)

This refers anyone **who conquers**. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: “Anyone who resists evil” or “Anyone who does not agree to do evil” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

### will be clothed in this manner in white garments (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the passive verb **clothed**, you can translate it with an active verb. Alternate translation: “will wear white garments” or “I will give white clothes” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### I will confess his name (ULT)

Here **I will confess his name** means he would announce that the person belongs to him, not simply say the person’s name. Alternate translation: “I will announce that he belongs to me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### before my Father (ULT)

Alternate translation: “in the presence of my Father”

### my Father (ULT)

Here, **Father** is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> The one who conquers will be clothed in this manner in white garments, and I will certainly not wipe his name out of the Book of Life, and I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

## Revelation 3:6

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. Here, the phrase **has an ear** is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#).

Alternate translation: "Let the one who is willing to listen, listen to" or "The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'"

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: "If you are willing to listen, listen to" or "If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

## Revelation 3:7

### General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Philadelphia.

### to the angel (ULT)

Here, **the angel** could refer to: (1) a heavenly angel who protects this church. (2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the churches. See how you translated "angel" in [Revelation 1:20](#)

#### ULT

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The Holy One, the True One, the one having the key of David, the one who opens and no one will shut, and he shuts and no one opens, says these things:

### Philadelphia (ULT)

**Philadelphia** is the name of a city in the western part of Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

### the key of David (ULT)

Jesus speaks of his authority to decide who may go into his kingdom as if it were King David's **key**. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### And...The...who opens...no one will shut (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he opens the door to the kingdom and no one can close it"

### And...no one...he shuts...opens (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he closes the door and no one can open it"

## Revelation 3:8

### **your...I have put before...an open door (ULT)**

Alternate translation: "I have opened a door for you"

### **you have kept my word (ULT)**

This could mean: (1) they have followed his teachings. (2) they have obeyed his commands.

### **my name (ULT)**

Here, **name** is a metonym for the person who has that name. Alternate translation: "me" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### **ULT**

<sup>8</sup> "I know your works (Behold, I have put before you an open door that no one is able to shut), that you have little power, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

## Revelation 3:9

### synagogue of Satan (ULT)

People who gather to obey or honor **Satan** are spoken of as if they were in a **synagogue**, a place of worship and teaching for the Jews. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:9](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

### bow down (ULT)

Here to **bow down** is a sign of submission, not worship. Alternate translation: “bow down in submission” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

### before your feet (ULT)

Here, **feet** represents the person before whom these people bow down. Alternate translation: “before you” or “to you” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

### they might realize (ULT)

Alternate translation: “they will learn” or “they will admit”

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> Behold, I will give those of the synagogue of Satan who call themselves Jews but are not, rather, they are lying—behold, I will make them so that they will come and bow down before your feet, and they might realize that I loved you.



## Revelation 3:10

### of...steadfastness, I will also keep you from... hour of testing (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I will also prevent the hour of testing from happening to you" or "I will protect you so you do not enter the hour of testing"

### hour of testing (ULT)

This probably means "the time when people try to make you disobey me."

### that is about to come (ULT)

Existing in the future is spoken of as coming. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>10</sup> Because you have kept the word of my steadfastness, I will also keep you from the hour of testing that is about to come on the entire inhabited world, to test those who live on the earth.

## Revelation 3:11

### I am coming quickly (ULT)

It is understood that he is **coming** in order to judge. Alternate translation: "I am coming to judge soon" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### ULT

**11** I am coming quickly. Hold fast to what you have so that no one might take away your crown.

### Hold fast to what you have (ULT)

Continuing to believe firmly in Christ is spoken of as if it were holding something tightly. Alternate translation: "Continue to believe firmly" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### crown (ULT)

Here, **crown** stands for a reward. See how you translated "crown" in [Revelation 2:10](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Revelation 3:12

### The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God (ULT)

Here, **The one who conquers** refers to anyone who conquers. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: “I will make anyone who resists evil to be a pillar in the temple of my God” or “Those who do not agree to do evil I will make a pillar in the temple of my God” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

### I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God (ULT)

The **pillar** represents an important and permanent part of God’s kingdom. Alternate translation: “I will make him strong, like a pillar in the temple of my God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>12</sup> The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will certainly not go out from it anymore, and I will write on him the name of my God, the name of the city of my God (even the new Jerusalem, that comes down out of heaven from my God), and my new name.

## Revelation 3:13

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. Here, the phrase **has an ear** is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#).

Alternate translation: "Let the one who is willing to listen, listen to" or "The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**13** Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'"

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: "If you are willing to listen, listen to" or "If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

## Revelation 3:14

### General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Laodicea.

### to the angel (ULT)

Here, **the angel** could refer to: (1) a heavenly angel who protects this church. (2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the churches. See how you translated "angel" in [Revelation 1:20](#)

### Laodicea (ULT)

**Laodicea** is the name of a city in the western part of Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

### The Amen (ULT)

Here, **The Amen** is a name for Jesus Christ. He guarantees God's promises by saying amen to them.

### the...the beginning of...creation of God (ULT)

Here, **the beginning of the creation of God** could refer to: (1) the one who rules over everything that God created. (2) the one through whom God created everything.

#### ULT

**14** "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God says these things:

## Revelation 3:15

### you are neither cold nor hot (ULT)

The writer speaks of the Laodiceans as if they were water. Here, **cold** and **hot** could: (1) represent two extremes of spiritual interest or love for God, where “cold” is to be completely against God, and to be “hot” is to be zealous to serve him. (2) both refer to water that is useful for drinking or for cooking or healing, respectively. Alternate translation: “you are like water that is neither cold nor hot” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**15** “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were cold or hot!”

## Revelation 3:16

### I am about to vomit you out of my mouth (ULT)

Rejecting them is spoken of as vomiting them **out of the mouth**.  
Alternate translation: "I will reject you as I would spit out lukewarm water" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am about to vomit you out of my mouth.

## Revelation 3:17

### **you are miserable and pitiable and poor and blind and naked (ULT)**

Jesus speaks of their spiritual condition as if he were speaking about their physical condition. Alternate translation: “you are like people who are most miserable, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### **ULT**

<sup>17</sup> For you say, ‘I am rich and have become wealthy and have need of nothing,’ and yet you do not know that you are miserable and pitiable and poor and blind and naked.



## Revelation 3:18

**Buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and brilliant white garments so you may clothe yourself and not show the shame of your nakedness, and salve to anoint your eyes so you will see**

Here, **to buy** represents receiving things from Jesus that have true spiritual value. The **gold refined by fire** represents spiritual wealth. The **brilliant white garments** represents righteousness. And the

**salve to anoint your eyes** represents the ability to understand spiritual things. Alternate translation: “to come to me and receive spiritual wealth, which is more valuable than gold that is refined by fire. Receive from me righteousness, which is like brilliant white garments, so that you will not be ashamed. And receive from me wisdom, which is like salve for the eyes, so that you may understand spiritual things” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### ULT

<sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you might become rich, and brilliant white garments so that you might clothe yourself and would not show the shame of your nakedness, and salve to anoint your eyes so that you might see.

## Revelation 3:19

### be earnest...and...repent (ULT)

Alternate translation: "be serious and repent"

#### ULT

<sup>19</sup> I rebuke and discipline as many as I love. Therefore, be earnest and repent.

## Revelation 3:20

### I stand at the door and knock (ULT)

Jesus speaks about wanting people to relate to him as if he wanted them to invite him into their home. Alternate translation: "I am like one standing at the door and knocking" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### knock (ULT)

When people want someone to welcome them into their home, they **knock** on the door. Alternate translation: "I want you to let me come inside" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

### might hear my voice (ULT)

Here, **my voice** refers to Christ speaking. Alternate translation: "hears me speak" or "hears me call" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### I will indeed enter into him (ULT)

Some languages might prefer the verb "go" here. Alternate translation: "I will indeed go into his home" (See: [Go and Come](#))

### and will eat with him (ULT)

Here, **eat with him** represents being together as friends. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**20** Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone might hear my voice and would open the door, I will indeed enter into him and will eat with him, and he with me.

## Revelation 3:21

### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the Son of Man's messages to the angels of the seven churches.

### The one who conquers (ULT)

This refers anyone **who conquers**. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: "Anyone who resists evil" or "Anyone who does not agree to do evil" (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

### to sit down with me on my throne (ULT)

To **sit down** on a **throne** means to rule. Alternate translation: "to rule with me" or "to sit down on my throne and rule with me" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### my Father (ULT)

Here, **Father** is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

#### ULT

**21** The one who conquers, I will grant to him to sit down with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

## Revelation 3:22

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. Here, the phrase **has an ear** is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#).

Alternate translation: "Let the one who is willing to listen, listen to" or "The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>22</sup> Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'"

### Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: "If you are willing to listen, listen to" or "If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

## Revelation 4

### Revelation 4 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verses 8 and 11.

John has finished describing the letters to the churches. He now begins to describe a vision that God showed him.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Jasper, carnelian, and emerald

These words refer to kinds of special stones that the people in John's day considered valuable. It may be difficult for you to translate these words if people in your culture do not value special kinds of stones.

#### Twenty-four elders

Elders are church leaders. Twenty-four elders may be symbolic of the whole church through the ages. There were twelve tribes in Old Testament Israel and twelve apostles in the New Testament church. (See: [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

#### Seven spirits of God

These spirits are the seven spirits of [Revelation 1:4](#).

#### Giving glory to God

God's glory is the great beauty and radiant majesty that God has because he is God. Other Bible writers describe it as if it were a light so bright that no one can look at it. No one can give God this kind of glory, because it is already his. When people give glory to God or when God receives glory, people say that God has the glory that is his, that it is right for God to have that glory, and that people should worship God because he has that glory. (See: [glory](#), [glorious](#), [glorify](#) and [worthy](#), [worth](#), [unworthy](#), [worthless](#) and [prostrate](#), [bow down](#), [worship](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Difficult images

Such things as bolts of lightning coming from the throne, lamps that are spirits, and a sea in front of the throne may be difficult to imagine, and so the words for them may be difficult to translate. (See: [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

## Revelation 4:1

### General Information:

John begins to describe his vision of the throne of God.

### After these things (ULT)

See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:1-3:22](#) Alternate translation: “After I had just seen these things”

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> After these things I looked, and behold—an open door in heaven, and the first voice that I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after these things.”

### an open door in heaven (ULT)

The expression **open door in heaven** stands for the ability that God gave John to see into heaven, at least by means of a vision. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### speaking to me like a trumpet (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this simile, you can state explicitly how the voice was **like a trumpet**. Alternate translation: “speaking to me loudly like the sound of a trumpet” (See: [Simile](#))

### a trumpet (ULT)

A **trumpet** is a instrument for producing music or for calling people to gather together for an announcement or meeting. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:10](#).

## Revelation 4:2

### I was in the Spirit (ULT)

John speaks of being influenced by God's **Spirit** as if he were **in the Spirit**. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:10](#). Alternate translation: "I was influenced by the Spirit" or "the Spirit influenced me" (See: [Idiom](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> Immediately I was in the Spirit, and behold—a throne was placed in heaven! And {someone is} sitting on the throne.



## Revelation 4:3

### a jasper stone and carnelian (ULT)

The terms **jasper** and **carnelian** refer to valuable stones. Jasper may have been clear like glass or crystal, and carnelian may have been red. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

### an emerald (ULT)

An **emerald** is a green, valuable stone. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And the one who was sitting on it {had} the appearance like a jasper stone and carnelian, and a rainbow around the throne {had} the appearance like an emerald.

## Revelation 4:4

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And around the throne {were} 24 thrones, and seated on the thrones {were} 24 elders dressed in white garments, and on their heads {were} golden crowns.

## Revelation 4:5

### flashes of lightning (ULT)

Use your language's way of describing what **lightning** looks like each time it appears.

### And...rumblings...thunder (ULT)

Here, **rumblings** are the loud noises that thunder makes. Use your language's way of describing the sound of thunder.

### the seven spirits of God (ULT)

The number **seven** is a symbol of completeness and perfection. The **seven spirits** refers either to the Spirit of God or to seven spirits who serve God. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:4](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And from the throne burst out flashes of lightning and rumblings and thunder. And seven lamps of fire are burning in front of the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

## Revelation 4:6

### a glass sea (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this metaphor, you can state how it was like **glass** or a **sea**. This could mean: (1) a sea is spoken of as if it were glass. Alternate translation: “a sea that was as smooth as glass” (2) glass is spoken of as if it were a sea. Alternate translation: “glass that was spread out like a sea” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### ULT

<sup>6</sup> And in front of the throne was a glass sea, like crystal, and in the middle of the throne and around the throne {were} four living creatures, full of eyes, front and back.

### like crystal (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this simile, you can state how it was **like crystal**. Alternate translation: “clear as crystal” (See: [Simile](#))

### In the middle of the throne and around the throne

Alternate translation: “immediately around the throne” or “close to the throne and around it”

### were} four living creatures (ULT)

Alternate translation: “four living beings” or “four living things”

## Revelation 4:7

**the first living creature {was} like a lion, and the second living creature {was} like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature {was} like an eagle flying (ULT)**

How the head of each **living creature** appeared to John is expressed as a comparison with something more familiar. (See: [Simile](#))

### ULT

<sup>7</sup> And the first living creature {was} like a lion, and the second living creature {was} like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature {was} like an eagle flying.

### living creature (ULT)

See how you translated this term in [Revelation 4:6](#) Alternate translation: “living being” or “living thing”

## Revelation 4:8

### And...all around...are full of eyes underneath (ULT)

The top and bottom of each wing was covered with **eyes**.

### who is coming (ULT)

Existing in the future is spoken of as **coming**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> And the four living creatures, each one of them have in turn six wings all around and are full of eyes underneath, and do not have rest night and day, saying, "Holy, holy, holy {is} the Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is coming."

## Revelation 4:9

**the one who sits on the throne, the one who lives forever and ever**

This is one person. The **one who sits on the throne** lives forever and ever.

**forever {and} ever (ULT)**

These two words mean about the same thing and are repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: “for all eternity” (See: [Doublet](#))

### ULT

<sup>9</sup> And whenever the living creatures will give glory and honor and thanks to the one who sits on the throne, the one who lives forever {and} ever,

## Revelation 4:10

### will fall down (ULT)

They purposely lie down facing the ground to show that they are worshiping.

### they will lay their crowns before the throne (ULT)

The elders were respectfully placing the **crowns** on the ground, showing that they were submitting to God's authority to rule. Alternate translation: "they lay their crowns before the throne to show that they were submitting to him" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

### they will lay (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) placing something. (2) throwing down forcibly, as of something worthless ([Revelation 2:22](#)). The reader should understand that the elders are acting respectfully.

#### ULT

**10** the 24 elders will fall down before the one seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever {and} ever, and they will lay their crowns before the throne, saying,



## Revelation 4:11

### our Lord and our God

Here, **our Lord and God** is one person, the one who was sitting on the throne.

### to receive the glory and the honor and the power (ULT)

Here, **the glory and the honor and the power** are things that God always has. Being praised for having them is spoken of as receiving them. Alternate translation: “to be praised for your glory, honor, and power” or “for everyone to praise you because you are glorious, honorable, and powerful” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**11** “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

## Revelation 5

### Revelation 5 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this in verses 9-13.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Sealed scroll

Kings and important people in John's time wrote important documents on large pieces of paper or animal skin. They then rolled them up and sealed them with wax so they would stay closed. Only the person to whom the document was written had the authority to open it by breaking the seal. In this chapter, "the one who was seated on the throne" had written the scroll. Only the person called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" and "the Lamb" had the authority to open it. (See: [scroll](#) and [authority](#))

#### Twenty-four elders

Elders are church leaders. Twenty-four elders may be symbolic of the whole church through the ages. There were twelve tribes in Old Testament Israel and twelve apostles in the New Testament church. (See: [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

#### Christian prayers

The prayers of Christians are described as incense. Christian prayers have a good smell to God. He is pleased when Christians pray.

#### Seven spirits of God

These spirits are the seven spirits of [Revelation 1:4](#).

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Metaphors

The "Lion of the tribe of Judah" and the "Root of David" are metaphors that refer to Jesus. Jesus descended from the tribe of Judah and the family of David. Lions are fierce, and all animals and people are afraid of them, so they are a metaphor for a king whom everyone obeys. The words **Root of David** speak of Israel's King David as if he were a seed that God had planted and of Jesus as if he were a root growing from that seed. (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Revelation 5:1

### Connecting Statement:

John continues to describe what he saw in his vision of the throne of God.

### And I saw (ULT)

Alternate translation: "After I saw those things, I saw"

### the one who was seated on the throne

This is the same **one** as in [Revelation 4:2-3](#).

### And...a scroll written on the inside...on the back (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a scroll with writing on the front and the back"

### having been sealed with seven seals (ULT)

Alternate translation: "and it had seven seals keeping it closed"

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> And I saw in the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, having been sealed with seven seals.

## Revelation 5:2

### Who {is} worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals (ULT)

Someone would need to break the **seals** in order **to open the scroll**.  
Alternate translation: "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" (See: [Order of Events](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who {is} worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?"

### Who {is} worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can translate it as a statement: "Show us who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

## Revelation 5:3

### in heaven or on the earth or under the earth (ULT)

This means everywhere: the place where God and the angels live, the place where people and animals live, and the place where those who have died are. Alternate translation: “anywhere in heaven or on the earth or under the earth” (See: [Merism](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to read it.

## Revelation 5:4

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to read it.

## Revelation 5:5

### Behold (ULT)

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

### The Lion of the tribe of Judah

This is a title for the man **from the tribe of Judah** that God had promised would be the great king. Alternate translation: "The one who is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah" or "The king who is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah"

### the Lion (ULT)

The king is spoken of as if he were a **Lion** because a lion is very strong. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### the Root of David (ULT)

This is a title for the descendant of **David** that God had promised would be the great king. Alternate translation: "the one who is called the Root of David"

### the Root of David (ULT)

The descendant is spoken of as if David's family were a tree and he were a root of that tree. Alternate translation: "the Descendant of David" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion who {is} from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered. {He is able} to open the scroll and its seven seals."

## Revelation 5:6

### General Information:

The Lamb appears in the throne room. (See: [Introduction of New and Old Participants](#))

### a Lamb (ULT)

Here, **Lamb** is used symbolically to refer to Christ. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### the seven spirits of God (ULT)

The number **seven** is a symbol of completeness and perfection. The **seven spirits** refers either to the Spirit of God or to seven spirits who serve God. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:4](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### sent out into all the earth (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can translate it with an active verb. Alternate translation: “which God sent out over all the earth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### ULT

<sup>6</sup> And I saw in the middle of the throne and the four living creatures, and among the elders, a Lamb standing, as though having been killed, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.



## Revelation 5:7

### he came (ULT)

He approached the throne. Some languages would use the verb "go." Alternate translation: "he went" (See: [Go and Come](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> And he came and took {the scroll}  
from the right hand of the one who was  
seated on the throne.

## Revelation 5:8

### the Lamb (ULT)

Here, **Lamb** is used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### fell down (ULT)

Their faces were toward the ground to show that they were worshiping the Lamb. They did this on purpose; they did not fall accidentally. Alternate translation: “lay down on the ground”

### each one (ULT)

Here, **each one** could refer to: (1) each of the elders and living creatures. (2) each of the elders.

### a golden bowl full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints (ULT)

Here, **incense** here is a symbol for the believers’ **prayers** to God. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb, each one having a harp and a golden bowl full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

## Revelation 5:9

### because you were slaughtered (ULT)

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

### you were slaughtered (ULT)

If your language has a word for killing an animal for a sacrifice, consider using it here.

### with your blood (ULT)

Since **blood** represents a person’s life, losing the blood represents dying. This probably means “by your death” or “by dying.” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### you purchased people for God (ULT)

Alternate translation: “you bought people so that they could belong to God” or “you paid the price so that people could belong to God”

### from every tribe, language, people, and nation

This means that **people** from every ethnic group are included.

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> And they sing a new song, saying, “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slaughtered, and with your blood you purchased people for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

## Revelation 5:10

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>10</sup> And you made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign on the earth.”

## Revelation 5:11

### myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands (ULT)

Use an expression in your language that shows that it is a huge number. Alternate translation: “millions” or “too many thousands to count” (See: [Numbers](#))

#### ULT

**11** And I looked and heard the sound of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders and the total number of them was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,

## Revelation 5:12

### Worthy is the Lamb who has been slaughtered

Alternate translation: "wdwdThe Lamb who has been slaughtered is worthy"

### to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise (ULT)

These are all things that the Lamb has. Being praised for having them is spoken of as receiving them. (See: [Metonymy](#))

### to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand these abstract nouns, you can express them as verbs. See how you translated a similar sentence in [Revelation 4:11](#). Alternate translation: "for everyone to honor, glorify, and praise him because he is powerful, wealthy, wise, and strong" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

#### ULT

<sup>12</sup> saying in a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who has been slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise."

## Revelation 5:13

### in heaven and on the earth and under the earth (ULT)

This means everywhere: the place where God and the angels live, the place where people and animals live, and the place where those who have died are. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:3](#). (See: [Merism](#))

### To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb

Alternate translation: "May he who sits on the throne and the Lamb have"

#### ULT

**13** And I heard every creature that was in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea and everything that {is} in them, saying, "To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb {be} the praise and the honor and the glory and the power to rule, forever {and} ever."

## Revelation 5:14

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**14** And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped. <sup>[1]</sup>



## Revelation 6

### Revelation 6 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

The author describes what happened after the Lamb opens each of the first six seals. The Lamb does not open the seventh seal until Chapter 8.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Seven Seals

Kings and important people in John's time wrote important documents on large pieces of paper or animal skin. They then rolled them up and sealed them with wax so they would stay closed. Only the person to whom the document was written had the authority to open it by breaking the seal. In this chapter, the Lamb opens the seals. (See: [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

#### The Four Horsemen

As the Lamb opens each of the first four seals, the author describes horsemen riding different colored horses. The colors of the horses seem to symbolize how the rider will affect the earth.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### The Lamb

This refers to Jesus. In this chapter, it is also a title for Jesus. (See: [lamb](#), [Lamb of God](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### Similes

In verses 12-14, the author uses several similes to try to describe the images he sees in the vision. He compares the images to everyday things. (See: [Simile](#))

## Revelation 6:1

### Connecting Statement:

John continues to describe the events that happened before the throne of God. The Lamb begins to open the seals on the scroll.

### Come (ULT)

This is a command to one person, apparently to the rider of the white horse who is spoken of in verse 2.

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come!"

## Revelation 6:2

### to him was given a crown (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “he received a crown” or “God gave him a crown” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> And I looked and behold, a white horse! And the one sitting on it having a bow and to him was given a crown, and he went out conquering, and in order that he might conquer.

## Revelation 6:3

### the second seal (ULT)

The word **second** is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “the next seal” or “seal number two” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

### the second living creature (ULT)

The word **second** is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “the next living creature” or “living creature number two” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And when he opened the second seal,  
I heard the second living creature  
saying, “Come!”

## Revelation 6:4

### came out...fiery red (ULT)

This can be stated as a second sentence. Alternate translation: “came out. It was red like fire” or “came out. It was bright red”

### to the one sitting on it was granted to him (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God gave permission to its rider” or “its rider received permission” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### to him was given a huge sword (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “this rider received a huge sword” or “God gave this rider a huge sword” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And another horse came out—fiery red! And to the one sitting on it was granted to him to take peace from the earth, and so that people will slaughter one another, and to him was given a huge sword.

## Revelation 6:5

### the third seal (ULT)

The word **third** is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “the next seal” or “seal number three” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

### the third living creature (ULT)

The word **third** is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “the next living creature” or “living creature number three” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

### a pair of scales (ULT)

A **scales** is a tool used for weighing things.

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, “Come!” And I looked and behold, a black horse, and the one sitting on it having a pair of scales in his hand.

## Revelation 6:6

### A choenix of wheat for one denarius (ULT)

Some languages might want a verb such as “cost” or “buy” in the sentence. There was very little wheat for all the people, so its price was very high. Alternate translation: “A choenix of wheat now costs one denarius” or “Buy a choenix of wheat with one denarius”

### A choenix of wheat...three choenices of barley (ULT)

A **choenix** was a specific measure that was about one liter. The plural of **choenix** is “choenices.” Alternate translation: “one liter of wheat ... three liters of barley” or “one bowl of wheat ... three bowls of barley” (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

### for one denarius (ULT)

The **denarius** was a coin that was worth a day’s wages. Alternate translation: “one silver coin” or “the pay for one day of work” (See: [Biblical Money](#))

### But do not harm the oil and the wine

If the **oil and wine** were harmed, there would be less of them for people to buy, and their prices would go up.

### the oil and the wine (ULT)

The **oil** and the **wine** probably stand for the olive oil harvest and the grape harvest. (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> And I heard as if a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A choenix of wheat for one denarius, and three choenices of barley for a denarius. But do not harm the oil and the wine.”

## Revelation 6:7

### the fourth seal (ULT)

The word **fourth** is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “the next seal” or “seal number four” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

### of the fourth living creature (ULT)

The word **fourth** is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “the next living creature” or “living creature number four” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come!”



## Revelation 6:8

### a pale horse (ULT)

Here, **pale** is the color of a dead body, so its color is a symbol of death. Alternate translation: “a grey horse”

### one-fourth of the earth (ULT)

Here, **the earth** represents the people of the earth. Alternate translation: “one-fourth of the people on the earth” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### one-fourth of the earth (ULT)

Alternate translation: “one out of every four of the people on the earth” (See: [Fractions](#))

### the sword (ULT)

Here, **the sword** represents war. (See: [Metonymy](#))

### of the earth...by the wild animals (ULT)

This means that Death and Hades would cause **the wild animals** to attack and kill people.

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And the one sitting on it was named Death, and Hades was following after him. And authority was given to them over one-fourth of the earth, to kill with the sword and with famine and with disease and by the wild animals of the earth.

## Revelation 6:9

### the fifth seal (ULT)

The word **fifth** is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “the next seal” or “seal number five” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

### under the altar (ULT)

This may have been “at the base of the altar.”

### of those who had been killed (ULT)

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

### because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they held (ULT)

Here, **the word of God** is a metonym for the message from God. (See: [Metonymy](#))

### because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they held (ULT)

Here, **held** is a metaphor. Here, holding **the testimony** could refer to: (1) believing God’s word and testimony. Alternate translation: “because of the teachings of scripture and what they taught about Jesus Christ” or “because they believed the word of God, which is his testimony” (2) testifying about the word of God. Alternate translation: “because they testified about the word of God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been killed because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they held.

## Revelation 6:10

### avenge our blood (ULT)

Here, **blood** represents their deaths. Alternate translation: “punish those who killed us” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**10** And they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, Ruler over all, holy and true, do you not judge and avenge our blood from those who live on the earth?”

## Revelation 6:11

**until {the number} was completed of both their fellow servants and their brothers who were going to be killed, as also they {were (ULT)}**

This implies that God had decided that a certain number of people should **be killed** by their enemies. If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “until people had killed the full number of their fellow servants and brothers that they were going to kill” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### ULT

<sup>11</sup> And to each of them was given a white robe, and they were told that they should wait yet a little time until {the number} was completed of both their fellow servants and their brothers who were going to be killed, as also they {were}.

## **their fellow servants and their brothers**

This is one group of people described in two ways: as **fellow servants** and as **brothers**. Alternate translation: “their brothers who serve God with them” or “their fellow believers who serve God with them”

## **brothers (ULT)**

Christians are often spoken of as being one another’s **brothers**. Females were among those spoken of here. Alternate translation: “fellow Christians” or “fellow believers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Revelation 6:12

### the sixth seal (ULT)

The word **sixth** is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “the next seal” or “seal number six” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

### black as sackcloth (ULT)

Sometimes **sackcloth** was made of black hair. People would wear sackcloth when they were mourning. The image of sackcloth is meant to lead people to think of death and mourning. Alternate translation: “as black as mourning clothes” (See: [Simile](#))

### as blood (ULT)

The image of **blood** is meant to lead people to think of death. If your readers would misunderstand this simile, you can state how it was like blood. Alternate translation: “red like blood” (See: [Simile](#))

#### ULT

**12** And when he opened the sixth seal, I watched, and there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the full moon became as blood,

## Revelation 6:13

### as a fig tree drops its unripe fruit, being shaken by a stormy wind (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “just as a stormy wind shakes a fig tree and causes it to drop its unripe fruit” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>13</sup> and the stars in the heavens fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its unripe fruit, being shaken by a stormy wind.

## Revelation 6:14

### the sky vanished as a scroll being rolled up (ULT)

The **sky** was normally thought of as being strong like a sheet of metal, but now it was weak like a sheet of paper and easily torn and **rolled up**. (See: [Simile](#))

#### ULT

**14** And the sky vanished as a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

## Revelation 6:15

### the...generals (ULT)

Here, **the generals** refers to the warriors who command in the battle.

### the caves (ULT)

These **caves** are large holes in the sides of hills.

### ULT

**15** And the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains;



## Revelation 6:16

### the face of the one (ULT)

Here, **face** represents “presence.” Alternate translation: “the presence of the one” or “the one” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**16** and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb,

## Revelation 6:17

### the great day of their wrath has come (ULT)

The **great day of their wrath** refers to the time when they would punish wicked people. Alternate translation: “this is the terrible time when they will punish people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>17</sup> because the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

### has come (ULT)

Existing now is spoken of as having **come**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### of...their...wrath (ULT)

Here, **their** refers to the one on the throne and the Lamb.

### who is able to stand (ULT)

Surviving, or staying alive, is spoken of as standing. Alternate translation: “Who can survive?” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### who is able to stand (ULT)

This question is used to express their great sadness and fear that no one will be able to survive when God punishes them. Alternate translation: “no one can survive!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

## Revelation 7

### Revelation 7 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Scholars have interpreted parts of this chapter in many different ways. Translators do not need to fully understand what this chapter means to accurately translate its contents. (See: [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

It is important to accurately translate the large numbers in this chapter. The number 144,000 is twelve times twelve thousand.

Translators should be aware that the tribes of the people of Israel are not listed in this chapter the same as they are generally listed in the Old Testament.

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 verses 5-8 and 15-17.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Worship

God saves his people and keeps them through times of trouble. His people respond by worshipping him. (See: [prostrate, bow down, worship](#))

#### Important figures of speech in this chapter

##### The Lamb

This refers to Jesus. In this chapter, it is also a title for Jesus. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

## Revelation 7:1

### General Information:

John begins to describe a vision of 144,000 servants of God who become marked with seals. Their marking takes place after the Lamb opens the sixth seal and before he opens the seventh seal.

### four...the...corners of the earth (ULT)

The **earth** is spoken of as if it were flat and square like a sheet of paper. The phrase **the four corners** refers to the north, south, east, and west.

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, tightly holding back the four winds of the earth so that the wind would not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor against any tree.

## Revelation 7:2

### the seal (ULT)

Here, **the seal** refers to a tool that is used to press a mark onto a wax seal. In this case the tool would be used to put a mark on God's people. Alternate translation: "the marker" or "stamp" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> And I saw another angel coming up from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God. And he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to them to harm the earth and the sea,

## Revelation 7:3

### we might seal the servants of our God on their foreheads (ULT)

Here, to **seal** refers to placing a mark on something. This mark shows that the people belong to God and that he will protect them. Alternate translation: "we put a mark on the foreheads of the servants of God" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### foreheads (ULT)

The **forehead** is the top of the face, above the eyes.

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> saying, "Do not harm the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees until we might seal the servants of our God on their foreheads."

## Revelation 7:4

### of those who had been sealed (ULT)

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

### 144,000 (ULT)

Alternate translation: “one hundred forty-four thousand people” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And I heard the number of those who had been sealed: 144,000, who had been sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

## Revelation 7:5

### 12,000 (ULT)

Alternate translation: "12,000 people" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> 12,000 were sealed from the tribe of Judah, 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 from the tribe of Gad,



## Revelation 7:6

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>6</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Asher, 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,

## Revelation 7:7

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>7</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon,  
12,000 from the tribe of Levi, 12,000  
from the tribe of Issachar,

## Revelation 7:8

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>8</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun,  
12,000 from the tribe of Joseph, and  
12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin had  
been sealed.

## Revelation 7:9

### General Information:

John begins to describe a second vision about a multitude praising God. This vision also takes place after the Lamb opens the sixth seal and before he opens the seventh seal.

### a huge multitude (ULT)

Alternate translation: “a huge crowd” or “a great number of people”

### white robes (ULT)

Here the color **white** represents purity.

### ULT

<sup>9</sup> After these things I looked, and behold, a huge multitude that no one was able to count—from every nation and tribe and people and language—standing before the throne and before the Lamb, having been clothed in white robes, and palm branches {were} in their hands,

## Revelation 7:10

### Salvation {belongs} to our God (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Salvation comes from our God"

### Salvation {belongs} to our God, to the one who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb (ULT)

They were praising **God** and **the Lamb**. If your readers would misunderstand the abstract **Salvation**, you can express it with the verb "save." Alternate translation: "Our God, who sits on the throne, and the Lamb have saved us!" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

#### ULT

**10** and they call out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation {belongs} to our God, to the one who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

## Revelation 7:11

### the...four living creatures (ULT)

These are the **four living creatures** mentioned in [Revelation 4:6-8](#).

### they fell...on their faces (ULT)

Here, **fell on their faces** is an idiom that means they lay down facing the ground. See how you translated “prostrated themselves” in [Revelation 4:10](#). Alternate translation: “they bowed down” (See: [Idiom](#))

#### ULT

**11** And all the angels were standing around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

## Revelation 7:12

### Praise, glory ... be to our God

Alternate translation: "Our God is worthy of all praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power and strength"

### Praise, glory ... thanksgiving, honor ... be to our God

You can use the verb "give" to show how **praise, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and strength** are to be **to our God**. Alternate translation: "We must give praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power, and strength to our God"

### forever {and} ever (ULT)

These two words **forever** and **ever** mean basically the same thing and emphasize that the praise will never end.

#### ULT

<sup>12</sup> saying, "Amen! The praise and the glory and the wisdom and the thanksgiving and the honor and the power and the strength {be} to our God forever {and} ever! Amen!"

## Revelation 7:13

### clothed with white robes

These **white robes** showed that they were righteous.

#### ULT

**13** And one of the elders replied, saying to me, “These who have been clothed with white robes—who are they, and from where did they come?”



## Revelation 7:14

### have come out of the great tribulation

Alternate translation: "the one who have survived the great tribulation" or "are the people who have lived through the great tribulation"

### the great tribulation

Alternate translation: "the time of terrible suffering" or "the time when people suffered terribly"

### they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (ULT)

Being made righteous by **the blood of the Lamb** is spoken of as washing **their robes** in his blood. Alternate translation: "they have been made righteous by washing their robes white in his blood" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### the blood of the Lamb (ULT)

Here, **blood** is used to refer to the death of Lamb. (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**14** And I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming from the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

## Revelation 7:15

### they are...them (ULT)

Here, **they** and **them** refer to those people who have come out of the great tribulation.

### day and night (ULT)

Here, **day** and **night** are used together to mean “all the time” or “without stopping” (See: [Merism](#))

### will spread his tent over them (ULT)

Protecting them is spoken of as if he were giving them shelter to live under. Alternate translation: “will shelter them” or “will protect them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**15** For this reason, they are before the throne of God and worship him day and night in his temple. And the one who is seated on the throne will spread his tent over them.

## Revelation 7:16

### They will not be hungry...them (ULT)

Here, **They** and **them** refer to those people who have come out of the great tribulation.

### and the sun will not beat down on them at all (ULT)

The heat of the **sun** is compared to punishment that causes people to suffer. Alternate translation: “and the sun will not burn them” or “and the sun will not make them weak” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**16** They will not be hungry anymore, and they will not be thirsty anymore, and the sun will not beat down on them at all, nor any burning heat,

## Revelation 7:17

### them...them (ULT)

Both occurrences of **them** refer to those people who have come out of the great tribulation.

### the Lamb at the center of the throne

Alternate translation: "the Lamb, who is standing in the middle of the area around the throne"

#### ULT

**17** because the Lamb who {is} at the center of the throne will shepherd them and will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

### because the Lamb...will shepherd them (ULT)

The elder speaks of the Lamb's care for his people as if it were a shepherd's care for his sheep. Alternate translation: "for the Lamb ... will be like a shepherd to them" or "for the Lamb ... will care for them as a shepherd cares for his sheep" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### will guide them to springs of living water (ULT)

The elder speaks of what gives life as if it were **springs** of fresh **water**. Alternate translation: "he will guide them like a shepherd guiding his sheep to fresh water" or "he will guide them to life like a shepherd guiding his sheep to living water" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### God will wipe away every tear from their eyes (ULT)

Here, a **tear** represents sadness. Alternate translation: "God will wipe away their sadness, like wiping away tears" or "God will cause them to not be sad anymore" (See: [Metonymy](#))

## Revelation 8

### Revelation 8 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Seven seals and seven trumpets

This chapter begins to show what happens when the Lamb opens the seventh seal. God uses the prayers of all believers to cause dramatic things to happen on earth. John then describes what happens when angels sound the first four of seven trumpets. (See: [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Passive voice

John uses the passive voice several times in this chapter. This hides who performs the action. This will be difficult to convey if the translator's language does not have a passive voice. (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### Similes

In verses 8 and 10, John uses similes to try to describe the images he sees in the vision. He compares the images to everyday things. (See: [Simile](#))

## Revelation 8:1

### Connecting Statement:

The Lamb opens the seventh seal.

### the seventh seal (ULT)

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> And when he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

This is the last of the seven seals on the scroll. The word **seventh** is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “the next seal” or “the final seal” or “seal number seven” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

## Revelation 8:2

### seven trumpets were given to them (ULT)

Each of the seven angels were given one trumpet. If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. This could mean: (1) God gave them seven trumpets. (2) the Lamb gave them seven trumpets. (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

## Revelation 8:3

### he would offer it (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he would offer the incense to God by burning it"

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And another angel came, holding a golden incense bowl, and was stationed at the altar, and much incense was given to him so that he would offer it with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that {was} before the throne.



## Revelation 8:4

### from the hand of the angel (ULT)

This refers to the bowl in the angel's hand. Alternate translation: "from the bowl in the angel's hand" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose up before God from the hand of the angel.

## Revelation 8:5

### filled it with the fire (ULT)

Here, **the fire** probably refers to burning coals. Alternate translation: “filled it with burning coals” or “filled it with coals of fire” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And the angel took the incense bowl and filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it onto the earth, and there were crashes of thunder and loud sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

## Revelation 8:6

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>6</sup> And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves that they might sound them.

## Revelation 8:7

### it was thrown onto the earth (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the angel threw the hail and fire mixed with blood down onto the earth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “it burned up a third of the earth, a third of the trees, and all the green grass” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> And the first angel sounded {his} trumpet, and there was hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was thrown onto the earth, and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. <sup>[1]</sup>

## Revelation 8:8

### the second angel (ULT)

The word **second** is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “the next angel” or “angel number two” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

### something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the angel threw something like a great mountain burning with fire” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### a third of the sea became blood (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the fraction **a third**, you can explain it in translation. Alternate translation: “it was like the sea was divided into three parts, and one of those parts became blood” (See: [Fractions](#))

### became...blood (ULT)

Here, **became blood** could mean: (1) it became red like blood. (2) it really became blood. (See: [Simile](#))

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> And the second angel sounded {his} trumpet, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood,

## Revelation 8:9

### the living creatures in the sea

Alternate translation: “of the things living in the sea” or “of the fish and other animals that lived in the sea”

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> and a third of the creatures—those having life in the sea—died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

## Revelation 8:10

### a huge star fell from the sky, blazing as a torch (ULT)

The fire of the **huge star** looked similar to the fire of **a torch**.

Alternate translation: "a huge star that was blazing like a torch fell from the sky" (See: [Simile](#))

### a torch (ULT)

A **torch** a stick with one end lit on fire to provide light.

#### ULT

<sup>10</sup> And the third angel sounded {his} trumpet, and a huge star fell from the sky, blazing as a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.

## Revelation 8:11

### the name of the star is called Wormwood (ULT)

**Wormwood** is a shrub that tastes bitter. People made medicine out of it, but they also believed that it was poisonous. Alternate translation: “the name of the star is Bitterness” or “the name of the star is Bitter Medicine” (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

#### ULT

**11** And the name of the star is called Wormwood. And a third of the waters became wormwood, and many of the men died from the waters that became bitter.

### became...wormwood (ULT)

The bitter taste of the water is spoken of as if it were **wormwood**. Alternate translation: “became bitter like wormwood” or “became bitter” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### of the waters...died from...that became bitter (ULT)

Alternate translation: “died when they drank the bitter water”



## Revelation 8:12

### a third of the sun was struck (ULT)

Causing something bad to happen to **the sun** is spoken of as striking, or hitting, it. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### a third of the sun was struck (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “a third of the sun changed” or “God changed a third of the sun” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

**12** And the fourth angel sounded {his} trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark, and the day did not shine {for} a third of it, and likewise the night.

### a third...of them turned dark (ULT)

The phrase **a third of then turned dark** could mean: (1) one third of the time, they were dark. (2) one third of the sun, one third of the moon, and one third of the stars became dark.

### a third of the day and a third of the night had no light

Alternate translation: “there was no light during one third of the day and one third of the night” or “they did not shine during one third of the day and one third of the night”

## Revelation 8:13

**from the remaining blasts of the trumpet of  
the three angels who are about to sound  
{their} trumpets (ULT)**

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “because the three angels who have not yet sounded their trumpets are about to sound them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### ULT

<sup>13</sup> And I looked, and I heard one eagle <sup>[2]</sup> flying in the mid-heaven, calling out with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe, to those who live on the earth, from the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound {their} trumpets.”

## Revelation 9

### Revelation 9 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

In this chapter, John continues to describe what happens when angels sound seven trumpets. (See: [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

### Woe

John describes several “woes” in the Book of Revelation. This chapter begins to describe three “woes” announced at the end of Chapter 8.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Animal imagery

This chapter includes several animals: locusts, scorpions, horses, lions, and snakes. Animals convey different qualities or traits. For example, a lion is powerful and dangerous. Translators should use the same animals in their translation if possible. If the animal is unknown, one with similar qualities or traits should be used.

#### Bottomless pit

This image is seen several times in the Book of Revelation. It is a picture of hell as being inescapable and the opposite direction as heaven. (See: [hell](#), [lake of fire](#))

#### Abaddon and Apollyon

“Abaddon” is a Hebrew word. “Apollyon” is a Greek word. Both words mean “Destroyer.” John used the sounds of the Hebrew word and wrote them with Greek letters. The ULT and UST write the sounds of both words with English letters. Translators are encouraged to transliterate these words using the letters of the target language. The original Greek readers would have understood “Apollyon” to mean “Destroyer.” So translators may also supply what it means in the text or in a footnote. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))

#### Repentance

Despite great signs, people are described as not repenting and so remain in their sin. People refusing to repent are also mentioned in Chapter 16. (See: [repent](#), [repentance](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Simile

John uses many similes in this chapter. They help to describe the images that he sees in his vision. (See: [Simile](#))

## Revelation 9:1

### Connecting Statement:

The fifth of the seven angels begins to sound his trumpet.

### I saw a star from heaven that had fallen (ULT)

John saw the **star** after it **had fallen**. He did not watch it fall.

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> And the fifth angel sounded {his} trumpet, and I saw a star from heaven that had fallen to the earth, and the key to the shaft of the abyss was given to him.

### heaven...the key to...shaft of the abyss (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the key that unlocks the shaft of the bottomless pit"

### heaven...to...shaft of the abyss (ULT)

Here, **shaft** could be: (1) another way of referring to the abyss and describes it as long and narrow. (2) the opening of the abyss.

### of the abyss (ULT)

The **abyss** is an extremely deep narrow hole. This could mean: (1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever. (2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom.

## Revelation 9:2

### as smoke of a huge furnace (ULT)

A **huge furnace** gives off a great amount of thick, dark **smoke**.  
Alternate translation: "like the great amount of smoke that comes from a huge furnace" (See: [Simile](#))

### were darkened (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase **were darkened**, you can state it in active form.  
Alternate translation: "became dark" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> And he opened the shaft of the abyss, and smoke went up from the shaft as smoke of a huge furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened from the smoke of the shaft.

## Revelation 9:3

### locusts (ULT)

The **locusts** are insects that fly together in large groups. People fear them because they can eat up all the leaves in gardens and on trees. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

### power was given to them as scorpions have power (ULT)

These **scorpions** have the ability to sting and poison people. Alternate translation: “they have the ability to sting people as scorpions do” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### scorpions (ULT)

A scorpion is a small insect with a poisonous stinger on its tail. Its sting is extremely painful and the pain lasts a long time. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And out from the smoke locusts came on the earth, and power was given to them as scorpions have power on the earth.

## Revelation 9:4

### They were told not to damage the grass on the earth or any green plant or tree

Ordinary locusts were a terrible threat to people because when they swarm, they can eat up all the grass and all the leaves on plants and trees. These locusts were told not to do this.

### but only the men (ULT)

The phrase “to damage” or “to harm” is understood. Alternate translation: “but only to harm the men” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

### the seal of God (ULT)

Here, **seal** refers to a tool that is used to press a mark onto a wax seal. In this case the tool would be used to put a mark on God’s people. See how you translated “seal” in [Revelation 7:3](#). Alternate translation: “the marker of God” or “stamp of God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### their} foreheads (ULT)

The **forehead** is the top of the face, above the eyes.

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And it was told to them that they should not damage the grass on the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only the men who did not have the seal of God on {their} foreheads.

## Revelation 9:5

### it was given to them (ULT)

Here, **them** refers to the locusts. ([Revelation 9:3](#))

### them (ULT)

Here, **them** refers to the people whom the locusts were stinging.

### they will be tormented for five months (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase **will be tormented**, you can state it in active form.

Alternate translation: "the locusts will torment the people for five months" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### they will be tormented (ULT)

Alternate translation: "will suffer terrible pain"

### torment...of a scorpion (ULT)

A **scorpion** is a small insect with a poisonous stinger at the end of its long tail. The sting can cause severe pain or even death.

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And it was given to them that they should not kill them, but that they will be tormented for five months, and their torment {will be} as the torment of a scorpion when it would strike a man.



## Revelation 9:6

### men will seek death but will certainly not find it (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **death**, you can express it with a verb. Alternate translation: “people will try to find a way to die, but will not find it” or “people will try to kill themselves, but will not find a way to die” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> And in those days, men will seek death but will certainly not find it, and they will greatly desire to die, but death flees from them.

### death flees from them (ULT)

John speaks of **death** as if it were a person or animal that could run away. Alternate translation: “they will not be able to die” or “they will not die” (See: [Personification](#))

## Revelation 9:7

### General Information:

These locusts did not look like ordinary locusts. John describes them by telling how parts of them looked like other things.

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> And the appearance of the locusts {was} like horses prepared for war. And on their heads {were something} like crowns like gold, and their faces {were} like faces of men.

## Revelation 9:8

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>8</sup> And they had hair like hair of women,  
and their teeth were as of lions.

## Revelation 9:9

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>9</sup> And they had breastplates like iron breastplates, and the sound of their wings {was} like the sound of chariots—of many horses running into battle.

## Revelation 9:10

### they have tails (ULT)

Here, **they** refers to the locusts.

### with stingers like scorpions (ULT)

A scorpion is a small insect with a poisonous stinger at the end of its long tail. The sting can cause severe pain or even death. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 9:6](#). Alternate translation: “with stingers like scorpion stingers” or “with stingers that could cause terrible pain as scorpion stingers can” (See: [Simile](#))

#### ULT

**10** And they have tails with stingers like scorpions, and in their tails, their power to harm men for five months.

### in their tails they had power to harm people for five months

This could mean: (1) they had power for five months to harm people. (2) they could sting people and the people would be in pain for five months.

## Revelation 9:11

### of the abyss (ULT)

The **abyss** is an extremely deep narrow hole. This could mean: (1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever. (2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in [Revelation 9:1](#).

### is} Abaddon...Apollyon (ULT)

Both **Abaddon** and **Apollyon** mean “Destroyer.” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

#### ULT

**11** They have {as} king over them the angel of the abyss. His name in Hebrew {is} Abaddon, and in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

## Revelation 9:12

### two woes are still coming (ULT)

Existing in the future is spoken of as **coming**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>12</sup> The first woe has passed. Behold, two woes are still coming after these things.

## Revelation 9:13

### Connecting Statement:

The sixth of the seven angels begins to sound his trumpet.

### I heard a voice from (ULT)

The **voice** refers to the one who was speaking. John does not say who the speaker was, but it may have been God. Alternate translation: “I heard someone speaking” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

#### ULT

**13** And the sixth angel sounded {his} trumpet, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar that {is} before God,

### horns of the golden altar

These are horn-shaped extensions at each of the four corners of the top of the **altar**.



## Revelation 9:14

### saying (ULT)

This one who is speaking is the voice in verse 13. Alternate translation: “the voice said” or “the speaker said” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

### the four angels who have been bound (ULT)

The text does not say who has **bound** the **angels**, but it implies that God told someone to bind them. If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the four angels whom God has commanded them to bind” or “the four angels whom God has commanded someone to bind” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>14</sup> saying to the sixth angel who has the trumpet, “Release the four angels who have been bound at the great Euphrates River.”

## Revelation 9:15

**the four angels who had been prepared for that hour and day and month and year were released (ULT)**

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the angel released the four angels who had been prepared for that hour and day and month and year” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### ULT

<sup>15</sup> And the four angels who had been prepared for that hour and day and month and year were released so that they might kill a third of mankind.

**the four angels who had been prepared (ULT)**

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the four angels whom God had prepared” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

**for that hour and day and month and year (ULT)**

These words are used to show that there is a specific, chosen time and not just any time. Alternate translation: “for that exact time” (See: [Parallelism](#))

## Revelation 9:16

### General Information:

Suddenly, a huge number of soldiers on horseback appear in John's vision. John is no longer speaking about the four angels mentioned in the previous verse.

#### ULT

**16** And the number of the soldiers on horseback {was} two myriads of myriads; I heard their number.

### was} two myriads of myriads (ULT)

Some ways to express **two myriads** are: "two hundred million" or "two hundred thousand thousand" or "twenty thousand times ten thousand." If your language does not have a specific number for this, you could also see how you translated a similar large number in [Revelation 5:11](#). (See: [Numbers](#))

## Revelation 9:17

### that were} fiery red (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 6:3](#). Alternate translation: “red like fire” or “bright red”

### sulfurous yellow (ULT)

Alternate translation: “yellow like sulfur” or “bright yellow like sulfur”

#### ULT

**17** And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode on them —having breastplates {that were} fiery red and dark blue and sulfurous yellow. And the heads of the horses {were} as heads of lions, and from their mouths came fire and smoke and sulfur.

## Revelation 9:18

### A third of mankind (ULT)

See how you translated “A third” in [Revelation 8:7](#). Alternate translation: “One third of the people” (See: [Fractions](#))

#### ULT

**18** A third of mankind were killed by these three plagues: by the fire and the smoke and the sulfur that came out from their mouths.

## Revelation 9:19

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>19</sup> For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails—for their tails {are} like snakes having heads, and with them they injure people.

## Revelation 9:20

### those who were not killed by these plagues (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom the plagues had not killed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### that are neither able to see nor to hear nor to walk (ULT)

This phrase reminds us that idols are not alive and do not deserve to be worshiped. But the people did not stop worshiping them. Alternate translation: “even though these idols cannot see, hear, or walk” (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

#### ULT

<sup>20</sup> And the rest of mankind, those who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so that they will not worship the demons and the idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, that are neither able to see nor to hear nor to walk.

## Revelation 9:21

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>21</sup> And they did not repent of their murders, nor of their sorcery nor of their sexual immorality nor of their thefts.



## Revelation 10

### Revelation 10 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Seven thunders

John here describes the seven thunders as making sounds that he could understand as words. However, translators should use their normal word for “thunder” when translating these verses. (See: [Personification](#) and [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

#### “The mystery of God”

This refers to some aspect of the hidden plan of God. It is not necessary to know what this mystery is to translate it. (See: [reveal](#), [revealed](#), [revelation](#))

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Simile

John uses similes to help him describe the face, legs, and voice of the mighty angel. Translators should understand other objects in this chapter, such as the rainbow and the cloud, with their normal meanings. (See: [Simile](#))

## Revelation 10:1

### General Information:

John begins to describe a vision of a mighty angel holding a scroll. In John's vision he is viewing what is happening from earth. This takes place between the blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpets.

### having been clothed in a cloud (ULT)

John speaks of the angel as if he were wearing **a cloud** as his clothing. This expression may be understood as metaphor. However, because very unusual things were often seen in visions, it might be understood as a literally true statement in its context. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### his face like the sun (ULT)

John compares the brightness of **his face** with the brightness of **the sun**. Alternate translation: "his face was bright like the sun" (See: [Simile](#))

### his feet like pillars of fire (ULT)

Here, **feet** refers to the legs. Alternate translation: "his legs were like pillars of fire" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> And I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, having been clothed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head and his face like the sun and his feet like pillars of fire,

## Revelation 10:2

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>2</sup> and having in his hand a little scroll,  
which had been opened. And he put his  
right foot on the sea and {his} left foot  
on the land,

## Revelation 10:3

### and he shouted (ULT)

Alternate translation: "then the angel shouted"

### the seven thunders spoke out (ULT)

The **seven thunders** are described as if they were people who could speak. Alternate translation: "the seven thunders made a loud noise" or "the thunder sounded very loudly seven times"

### seven thunders (ULT)

This may refer to thunder occurring **seven** times, yet being spoken of as if it were **seven** different **thunders**.

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> and he shouted in a loud voice like a roaring lion. And when he shouted, the seven thunders spoke out with their own voices.

## Revelation 10:4

### but I heard a voice from heaven (ULT)

Here, **voice** refers to words spoken by someone other than the angel. Alternate translation: “but I heard someone speaking from heaven” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And when the seven thunders spoke out, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Seal up what the seven thunders said, and do not write it down.”

## Revelation 10:5

### raised his right hand to heaven (ULT)

He **raised his right hand to heaven** to show that he was swearing by God. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And the angel that I saw standing on the sea and on the earth raised his right hand to heaven

## Revelation 10:6

**swore by the one who lives forever {and} ever (ULT)**

Alternate translation: "and he asked that what he was going to say would be confirmed by the one who lives forever and ever"

**by the one who lives forever {and} ever (ULT)**

Here, **the one who lives forever and ever** refers to God.

**There will no longer be a delay (ULT)**

Alternate translation: "There will be no more waiting" or "God will not delay"

### ULT

<sup>6</sup> and swore by the one who lives forever {and} ever, who created heaven and the things in it and the earth and the things in it and the sea and the things in it, "There will no longer be a delay.

## Revelation 10:7

### the mystery of God will be accomplished (ULT)

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

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound {his} trumpet, then the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he proclaimed the good news to his own servants the prophets.”



## Revelation 10:8

### Connecting Statement:

John hears the voice from heaven, which he had heard in [Revelation 10:4](#), speak to him again.

### the voice that I heard from heaven (ULT)

Here, **voice** refers to the speaker. Alternate translation: “the one I heard speak from heaven” or “the one who had spoken to me from heaven” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

### I heard (ULT)

John heard.

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> And the voice that I heard from heaven is speaking to me again, and saying: “Go, take the scroll that has been opened in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.”

## Revelation 10:9

### me...he says (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the angel said to me"

### it will make your stomach bitter (ULT)

This refers to a bad taste from the **stomach** after eating something that is not good. Alternate translation: "it will make your stomach sour"

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> And I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little scroll. And he says to me, "Take and eat it, and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

## Revelation 10:10

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**10** And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it, and it was as sweet {as} honey in my mouth, but after I ate it, my stomach became bitter.

## Revelation 10:11

### tongues (ULT)

Here, **tongues** refers to the people who speak the languages.  
 Alternate translation: “many language communities” or “many groups of people who speak their own languages” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**11** And they said to me, “It is necessary for you to prophesy again about many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.”

# Revelation 11

## Revelation 11 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verses 15 and 17-18.

### Woe

John describes several “woes” in the book of Revelation. This chapter describes a second and third “woe” announced at the end of Chapter 8.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Gentiles

The word “Gentiles” here refers to ungodly people groups and not Gentile Christians. (See: [godly](#), [godliness](#), [ungodly](#), [godless](#), [ungodliness](#), [godlessness](#))

#### Two witnesses

Scholars have suggested many different ideas about these two witnesses. Translators do not need to understand this passage to accurately translate it. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

#### Bottomless pit

This image is seen several times in the Book of Revelation. It is a picture of hell as being inescapable and the opposite direction as heaven. (See: [hell](#), [lake of fire](#))

## Revelation 11:1

### General Information:

John begins to describe a vision about receiving a measuring rod and two witnesses that God appointed. This vision also takes place between the blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpets.

### **a reed like a measuring rod was given to me (ULT)**

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone gave me a reed like a measuring rod" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### **was given to me...someone} said (ULT)**

Here, **me** refers to John.

### **those who worship in it (ULT)**

Alternate translation: "count those who worship in the temple"

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> And a reed like a measuring rod was given to me, {someone} said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it."

## Revelation 11:2

### they will trample (ULT)

To **trample** to treat something as worthless by walking on it.

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> But leave out the courtyard that is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles, and they will trample the holy city for 42 months.

## Revelation 11:3

### clothed in sackcloth (ULT)

You can make it explicit why they will wear **sackcloth**. Alternate translation: “wearing rough mourning clothes” or “wearing scratchy clothes to show that they are very sad” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And I will grant to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1, 260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”



## Revelation 11:4

### These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth (ULT)

The **two olive trees** and the **two lampstands** symbolize these people, but they are not literally the people. Alternate translation:

“The two olive trees and the two lampstands that have stood before the Lord of the earth represent these witnesses” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

### the two olive trees and the two lampstands that (ULT)

John expects his readers to know about the **two olive trees and the two lampstands** because many years earlier another prophet had written about them. Alternate translation: “the two olive trees and the two lampstands, told about in scripture, that” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

## Revelation 11:5

### fire comes out of their mouth and devours their enemies

Because this is about future events, you can state this in the future tense. Alternate translation: “fire will come out of their mouth and devour their enemies”

### fire...devours their enemies (ULT)

Here, **fire** burning and killing people is spoken of as if it were an animal that could eat them up. Alternate translation: “fire ... will destroy their enemies” or “fire ... will completely burn up their enemies” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And if anyone wishes to harm them, fire comes out from their mouth and devours their enemies, and if anyone might wish to harm them, he must be killed in this way.

## Revelation 11:6

### to close up the sky so that no rain might fall (ULT)

John speaks of **the sky** as if it had a door that someone can open to let **rain fall** or close to stop the rain. Alternate translation: “to keep rain from falling from the sky” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### to turn (ULT)

Alternate translation: “to change”

### to strike the earth with every plague (ULT)

John speaks of the plagues as if they were a stick that someone could hit the earth with. Alternate translation: “to cause all kinds of trouble to occur on earth” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> They have authority to close up the sky so that no rain might fall {during} the days of their prophesy, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every plague whenever they would desire.

## Revelation 11:7

### abyss (ULT)

The **abyss** is an extremely deep narrow hole. This could mean: (1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever. (2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in [Revelation 9:1](#).

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the abyss will make war against them, and he will conquer them and kill them.

## Revelation 11:8

### their corpses (ULT)

Here, **their corpses** refers to the bodies of the two witnesses.

### in the street of the great city

The city had more than one **street**. This was a public place where people could see them. Alternate translation: “in one of the streets of the great city” or “in the main street of the great city”

### their...Lord (ULT)

They served the **Lord**, and like him, would die in that city.

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> And their corpses {will be} in the street of the great city (which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt) where also their Lord was crucified.

## Revelation 11:9

### for three and a half days (ULT)

Alternate translation: "three full days and one half day" or "3.5 days" or "3-1/2 days" (See: [Numbers](#))

### their...they do not permit...corpses to be placed in a tomb (ULT)

They will leave their bodies in the street as a sign of disrespect.

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> And for three and a half days {some} from {every} people and tribe and tongue and nation look at their corpses, and they do not permit their corpses to be placed in a tomb.

## Revelation 11:10

### And...rejoice over them...celebrate (ULT)

Alternate translation: "will rejoice and celebrate that the two witnesses have died"

### send gifts to one another (ULT)

Sending **gifts to one another** shows how happy the people were.  
(See: [Symbolic Action](#))

### those...on the earth...because these two...prophets...tormented those who live (ULT)

This is the reason that the people will be so happy that the witnesses have died.

#### ULT

**10** And those who live on the earth rejoice over them and celebrate and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who live on the earth.

## Revelation 11:11

### three and a half days (ULT)

Alternate translation: “three full days and one half day” or “3.5 days” or “3-1/2 days.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 11:9](#). (See: [Numbers](#))

### a breath of life from God entered into them (ULT)

The ability to breathe is spoken of as if it were something that can go into people. Alternate translation: “God will cause the two witnesses to breathe again and live” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### great fear fell on those seeing them (ULT)

Here, **fear** is spoken of as if it were a object that can fall on people. Alternate translation: “those who see them will be extremely afraid” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**11** But after three and a half days, a breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those seeing them.



## Revelation 11:12

### And they heard (ULT)

Here, **they heard** could mean: (1) the two witnesses will hear. (2) the people will hear what is said to the two witnesses.

### a loud voice from heaven (ULT)

Here, **a loud voice** refers to the one who speaks. Alternate translation: "someone speak loudly to them from heaven and" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### saying to them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "saying to the two witnesses"

#### ULT

**12** And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up into heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.

## Revelation 11:13

### the survivors (ULT)

Alternate translation: "those who do not die" or "those who are still living"

### the...gave glory to...God of heaven (ULT)

Alternate translation: "said that the God of heaven is glorious"

#### ULT

**13** And at that hour a great earthquake happened, and a tenth part of the city collapsed. And in the earthquake, the names of 7,000 men were killed, and the survivors became terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

## Revelation 11:14

### The second woe is past

See how you translated “The first woe is past” in [Revelation 9:12](#).  
Alternate translation: “The second terrible event is over”

### the third woe is coming quickly (ULT)

Existing in the future is spoken of as **coming**. Alternate translation: “The third woe will happen soon” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**14** The second woe has passed. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

## Revelation 11:15

### Connecting Statement:

The last of the seven angels begins to sound his trumpet.

### the seventh angel (ULT)

This is the last of the seven angels. See how you translated **seventh** in [Revelation 8:1](#). The word **seventh** is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “the final angel” or “angel number seven” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

#### ULT

**15** And the seventh angel sounded {his} trumpet, and loud voices spoke in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become {the kingdom} of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever {and} ever.”

### loud voices spoke in heaven, saying (ULT)

The phrase **loud voices** represents speakers who spoke loudly. Alternate translation: “speakers in heaven spoke loudly and said”

### The kingdom of the world has become {the kingdom} of our Lord and of his Christ (ULT)

Here, **kingdom** refers to the authority to rule **the world**. Alternate translation: “The authority to rule the world has become the authority that belongs to our Lord and his Christ” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### of the world (ULT)

Here, **the world** refers to every person in **the world**. Alternate translation: “everyone in the world” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### The kingdom of the world has become {the kingdom} of our Lord and of his Christ (ULT)

Alternate translation: “Our Lord and his Christ are now the rulers of the world”

## Revelation 11:16

### fell upon their faces (ULT)

Here, **fell upon their faces** is an idiom that means they lay down facing the ground. See how you translated “prostrated themselves” in [Revelation 4:10](#). Alternate translation: “they bowed down” (See: [Idiom](#))

#### ULT

**16** And the 24 elders, who sit on their thrones in the presence of God, fell upon their faces and worshiped God,

## Revelation 11:17

### to you, O Lord God Almighty, the one who is, and who was (ULT)

You can state these phrases as sentences. Alternate translation: “you, Lord God, the ruler over all. You are the one who is, and you are the one who was” (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

#### ULT

<sup>17</sup> saying, “We give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty, the one who is, and who was, and because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. <sup>[1]</sup>”

### God...who is (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the one who exists” or “the one who lives”

### God...was (ULT)

Alternate translation: “who has always existed” or “who has always lived”

### you have taken your great power (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this phrase, you can state explicitly what God did with his **great power**. Alternate translation: “you have defeated with your power everyone who has rebelled against you” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

## Revelation 11:18

### General Information:

The words **you** and **your** refer to God.

### **your wrath has come (ULT)**

Existing in the present is spoken of as having **come**. Alternate translation: “you are ready to show your anger” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### **for the dead to be judged (ULT)**

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

### **for the dead (ULT)**

If your readers would misunderstand the nominal adjective **dead**, you can state it as a verb or adjective. Alternate translation: “for those who have died” or “for the dead people” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

### **to those who fear your name (ULT)**

Here, **name** is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: “to those who fear you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**18** And the nations were enraged, but your wrath has come, and the time for the dead to be judged, and to give the reward to your servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who are destroying the earth.”

## Revelation 11:19

### And the temple of God that {is} in heaven was opened (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “Then someone opened God’s temple in heaven” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### the ark of the covenant of the Lord was seen in his temple (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “I saw the ark of his covenant in his temple” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### flashes of lightning (ULT)

Use your language’s way of describing what **lightning** looks like each time it appears. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:5](#).

### And...loud sounds...crashes of thunder (ULT)

Here, **loud sounds and crashes of thunder** refers to the loud noises that thunder makes. Use your language’s way of describing the sound of thunder. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:5](#).

#### ULT

<sup>19</sup> And the temple of God that {is} in heaven was opened and the ark of the covenant of the Lord was seen in his temple. And there were flashes of lightning and loud sounds and crashes of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.



## Revelation 12

### Revelation 12 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verses 10-12.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Serpent

The Book of Revelation uses imagery from the Old Testament. For example, John refers to Satan as the serpent. This image comes from the account of the Garden of Eden when Satan tempted Eve. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

##### “A great sign was seen in heaven”

By using the passive voice here, John does not say who saw this great sign in heaven. The translation may be difficult when the subject is unclear, if your language does not have a passive voice. Many English translations use the past tense here and say “A great sign appeared in heaven.” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

## Revelation 12:1

### General Information:

John begins to describe a woman who appears in his vision.

**a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon  
under her feet (ULT)**

### ULT

<sup>1</sup> And a great sign appeared in heaven:  
a woman clothed with the sun, and the  
moon under her feet, and a crown of 12  
stars on her head,

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “a woman who was wearing the sun and had the moon under her feet” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

## Revelation 12:2

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>2</sup> and having in the womb, and she cries out in birth pains and is struggling to give birth.

## Revelation 12:3

### Connecting Statement:

John describes a dragon that appears in his vision.

### a...dragon (ULT)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a huge red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.

## Revelation 12:4

### a third (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 8:7](#). Alternate translation: "one third" (See: [Fractions](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And his tail sweeps away a third of the stars in heaven and hurled them down to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she would give birth, he might devour her child.

## Revelation 12:5

### to rule all the nations with an iron rod (ULT)

Here, ruling harshly is spoken of as ruling **with an iron rod**. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 2:27](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

### her child was snatched away to God (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God quickly took her child to himself” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is going to rule all the nations with an iron rod. And her child was snatched away to God and to his throne,

## Revelation 12:6

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>6</sup> and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God there, so that they might provide for her there for 1, 260 days.

## Revelation 12:7

### dragon (ULT)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as “the devil or Satan.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought back.



## Revelation 12:8

**nor was a place found for them any longer in heaven (ULT)**

Alternate translation: "so the dragon and his angels could no longer stay in heaven"

### ULT

<sup>8</sup> But he was not strong enough, nor was a place found for them any longer in heaven.

## Revelation 12:9

**the great dragon...the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him (ULT)**

You can give the information about the serpent in a separate sentence after the statement that it was thrown down to the earth.

Alternate translation: “the great dragon was thrown down to earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. He is the old serpent who deceives the world and is called the devil or Satan” (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

### ULT

<sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was thrown down—the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

**the great dragon was thrown down—the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him (ULT)**

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God threw the great dragon—the ancient serpent, who people also call the devil and Satan—and his angels out of heaven and sent them to the earth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

## Revelation 12:10

### I heard (ULT)

The word **I** refers to John.

### I heard a loud voice in heaven (ULT)

Here, the **voice** refers to someone who speaks. Alternate translation: "I heard someone saying loudly from heaven" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ (ULT)

God saving people by his power is spoken of as if his **salvation** and **power** were things that **have come**. God's ruling and Christ's authority are also spoken of as if they have come. Alternate translation: "Now God has saved his people by his power, God rules as king, and his Christ has all authority" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### have come (ULT)

God is revealing these things because their time to occur has **come**. It is not that they did not exist before. Alternate translation: "have begun to really exist" or "have appeared" or "have become real"

### our...the accuser of...brothers has been thrown down (ULT)

Here, **the accuser of our brothers** is the dragon that was thrown down in [Revelation 12:9](#).

### of our brothers (ULT)

Fellow believers are spoken of as if they were **brothers**. Alternate translation: "our fellow believers" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### day and night (ULT)

These two parts of the day are used together to mean "all the time" or "without stopping" (See: [Merism](#))

#### ULT

**10** And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, the one who accused them before our God day and night."

## Revelation 12:11

### they conquered him (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they conquered the accuser"

### through the blood of the Lamb (ULT)

Here, **the blood** refers to the death of the Lamb. Alternate translation: "because the Lamb had shed his blood and died for them" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### by the word of their testimony (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **testimony**, you can express it with the verb "testify" and you can state who they testified. Alternate translation: "by what they said when they testified" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

### by the word of their testimony (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this phrase, you can state explicitly what they testified. Alternate translation: "by what they said when they testified to others about Jesus" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### even to death (ULT)

The believers told the truth about Jesus, even though they knew that their enemies might try to kill them because of it. Alternate translation: "but they kept testifying even though they knew that they might die for it"

#### ULT

**11** And they conquered him through the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives even to death.

## Revelation 12:12

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>12</sup> Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and those who reside in them! Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil has gone down to you, having terrible anger because he knows he has {only} a little time!”

## Revelation 12:13

### the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the dragon realized that God had thrown him out of heaven and sent him to earth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>13</sup> And when the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.

### the dragon (ULT)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as “the devil or Satan.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

## Revelation 12:14

### of a...eagle...of...serpent (ULT)

Here, **the serpent** is another way of referring to the dragon.

#### ULT

**14** But two wings of a great eagle were given to the woman so that she might flee to the wilderness to her place, where she is taken care of there for a time and times and half a time—away from the face of the serpent.

## Revelation 12:15

### serpent (ULT)

Here, **the serpent** is the same being as the dragon mentioned earlier in [Revelation 12:9](#).

### like a river (ULT)

The water flowed from his mouth **like a river** flows. Alternate translation: “in large volume” (See: [Simile](#))

### he might cause her to be swept away by a flood (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “he might sweep her away with a flood” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

**15** And the serpent poured water like a river out from his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away by a flood.



## Revelation 12:16

**the earth opened its mouth and swallowed  
the river that the dragon poured out from his  
mouth (ULT)**

Here, **the earth** is spoken of as if it were a living thing, and a hole in the earth is spoken of as if it were a **mouth** that could drink up the water. Alternate translation: “a hole in the ground opened up and the river from the dragon went down into the hole” (See: [Personification](#))

### ULT

<sup>16</sup> But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon poured out from his mouth.

### dragon (ULT)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as “the devil or Satan.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

## Revelation 12:17

### who hold to the testimony of Jesus (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **testimony**, you can express it as a verb. Alternate translation: “who continue to testify about Jesus” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

#### ULT

**17** And the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war with the rest of her seed, those who keep the commandments of God and who hold to the testimony of Jesus.

## Revelation 13

### Revelation 13 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the words of verse 10, which are from the Old Testament.

#### Important figures of speech in this chapter

##### Similes

John uses many similes in this chapter. They help to describe the images that he sees in his vision. (See: [Simile](#))

#### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

##### Unknown animals

John uses different animals to try to describe what he saw. Some of these animals may not be known in the target language. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

## Revelation 13:1

### General Information:

John begins to describe a beast who appears in his vision. Here, **I** refers to John.

### ULT

**1** And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on its horns {were} ten crowns, and on its heads {was} a blasphemous name. <sup>[1]</sup>

## Revelation 13:2

### dragon (ULT)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified as “the devil or Satan.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, and its feet {were} like a bear’s, and its mouth {was} like a lion’s mouth, and the dragon gave his power to it, and his throne and his great authority.

### its...the dragon gave...power to it (ULT)

The **dragon** made the beast as powerful as he was. He did not lose **his power**, however, by giving it to the beast.

### his power ... his throne, and his great authority to rule

The words **power**, **throne**, and **authority** are three ways of referring to the dragon's authority, and together they emphasize that the authority was great.

### his throne (ULT)

Here, **throne** refers to the dragon’s authority to rule as king. Alternate translation: “his royal authority” or “his authority to rule as king” (See: [Metonymy](#))

## Revelation 13:3

### but its fatal wound was healed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “but its fatal wound healed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### fatal wound (ULT)

This is an injury that is serious enough to cause a person to die. Alternate translation: “deadly wound”

### the whole earth (ULT)

Here, **the whole earth** refers to all the people who live anywhere on it. Alternate translation: “all the people on the earth” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### fatal...and followed} after...beast (ULT)

Alternate translation: “obeyed the beast”

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And one of its heads {was} like it had been killed, but its fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth marveled {and followed} after the beast,

## Revelation 13:4

### dragon (ULT)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified as “the devil or Satan.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### the...he gave {his} authority to...beast (ULT)

Alternate translation: “he had caused the beast to have as much authority as he had”

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave {his} authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who {is} like the beast, and who is able to fight against it?”

### Who {is} like the beast, and who is able to fight against it (ULT)

This question shows how amazed they were about the beast. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can translate it as a statement. Alternate translation: “No one is as powerful as the beast or able to fight against it and win!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

## Revelation 13:5

### to it was given...was given to it (ULT)

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

### to it was given a mouth speaking (ULT)

Being **given a mouth** refers to being allowed to speak. Alternate translation: "the beast was allowed to speak" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And to it was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and authority was given to it to act for 42 months.



## Revelation 13:6

### for blasphemies against God (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to say disrespectful things about God"

**blaspheming his name, the place where he lives, and those who live in heaven**

These phrases tell how the beast spoke blasphemies against God.

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> And it opened its mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle—those who dwell in heaven.

## Revelation 13:7

### authority was given to it (ULT)

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

### every tribe, people, language, and nation

This means that people from every ethnic group are included. See how you translated a similar list in [Revelation 5:9](#).

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> And to it was granted to make war with the saints and to conquer them, and authority was given to it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.

## Revelation 13:8

### will worship it (ULT)

Alternate translation: “will worship the beast”

### everyone whose name has not been written in the Book of Life (ULT)

This phrase clarifies who on the earth will worship the beast. If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “everyone whose names the Lamb did not write in the Book of Life” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> And all those who live on the earth will worship it—everyone whose name has not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb who was slaughtered from the foundation of the world.

### from the foundation of the world (ULT)

Alternate translation: “when God created the world”

### of the Lamb (ULT)

A lamb is a young sheep. Here it is used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### who was slaughtered (ULT)

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

## Revelation 13:9

### General Information:

These verses are a break from John's account of his vision. Here he give a warning to the people reading his account.

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

### If anyone has an ear, let him hear (ULT)

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. Here, **has an ear** is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: "If anyone is willing to listen, listen" or "If anyone is willing to understand, let him understand and obey" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### If anyone has an ear, let him hear (ULT)

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7](#). Alternate translation: "If you are willing to listen, listen" or "If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

## Revelation 13:10

### If anyone {is} for captivity (ULT)

This expression means that someone has decided who should be taken. If your readers would misunderstand this phrase, you may state explicitly who decided it. Alternate translation: “If God has decided that someone should be taken captive” or “If it is God’s will that someone should be taken into captivity” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### ULT

<sup>10</sup> If anyone {is} for captivity, {to captivity} he goes; if anyone will be killed with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.

### If anyone {is} for captivity (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **captivity**, you can express it with the verb “capture.” Alternate translation: “If it is God’s will for a certain person to captured” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

### If anyone {is} for captivity (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “If it is God’s will for the enemy to capture a certain person” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### if anyone will be killed with the sword (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “If it is God’s will for the enemy to kill a certain person with a sword” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### with the sword (ULT)

Here, **the sword** represents war. Alternate translation: “in war” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### he must...be killed (ULT)

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

### Here is a call for the patient endurance and faith of the saints

Alternate translation: “God’s holy people must endure patiently and be faithful”

## Revelation 13:11

### Connecting Statement:

John begins to describe another beast who appears in his vision.

### it was speaking like a dragon (ULT)

Harsh speech is spoken of as if it were the roar of **a dragon**.

Alternate translation: "it spoke harshly like a dragon speaks" (See: [Simile](#))

#### ULT

**11** And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and it had two horns like a lamb, and it was speaking like a dragon.

### a dragon (ULT)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

## Revelation 13:12

### And...the...earth...those who live on it (ULT)

Alternate translation: “everyone on the earth”

### the one whose lethal wound had been healed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the one who had a lethal wound that healed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### the...lethal...wound (ULT)

This was an injury that was serious enough that it could have made him die. Alternate translation: “deadly wound”

#### ULT

<sup>12</sup> And it exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and it makes it so that the earth and those who live on it will worship the first beast —the one whose lethal wound had been healed.

## Revelation 13:13

### it does (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the beast from the earth performed"

#### ULT

**13** And it does great signs, so that he might even cause fire to come down to the earth from heaven in front of mankind.



## Revelation 13:14

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**14** And it deceives those who live on the earth through the signs that it has been granted to do in the presence of the beast, telling those who live on the earth to make an image to the beast that has the wound of the sword, but lived.

## Revelation 13:15

### it was granted to him (ULT)

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

### to give breath to the image of the beast (ULT)

Here, **breath** represents life. Alternate translation: “to give life to the beast’s image” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### to the image of the beast (ULT)

This is **the image** of the first **beast** that had been mentioned.

### might cause whoever would not worship the image of the beast to be killed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “might put to death anyone who refused to worship the first beast” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

**15** And it was granted to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak, and might cause whoever would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

## Revelation 13:16

### And it caused everyone (ULT)

Alternate translation: "And the beast from the earth also forced everyone"

#### ULT

**16** And it caused everyone, the small and the great and the rich and the poor and the free and the slave, so that they might give to them a mark on their right hand or on their forehead,

## Revelation 13:17

**no one was able to buy or to sell except the one who has the mark—the name of the beast (ULT)**

The implicit information is that the beast from the earth commanded these things. If your readers would misunderstand this phrase, you can state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “he commanded that people could buy or sell things only if they had the mark of the beast” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### ULT

<sup>17</sup> and so that no one was able to buy or to sell except the one who has the mark—the name of the beast, or the number of its name.

## the mark of the name of the beast

The **mark** indicated that the person who received it worshiped **the beast**.

## Revelation 13:18

### General Information:

This verse is a break from John's account of his vision. Here he gives another warning to the people reading his account.

### Here is wisdom (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Wisdom is needed" or "You need to be wise about this"

#### ULT

**18** Here is wisdom: The one who has understanding, let him calculate the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man, and its number is 666.

### The one who has understanding, let him calculate (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **insight**, you can express it with the verb "understand."

Alternate translation: "If anyone is able to understand things" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

### let him calculate the number of the beast (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he should discern what the number of the beast means" or "he should figure out what the number of the beast means"

### the number...is...of a man (ULT)

The **number** could represent: (1) one person. (2) all of humanity.

## Revelation 14

### Revelation 14 General Notes

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Harvest

Harvest is when people go out to gather ripe food from plants. Jesus used this as a metaphor to teach his followers that they need to go and tell other people about him so those people can be part of God's kingdom. This chapter uses the metaphor of two harvests. Jesus gathers in his people from the whole earth. Then an angel gathers in wicked people whom God will punish. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [faith](#))

## Revelation 14:1

### General Information:

The word **I** refers to John.

### Connecting Statement:

John begins to describe the next part of his vision. There are 144,000 believers standing before the Lamb.

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> And I looked and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him {were} 144,000 having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads.

### the Lamb (ULT)

A lamb is a young sheep. Here, **the Lamb** it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### were} 144,000 (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 7:4](#). Alternate translation: “one hundred forty-four thousand” (See: [Numbers](#))

### having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “on whose foreheads the Lamb and his Father had written their names” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### of his Father (ULT)

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

## Revelation 14:2

### a voice from heaven (ULT)

Alternate translation: "a sound from heaven"

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven as a roar of many waters and as the sound of loud thunder, and the voice I heard was like harpists playing on their harps.



## Revelation 14:3

### they sing a new song (ULT)

This phrase explains what the sound was that John heard in verse 2. Alternate translation: “that sound was a new song that they sang” or “the sound was the 144,000 people singing a new song”

### the four living creatures (ULT)

See how you translated “living creature” in [Revelation 4:6](#)

### the...elders (ULT)

Here, **the elders** refers to the twenty-four elders around the throne. See how you translated “elders” in [Revelation 4:4](#).

### 144,000 (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 7:4](#). Alternate translation: “one hundred forty-four thousand” (See: [Numbers](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no one was able to learn the song except the 144,000 who had been bought from the earth.

## Revelation 14:4

### have not defiled themselves with women (ULT)

This could mean: (1) they have never had immoral sexual relations with a woman. (2) they have never had sexual relations with a woman. Defiling oneself with women may be a symbol of worshiping idols.

### virgins (ULT)

This could mean: (1) they did not have sexual relations with a woman who was not their wife. (2) they are virgins.

### the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes (ULT)

Doing what the Lamb does is spoken of as following him. Alternate translation: “they do whatever the Lamb does” or “they obey the Lamb” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### have been redeemed from among mankind as firstfruits (ULT)

Here, **firstfruits** is a metaphor for the first offering to be made to God in celebration of harvest. Alternate translation: “have been purchased out of the midst of the rest of mankind as a special celebration of salvation” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> These are the ones that have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from among mankind as firstfruits for God and for the Lamb,

## Revelation 14:5

### no lie was found in their mouth (ULT)

Here, **their mouth** refers to “what they said.” Alternate translation: “they never lied when they spoke” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> and no lie was found in their mouth,  
for they are blameless. <sup>[1]</sup>

## Revelation 14:6

### Connecting Statement:

John begins to describe the next part of his vision. This is the first of three angels who proclaim judgment on the earth.

### **every nation, tribe, language, and people**

This means that people from every ethnic group are included. See how you translated a similar list in [Revelation 5:9](#).

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> And I saw another angel flying in midair, having the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—even to every nation and tribe and tongue and people—

## Revelation 14:7

### the hour of his judgment has come (ULT)

Here, **the hour** represents the time that has been chosen for something, and the hour having **come** is a metaphor for now being the chosen time. Alternate translation: “now is the time that God has chosen for judgment” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### the hour of his judgment has come (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **judgment**, you can express it with a verb. Alternate translation: “it is now the time for God to judge people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> saying in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. And worship the one who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and the springs of water.”

## Revelation 14:8

### Fallen, fallen {is} Babylon the great (ULT)

The angel speaks of **Babylon** having been destroyed as if it had **fallen**. Alternate translation: “Babylon the great has been destroyed” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### is} Babylon the great (ULT)

This was probably a symbol for the city of Rome, which was large, wealthy, and sinful. Alternate translation: “Babylon the large city” or “the important city of Babylon” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> And another {angel}—a second—followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen {is} Babylon the great, who caused all the nations to drink from the wine of her immoral passion.”

### who...caused all the nations to drink (ULT)

Babylon is spoken of as if it were a person, instead of a city filled with people. (See: [Metonymy](#))

### who caused all the nations to drink from the wine of her immoral passion (ULT)

Here, **to drink from the wine** is a symbol for participating in her sexually **immoral passion**. Alternate translation: “to be sexually immoral like her” or “to get drunk like her in sexual sin” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### of her immoral passion (ULT)

Babylon is spoken of as if it were a prostitute who has caused other people to sin along with her. (See: [Personification](#))

### of her immoral passion (ULT)

Here, **immoral passion** may well have a double meaning: literal sexual immorality and also the worship of false gods. (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Revelation 14:9

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>9</sup> And another angel—a third—followed them, saying in a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,

## Revelation 14:10

### he will also drink from the wine of the wrath of God (ULT)

Here, **to drink from the wine of the wrath of God** is a symbol for being punished by God. Alternate translation: “will also drink some of the wine that represents God’s wrath” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### that has been poured undiluted (ULT)

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

### that has been poured undiluted (ULT)

This means that the wine has no water mixed into it. It is strong, and a person who drinks much of it will get very drunk. As a symbol, it means that God will be extremely angry, not just a little angry. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### the cup of his anger (ULT)

This symbolic **cup** holds the wine that represents God’s **anger**. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>10</sup> he will also drink from the wine of the wrath of God that has been poured undiluted into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur before the holy angels and before the Lamb.



## Revelation 14:11

### the smoke of their torment (ULT)

The phrase **their torment** refers to the fire that torments them.  
Alternate translation: “the smoke from the fire that torments them”  
(See: [Metonymy](#))

### they have no rest (ULT)

Alternate translation: “they have no relief” or “the torment does not stop”

#### ULT

**11** And the smoke of their torment goes up forever {and} ever, and they have no rest day and night—the ones who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

## Revelation 14:12

### Here is the endurance of the saints (ULT)

See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 13:10](#).

#### ULT

<sup>12</sup> Here is the endurance of the saints,  
those who keep the commandments of  
God and the faith of Jesus.”

## Revelation 14:13

### the dead who die

Alternate translation: "those who die"

### the...who die...in the Lord (ULT)

This may refer to believers who are killed by their enemies. Alternate translation: "who are united to the Lord and die" or "who die because they are united to the Lord"

### ULT

**13** And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write: Blessed {are} the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

### deeds...their...deeds...follow with them (ULT)

These **deeds** are spoken of as if they were alive and able to **follow** those who did them. This could mean: (1) others will know the good deeds these people have done. (2) God will reward them for their deeds. (See: [Personification](#))

## Revelation 14:14

### Connecting Statement:

John begins to describe the next part of his vision. This part is about the Son of Man harvesting the earth. Harvesting the grain is a symbol of God's judging people. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### was one} like a son of man (ULT)

Here, the expression **a son of man** describes a human figure, someone who looks human. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:13](#). (See: [Simile](#))

### a sharp sickle (ULT)

A **sickle** is a tool with a curved blade used for cutting grass, grain, and vines (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

#### ULT

**14** And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud {was one} like a son of man, having a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

## Revelation 14:15

### came out of the temple (ULT)

Alternate translation: "came out of the heavenly temple"

### the time to reap has come (ULT)

Existing in the present is spoken of as having **come**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**15** And another angel came out of the temple, crying out in a loud voice to the one sitting on the cloud: "Send out your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, since the harvest of the earth has ripened."

## Revelation 14:16

### the earth was harvested (ULT)

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

#### ULT

**16** And the one who was sitting on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

## Revelation 14:17

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**17** And another angel came out from the temple that {is} in heaven, he himself also having a sharp sickle.

## Revelation 14:18

### the one who had authority over...fire...the (ULT)

Here, **authority over** refers to responsibility to tend **the fire**.

#### ULT

**18** And another angel, the one who had authority over the fire, {came} from the altar, and he shouted in a loud voice to the one who has the sharp sickle, saying, "Send out your sharp sickle and gather in the clusters of grapes of the vines of the earth, since their grapes have ripened."



## Revelation 14:19

### the great wine vat of God's wrath

Alternate translation: "the large wine vat where God will show his wrath"

#### ULT

**19** And the angel swung his sickle to the earth and harvested the grapevine of the earth, and he threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

## Revelation 14:20

### winepress (ULT)

This is “the great winepress” of [Revelation 14:19](#).

### up to the height of a horse’s bridle

Alternate translation: “as high as the bridle in a horse’s mouth”

### the bridles (ULT)

A **bridle** is device made of leather straps that goes around a horse’s head and is used for directing the horse.

### 1, 600 stadia (ULT)

Alternate translation: “one thousand six hundred stadia” or “sixteen hundred stadia” (See: [Numbers](#))

### 1, 600 stadia (ULT)

A “stadium” is 185 meters. The plural form of “stradium” is **stadia**. In modern measures this would be about “300 kilometers” or “200 miles.” (See: [Biblical Distance](#))

#### ULT

<sup>20</sup> And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood poured out from the winepress up to the bridles of the horses, for 1, 600 stadia.

## Revelation 15

### Revelation 15 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

In this chapter, John describes events and pictures that occur in heaven.

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 verses 3-4.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### “Victorious over the beast”

These people are spiritually victorious. While most spiritual battles cannot be seen, the Book of Revelation pictures spiritual battles as openly occurring. (See: [spirit](#), [wind](#), [breath](#) and [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

#### “The temple having the tent of witness, was open in heaven”

Scripture elsewhere indicates the earthly temple copied God’s perfect dwelling place in heaven. Here John seems to refer to God’s heavenly dwelling place or temple. (See: [heaven](#), [sky](#), [heavens](#), [heavenly](#) and [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

### Songs

The Book of Revelation often describes heaven as a place where people sing. They worship God with songs. This illustrates that heaven is a place where God is always worshiped.

## Revelation 15:1

### General Information:

This verse is a summary of what will happen in 15:6-16:21.

### great and marvelous (ULT)

The words **great** and **marvelous** have similar meanings and are used for emphasis. Alternate translation: “something that greatly amazed me” (See: [Doublet](#))

### ULT

<sup>1</sup> And I saw another great and marvelous sign in heaven: seven angels having seven plagues—the final {ones}, because with them the wrath of God will be completed.

### seven angels with seven plagues

Alternate translation: “seven angels who had authority to send seven plagues on the earth”

### the final {ones} (ULT)

Alternate translation: “and after them, there will not be any more plagues”

### because with them the wrath of God will be completed (ULT)

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

### because with them the wrath of God will be completed (ULT)

This could mean: (1) these plagues will show all of God’s anger. (2) after these plagues, God will no longer be angry.

## Revelation 15:2

### General Information:

Here John begins to describe his vision of the people who had been victorious over the beast and who are praising God.

### a sea of glass (ULT)

You can state explicitly how it was like **glass** or **a sea**. This could mean: (1) a sea is spoken of as if it were glass. Alternate translation:

“a sea that was as smooth as glass” (2) glass if spoken of as if it were a sea. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:6](#). Alternate translation: “glass that was spread out like a sea” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### ULT

<sup>2</sup> Then I saw {something} like a sea of glass having been mixed with fire. And those who are victorious over the beast and over his image and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.

### those who are victorious over the beast and over his image (ULT)

You can state explicitly how they were **victorious**. Alternate translation: “who had been victorious over the beast and his image by not worshipping them” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### over the number of his name (ULT)

You can state explicitly how they were victorious over **the number**. Alternate translation: “over the number representing his name by not being marked with that number” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### the number representing his name

This refers to **the number** described in [Revelation 13:18](#).

## Revelation 15:3

### they sing (ULT)

Alternate translation: "those who had been victorious over the beast were singing"

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous {are} your deeds, O Lord God Almighty. Righteous and true {are} your ways, O King of the Ages. <sup>[1]</sup>"

## Revelation 15:4

### Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name, because {you} alone {are} holy (ULT)

This question is used to show their amazement at how great and glorious the Lord is. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as an exclamation. Alternate translation: “Lord, everyone will fear you and glorify your name because you are holy!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name, because {you} alone {are} holy? For all the nations will come and worship before you, because your righteous deeds have been revealed.”

### glorify your name (ULT)

The phrase **your name** refers to God. Alternate translation: “glorify you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### your righteous deeds have been revealed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “you have made everyone know about your righteous deeds” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

## Revelation 15:5

### Connecting Statement:

The seven angels with the seven plagues come out of the most holy place. They were spoken of previously in [Revelation 15:1](#).

### after these things (ULT)

Alternate translation: "after the people finished singing"

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And after these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven had been opened.



## Revelation 15:6

### the seven angels holding the seven plagues

These **seven angels** were seen as **holding seven plagues** because in [Revelation 17:7](#) they are given seven bowls full of the wrath of God.

### linen (ULT)

Linen is a fine, expensive cloth made from flax.

### with golden sashes (ULT)

A sash is a decorative piece of cloth worn on the upper body.

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> And the seven angels holding the seven plagues came out from the temple, having been clothed with pure, bright linen and with golden sashes having been wrapped around {their} chests.

## Revelation 15:7

### the four living creatures (ULT)

See how you translated **living creatures** in [Revelation 4:6](#)

### seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God (ULT)

The word **wrath** here refers to punishment. Alternate translation: “seven gold bowls full of something that represents the wrath of God” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever {and} ever.

## Revelation 15:8

### until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “until the seven angels finished sending the seven plagues to the earth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one was able to enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

## Revelation 16

### Revelation 16 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the vision of chapter 15. Together they give the seven plagues that complete the wrath of God. (See: [wrath, fury](#))

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 verses 5-7.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### “I heard a loud voice call out of the temple”

This is the same temple that was mentioned in chapter 15.

##### Seven bowls of God’s wrath

This chapter reveals severe judgments. They are pictured as angels pouring out seven bowls of God’s wrath. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The tone of this chapter is meant to astonish the reader. Translations should not minimize the vivid language expressed in this chapter.

#### Armageddon

This is a Hebrew word. It is the name of a place. John used the sounds of the Hebrew word and wrote them with Greek letters. Translators are encouraged to transliterate it using the letters of the target language. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))

## Revelation 16:1

### Connecting Statement:

John continues to describe the part of the vision about the seven angels with the seven plagues. The seven plagues are the seven bowls of God's wrath.

### I heard (ULT)

Here, **I** refers to John.

### bowls of the wrath of God (ULT)

See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 15:7](#). Alternate translation: "bowls full of something that represents God's wrath" (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God onto the earth."

## Revelation 16:2

### poured out his bowl (ULT)

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. Alternate translation: “poured out God’s wrath from his bowl” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### So...an ugly...painful sore (ULT)

These could be infections from diseases or injuries that have not healed.

### the mark of the beast (ULT)

The **mark of the beast** was an identifying mark that indicated that the person who received it worshiped the beast. See how you translated this in [Revelation 13:17](#).

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> So the first {angel} went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and an ugly and painful sore happened on the men who have the mark of the beast and those who worship its image.

## Revelation 16:3

### poured out his bowl (ULT)

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2](#). Alternate translation: “poured out God’s wrath from his bowl” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### the sea (ULT)

Here, **the sea** refers to all the salt water lakes and oceans. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And the second {angel} poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood, as of a dead {person}, and every living thing in the sea died.

## Revelation 16:4

### poured out his bowl (ULT)

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2](#). Alternate translation: “poured out God’s wrath from his bowl” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### the rivers and the springs of water (ULT)

This refers to all bodies of fresh **water**. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And the third {angel} poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and it became blood.



## Revelation 16:5

### the angel of the waters (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) the third **angel** who was in charge of pouring out God's wrath on the rivers and springs of water. (2) another **angel** who was in charge of all the waters.

### You are righteous (ULT)

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

### the one who is and who was

See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 1:4](#). Alternate translation: "God who is and who was"

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "You are righteous—the one who is and who was, the Holy One—because you have judged these things."

[1]

## Revelation 16:6

### they poured out the blood of the saints and prophets (ULT)

Here, **poured out the blood** means they killed them. Alternate translation: "they murdered God's holy people and the prophets" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> Because they poured out the blood of the saints and prophets, you have also given them blood to drink; it is what they deserve."

### the blood...and...you have...given them...to drink (ULT)

God will make the evil people **drink** the waters that he turned to **blood**.

## Revelation 16:7

### I heard the altar saying (ULT)

Here, **altar** here refers perhaps to someone at the altar. "I heard someone at the altar reply" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God Almighty, your judgments {are} true and righteous."

## Revelation 16:8

### poured out his bowl (ULT)

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2](#). Alternate translation: “poured out God’s wrath from his bowl” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> And the fourth {angel} poured out his bowl on the sun and it was granted to it to scorch men with fire.

### it was granted to it to scorch men (ULT)

John speaks about the sun as if it were a person. (See: [Personification](#))

### it was granted to it to scorch men (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “and caused the sun to severely burn the people” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

## Revelation 16:9

### men were scorched by the great heat (ULT)

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

### they blasphemed the name of God (ULT)

Here, **the name of God** represents God. Alternate translation: “they blasphemed God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### the name of God who has the authority over these plagues (ULT)

This phrase reminds readers of something they already know about **God**. It helps to explain why the people were blaspheming God. Alternate translation: “God because he has the power over these plagues” (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

### the authority over these plagues (ULT)

This refers to the power to inflict **these plague** on people, and the power to stop the plagues. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> And men were scorched by the great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has the authority over these plagues, but they did not repent to give him glory.

## Revelation 16:10

### poured out his bowl (ULT)

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2](#). Alternate translation: “poured out God’s wrath from his bowl” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### the throne of the beast (ULT)

The **throne of the beast** is where the beast reigns from. It may refer to the capital city of his kingdom. (See: [Metonymy](#))

### its kingdom became darkened (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the contents of the bowl made the kingdom of the beast dark” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### they chewed on (ULT)

Here, **they** refers to the people in the beast’s kingdom.

#### ULT

**10** And the fifth {angel} poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom became darkened, and they chewed on their tongues because of the pain.

## Revelation 16:11

### they blasphemed (ULT)

Here, **they** refers to the people in the beast's kingdom.

#### ULT

**11** And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pain and because of their sores, but they did not repent of their deeds.

## Revelation 16:12

### poured out his bowl (ULT)

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2](#). Alternate translation: “poured out God’s wrath from his bowl” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### the Euphrates, and its water was dried up (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. You can also make it into two sentences. Alternate translation: “the Euphrates, and caused its water to dry up” or “the Euphrates. Its water dried up” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

**12** And the sixth {angel} poured out his bowl into the great river, the Euphrates, and its water was dried up so that the way of the kings from the rising of the sun might be prepared.



## Revelation 16:13

### like frogs (ULT)

A frog is a small animal that lives near water. Jews considered them unclean animals.

### of the dragon (ULT)

A **dragon** is a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as “the devil or Satan.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

**13** And I saw {coming} from the mouth of the dragon and from the mouth of the beast and from the mouth of the false prophet three unclean spirits like frogs,

## Revelation 16:14

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**14** for they are spirits of demons performing signs, who go out to the kings of the whole world to gather them together for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

## Revelation 16:15

### General Information:

Verse 15 is a break from the main story line of John's vision. These are words spoken by Jesus. The story line continues in verse 16.

**Behold! I come as a thief! Blessed {is} the one who watches and keeps his garments, so that he might not walk around naked and they might see his shameful condition (ULT)**

This is in parentheses to show that it is not part of the story line in the vision. Rather, this is something that the Lord Jesus said. You can state explicitly that the Lord Jesus said this, as in the UST. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### I come as a thief (ULT)

Jesus will **come** at a time when people do not expect him, just as **a thief** comes when not expected. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 3:3](#). (See: [Simile](#))

### keeps his garments (ULT)

Living the right way is spoken of as keeping one's clothes on. Alternate translation: "doing what is right, like keeping his clothes on" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### keeps his garments (ULT)

Some versions translate this phrase as, "keeps his garments with him."

### his...they might see...shameful condition (ULT)

Here the word **they** refers to other people.

#### ULT

**15** ("Behold! I come as a thief! Blessed {is} the one who watches and keeps his garments, so that he might not walk around naked and they might see his shameful condition.")

## Revelation 16:16

### they brought them together (ULT)

Alternate translation: “the spirits of the demons brought the kings and their armies together”

### the place that is called (ULT)

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

### Armageddon (ULT)

**Armageddon** is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

#### ULT

**16** And they brought them together at the place that is called Armageddon in Hebrew.

## Revelation 16:17

### Connecting Statement:

The seventh angel pours out the seventh bowl of God's wrath.

### poured out his bowl (ULT)

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2](#). Alternate translation: "poured out God's wrath from his bowl" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**17** And the seventh {angel} poured out his bowl into the air and a loud voice came out from the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"

### and a loud voice came out from the temple, from the throne (ULT)

This means someone sitting on **the throne** or someone standing near the throne spoke loudly. It is unclear who is speaking. (See: [Metonymy](#))

## Revelation 16:18

### flashes of lightning (ULT)

Use your language's way of describing what **lightning** looks like each time it appears. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:5](#).

### And...sounds...crashes of thunder (ULT)

These **sounds and crashes** are the loud noises that **thunder** makes. Use your language's way of describing the sound of thunder. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:5](#).

#### ULT

**18** And there came about flashes of lightning and sounds and crashes of thunder, and a great earthquake happened—such as has not ever happened from {when} man had not {yet} been on the earth, so powerful {and} great {was} the earthquake.

## Revelation 16:19

### the great city became {split} into (ULT)

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

### Babylon the Great was remembered before God (ULT)

This does not mean that God remembered something he had forgotten. Alternate translation: “then God remembered Babylon the Great” or “then God thought of Babylon the Great” or “then God started to pay attention to Babylon the Great” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### to give to her the cup of the wine of the wrath of his fury (ULT)

Here, **the wine** is a symbol of his **wrath**. Making people drink it is a symbol of punishing them. Alternate translation: “he made the people of that city drink the wine that represents his wrath” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

**19** And the great city became {split} into three parts and the cities of the nations collapsed, and Babylon the Great was remembered before God to give to her the cup of the wine of the wrath of his fury.

## Revelation 16:20

### the mountains were not found (ULT)

The inability to see any **mountains** is metonymy expressing the idea that no mountains existed any longer. Alternate translation: “there were no longer any mountains” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**20** And every island fled, and the mountains were not found.



## Revelation 16:21

### a talent {in weight (ULT)}

You may convert the **talent** to a modern measure. Alternate translation: "33 kilograms" (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

#### ULT

**21** And great hailstones, about a talent {in weight}, come down from heaven upon men, and the men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because that plague is exceedingly great.

## Revelation 17

### Revelation 17 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This chapter begins to describe how God will destroy Babylon.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Prostitute

Scripture often pictures idolatrous Jews as adulterous people and sometimes as prostitutes. This is not the reference here. The translator should allow this illustration to be vague. (See: [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

#### Seven hills

This possibly refers to the city of Rome, which was known as the city on seven hills. However, the translator should not attempt to identify Rome in the translation.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Metaphors

John uses many different metaphors in this chapter. He explains some of their meanings, but allows them to remain relatively unclear. The translator should attempt to do the same. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### “The beast you saw existed, does not exist now, but is about to come up”

This and similar phrases in this chapter contrast the beast with Jesus. Jesus is called “the one who is, and who was, and who is to come” elsewhere in the Book of Revelation. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. This sentence in 17:11 is a paradox: “the beast ... is itself also an eighth king; but it is one of those seven kings.” The translator should not attempt to resolve this paradox. It should remain a mystery. ([Revelation 17:11](#))

## Revelation 17:1

### General Information:

John begins to describe the part of his vision about the great prostitute.

### the judgment of the great prostitute (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun “judgment”, you can express it with a verb. Alternate translation: “how God will judge the great prostitute” or “how God will condemn the great prostitute”(See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

### of the great prostitute (ULT)

Here, **the great prostitute** represents a certain sinful city. Alternate translation: “the prostitute that everyone knows about” or “a certain sinful city” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### on many waters (ULT)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a more specific word for the kind of water. Alternate translation: “on many rivers” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> And one of the seven angels who has the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters,

## Revelation 17:2

### those living on the earth became drunk from the wine of her sexual immorality (ULT)

Here to be **drunk from the wine of her sexual immorality** represents fully giving themselves over to doing sexually immoral acts. Alternate translation: "the people of the earth fully engaged in every kind of sexual immorality" (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> with whom the kings of the earth committed sexual immorality and those living on the earth became drunk from the wine of her sexual immorality."

### the wine of her sexual immorality (ULT)

Here, **the wine** represents **sexual immorality**. Alternate translation: "her wine, that is, they were sexually immoral" (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

### of her sexual immorality (ULT)

This may well have a double meaning: **sexual immorality** among people and also the worship of false gods. (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Revelation 17:3

### he carried me away in the Spirit to a wilderness (ULT)

The setting changes from John being in heaven to being in a **wilderness**. (See: [Background Information](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast being full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

## Revelation 17:4

### pearls (ULT)

A pearl is a beautiful and valuable white bead that is formed inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean.

(See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And the woman was dressed in purple and scarlet and had been adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of detestable things and the impurities of her sexual immorality,

## Revelation 17:5

### on her forehead had been written a name (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “someone had written on her forehead a name” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> and on her forehead had been written a name: “Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Prostitutes and of the Abominations of the Earth.”

### Babylon the Great (ULT)

If it needs to be made explicit that the name refers to the woman, it can be put in a new sentence. Alternate translation: “I am Babylon, the powerful one” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

## Revelation 17:6

### General Information:

The angel begins to explain to John the meaning of the prostitute and the red beast. The angel explains these things through verse 18.

**is drunk with the blood...And...with the blood (ULT)**

Alternate translation: "was drunk because she had drunk the blood ... and had drunk the blood"

**the...of...witnesses of Jesus (ULT)**

Alternate translation: "of the believers who have died because they told others about Jesus"

**I marveled (ULT)**

Alternate translation: "I was amazed" or "I was surprised"

### ULT

**6** And I saw that the woman is drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus, and having seen her, I marveled with great wonder.



## Revelation 17:7

### Why are you astonished (ULT)

The angel used this question to gently scold John. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you could express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not be astonished!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> But the angel said to me, "Why are you astonished? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that is carrying her, that has the seven heads and the ten horns."

## Revelation 17:8

### the abyss (ULT)

The **abyss** is an extremely deep narrow hole. This could mean: (1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever. (2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in [Revelation 9:1](#).

### and it will go to destruction (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **destruction**, you can express it with a verb. Alternate translation: “and then he will be destroyed” or “and God will destroy him” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

### it will go to destruction (ULT)

The certainty of what will happen in the future is spoken of as if the beast were going to it. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### whose names have not been written (ULT)

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

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> The beast that you saw existed, does not exist now, but is about to come up from the abyss, and it will go to destruction, and those who live on the earth, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life since the foundation of the world, will be astounded when they see the beast that existed, and does not exist, but will come.

## Revelation 17:9

### Here {is} the mind that has wisdom (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract nouns **mind** and **wisdom**, you can express them with “think” and “wise” or “wisely.”  
Alternate translation: “You need to think wisely in order to understand this” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> Here {is} the mind that has wisdom:  
The seven heads are seven hills where  
the woman is seated on them, and they  
are seven kings;

### Here {is} the mind that has wisdom (ULT)

You can state explicitly why a wise **mind** is needed. Alternate translation: “A wise mind is needed in order to understand this” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### The seven heads are seven hills

Here, **are** means “stand for” or “represent.”

## Revelation 17:10

### five have fallen (ULT)

The angel speaks of dying as falling. Alternate translation: “five kings have died” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### one is (ULT)

Alternate translation: “one is king now” or “one king is alive now”

### the other has not yet come (ULT)

Not having existed yet is spoken of as not yet having **come**. Alternate translation: “the other has not yet become king” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### when he comes, it is necessary for him to remain a little while (ULT)

The angel speaks of someone continuing to be king as if he were remaining in a place. Alternate translation: “he can be king only for a little while” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**10** five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come. But when he comes, it is necessary for him to remain a little while.

## Revelation 17:11

### is...from among those seven (ULT)

This could mean: (1) the beast rules twice: first as one of the seven kings, and then as the eighth king. (2) the beast belongs to that group of seven kings because he is like them.

### is going to destruction (ULT)

The certainty of what will happen in the future is spoken of as if the beast were **going** to it. Alternate translation: “it will certainly be destroyed” or “God will surely destroy it” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**11** And the beast that was but is not, is itself also an eighth {king}; but is from among those seven and is going to destruction.

## Revelation 17:12

### Connecting Statement:

The angel explains the meaning of the ten horns of the beast.

### for one hour (ULT)

If your language does not divide the day into 24 hours, you may need to use a more general expression. Alternate translation: “for a very short time” or “for a very small part of a day” (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

#### ULT

**12** And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they will receive authority as kings for one hour with the beast.

## Revelation 17:13

### These have one mind (ULT)

Alternate translation: "These all think the same thing" or "These all agree to do the same thing"

#### ULT

**13** These have one mind, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

## Revelation 17:14

### the Lamb (ULT)

A lamb is a young sheep. Here, **Lamb** is used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### are} called and chosen and faithful (ULT)

This refers to one group of people. The words **called** and **chosen** can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: “the called, chosen, and faithful ones” or “the ones whom God has called and chosen, who are faithful to him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

**14** They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and those with him {are} called and chosen and faithful.”



## Revelation 17:15

**The waters that you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues (ULT)**

Here, **are** stands for “represent.” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### ULT

<sup>15</sup> And he says to me, “The waters that you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.

### The waters (ULT)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a more specific word for the kind of **water**. See how you translated “many waters” in [Revelation 17:1](#). Alternate translation: “The rivers” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### multitudes (ULT)

large groups of people

### tongues (ULT)

Here, **tongues** refers to people who speak the languages. See how you translated this in [Revelation 10:11](#). (See: [Metonymy](#))

## Revelation 17:16

### And...they will make her desolate...naked (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they will steal everything that she has and leave her with nothing"

### they will devour her flesh (ULT)

Destroying her completely is spoken of as eating all **her flesh**.

Alternate translation: "they will destroy her completely" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>16</sup> And the ten horns that you saw, and the beast—they will hate the prostitute, and they will make her desolate and naked, and they will devour her flesh, and they will burn her completely with fire,

## Revelation 17:17

**For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give ... until God's words are fulfilled**

They would agree to give their power **to the beast**, but it would not be that they want to obey **God**. Alternate translation: "For God has put it into their hearts to agree to give their kingdom to the beast until God's words are fulfilled, and by doing this, they would carry out God's purpose"

### ULT

<sup>17</sup> for God has put into their hearts to do his purpose and to do one purpose and to give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God will be fulfilled.

**for God has put into their hearts to do (ULT)**

Here, **heart** is a metonym for desires. (See: [Metonymy](#))

**for God has put into their hearts to do (ULT)**

Making them want to do something is spoken of as putting it **into their hearts** to do it. Alternate translation: "God has made them want to do" (See: [Metaphor](#))

**their...purpose...kingdom (ULT)**

Alternate translation: "their authority" or "their kingly authority"

**until the words of God will be fulfilled (ULT)**

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

## Revelation 17:18

### Connecting Statement:

The angel finishes speaking to John about the prostitute and the beast.

### is (ULT)

Here, **is** stands for “represents.” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### the great city that has a kingdom (ULT)

When it says that the **city** rules, it means that the leader of the city rules. Alternate translation: “the great city whose leader rules” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**18** And the woman that you saw is the great city that has a kingdom over the kings of the earth.”

# Revelation 18

## Revelation 18 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verses 1-8.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Prophecy

The angel prophesies about Babylon falling, which here means being destroyed. It is spoken of as having already happened. This is common in prophecy. It emphasizes that the coming judgment will certainly happen. The angel also prophesies that the people will lament over Babylon falling. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [judge](#), [judgment](#) and [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Metaphors

Prophecy frequently uses metaphors. This chapter has a slightly different apocalyptic style than the Book of Revelation overall. (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Revelation 18:1

### Connecting Statement:

Another angel comes down from heaven and speaks. This is a different angel than the one in the previous chapter, who spoke about the prostitute and the beast.

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined by his glory.

## Revelation 18:2

### Fallen {is} Babylon the great (ULT)

The angel speaks of **Babylon** having been destroyed as if it had fallen. See how you translated this in [Revelation 14:8](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen {is} Babylon the great! And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a refuge of every unclean spirit and a refuge of every unclean and detestable bird. <sup>[1]</sup>

## Revelation 18:3

### all the nations (ULT)

Here, **the nations** is a metonym for the people of those nations. Alternate translation: “the people of all the nations” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### have drunk from the wine of her immoral passion (ULT)

Here, drinking **from the wine of her immoral passion** is a symbol for participating in her sexually immoral passion. Alternate translation: “have become sexually immoral like her” or “have become drunk like her in sexual sin” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### of her immoral passion (ULT)

This may well have a double meaning: literal sexual immorality and also the worship of false gods. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### have committed immorality with her (ULT)

Babylon is spoken of as if it were a prostitute who has caused other people to sin along **with her**. (See: [Personification](#))

### merchants (ULT)

A merchant is a person who sells things.

### from the...her immoral...power...of...sensual way of living (ULT)

Alternate translation: “because she spent so much money on sexual immorality”

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> For all the nations have drunk from the wine of her immoral passion and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her and the merchants of the earth have become rich from the power of her sensual way of living.”



## Revelation 18:4

### another voice (ULT)

Here, **voice** refers to the speaker, which is probably either Jesus or the Father. Alternate translation: “someone else” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out from her, my people, so that you might not share in her sins, and so that you might not receive from her plagues.”

## Revelation 18:5

### her sins have piled up as far as heaven (ULT)

The voice speaks of Babylon's **sins** as if they were objects that could form a pile. Alternate translation: "her sins are so many they are like a pile that reaches heaven" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> For her sins have piled up as far as heaven, and God has remembered her sinful actions.

### has remembered (ULT)

This does not mean that God **remembered** something he had forgotten. See how you translated "called to mind" in [Revelation 16:19](#). Alternate translation: "has thought of" or "has started to pay attention to"

## Revelation 18:6

### Give back to her even as she has given (ULT)

The voice speaks of punishment as if it were repayment. Alternate translation: "Punish her as she has punished others" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### repay her double, twice as much (ULT)

The voice speaks of punishment as if it were repayment. Alternate translation: "punish her twice as much" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### in the cup that she mixed, mix double for her (ULT)

The voice speaks of causing others to suffer as preparing strong wine for them to drink. Alternate translation: "prepare for her the wine of suffering that is twice as strong as what she made for others" or "make her suffer twice as much as she made others suffer" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### mix...double (ULT)

Here, **mix double** could mean: (1) they should prepare twice the amount. (2) they should make it twice as strong.

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> Give back to her even as she has given, and repay her double, twice as much according to her deeds; in the cup that she mixed, mix double for her.

## Revelation 18:7

### she glorified herself (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the people of Babylon glorified themselves"

### For she says in her heart (ULT)

Here, **heart** is a metonym for a person's mind or thoughts. Alternate translation: "For she says to herself" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### I sit {as} a queen (ULT)

She claims to be a ruler, having her own authority. (See: [Simile](#))

### I am not a widow (ULT)

She implies that she will not be dependent on other people. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### I will certainly not see mourning (ULT)

Experiencing mourning is spoken of as seeing **mourning**. Alternate translation: "I will never mourn" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> As much as she glorified herself and lived in luxury, give her just as much torture and grief. For she says in her heart, 'I sit {as} a queen and I am not a widow and I will certainly not see mourning.'

## Revelation 18:8

### her plagues will come (ULT)

Existing in the future is spoken of as coming. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### she will be consumed by fire (ULT)

Being burned up by fire is spoken of as being eaten up **by fire**.  
Alternate translation: "she will be completely burned up" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### she will be consumed by fire (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "fire will completely burn her up" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> Therefore, in one day her plagues will come: death and mourning and famine, and she will be consumed by fire, for the Lord God who judges her {is} mighty."

## Revelation 18:9

### General Information:

In these verses the word **her** refers to the city of Babylon.

### **And...committed sexual immorality...lived in luxury with her (ULT)**

Alternate translation: "sinned sexually and did whatever they wanted just as the people of Babylon did"

#### **ULT**

<sup>9</sup> And the kings of the earth who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning,

## Revelation 18:10

### because of the fear of her torment (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **torment**, you can express it with a verb. Alternate translation: “because they were afraid that they would be tormented like Babylon” or “because they were afraid that God would torment them as he torments Babylon” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

#### ULT

<sup>10</sup> having stood at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, “Woe, woe to the great city, Babylon, the powerful city! For in one hour your judgment has come.”

### Woe, woe (ULT)

The word **Woe** is repeated for emphasis.

### your judgment has come (ULT)

Existing in the present is spoken of as having **come**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Revelation 18:11

### mourn for her (ULT)

Alternate translation: "mourn for the people of Babylon"

#### ULT

**11** And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, because no one buys her cargo anymore—



## Revelation 18:12

### and...precious stone...pearls (ULT)

See how you translated these in [Revelation 17:4](#). Alternate translation: “many kinds of expensive stones”

### fine linen (ULT)

The **fine linen** is an expensive cloth made from flax. See how you translated “linen” in [Revelation 15:6](#).

### purple cloth and silk and scarlet cloth (ULT)

Purple cloth is a very dark red cloth that was very expensive at that time. Silk is a soft, strong cloth made from the fine string that silkworms make when they make their cocoons. Scarlet cloth was an expensive red cloth. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

### every...ivory vessel (ULT)

Alternate translation: “all kinds of containers made of ivory”

### ivory vessel (ULT)

Ivory is a beautiful hard, white material that people get from the tusks or teeth of very large animals such as elephants or walruses. Alternate translation: “container made from tusks” or “container made from valuable animal teeth” (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

### marble (ULT)

Marble is a precious stone that is used for building and to make statues, furniture, and many other things. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

#### ULT

<sup>12</sup> cargo of gold and silver and precious stone and pearls and fine linen and purple cloth and silk and scarlet cloth and every scented wood and every ivory vessel and every vessel from precious wood and bronze and iron and marble

## Revelation 18:13

### cinnamon (ULT)

Cinnamon is a spice that smells nice and comes from the bark of a certain kind of tree.

### spice (ULT)

Spice is a substance used to add flavor to food or a good smell to oil.

### ULT

**13** and cinnamon and spice and incense  
and myrrh and frankincense and wine  
and oil and fine flour and wheat and  
cattle and sheep and horses and  
chariots and slaves and souls of men.

## Revelation 18:14

### autumn fruit (ULT)

The **autumn fruit** refers to fruit that ripens in the fall. Here, it is a metaphor for “result” or “outcome.” Alternate translation: “result” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### the desire of your soul

Alternate translation: “what you wanted very much”

### has perished from you, and they will certainly not be found any longer (ULT)

Not to **be found** stands for not existing. Alternate translation: “has vanished, and they will never exist again” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### has perished from you, and they will certainly not be found any longer (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this figure of speech, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “has vanished; you will never have them again” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

**14** And your autumn fruit, the desire of your soul, has gone away from you, and all the luxury and the splendor has perished from you, and they will certainly not be found any longer.

## Revelation 18:15

### because of the fear of her torment (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract nouns **fear** and **torment**, you can express them as verbs. Alternate translation: “because they will be afraid of God tormenting them the way he torments her” or “because they will be afraid of suffering the way she is suffering” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

#### ULT

**15** The merchants of these things who became rich will stand at a distance from her because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning loudly,

### weeping and mourning loudly (ULT)

The merchants are the ones who will be **weeping and mourning loudly**. Alternate translation: “and the merchants will weep and mourn loudly”

## Revelation 18:16

### to the great city— having been dressed in fine linen (ULT)

Throughout this chapter, Babylon is spoken of as if it were a woman.  
Alternate translation: “the great city, which was like a woman dressed in fine linen” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>16</sup> saying, “Woe, woe to the great city— having been dressed in fine linen and purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls—

### to the great city— having been dressed in fine linen (ULT)

The merchants speak of Babylon as being **dressed in fine linen** because its people were dressed in fine linen.  
Alternate translation: “the great city, whose women were dressed in fine linen” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### having been dressed in fine linen (ULT)

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

### adorned with gold (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “adorned herself with gold” or “adorned themselves with gold” or “wore gold” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### precious stones (ULT)

Alternate translation: “valuable gems” or “treasured gems”

### pearls (ULT)

Pearls are beautiful and valuable white beads that are formed inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean. See how you translated this in [Revelation 17:4](#). (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

## Revelation 18:17

### work the sea (ULT)

The phrase **work the sea** refers to what they do on the sea.  
Alternate translation: "who travel on the sea to make their living" or  
"who sail on the sea to different places in order to trade things"  
(See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**17** for in one hour such great wealth has been destroyed." And every ship's captain and all who sail to a place and sailors and as many as work the sea stood at a distance

## Revelation 18:18

### What city {is} like the great city (ULT)

This question shows the people the importance of the **city** of Babylon. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you could translate it as a statement. Alternate translation: “No other city is like the great city, Babylon!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

#### ULT

<sup>18</sup> and were crying out, seeing the smoke of her burning, saying, “What city {is} like the great city?”

## Revelation 18:19

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**19** And they threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and mourning, saying, “Woe, woe to the great city in which all who have ships in the sea became rich from her wealth, for in one hour she was destroyed.”



## Revelation 18:20

### God has pronounced your judgment against her (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **judgment**, you can express it with the verb “judge.” Alternate translation: “God has judged her for you” or “God has judged her because of the bad things she did to you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

#### ULT

<sup>20</sup> “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and saints and apostles and prophets, for God has pronounced your judgment against her!”

## Revelation 18:21

### Connecting Statement:

Another angel begins to speak about Babylon. This is a different angel than the ones who have spoken previously.

### a great millstone (ULT)

A **millstone** large round stone used to crush grain.

#### ULT

**21** And one mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "In this way, Babylon, the great city, will be thrown down with violence and will certainly not be seen anymore,

### Babylon, the great city, will be thrown down with violence and will certainly not be seen anymore (ULT)

To be **thrown down** and **not be seen anymore** speaks of complete destruction of the **city**. Alternate translation: "Babylon will be completely destroyed and will no longer exist" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### Babylon, the great city, will be thrown down with violence and will certainly not be seen anymore (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God will violently throw down Babylon, the great city, and it will no longer exist" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### will certainly not be seen anymore (ULT)

Not being **seen** here means that it will not exist. Alternate translation: "it will not exist anymore" (See: [Metonymy](#))

## Revelation 18:22

**the sound made by harpists and musicians  
and flute players and trumpeters will  
certainly not be heard anymore in you (ULT)**

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “no one in your city will ever again hear the sound that harpists, musicians, flute players, and trumpeters make” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### ULT

<sup>22</sup> and the sound made by harpists and musicians and flute players and trumpeters will certainly not be heard anymore in you, and every craftsman will certainly not be found in you anymore, and the sound of a mill will certainly not be heard anymore in you.

**in you (ULT)**

The angel speaks as if Babylon were there listening to him. Alternate translation: “in Babylon” (See: [Apostrophe](#))

**will certainly not be heard anymore in you (ULT)**

Not being **heard** here means that they will not be there. Alternate translation: “they will not be in your city anymore” (See: [Metonymy](#))

**every craftsman will certainly not be found in you (ULT)**

Not being **found** there means that they will not be there. Alternate translation: “no craftsman of any kind will be in your city” (See: [Metonymy](#))

**the sound of a mill will certainly not be heard anymore in you (ULT)**

The sound of something not being **heard** means that no one will make that sound. Alternate translation: “no one will use a mill in your city” (See: [Metonymy](#))

## Revelation 18:23

### Connecting Statement:

The angel who threw the millstone finishes talking.

**the voices of the bridegroom and the bride  
will certainly not be heard in you anymore  
(ULT)**

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “no one will ever again hear in Babylon the happy voices of a bridegroom and a bride” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### ULT

<sup>23</sup> And the light of a lamp will certainly not shine in you anymore, and the voices of the bridegroom and the bride will certainly not be heard in you anymore, for your merchants were the princes of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.

**will certainly not be heard in you anymore (ULT)**

Not being **heard** here means that they will not be there. Alternate translation: “will not be in your city anymore” (See: [Metonymy](#))

**your merchants were the princes of the earth (ULT)**

The angel speaks of important and powerful people as if they were **princes**. Alternate translation: “your merchants were like princes of the earth” or “your merchants were the most important men in the world” (See: [Metaphor](#))

**all the nations were deceived by your sorcery (ULT)**

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “you deceived the people of the nations with your magic spells” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

## Revelation 18:24

**in her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all those who have been killed on the earth (ULT)**

Here, **blood** being **found** means that the people of the city were guilty of killing people. Alternate translation: “in her is the guilt for the death of the prophets and saints, along with all the other people in the world who were killed” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### ULT

<sup>24</sup> And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all those who have been killed on the earth.”

**in her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all those who have been killed on the earth (ULT)**

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “Babylon is guilty of killing the prophets and believers and all the other people in the world who were killed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

## Revelation 19

### Revelation 19 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

The beginning of chapter 19 concludes the topic of Babylon falling.

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 verses 1-8.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Songs

The Book of Revelation often describes heaven as a place where people sing. They worship God with songs. This illustrates that heaven is a place where God is always worshiped. (See: [heaven](#), [sky](#), [heavens](#), [heavenly](#))

#### Wedding celebration

The wedding celebration or feast is an important image in Scripture. Jewish culture often pictured paradise, or life with God after death, as a feast. Here, the wedding feast is for the Lamb, who is Jesus, and his bride, who is all his people.

## Revelation 19:1

### General Information:

This is the next part of John's vision. Here he describes the rejoicing in heaven over the fall of the great prostitute, who is the city of Babylon.

### I heard (ULT)

Here, **I** refers to John.

### Hallelujah (ULT)

The word **Hallelujah** means "Praise God" or "Let us praise God."

### ULT

<sup>1</sup> After these things I heard as if the loud voice of a large crowd in heaven saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power to our God,

## Revelation 19:2

### the great prostitute (ULT)

Here John refers to the city of Babylon whose wicked people rule over all the people of the earth and lead them to worship false gods. He speaks of the wicked people of Babylon as if they were a **great prostitute**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### who was corrupting the earth (ULT)

Here, **the earth** is a metonym for its inhabitants. Alternate translation: “who corrupted the people of the earth” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### the blood of his servants (ULT)

Here, **the blood** is a metonym that represents murder. Alternate translation: “the murder of his servants” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### from her hand (ULT)

Here, **he** refers to Babylon. (See: [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> because his judgments {are} true and righteous; because he has judged the great prostitute who was corrupting the earth with her sexual immorality, and he has avenged the blood of his servants from her hand.”



## Revelation 19:3

### they spoke (ULT)

Here, **they** refers to the crowd of people in heaven.

### Hallelujah (ULT)

The word **Hallelujah** means “Praise God” or “Let us praise God.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 19:1](#).

### smoke rises from her (ULT)

The word **her** refers to the city of Babylon, which is spoken of as if it were a prostitute. The **smoke** is from the fire that destroys the city. Alternate translation: “smoke rises from that city”

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And they spoke a second {time}:  
“Hallelujah! And the smoke rises from  
her forever {and} ever.”

## Revelation 19:4

### the 24 elders (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:4](#). (See: [Numbers](#))

### the four living creatures (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:6](#) Alternate translation: “the four living beings” or “the four living things”

### who is seated on the throne (ULT)

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

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And the 24 elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who is seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!”

## Revelation 19:5

### a voice came out from the throne (ULT)

Here John speaks of a **voice** as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "someone spoke from the throne" (See: [Personification](#))

### Praise our God (ULT)

Here, **our** refers to the speaker and all God's servants. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

### those who fear him (ULT)

Here, **fear** does not mean to be afraid of God, but to honor him. Alternate translation: "all you who honor him" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### the small and the great (ULT)

The speaker uses the words **small** and **great** together to include all of God's people. (See: [Merism](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And a voice came out from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all his servants, and those who fear him, the small and the great."

## Revelation 19:6

**And I heard as if the sound of a great crowd,  
and as if the sound of many waters, and as if  
the loud sound of thunder (ULT)**

John speaks of what he is hearing as if it were like the sound made by a very large **crowd** of people, a large body of rushing water, and very loud **thunder**. (See: [Simile](#))

### ULT

<sup>6</sup> And I heard as if the sound of a great crowd, and as if the sound of many waters, and as if the loud sound of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God Almighty reigns.

## Hallelujah (ULT)

The word **Hallelujah** means "Praise God" or "Let us praise God." See how you translated this in [Revelation 19:1](#).

## For...the Lord (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Because the Lord"

## Revelation 19:7

### Connecting Statement:

The voice of the crowd from the previous verse continues speaking.

### Let us rejoice (ULT)

Here, **us** refers to all of God's servants.

### give him the glory (ULT)

Alternate translation: "give God the glory" or "honor God"

### the wedding celebration of the Lamb...his bride has made herself ready (ULT)

Here John speaks of the joining of Jesus and his people together forever as if it were a **wedding celebration** and his people were **his bride**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### of the Lamb (ULT)

A lamb is a young sheep. Here, **the Lamb** used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

### has come (ULT)

Existing in the present is spoken of as having **come**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### his bride has made herself ready (ULT)

John speaks of God's people as if they were a **bride** who has gotten **herself ready** for her wedding. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, because the wedding celebration of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

## Revelation 19:8

### it had been given to her that she might be dressed in bright {and} clean fine linen (ULT)

Here, **her** and **she** refer to the people of God. John speaks of the righteous acts of God's people as if they were a bright and clean dress that a bride wears on her wedding day. Alternate translation: "and it was permitted to them to wear a dress of bright and clean fine linen" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> And it had been given to her that she might be dressed in bright {and} clean fine linen" (for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints).

### it had been given to her that she might be dressed in bright {and} clean fine linen (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God allowed her to wear a dress of bright and clean fine linen" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

## Revelation 19:9

### General Information:

An angel begins to speak to John. This is likely the same angel who began to speak to John in [Revelation 17:1](#).

### those...who are invited (ULT)

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

### the wedding supper of the Lamb (ULT)

Here the angel speaks of the joining of Jesus and his people forever as if it were a **wedding supper**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> And he says to me, “Write: Blessed {are} those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb,” and he says to me, “These are true words of God.”

## Revelation 19:10

### I fell down at his feet (ULT)

This means that John purposely lay on the ground and stretched himself out in reverence or submission. This action was an important part of worship, to show respect and willingness to serve. See note in [Revelation 19:3](#).

### feet...your...brothers (ULT)

Here the word **brothers** here refers to all believers, male and female.

### who hold the testimony of Jesus (ULT)

Here holding stands for believing in or announcing. Alternate translation: “who speak the truth about Jesus” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (ULT)

Here, **the spirit of prophecy** refers to God’s Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: “for it is the Spirit of God who gives people the power to speak the truth about Jesus” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### ULT

**10** And I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he says to me, “Do not do that! I am a fellow servant of you and your brothers who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”



## Revelation 19:11

### General Information:

This is the beginning of a new vision. John begins to describe a rider on a white horse.

### And I saw heaven having been opened (ULT)

This imagery is used to signify the beginning of a new vision. See how you translated this idea in [Revelation 4:1](#) and [Revelation 11:19](#) and [Revelation 15:5](#).

### the one riding on it (ULT)

The rider is Jesus.

### he judges and wages war in righteousness (ULT)

Here, **righteousness** refers to what is right. Alternate translation: “he judges all people and wages war according to what is right” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### ULT

**11** And I saw heaven having been opened, and behold, a white horse, and the one riding on it is called faithful and true, and he judges and wages war in righteousness.

## Revelation 19:12

### eyes...his...eyes...are like} a fiery flame (ULT)

John speaks of the rider's **eyes** as if they shone like a **flame** of fire.  
(See: [Simile](#))

### having a name written (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "and someone has written a name on him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### that no one knows except himself (ULT)

Here, **except himself** means that he is the only one. Alternate translation: "on him, and only he knows the meaning of that name" (See: [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

#### ULT

**12** Now his eyes {are like} a fiery flame,  
and on his head {are} many crowns,  
having a name written that no one  
knows except himself.

## Revelation 19:13

### he is clothed in a robe dipped in blood (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “and blood had covered his robe” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

**13** And he is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God.

### his name is called the Word of God (ULT)

Here, **Word of God** is a metonym for Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: “his name is called the Message of God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### his name is called the Word of God (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “his name is also the Word of God” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

## Revelation 19:14

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**14** And the armies of heaven were following him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

## Revelation 19:15

### from his mouth goes out a sharp sword (ULT)

The **sword** blade was sticking out of **his mouth**. The sword itself was not in motion. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 1:16](#).

### he might strike the nations (ULT)

Alternate translation: “he could destroy the nations” or “he could bring the nations under his control”

### will shepherd them with an iron rod (ULT)

John speaks of the rider’s power as if he were ruling with **an iron rod**. See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:5](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

### he tramples the winepress of the wrath of the fury of God Almighty (ULT)

John speaks of the rider’s destroying his enemies as if they were grapes that a person **tramples** in a **winepress**. Alternate translation: “he crushes his enemies according to the wrath of God Almighty, just as a person crushes grapes in a winepress” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### he tramples the winepress of the wrath of the fury of God Almighty (ULT)

Here, **wrath** refers to God’s punishment of evil persons. Alternate translation: “he crushes his enemies according to the judgment of God Almighty” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### ULT

**15** And from his mouth goes out a sharp sword so that with it he might strike the nations, and he will shepherd them with an iron rod, and he tramples the winepress of the wrath of the fury of God Almighty.

## Revelation 19:16

### he has a name written on {his} robe and on his thigh (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “someone has written a name on his robe and thigh:” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>16</sup> And he has a name written on {his} robe and on his thigh: “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

## Revelation 19:17

### I saw one angel standing in the sun (ULT)

Here, **the sun** is a metonym for the light of the sun. Alternate translation: "Then I saw an angel standing in the light of the sun" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**17** And I saw one angel standing in the sun, and he called out in a loud voice, saying to all the birds flying in midheaven, "Come, be gathered together for the great supper of God,

## Revelation 19:18

### both free and slaves—and small and great (ULT)

The angel uses these two sets of opposite-meaning words together to refer to all people. (See: [Merism](#))

#### ULT

<sup>18</sup> so that you might eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those sitting on them and the flesh of all {men}—both free and slaves—and small and great.”



## Revelation 19:19

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**19** And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies having been gathered to make war with the one sitting on the horse and with his army.

## Revelation 19:20

### the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the rider on the white horse captured the beast and the false prophet” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### the...mark of the beast (ULT)

The **mark of the beast** was an identifying mark that indicated that the person who received it worshiped the beast. See how you translated this in [Revelation 13:17](#).

### The two were thrown alive (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God threw the beast and the false prophet alive” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### by...the...the lake...of fire...that burns...sulfur (ULT)

Alternate translation: “place full of fire that burns with sulfur”

#### ULT

<sup>20</sup> And the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs before him, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image. The two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

## Revelation 19:21

**the rest were killed by the sword of the one who sat on the horse, {the sword} that came out from his mouth (ULT)**

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the rider of the horse killed the remainder of the beast’s armies with the sword that extended from his mouth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### ULT

<sup>21</sup> And the rest were killed by the sword of the one who sat on the horse, {the sword} that came out from his mouth, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

**the sword...the...of the one...came out from his...mouth (ULT)**

The **sword** blade was sticking out of **his mouth**. The sword itself was not in motion. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 1:16](#).

## Revelation 20

### Revelation 20 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### The thousand-year reign of Christ

In this chapter, Jesus is said to reign for a thousand years, at the same time that Satan is bound. Scholars are divided over whether this refers to a future period of time or to Jesus reigning now from heaven. It is not necessary to understand this passage in order to translate it accurately. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

#### Final rebellion

This chapter also describes what happens after the thousand years are ended. During this time, Satan and many people will attempt to rebel against Jesus. This will result in God's ultimate and final victory over sin and evil. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [evil](#), [wicked](#), [unpleasant](#) and [eternity](#), [everlasting](#), [eternal](#), [forever](#))

#### Great white throne

This chapter ends with God judging all people who ever lived. God separates people who believe in Jesus from those who do not believe in him. (See: [judge](#), [judgment](#) and [heaven](#), [sky](#), [heavens](#), [heavenly](#) and [faith](#))

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Book of Life

This is a metaphor for eternal life. Those possessing eternal life are said to have their names written in this Book of Life. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Hades and the lake of fire

These appear to be two distinct places. The translator may wish to do further research to determine how to translate these two places differently. They should not be made the same as each other in translation. (See: [hell](#), [lake of fire](#))

## Revelation 20:1

### General Information:

John begins to describe a vision of an angel throwing the devil into the bottomless pit.

### And I saw (ULT)

Here, **I** refers to John.

### to the abyss (ULT)

The **abyss** is an extremely deep narrow hole. This could mean: (1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever. (2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in [Revelation 9:1](#).

### ULT

**1** And I saw an angel coming down from heaven having the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand.

## Revelation 20:2

### of the dragon (ULT)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> And he took hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him for 1,000 years.

## Revelation 20:3

### sealed {it} over him (ULT)

The angel **sealed** the abyss to keep anyone from opening it.  
Alternate translation: “sealed it to prevent anyone from opening it”  
(See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### he would not deceive...the nations (ULT)

Here, **nations** is a metonym for the people of the earth. Alternate translation: “he would not deceive the people-groups” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### it is necessary for him to be released (ULT)

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

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And he threw him into the abyss and shut {it} and sealed {it} over him so that he would not deceive the nations anymore until the 1,000 years would be completed. After that, it is necessary for him to be released for a short time.

## Revelation 20:4

### General Information:

This is the next part of John's vision. He describes suddenly seeing thrones and the souls of believers.

### judgment was given to them (ULT)

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

### of those who had been beheaded (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "whose heads others had cut off" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### for the testimony about Jesus and for the word of God

Alternate translation: "because they had spoken the truth about Jesus and about the word of God"

### because of the word of God (ULT)

Here, **the word of God** is a metonym for the message from God. Alternate translation: "for what they taught about the scriptures" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### they came to life (ULT)

Alternate translation: "they came back to life" or "they became alive again"

### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them, both the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who did not worship the beast nor his image and did not receive the mark on {their} forehead or on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for 1,000 years.



## Revelation 20:5

### The rest of the dead (ULT)

Alternate translation: "All of the other dead people"

### the 1,000 years were ended (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the end of the thousand years" (See: [Numbers](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1,000 years were ended.)  
This {is} the first resurrection.

## Revelation 20:6

### Over these the second death has no power (ULT)

Here John describes **the second death** as a person with power.  
Alternate translation: "These people will not experience the second death" (See: [Personification](#))

### the second death (ULT)

The **second death** is described as eternal punishment in the lake of fire in [Revelation 20:14](#) and [Revelation 21:8](#). See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:11](#). Alternate translation: "the final death in the lake of fire" or "dying a second time" (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy {is} the one who has a part in the first resurrection! Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for 1,000 years.

## Revelation 20:7

### Satan will be released from his prison (ULT)

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

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> But when the 1,000 years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison

## Revelation 20:8

### The number of them {will be} like the sand of the sea (ULT)

The comparison to **the sand of the sea** emphasizes the extremely large **number** of soldiers in Satan's army. (See: [Simile](#))

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> and will go out to deceive the nations that {are} at the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them together to the battle. The number of them {will be} like the sand of the sea.

## Revelation 20:9

### they went up (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Satan's army went up"

### the beloved city

Here, **the beloved city** refers to Jerusalem.

### ULT

<sup>9</sup> And they went up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

### fire came down from heaven and devoured them (ULT)

Here John speaks of **fire** as if it were alive. Alternate translation: "God sent fire from heaven to burn them up" (See: [Personification](#))

## Revelation 20:10

### the devil who deceived them was thrown into (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God threw the devil, who had deceived them, into” or “God’s angel threw the devil, who had deceived them, into” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>10</sup> And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet {were}, and they will be tormented day and night forever {and} ever.

### And...the lake of fire...sulfur (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 19:20](#). Alternate translation: “the lake of fire that burns with sulfur” or “place full of fire that burns with sulfur”

### they will be tormented (ULT)

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

## Revelation 20:11

### General Information:

This is the next part of John's vision. He describes suddenly seeing a great white throne and the dead being judged.

### **from whose presence the earth and the heaven fled away (ULT)**

John describes **the earth and the heaven** as if they were people who were trying to escape God's judgment. This means that God completely destroyed the old heaven and earth. (See: [Personification](#))

### **the earth and the heaven fled away, but no place was found for them (ULT)**

Here, not having a **place** means that God completely destroyed the old heaven and earth. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**11** And I saw a great white throne and the one seated on it, from whose presence the earth and the heaven fled away, but no place was found for them.

## Revelation 20:12

### books were opened (ULT)

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

### the dead were judged (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God judged the people who had died and now lived again” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### from the things that were written (ULT)

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

#### ULT

**12** And I saw the dead—both the great and the small—standing before the throne, and books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the {Book} of Life. And the dead were judged from the things that were written in the books, according to their deeds.



## Revelation 20:13

### the sea gave up the dead...Death and Hades gave up the dead (ULT)

Here John speaks of **the sea**, **Death**, and **Hades** as if they were living persons. (See: [Personification](#))

### each of them was judged (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "God judged each of the dead people" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### Hades (ULT)

Here, **Hades** is a metonym that represents the place where unbelievers go when they die, to wait for God's judgment. (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead who {were} in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead who {were} in them, and each of them was judged according to their deeds.

## Revelation 20:14

### Death and Hades were thrown (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “God threw Death and Hades” or “God’s angel threw Death and Hades” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

**14** And Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death—the lake of fire.

### the second death (ULT)

The **second death** is described as eternal punishment in the lake of fire in [Revelation 20:14](#) and [Revelation 21:8](#). See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:11](#). Alternate translation: “the final death in the lake of fire” or “dying a second time” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

## Revelation 20:15

### if anyone was not found...written (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “if God’s angel did not find a person’s name written” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

**15** And if anyone was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

### he was thrown into the lake of fire (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the angel threw him into the lake of fire” or “the angel threw him into the place where fire burns forever” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

## Revelation 21

### Revelation 21 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This chapter gives a detailed picture of the new Jerusalem.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Second death

Death is a type of separation. The first death is physically dying, when the soul is separated from the body. The second death is being eternally separated from God. (See: [die](#), [dead](#), [deadly](#), [death](#) and [soul](#), [self](#), [person](#) and [eternity](#), [everlasting](#), [eternal](#), [forever](#))

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Book of Life

This is a metaphor for eternal life. Those possessing eternal life are said to have their names written in this Book of Life. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### New heaven and new earth

It is unclear whether this is an entirely new heaven and earth or if it is remade out of the present heaven and earth. The same is also true of the new Jerusalem. It is possible this will affect translation in some languages. The word “new” in the original language means different and better than the old. It does not mean new in time.

## Revelation 21:1

### General Information:

John begins to describe his vision of the new Jerusalem.

### I saw (ULT)

Here, **I** refers to John.

### ULT

<sup>1</sup> And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

## Revelation 21:2

### like a bride adorned for her husband (ULT)

John compares the new Jerusalem to **a bride** who has made herself beautiful for her bridegroom. (See: [Simile](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

## Revelation 21:3

### a great voice from the throne saying (ULT)

The **great voice** refers to the one who speaks. Alternate translation: “someone speak loudly from the throne saying” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### Behold (ULT)

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

### The tabernacle of God {is} with men, and he will live with them (ULT)

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that God will, indeed, live among men. (See: [Parallelism](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And I heard a great voice from the throne saying, “Behold! The tabernacle of God {is} with men, and he will live with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them.”<sup>[1]</sup>

## Revelation 21:4

### he will wipe away every tear from their eyes (ULT)

Here, tears represent sadness. See how you translated this in [Revelation 7:17](#). Alternate translation: “God will wipe away their sadness, like wiping away tears” or “God will cause them to not be sad anymore” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will not be any longer, nor grieving nor crying nor pain. They will not be any longer; the first things have passed away.”



## Revelation 21:5

### these words are trustworthy and true (ULT)

Here, **these words** refers to the message that they formed. Alternate translation: "this message is trustworthy and true" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And the one who was seated on the throne said, "Behold! I make all things new." And he says to me, "Write, because these words are trustworthy and true."

## Revelation 21:6

### the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end (ULT)

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize God's eternal nature. (See: [Parallelism](#))

### the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end (ULT)

These two phrases mean that God exists from the beginning of everything to the end of it, including everything in between. (See: [Merism](#))

### the alpha and the omega (ULT)

The **alpha** and the **omega** are first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This could refer to: (1) the one who began all things and who ends all things. (2) the one who has always lived and who always will live. If your readers would misunderstand this, you may consider using the first and last letters of your alphabet. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "the A and the Z" or "the first and the last" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### And...the...the beginning...end (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end. (2) the one who existed before all things and who will exist after all things.

### To the one who thirsts...will give without cost from the spring of the water of life (ULT)

God speaks of a person's desire for eternal life as if it were thirst and of that person receiving eternal life as if he were drinking life-giving **water**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> And he said to me, "It is done! I {am} the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. To the one who thirsts I will give without cost from the spring of the water of life.

## Revelation 21:7

### Connecting Statement:

The one seated on the throne continues to speak to John.

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son.

## Revelation 21:8

### the...cowards (ULT)

Alternate translation: "those who are too afraid to do what is right"

### detestable (ULT)

Alternate translation: "those who do terrible things"

### the fiery lake of burning sulfur

See how you translated this in [Revelation 19:20](#). Alternate translation: "the lake of fire that burns with sulfur" or "place full of fire that burns with sulfur"

### the second death (ULT)

The **second death** is described as eternal punishment in the lake of fire in [Revelation 20:14](#) and [Revelation 21:8](#). See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:11](#). Alternate translation: "the final death in the lake of fire" or "dying a second time" (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> But the cowards and unbelieving and detestable and murderers and sexually immoral and sorcerers and idolaters and all the liars—their place {will be} in the lake burning with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

## Revelation 21:9

### the bride, the wife of the Lamb (ULT)

The angel speaks of Jerusalem as if it were a **bride** who is about to marry her groom, **the Lamb**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### of the Lamb (ULT)

A **lamb** is a young sheep. Here, **Lamb** is it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> And one of the seven angels came—the one who had the seven bowls that were full of the seven last plagues—and he spoke with me, saying, “Come here. I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

## Revelation 21:10

### he carried me away in the Spirit (ULT)

The setting changes as **the Spirit** takes John to a high mountain where he can see the city of Jerusalem. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 17:3](#). (See: [Background Information](#))

### Jerusalem (ULT)

Jerusalem is a metonymy for those believers who will inhabit it. (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**10** And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,

## Revelation 21:11

### having (ULT)

This refers to the “Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven” that he described in the previous verse and not to the physical Jerusalem.

### its brilliance {was} like a very precious stone, like a stone of crystal-clear jasper (ULT)

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the **brilliance** of Jerusalem by naming a specific jewel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

### crystal-clear (ULT)

Alternate translation: “extremely clear”

### of...jasper (ULT)

Jasper is a valuable stone. This **jasper** may have been clear like glass or crystal. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:3](#). (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

#### ULT

**11** having the glory of God; its brilliance {was} like a very precious stone, like a stone of crystal-clear jasper,

## Revelation 21:12

### were written {on the gates (ULT)

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

#### ULT

<sup>12</sup> having a great and high wall having 12 gates and 12 angels at the gates, and names were written {on the gates}, which were those of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel.



## Revelation 21:13

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>13</sup> On the east {were} three gates, and on the north three gates, and on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.

## Revelation 21:14

### of the Lamb (ULT)

Here, **the Lamb** refers to Jesus. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6](#).

#### ULT

**14** And the wall of the city had 12 foundations, and on them {were} the 12 names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

## Revelation 21:15

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>15</sup> And the one who was speaking with me had a golden measuring rod so that he might measure the city and its gates and its wall.

## Revelation 21:16

### 12,000 stadia (ULT)

You may convert **12,000 stadia** to modern measures. Alternate translation: "2,200 kilometers" (See: [Biblical Distance](#))

#### ULT

**16** And the city is laid out {as} a square, and its length {is} as much as {its} width. And he measured the city with the measuring rod, at 12,000 stadia (the length and the width and the height of it are equal).

## Revelation 21:17

### 144 cubits {thick (ULT)}

You may convert **144 cubits** to modern measures. Alternate translation: "66 meters" (See: [Biblical Distance](#))

#### ULT

**17** And he measured its wall, 144 cubits {thick} by man's measurement (which is {also} an angel's {measurement}).

## Revelation 21:18

### pure gold, like clear glass (ULT)

The **gold** was so **clear** that it is spoken of as if it were **glass**. (See: [Simile](#))

### is} jasper (ULT)

Jasper is a valuable stone. It may have been clear like glass or crystal. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:3](#). (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

#### ULT

**18** And the material of its wall {is} jasper and the city—pure gold, like clear glass.

## Revelation 21:19

### The foundations of the wall of the city...were adorned (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone adorned the foundations of the city wall" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### was} jasper...sapphire...agate...emerald (ULT)

These are valuable stones. Jasper may have been clear like glass or crystal. See how you translated it in [Revelation 4:3](#). (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

#### ULT

<sup>19</sup> The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone. The first foundation {was} jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,

## Revelation 21:20

**onyx...carnelian...chrysolite...beryl...topaz...  
chrysoprase...jacinth...amethyst (ULT)**

These are all precious gems. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

### ULT

<sup>20</sup> the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.



## Revelation 21:21

### are...pearls (ULT)

Pearls are beautiful and valuable white beads that are formed inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean. See how you translated this in [Revelation 17:4](#). (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

#### ULT

**21** And the 12 gates {are} 12 pearls; each of the gates was from a single pearl, and the streets of the city {were} pure gold, like transparent glass.

### each of the gates was from a single pearl (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “someone had made each of the gates from a single pearl” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### were} pure gold, like transparent glass (ULT)

The **gold** was so **pure** that it is spoken of as if it was clear glass. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 21:18](#). (See: [Simile](#))

## Revelation 21:22

### the...Lord God Almighty is its temple, and the Lamb (ULT)

The **temple** represented God's presence. This means the new Jerusalem does not need a temple because **God** and **the Lamb** will live there. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>22</sup> And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty is its temple, and the Lamb.

## Revelation 21:23

### its lamp {is} the Lamb (ULT)

Here the glory of Jesus, **the Lamb**, is spoken of as if it were a **lamp** that gives light to the city. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**23** And the city does not have need of the sun nor the moon so that it might shine on it, because the glory of God shone on it, and its lamp {is} the Lamb.

## Revelation 21:24

### the nations will walk (ULT)

Here, **the nations** are a metonym for the people who live in the nations. Alternate translation: “the people from all the different nations will walk” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### the nations will walk (ULT)

Here, **walk** here is a metaphor for “live.” Alternate translation: “the people from all the different nations will live” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>24</sup> And the nations will walk by the light of it, and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. <sup>[2]</sup>

## Revelation 21:25

### its gates will never be shut (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “no one will ever shut the gates” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>25</sup> And its gates will never be shut during the day, for there will be no night there.

## Revelation 21:26

### they will bring (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the kings of the earth will bring"

#### ULT

<sup>26</sup> And they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it,

## Revelation 21:27

### anything unclean will certainly not enter into it, nor the one (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this double negative, you can state it in positive form. Alternate translation: “only what is clean will ever enter, and never anyone” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

### but only those who are written in the book of life of the Lamb (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “but only those whose names the Lamb wrote in his book of life” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### of the Lamb (ULT)

A lamb is a young sheep. Here, **the Lamb** is it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>27</sup> but anything unclean will certainly not enter into it, nor the one who does abominations and falsehoods, but only those who are written in the book of life of the Lamb.

## **Revelation 22**

### **Revelation 22 General Notes**

### **Structure and formatting**

This chapter emphasizes that Jesus is coming soon.

### **Special concepts in this chapter**

#### **Tree of life**

There is probably an intended connection between the tree of life in the Garden of Eden and the tree of life mentioned in this chapter. The curse that began in Eden will end at this time.

### **Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter**

#### **Alpha and omega**

These are the names of the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. The ULT spells out their names in English. This strategy can serve as a model for translators. Some translators, however, may decide to use the first and last letters in their own alphabet. This would be “A and Z” in English.



## Revelation 22:1

### Connecting Statement:

John continues to describe the new Jerusalem as the angel shows it to him.

### he showed me (ULT)

Here, **me** refers to John.

### the river of the water of life (ULT)

Alternate translation: "the river flowing with life-giving water"

### the river of the water of life (ULT)

Eternal **life** is spoken of as if it were provided by life-giving **water**. See how you translated this in [Revelation 21:6](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

### of the Lamb (ULT)

A lamb is a young sheep. Here, **the Lamb** is it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> And he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

## Revelation 22:2

### of the nations (ULT)

Here, **the nations** refers to the people who live in every nation.  
Alternate translation: “the people of all nations” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> in the middle of its street. And on this side and on that side of the river {was} the tree of life, bearing 12 {crops of} fruit, bearing its fruit according to each month, and the leaves of the tree {are} for the healing of the nations.

## Revelation 22:3

### there will no longer be any curse (ULT)

This could mean: (1) there will never be anyone there that God will **curse**. (2) there will not be anyone there who is under God's **curse**.

### his servants will serve him (ULT)

Here, **his** and **him** could refer to: (1) God the Father. (2) both God and the Lamb, who rule together as one.

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> And there will no longer be any curse, and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will serve him.

## Revelation 22:4

### they will see his face (ULT)

Here, **see his face** is an idiom that refers to being in God's presence.  
Alternate translation: "they will be in God's presence" (See: [Idiom](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> And they will see his face, and his name {will be} on their foreheads.

## Revelation 22:5

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>5</sup> And there will be no more night, and they have no need of the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will shine on them, and they will reign forever {and} ever.

## Revelation 22:6

### General Information:

This is the beginning of the end of John's vision. In verse 6 the angel is speaking to John. In verse 7, Jesus is speaking. This can be stated explicitly as is in the UST. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### These words {are} trustworthy and true (ULT)

Here, **words** refers to the message that they formed. See how you translated this in [Revelation 21:5](#). Alternate translation: "This message is trustworthy and true" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### the God of the spirits of the prophets (ULT)

Here, **spirits** refers to: (1) the inward disposition of the **prophets** and indicates that God inspires them. Alternate translation: "God who inspires the prophets" (2) the Holy Spirit who inspires the **prophets**. Alternate translation: "God who gives his Spirit to the prophets" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### ULT

<sup>6</sup> And he said to me, "These words {are} trustworthy and true, and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants what must happen soon."

## Revelation 22:7

### behold (ULT)

Here Jesus begins to speak. The word **behold** adds emphasis to what follows.

### I am coming quickly (ULT)

It is understood that he is **coming** in order to judge. See how you translated this in [Revelation 3:11](#). Alternate translation: "I am coming to judge soon!" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### ULT

7 "And behold, I am coming quickly!  
Blessed {is} the one who keeps the  
words of the prophecy of this book."

## Revelation 22:8

### General Information:

John tells his readers about how he responded to the angel.

### I fell down to worship at the feet (ULT)

This means that John purposely lay on the ground and stretched himself out in reverence or submission. This action was an important part of **worship**, to show respect and willingness to serve. See how you translated similar words in [Revelation 19:10](#).

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> And I, John, {am} the one who saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing me these things.



## Revelation 22:9

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>9</sup> But he says to me, "Watch out! I am a fellow servant of you and of your brothers the prophets and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"

## Revelation 22:10

### Connecting Statement:

The angel finishes speaking to John.

### Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book (ULT)

To **seal** a **book** was to keep it closed with something that makes it impossible for anyone to read what was inside without breaking the seal. The angel is telling John not to keep the message a secret. Alternate translation: "Do not keep secret ... this book" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### the words of the prophecy of this book (ULT)

Here, **words** refers to the message that they formed. See how you translated this in [Revelation 22:7](#). Alternate translation: "This prophetic message of this book" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**10** And he says to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near."

## Revelation 22:11

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**11** Let the one who is unrighteous still be unrighteous, and let the morally filthy one still be morally filthy, and let the righteous one still do righteousness, and let the holy one still be holy.”

## Revelation 22:12

### General Information:

As the book of Revelation is ending, Jesus gives a closing greeting.  
(See: [End of Story](#))

#### ULT

**12** “Behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward {is} with me, to pay back each one just as his deeds are.

## Revelation 22:13

### the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (ULT)

These three phrases share similar meanings and emphasize that Jesus has existed and will exist for all time. (See: [Parallelism](#))

#### ULT

<sup>13</sup> I {am} the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

### the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (ULT)

These three phrases are merisms. They each represent everything included between the two ends. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet are **alpha** and **omega**. They represent all the letters in between. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “the A and the Z, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (See: [Merism](#))

### the alpha and the omega (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) the one who began all things and who ends all things. (2) the one who has always lived and who always will live. If your readers would misunderstand this, you may consider using the first and last letters of your alphabet. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### the first and the last (ULT)

This refers to the eternal nature of Jesus. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:17](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

### the beginning and the end (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end. (2) the one who existed before all things and who will exist after all things. See how you translated this in [Revelation 21:6](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Revelation 22:14

### those who wash their robes (ULT)

Becoming righteous is spoken of as if it were washing one's clothing. See how you translated as similar phrase in [Revelation 7:14](#).

Alternate translation: "those who have become righteous, as if they have washed their robes" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**14** Blessed {are} those who wash their robes so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter into the city through the gates. <sup>[1]</sup>

## Revelation 22:15

### Outside (ULT)

This means they are outside the city and not allowed to enter.

### are} the dogs (ULT)

In that culture, **dogs** were considered to be unclean, despised animals. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### are} the dogs (ULT)

Here the word **dogs** is derogatory and refers to people who are wicked. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**15** Outside {are} the dogs and the sorcerers and the sexually immoral and the murderers and the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

## Revelation 22:16

### to testify to you about (ULT)

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

### the root and the offspring of David (ULT)

The words **root** and **descendant** mean basically the same thing.  
Together the words emphasize that Jesus belongs to the family of David. (See: [Doublet](#))

### the root and the offspring of David (ULT)

Jesus speaks of being a **descendant** as if he were a **root** that grew out of David. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### the bright morning star (ULT)

Jesus speaks of himself as if he were the **bright star** that sometimes appears early in the **morning** and indicates that a new day is about to begin. See how you translated “morning star” in [Revelation 2:28](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**16** I, Jesus, sent my angel to testify to you about these things to the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star.”



## Revelation 22:17

### Connecting Statement:

This verse is a response to what Jesus said.

### the Bride (ULT)

Believers are spoken of as if they were a **Bride** about to be married to her groom, Jesus. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**17** And the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" And the one who thirsts, let him come. The one who desires it, let him freely take the water of life.

### Come (ULT)

Here, **Come** could mean: (1) this is an invitation for people to come and drink the water of life. Alternate translation: "Come and drink!" (2) this is a polite request for Jesus to return. Alternate translation: "Please come!" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### the one who thirsts, let him come. The one who desires it, let him freely take the water of life (ULT)

A person's desire for eternal **life** is spoken of as if it were thirst and of that person receiving eternal life as if he were drinking life-giving **water**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### the water of life (ULT)

Eternal **life** is spoken of as if it were provided by life-giving **water**. See how you translated this in [Revelation 21:6](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Revelation 22:18

### General Information:

John gives his final remarks about the book of Revelation.

### I testify (ULT)

Here, **I** refers to John.

#### ULT

**18** I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone might add to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written about in this book.

### the words of the prophecy of this book (ULT)

Here, **the words** refers to the message that they formed. See how you translated this in [Revelation 22:7](#). Alternate translation: "this prophetic message of this book" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### If anyone adds to them ... God will add

This is a strong warning to not change anything about this prophecy.

### that are written about in this book (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: "which I have written about in this book" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

## Revelation 22:19

### If anyone takes away ... God will take away

This is a strong warning to not change anything about this prophecy.

#### ULT

**19** And if anyone might take away from the words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are written about in this book. <sup>[2]</sup>

## Revelation 22:20

### General Information:

In these verses John gives his and Jesus' closing greetings.

### The one who testifies (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Jesus, who testifies"

#### ULT

<sup>20</sup> The one who testifies these things says, "Yes! I am coming quickly." Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

## Revelation 22:21

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>21</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus {be} with the saints. Amen.



# **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: Revelation 1:4; 1:6; 2:2; 2:9; 2:13; 2:19; 2:24; 5:12; 7:10; 9:6; 12:11; 12:17; 13:10; 13:18; 14:7; 17:1; 17:8; 17:9; 18:10; 18:15; 18:20)



## 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:** Revelation 1:3; 3:5; 5:6; 5:9; 6:2; 6:4; 6:9; 6:11; 6:13; 7:4; Notes; 8:2; 8:7; 8:8; 8:12; 8:13; 9:2; 9:5; 9:14; 9:15; 9:20; 10:7; 11:1; 11:18; 11:19; Notes; 12:1; 12:5; 12:9; 12:13; 12:15; 13:3; 13:5; 13:7; 13:8; 13:10; 13:12; 13:15; 14:1; 14:10; 14:16; 15:1; 15:4; 15:8; 16:8; 16:9; 16:10; 16:12; 16:16; 16:19; 17:5; 17:8; 17:14; 17:17; 18:8; 18:14; 18:16; 18:21; 18:22; 18:23; 18:24; 19:4; 19:8; 19:9; 19:12; 19:13; 19:16; 19:20; 19:21; 20:3; 20:4; 20:7; 20:10; 20:12; 20:13; 20:14; 20:15; 21:12; 21:19; 21:21; 21:25; 21:27; 22:18)

# Apostrophe

## Description

An apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him. He does this to tell his listeners his message or feelings about that person or thing in a very strong way.

This page answers the question: *What is the figure of speech called an apostrophe?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use apostrophe, and readers could be confused by it. They may wonder who the speaker is talking to, or think that the speaker is crazy to talk to things or people who cannot hear.

## Examples from the Bible

Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on you. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

King Saul was killed on Mount Gilboa, and David sang a sad song about it. By telling these mountains that he wanted them to have no dew or rain, he showed how sad he was.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to you. (Luke 13:34a ULT)

Jesus was expressing his feelings for the people of Jerusalem in front of his disciples and a group of Pharisees. By speaking directly to Jerusalem as though its people could hear him, Jesus showed how deeply he cared about them.

He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar, altar!** This is what Yahweh says, 'See, ... on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

The man of God spoke as if the altar could hear him, but he really wanted the king, who was standing there, to hear him.

## Translation Strategies

If apostrophe would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. But if this way of speaking would be confusing to your people, let the speaker continue speaking to the people that are listening to him as he tells **them** his message or feelings about the people or thing that cannot hear him. See the example below.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar, altar!** This is what Yahweh says, 'See, ... on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

He said this about the altar: "This is what Yahweh says **about this altar**. 'See, ... they will burn people's bones on **it**.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

**Mountains of Gilboa**, let there not be dew or rain on **you**. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

**As for these mountains of Gilboa**, let there not be dew or rain on **them**. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

(Go back to: [Revelation 18:22](#))

## 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: [Revelation 1:18](#); [2:19](#); [2:22](#); [2:28](#); [3:3](#); [3:11](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [9:3](#); [11:3](#); [11:4](#); [11:17](#); [Notes](#); [12:11](#); [13:10](#); [13:17](#); [15:2](#); [16:15](#); [Notes](#); [17:1](#); [17:5](#); [17:9](#); [17:15](#); [19:5](#); [19:10](#); [19:11](#); [19:15](#); [20:3](#); [22:6](#); [22:7](#); [22:10](#); [22:15](#); [22:17](#))



## Background Information

### Description

When people tell a story, they normally tell the events in the order that they happened. This sequence of events makes up the storyline. The storyline is full of action verbs that move the story along in time. But sometimes a writer may take a break from the storyline and give some information to help his listeners understand the story better. This type of information is called background information. The background information might be about things that happened before the events he has already told about, or it might explain something in the story, or it might be about something that would happen much later in the story.

This page answers the question: *What is background information, and how can I show that some information is background information?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Order of Events](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro]]

**Example** — The bolded phrases in the story below are all background information.

Peter and John went on a hunting trip because **their village was going to have a feast the next day. Peter was the best hunter in the village. He once killed three wild pigs in one day!** They walked for hours through low bushes until they heard a wild pig. The pig ran, but they managed to shoot the pig and kill it. Then they tied up its legs with some rope **they had brought with them** and carried it home on a pole. When they brought it to the village, Peter's cousin saw the pig and realized that it was his own pig. Peter had mistakenly killed his cousin's pig.

Background information often tells about something that had happened earlier or something that would happen much later. Examples of these are: "their village was going to have a feast the next day," "He once killed three wild pigs in one day," and "that they had brought with them."

Often background information uses "be" verbs like "was" and "were," rather than action verbs. Examples of these are "their village was going to have a feast the next day," and "Peter **was** the best hunter in the village."

Background information can also be marked with words that tell the reader that this information is not part of the event line of the story. In this story, some of these words are "because," "once," and "had."

### A writer may use background information:

- to help their listeners be interested in the story
- to help their listeners understand something in the story
- to help the listeners understand why something is important in the story
- to tell the setting of a story
  - > \* Setting includes:
    - > \* where the story takes place
    - > \* when the story takes place
    - > \* who is present when the story begins
    - > \* what is happening when the story begins

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of marking background information and storyline information.
- You (the translator) need to know the order of the events in the Bible, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.
- You will need to translate the story in a way that marks the background information in a way that your own readers will understand the order of events, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.

## Examples From the Bible

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram **was 86 years old** when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:15-16 ULT)

The first sentence tells about two events. Hagar gave birth and Abraham named his son. The second sentence is background information about how old Abram was when those things happened.

And Jesus himself **was beginning about 30 years old**. He **was the son** (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli, (Luke 3:23 ULT)

The verses before this tell about when Jesus was baptized. This sentence introduces background information about Jesus' age and ancestors. The story resumes in chapter 4 where it tells about Jesus going to the wilderness.

Then **it happened on a Sabbath** that he **was going through the grain fields**, and his disciples **were picking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands**. But some of the Pharisees said ... (Luke 6:1-2a ULT)

These verses give the setting of the story. The events took place in a grain field on the Sabbath day. Jesus, his disciples, and some Pharisees were there, and Jesus' disciples were picking heads of grain and eating them. The main action in the story starts with the phrase, "But some of the Pharisees said ...."

## Translation Strategies

To keep translations clear and natural you will need to study how people tell stories in your language. Observe how your language marks background information. You may need to write down some stories in order to study this. Observe what kinds of verbs your language uses for background information and what kinds of words or other markers signal that something is background information. Do these same things when you translate, so that your translation is clear and natural and people can understand it easily.

- (1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information.
- (2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first. (This is not always possible when the background information is very long.)

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information. The examples below explain how this was done in the ULT English translations.

**And** Jesus himself **was** beginning about 30 years old. He **was** the son (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli. (Luke 3:23 ULT)

As here, English sometimes uses the word "and" to show that there is some kind of change in the story. The verb "was" shows that it is background information.

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The bolded phrase happened before John rebuked Herod. In English, the helping verb "had" in "had done" shows that Herod did those things before John rebuked him.

- (2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first.

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.  
**Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.** (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

**"When Abram was 86 years old,** Hagar gave birth to his son, and Abram named his son Ishmael."

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done,** added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The translation below reorders John's rebuke and Herod's actions.

"Now Herod the tetrarch married his brother's wife, Herodias, and **he did many other evil things,** so John rebuked him. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/grammar-connect-words-phrases]]  
 [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-newevent]]

(Go back to: [Revelation 17:3](#); [21:10](#))

# Biblical Distance

## Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man’s hand.
- The **span** or handspan was the width of a man’s hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man’s forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **“long” cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as “furlong,” which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

The metric values in the table below are close but not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact length from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Metric Measure
handbreadth	8 centimeters
span	23 centimeters
cubit	46 centimeters
“long” cubit	54 centimeters
stadia	185 meters

## Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as “.46 meters” or even as “46 centimeters,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a meter,” “45 centimeters,” or “50 centimeters.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as “about ten kilometers” from Jerusalem.

When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal\]\]](#)  
[Fractions](#)

## Translation Strategies

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

## Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 25:10 below.

They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half. (Exodus 25:10 ULT)

- (1) Use the measurements given in the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half kubits**; its width will be **one kubit and a half**; and its height will be **one kubit and a half**.”

- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement. For example, if you measure things using the standard meter length, you could translate it as below.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half cubits (one meter)**; its width will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**; and its height will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**.”

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; <sup>1</sup> its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; <sup>2</sup> and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; <sup>1</sup> its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; <sup>2</sup> and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

<sup>[1]</sup> two and a half cubits  
<sup>[2]</sup> one cubit and a half

(Go back to: [Revelation 14:20](#); [21:16](#); [21:17](#))

# Biblical Money

## Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of money in the Bible?*

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals, such as silver and gold, and would pay a certain weight of that metal in order to buy things. Later, people started to make coins that each contained a standard amount of a certain metal. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

Unit in OT	Metal	Weight
daric	gold coin	8.4 grams
shekel	various metals	11 grams
talent	various metals	33 kilograms

Unit in NT	Metal	Day's Wage
denarius/denarii	silver coin	1 day
drachma	silver coin	1 day
mite	copper coin	1/64 day
shekel	silver coin	4 days
talent	silver	6,000 days

## Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

## Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see [Biblical Weight](#). The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament.

- (1) Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
- (3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
- (4) Use the biblical term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

(5) Use the biblical term and explain it in a footnote.

## Translation Strategies Applied

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

█ The one owed 500 denarii, and the other, 50. (Luke 7:41b ULT)

Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

█ "The one owed **500 denali**, and the other, **50**."

Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.

█ "The one owed **500 silver coins**, and the other, **50**."

(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.

█ "The one owed **500 days' wages**, and the other, **50**."

(4) Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2"

The footnotes would look like:

█ [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii**,<sup>1</sup> and the other, **50**." (Luke 7:41 ULT)

█ <sup>[1]</sup> A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

[Translate Unknowns](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 6:6](#))



# Biblical Volume

## Description

The following terms are the most common units of volume used in the Bible to state how much a certain container could hold. The containers and measurements are given for both liquids (such as wine) and dry solids (such as grain). The metric values are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the measures of volume that are in the Bible?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal\]\]](#)

Type	Original Measure	Liters
Dry	omer	2 liters
Dry	ephah	22 liters
Dry	homer	220 liters
Dry	cor	220 liters
Dry	seah	7.7 liters
Dry	lethek	114.8 liters
Liquid	metrete	40 liters
Liquid	bath	22 liters
Liquid	hin	3.7 liters
Liquid	kab	1.23 liters
Liquid	log	0.31 liters

## Translation Principles

- The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
- Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
- Whatever measures you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kinds of measures in the text or a footnote.
- If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one hin as “3.7 liters,” readers might think that the measurement is exactly 3.7 liters, not 3.6 or 3.8. It would be better to use a more approximate measure such as “three and a half liters” or “four liters.”
- When God tells people how much of something to use, and when people use those amounts in obedience to him, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much they used.

## When the unit of measure is stated

### Translation Strategies

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

### Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Isaiah 5:10 below.

For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one bath, and one homer of seed will yield only an ephah. (Isaiah 5:10 ULT)

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one **bat**, and one **homer** of seed will yield only an **efa**.”

- (2) Use the measurements given in the UST. Usually they are metric measurements. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22 liters** and **220 liters** of seed will yield only **22 liters**.”

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22**, and **ten baskets** of seed will yield only **one basket**.”

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **six gallons**, and **six and a half bushels** of seed will yield only **20 quarts**.”

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **one bath (six gallons)**, and **one homer (six and a half bushels)** of seed will yield only **an ephah (20 quarts)**.”

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in footnotes.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only 22 liters<sup>1</sup>, and 220 liters<sup>2</sup> of seed will yield only 22 liters<sup>3</sup>.”

The footnotes would look like:

- [1] one bath
- [2] one homer
- [3] one ephah

## When the unit of measure is implied

Sometimes the Hebrew does not specify a particular unit of volume but only uses a number. In these cases, many English versions, including the ULT and UST, add the word “measure.”

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 measures** of wine, there were only 20. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

## Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.
- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”
- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.
- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

## Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Haggai 2:16 below.

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty measures** of wine, there were only **20**. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.

When you came to a heap of **20** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”

When you came to a heap of **20 amounts** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty amounts** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.

When you came to a heap of **20 baskets** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 jars** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

When you came to a heap for **20 liters** of grain, there were only **ten liters**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 liters** of wine, there were only **20 liters**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-explicitinfo]]

(Go back to: [Revelation 6:6](#))

# Biblical Weight

## Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of weight in the Bible?*

The following terms are the most common units of weight in the Bible. The term “shekel” means “weight,” and many other weights are described in terms of the shekel. Some of these weights were used for money. The metric values in the table below are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are only an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Shekels	Grams	Kilograms
shekel	1 shekel	11 grams	-
bekah	1/2 shekel	5.7 grams	-
pim	2/3 shekel	7.6 grams	-
gerah	1/20 shekel	0.57 grams	-
mina	50 shekels	550 grams	1/2 kilogram
talent	3,000 shekels	-	34 kilograms

## Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one gerah as “.57 grams,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a gram.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, 2 Samuel 21:16 says that Goliath’s spear weighed 300 shekels. Instead of translating this as “3300 grams” or “3.3 kilograms,” it can be translated as “about three and one half kilograms.”

When God tells people how much something should weigh, and when people use those weights, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise, it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much the thing should weigh.

## Translation Strategies

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this, you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

## Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 38:29 below.

■ The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. (Exodus 38:29 ULT)

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

■ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talentes and 2,400 sekeles**."

- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

■ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **2,400 kilograms**."

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

■ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **5,300 pounds**."

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a footnote. The following shows both measurements in the text.

■ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents (2,380 kilograms) and 2,400 shekels (26.4 kilograms)**."

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a footnote. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

■ "The bronze from the offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. <sup>1</sup>"

The footnote would look like:

■ <sup>[1]</sup> This was a total of about 2,400 kilograms.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 16:21](#))

# Copy or Borrow Words

## Description

Sometimes the Bible includes things that are not part of your culture and for which your language may not have a word. The Bible also includes people and places for which you may not have names.

When that happens you can “borrow” the word from the Bible in a familiar language and use it in your translation in your own language. This means that you basically copy it from the other language. This page tells how to “borrow” words. (There are also other ways to translate words for things that are not in your language. See [Translate Unknowns](#).)

This page answers the question: *What does it mean to borrow words from another language and how can I do it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Translate Unknowns](#)

## Examples From the Bible

Seeing one fig tree along the roadside, he went to it. (Matthew 21:19a ULT)

If there are no fig trees where your language is spoken, there might not be a name for this kind of tree in your language.

Above him were the **seraphim**; each one had six wings; with two each covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (Isaiah 6:2 ULT)

Your language might not have a name for this kind of creature.

The declaration of the word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of **Malachi**. (Malachi 1:1 ULT)

Malachi might not be a name that people who speak your language use.

## Translation Strategies

There are several things to be aware of when borrowing words from another language.

- Different languages use different scripts, such as the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Devanagari, and Korean scripts. These scripts use different shapes to represent the letters in their alphabets.
- Languages that use the same script might pronounce the letters in that script differently. For example, when speaking German, people pronounce the letter “j” the same way that people pronounce the letter “y” when speaking English.
- Languages do not all have the same sounds or combinations of sounds. For example, many languages do not have the soft “th” sound in the English word “think,” and some languages cannot start a word with a combination of sounds like “st” as in “stop.”

There are several ways to borrow a word.

- (1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.
- (2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.
- (3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.

.A man's name in Hebrew letters — זְפַנְיָה  
 "Zephaniah" — The same name in Roman letters

(2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.

Zephaniah — This is a man's name.  
 "Zephaniah" — The name as it is spelled in English, but you can pronounce it according to the rules of your language.

(3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Zephaniah — If your language does not have the "z," you could use "s." If your writing system does not use "ph" you could use "f." Depending on how you pronounce the "i" you could spell it with "i" or "ai" or "ay."  
 "Sefania"  
 "Sefanaia"  
 "Sefanaya"

(Go back to: [Revelation 9 General Notes; Notes](#))



## Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

### Description

In some languages, phrases that modify a noun can be used with the noun for two different purposes. They can either (1) distinguish the noun from other similar items, or (2) they can give more information about the noun. That information could be new to the reader, or a reminder about something the reader might already know. Other languages use modifying phrases with a noun only for distinguishing the noun from other similar things. When people who speak these languages hear a modifying phrase along with a noun, they assume that its function is to distinguish one item from another similar item.

This page answers the question: *When a phrase is used with a noun, what is the difference between phrases that distinguish the noun from others and phrases that simply inform or remind?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)

Some languages use a comma to mark the difference between (1) making a distinction between similar items and (2) giving more information about an item. Without the comma, the sentence below communicates that it is making a distinction:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister who was very thankful**.
  - If her sister was usually thankful, the phrase “who was thankful” could distinguish this sister of Mary’s from another sister who was not usually thankful.

With the comma, the sentence is giving more information:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister, who was very thankful**.
  - This same phrase can be used to give us more information about Mary’s sister. It tells us about how Mary’s sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish one sister from another sister.

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Many source languages of the Bible use phrases that modify a noun both for distinguishing the noun from another similar item and also for giving more information about the noun. You (the translator) must be careful to understand which meaning the author intended in each case.
- Some languages use phrases that modify a noun only for distinguishing the noun from another similar item. When translating a phrase that is used for giving more information, translators who speak these languages will need to separate the phrase from the noun. Otherwise, people who read it or hear it will think that the phrase is meant to distinguish the noun from other similar items.

### Examples From the Bible

#### Examples of words and phrases that are used to distinguish one item from other possible items:

(These usually do not cause any problem in translation.)

■ The curtain is to separate **the holy place** from **the most holy place**. (Exodus 26:33b ULT)

The words “holy” and “most holy” distinguish two different places from each other and from any other place.

A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to **the woman who bore him**. (Proverbs 17:25 ULT)

The phrase “who bore him” distinguishes which woman the son is bitterness to. He is not bitterness to all women, but to his mother.

## Examples of words and phrases that are used to give added information or a reminder about an item:

(These are a translation issue for languages that do not use these.)

... for **your righteous judgments** are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

The word “righteous” simply reminds us that God’s judgments are righteous. It does not distinguish his righteous judgments from his unrighteous judgments, because all of his judgments are righteous.

How can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is the reason that Abraham did not think that Sarah could bear a son. He was not distinguishing one woman named Sarah from another woman named Sarah who was a different age, and he was not telling anyone something new about her age. He simply did not think that a woman who was that old could bear a child.

I will wipe away mankind **whom I have created** from the surface of the earth. (Genesis 6:7 ULT)

The phrase “whom I have created” is a reminder of the relationship between God and mankind. It is the reason God had the right to wipe away mankind. There is not another mankind that God did not create.

## Translation Strategies

If readers would understand the purpose of a phrase with a noun, then consider keeping the phrase and the noun together. For languages that use words or phrases with a noun only to distinguish one item from another, here are some strategies for translating phrases that are used to inform or remind.

- (1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.
- (2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information. It may be by adding a small word, or by changing the way the voice sounds. Sometimes changes in the voice can be shown with punctuation marks, such as parentheses or commas.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.

I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

By saying “worthless idols,” David was commenting about all idols and giving his reason for hating those who serve them. He was not distinguishing worthless idols from valuable idols.

>

**Because idols are worthless**, I hate those who serve them.

... for your **righteous** judgments are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

... for your judgments are good **because they are righteous**.

Can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is a reminder of Sarah’s age. It tells why Abraham was asking the question. He did not expect that a woman who was that old could bear a child.

>

Can Sarah bear a son **even when she is 90 years old**?

I will call on Yahweh, **who is worthy to be praised**. (2 Samuel 22:4a ULT) There is only one Yahweh. The phrase “who is worthy to be praised” gives a reason for calling on Yahweh.

I will call on Yahweh, because **he is worthy to be praised**

(2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information.

You are my Son, **whom I love**. I am pleased with you. (Luke 3:22 ULT)

You are my Son. **I love you** and I am pleased with you.

**Receiving my love**, you are my Son. I am pleased with you.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Double Negatives](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 9:20](#); [11:17](#); [12:9](#); [16:9](#); [17:2](#))

## 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: [Revelation 21:27](#))

# 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.

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.

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]]

## 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: [Revelation 1:14](#); [4:9](#); [15:1](#); [22:16](#))

# Ellipsis

## Description

An ellipsis<sup>1</sup> 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.

[<sup>1</sup>] 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: [Revelation 2:16](#); [7:4](#); [7:5](#); [9:4](#))

## End of Story

### Description

There are different types of information that may be given at the end of a story. Often this is background information. This background information is different from the actions that make up the main part of the story. A book of the Bible is often made up of many smaller stories that are part of the larger story of the book itself. For example, the story of Jesus' birth is a smaller story in the larger story of the book of Luke. Each of these stories, whether large or small, can have background information at the end of it.

This page answers the question: *What kinds of information are given at the end of a story?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)

[Background Information](#)

### The following are purposes for end of story information:

- to summarize the story
- to give a comment about what happened in the story
- to connect a smaller story to the larger story it is a part of
- to tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends
- to tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends
- to tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of presenting these kinds of information. If you (the translator) do not use your language's ways of doing this, readers may not know:

- that this information is ending the story
- what the purpose of the information is
- how the information is related to the story

### Translation Strategies

- Translate the particular kind of information at the end of a story the way your language expresses that kind of information.
- Translate it so that people will understand how it relates to the story it is part of.
- If possible, translate the end of the story in a way that people will know where that story ends and the next begins.

### Examples From the Bible

- To summarize the story

Then the rest of the men should follow, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. **In this way it happened that all of us were brought safely to the land.** (Acts 27:44 ULT)

- To give a comment about what happened in the story

Many of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of everyone. Then they counted the value of them, and found it was 50,000 pieces of

silver. **So the word of the Lord was spreading and prevailing with power.** (Acts 19:19-20 ULT)

- To tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoiced in God my savior." **And Mary stayed with her about three months and then returned to her house.** (Luke 1:46-47, 56 ULT)

- To tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends

All who those who heard it were amazed concerning the things that were spoken to them by the shepherds. **But Mary kept all the things, pondering them in her heart.** (Luke 2:18-19 ULT)

- To tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

"Woe to you, experts in the Jewish law, because you have taken away the key of knowledge; you do not enter in yourselves, and you hinder those who are entering." **After he went from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to fiercely oppose him and argued against him about many things, lying in wait to trap him in something from his mouth.** (Luke 11:52-54 ULT)

(Go back to: [Revelation 22:12](#))

# Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

## Description

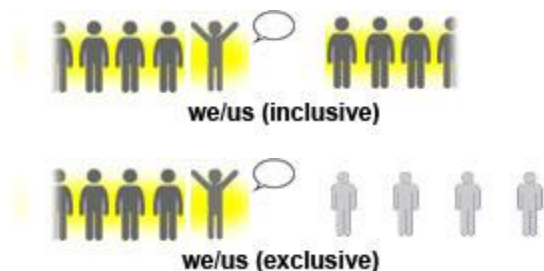
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also 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:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns\]\]](#)

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:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-gendernotations]]

(Go back to: [Revelation 19:5](#))

# First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as “I” and the person he is speaking to as “you.” Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than “I” or “you.”

## Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns “I” and “we.” (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun “you.” (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns “he,” “she,” “it,” and “they.” (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like “the man” or “the woman” are also third person.

This page answers the question: *What are first, second, and third person, and how do I translate when a third person form does not refer to the third person?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-explicitinfo]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns]]

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses the third person to refer to himself or to the people he is speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant “I” or “you.”

## Examples From the Bible

Sometimes people used the third person instead of “I” or “me” to refer to themselves.

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34 ULT)

David referred to himself in the third person as “your servant” and used “his.” He was calling himself Saul’s servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said,  
“... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words “God’s” and “his.” He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful.

Sometimes people use the third person instead of “you” or “your” to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

Abraham answered and said, “Look, I have undertaken to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!” (Genesis 18:27 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as “My Lord” rather than as “you.” He did this to show his humility before God.

So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

After saying “each of you,” Jesus used the third person “his” instead of “your.”

## Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean “I” or “you” would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”
- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34)

But David said to Saul, “**I, your servant**, used to keep **my** father’s sheep.”

- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **mine**? Can you thunder with a voice like **mine**?”

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **your** brother from your heart.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Forms of You](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:1](#); [2:7](#); [2:11](#); [2:17](#); [2:29](#); [3:6](#); [3:13](#); [3:22](#); [13:9](#))



## 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](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](https://ufw.io/figs_youform).

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- Forms of “You” — Formal or Informal

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:9](#); [16:5](#); [22:16](#))

# Fractions

## Description

A fraction is a number that represents part of a whole. When an item is divided into several equal parts, a fraction refers to one or more of those parts.

For the drink offering, you must offer **a third** of a hin of wine. (Numbers 15:7a ULT)

A hin is a container of a set size which is used for measuring wine and other liquids. The people were to think about dividing a hin container into three equal parts, filling up only one of those parts and offering that amount.

... **a third** of the ships were destroyed. (Revelation 8:9b ULT)

There were many ships. If all those ships were divided into three equal groups of ships, one group of ships was destroyed.

Most fractions in English simply have the letters “th” added to the end of the number, such as fourth, sixth, ninth, tenth.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | ----- | ----- | | four | fourth | | ten | tenth | | one hundred | one hundredth | | one thousand | one thousandth |

Some fractions in English do not follow that pattern.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | ----- | ----- | | two | half | | three | third | | five | fifth |

## Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use fractions. They may simply talk about parts or groups, but they do not use fractions to tell how big a part is or how many parts are included in a group.

## Examples From the Bible

Now to the **half-tribe** of Manasseh, Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the other **half**, Joshua gave a possession among their brothers across the Jordan on the west. (Joshua 22:7 ULT)

The tribe of Manasseh divided into two groups. The phrase “the half-tribe of Manasseh” refers one of those groups. The phrase “the other half” refers to the other group.

So the four angels who had been prepared for that hour, that day, that month, and that year, were released so that they would kill **a third** of mankind. (Revelation 9:15 ULT)

If all the people in the world were to be divided into three equal groups, then the number of people in one group would be killed.

You must also prepare **a fourth** of a hin of wine as the drink offering. (Numbers 15:5 ULT)

They were to imagine dividing a hin of wine into four equal parts and prepare the amount equal to one of them.

This page answers the question: *What are fractions and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Numbers](#)

## Translation Strategies

If a fraction in your language would give the right meaning, consider using it. If not, you could consider these strategies.

- (1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.
- (2) For measurements such as for weight and length, use a unit that your people might know or the unit in the UST.
- (3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

## Examples of These Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.

**A third** of the ocean became red like blood (Revelation 8:8 ULT)

It was like they **divided** the ocean **into three parts**, and **one part** of the ocean became blood.

Then you must offer with the bull a grain offering of **three-tenths** of an ephah of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9 ULT)

... then you must **divide** an ephah of fine flour **into ten parts** and **divide** a hin of oil **into two parts**. Then mix **three of those parts** of the flour with **one of the parts** of oil. Then you must offer that grain offering along with the bull.

- (2) For measurements, use the measurements that are given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

... **two-thirds of a shekel** ... (1 Samuel 13:21b ULT)

... **eight grams** of silver ... (1 Samuel 13:21b UST)

... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)

... **six and one-half liters** of finely ground flour mixed with **two liters** of olive oil. (Numbers 15:9b UST)

- (3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)

**six quarts** of fine flour mixed with **two quarts** of oil.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#)

[Biblical Money](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 6:8](#); [8:8](#); [9:18](#); [12:4](#))

## 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:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-gendernotations\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:3](#); [2:7](#); [2:11](#); [2:17](#); [2:26](#); [3:5](#); [3:12](#); [3:21](#))

## Go and Come

### Description

This page answers the question: *What do I do if the word "go" or "come" is confusing in a certain sentence?*

Different languages have different ways of determining whether to use the words "go" or "come" and whether to use the words "take" or "bring" when talking about motion. For example, when saying that they are approaching a person who has called them, English speakers say "I'm coming," while Spanish speakers say "I'm going." You will need to study the context in order to understand what is meant by the words "go" and "come" (and also "take" and "bring"), and then translate those words in a way that your readers will understand which direction people are moving in.

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of talking about motion. The biblical languages or your source language may use the words "go" and "come" or "take" and "bring" differently than your language uses them. If these words are not translated in the way that is natural in your language, your readers may be confused about which direction people are moving.

### Examples From the Bible

Yahweh said to Noah, "**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark." (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

In some languages, this would lead people to think that Yahweh was in the ark.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.  
Then you will be free from my oath. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to his servant. Abraham's relatives lived far away from where he and his servant were standing and he wanted his servant to **go** to them, not **come** toward Abraham.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14a ULT)

Moses is speaking to the people in the wilderness. They had not yet gone into the land that God was giving them. In some languages, it would make more sense to say, "When you have **gone** into the land ..."

They **brought** him up to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (Luke 2:22b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to say that they **took** or **carried** Jesus to the temple.

Then see, there was a man whose name was Jairus, and he was a leader of the synagogue. And falling at the feet of Jesus, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

The man was not at his house when he spoke to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to **go** with him to his house.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to ask what did you come out to see.

### Translation Strategies

If the word used in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other strategies.

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.
- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

But you will be free from my oath if you **go** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you come out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14 ULT)

“When you have **arrived** in the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ...”

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark ...” (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Enter**, you and all your household, into the ark ...”

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you travel out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

(Go back to: [Revelation 3:20](#); [5:7](#))



# How to Translate Names

## Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Translate Unknowns](#)

## Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see [Borrow Words](#).
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

## Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

**Saul** was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

## Translation Strategies

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.
- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
- (3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
- (4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
- (5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, "For out of the water I drew him." (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like 'drawn out')**, and she said, "For out of the water I drew him."

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?" Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?"  
Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called "Saul" before Acts 13 and "Paul" after Acts 13. You could translate his name as "Paul" all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** <sup>1</sup>

The footnote would look like:

<sup>[1]</sup> 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:

<sup>[1]</sup> 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**<sup>1</sup> and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

<sup>[1]</sup> This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

(Go back to: [Introduction to Revelation](#); [Revelation 1:11](#); [2:6](#); [2:8](#); [2:12](#); [2:13](#); [2:14](#); [2:15](#); [2:18](#); [3:1](#); [3:7](#); [3:14](#); [9:11](#); [16:16](#))

## 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: [Revelation 1:10](#); [2:23](#); [4:2](#); [7:11](#); [11:16](#); [22:4](#))

# Introduction of New and Old Participants

## Description

The first time that people or things are mentioned in a story, they are **new participants**. After that, whenever they are mentioned, they are **old participants**.

Now **there was a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus** ... **This man** came to Jesus at night ... Jesus replied and said to **him** ... (John 3:1, 2a, 3a)

This page answers the question: *Why cannot the readers of my translation understand who the author was writing about?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]  
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro]]

The first bolded phrase introduces Nicodemus as a new participant. After being introduced, he is then referred to as “This man” and “him” when he has become an old participant.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In order to make your translation clear and natural, it is necessary to refer to the participants in such a way that people will know if they are new participants or participants that they have already read about. Different languages have different ways of doing this. You must follow the way that your language does this, not the way that the source language does this.

## Examples From the Bible

### New Participants

Often the most important new participant is introduced with a phrase that says that he existed, such as “There was a man,” as in the example below. The phrase “There was” tells us that this man existed. The word “a” in “a man” tells us that the author is speaking about him for the first time. The rest of the sentence tells where this man was from, who his family was, and what his name was.

**Now there was a man** from Zorah, of the families of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. (Judges 13:2a ULT)

A new participant who is not the most important participant is often introduced in relation to the more important person who was already introduced. In the example below, Manoah’s wife is simply referred to as “his wife.” This phrase shows her relationship to him.

Now there was one man from Zorah, of the families of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. **His wife** was barren and she had never given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULT)

Sometimes a new participant is introduced simply by name because the author assumes that the readers know who the person is. In the first verse of 1 Kings, the author assumes that his readers know who King David is, so there is no need to explain who he is.

Now King David was old, he had advanced in the days, and they covered him with the garments, but it was not warm enough for him. (1 Kings 1:1 ULT)

## Old Participants

A person who has already been brought into the story can be referred to with a pronoun after that. In the example below, Manoah is referred to with the pronoun “his,” and his wife is referred to with the pronoun “she.”

His wife was barren and she had never given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULT)

Old participants can also be referred to in other ways, depending on what is happening in the story. In the example below, the story is about bearing a son, and Manoah’s wife is referred to by the noun phrase “the wife.”

The angel of Yahweh appeared to the wife and he said to her ... (Judges 13:3a ULT)

If the old participant has not been mentioned for a while, or if there could be confusion between participants, the author may use the participant’s name again. In the example below, Manoah is referred to by his name, which the author has not used since verse 2.

Then Manoah prayed to Yahweh. (Judges 13:8a ULT)

Some languages place an affix on the verb that tells something about the subject. In some of those languages, people do not always use noun phrases or pronouns for old participants when they are the subject of the sentence. The marker on the verb gives enough information for the listener to understand who the subject is. (See Verbs.)

## Translation Strategies

- (1) If the participant is new, use one of your language’s ways of introducing new participants.
- (2) If it is not clear to whom a pronoun refers, use a noun phrase or name.
- (3) If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the participant is new, use one of your language’s ways of introducing new participants.

Then Joseph, who was called Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated as Son of Encouragement), a Levite from Cyprus by birth ... (Acts 4:36-37 ULT) — Starting the sentence with Joseph’s name when he has not been introduced yet might be confusing in some languages.

There was a man from Cyprus who was a Levite. His name was Joseph, and he was given the name Barnabas by the apostles (that is, being interpreted, Son of Encouragement). There was a Levite from Cyprus whose name was Joseph. The apostles gave him the name Barnabas, which means Son of encouragement.

- (2) If it is not clear who a pronoun refers to, use a noun phrase or name.

And it happened that when he was praying in a certain place, when he stopped, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.” (Luke 11:1 ULT) — Since this is the first verse in a chapter, readers might wonder who “he” refers to.

It happened when Jesus finished praying in a certain place, that one of his disciples said, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.”



(3) If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.

Joseph's master took Joseph and put him in prison, in the place where all the king's prisoners were put, and Joseph stayed there. (Genesis 39:20) — Since Joseph is the main person in the story, some languages might prefer the pronoun.

Joseph's master took **him** and put **him** in prison, in the place where all the king's prisoners were put, and **he** stayed there in the prison.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-pronouns\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 5:6](#))

## Merism

### Definition

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it. By referring to the extreme parts, the speaker intends to include also everything in between those parts.

This page answers the question: *What does the word merism mean and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

"I am **the alpha and the omega**," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8 ULT)

I am **the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end**. (Revelation 22:13, ULT)

**Alpha and omega** are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a merism that includes everything from the beginning to the end. It means eternal.

... I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth** ..., (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

**Heaven and earth** is a merism that includes everything that exists.

### Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use merism. The readers of those languages may think that the phrase only applies to the items mentioned. They may not realize that it refers to those two things and everything in between.

### Examples From the Bible

**From the rising of the sun to its setting**, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

This bolded phrase is a merism because it speaks of the east and the west and everywhere in between. It means "everywhere."

He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13)

The bolded phrase is merism because it speaks of old people and young people and everyone in between. It means "everyone."

### Translation Strategies

If the merism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.
- (2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

### Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything**.

**From the rising of the sun to its setting**, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

**In all places**, people should praise Yahweh's name.

(2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything, including both what is in heaven and what is on earth**.

He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13 ULT)

He will bless **all those** who honor him, regardless of whether they are **young or old**.

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:8](#); [1:17](#); [2:8](#); [5:3](#); [5:13](#); [7:15](#); [12:10](#); [19:5](#); [19:18](#); [21:6](#); [22:13](#))

# 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: Revelation 1 General Notes; 1:4; 1:8; 1:13; 1:18; 2:3; 2:4; 2:5; 2:9; 2:10; 2:13; 2:14; 2:20; 2:22; 2:23; 2:24; 2:27; Notes; 3:1; 3:2; 3:3; 3:4; 3:9; 3:10; 3:11; 3:12; 3:15; 3:16; 3:17; 3:18; 3:20; 4:1; 4:6; 4:8; Notes; 5:5; 6:9; 6:11; 6:17; 7:14; 7:15; 7:16; 7:17; 8:11; 8:12; 9:12; 10:1; 11:5; 11:6; 11:11; 11:14; 11:18; 12:5; 12:10; Notes; 14:4; 14:7; 14:8; 14:15; 15:2; Notes; 16:9; 16:15; Notes; 17:2; 17:8; 17:10; 17:11; 17:15; 17:16; 17:17; 17:18; Notes; 18:2; 18:3; 18:5; 18:6; 18:7; 18:8; 18:10; 18:14; 18:16; 18:21; 18:23; 19:2; 19:7; 19:8; 19:9; 19:10; 19:15; Notes; 20:11; Notes; 21:6; 21:9; 21:22; 21:23; 21:24; 22:1; 22:13; 22:14; 22:15; 22:16; 22:17)

# 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: [Revelation 1 General Notes](#); 1:7; [Notes](#); 2:3; 2:7; 2:10; 2:11; 2:13; 2:17; 2:22; 2:23; 2:29; [Notes](#); 3:4; 3:5; 3:6; 3:8; 3:13; 3:20; 3:21; 3:22; 4:11; 5:9; 5:12; 6:6; 6:8; 6:9; 6:10; 6:16; 6:17; 7:2; 7:3; 7:14; 7:17; 8:4; 8:5; 9:4; 10:1; 10:11; 11:12; 11:15; 11:18; 12:10; 12:11; 13:2; 13:3; 13:5; 13:9; 13:10; 13:15; 14:5; 14:8; 14:11; 15:4; 16:2; 16:3; 16:4; 16:6; 16:7; 16:8; 16:9; 16:10; 16:12; 16:17; 16:20; 17:15; 17:17; 17:18; 18:3; 18:4; 18:7; 18:16; 18:17; 18:21; 18:22; 18:23; 18:24; 19:2; 19:13; 19:17; 20:3; 20:4; 20:13; 21:3; 21:4; 21:5; 21:10; 21:24; 22:2; 22:6; 22:10; 22:18)

# 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: [Revelation 11:18](#))

# Numbers

## Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words (“five”) or as numerals (“5”). Some numbers are very large, such as “two hundred” (200), “twenty-two thousand” (22,000), or “one hundred million” (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

■ Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

■ That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word “about” shows that it is not an exact number.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

## Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

## Examples From the Bible

■ When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

■ Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands**. (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

## Translation Strategies

- (1) Write numbers using numerals.
- (2) Write numbers using your language’s words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
- (3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

(1) Write numbers using numerals.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents), ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

## Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

## Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord® Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord® Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died.  
(Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#)

[Fractions](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 5:11](#); [9:16](#); [11:9](#); [11:11](#); [14:1](#); [14:3](#); [14:20](#); [19:4](#); [20:5](#))



## Order of Events

### Description

In the Bible, events are not always told in the order in which they occurred. Sometimes the author wanted to discuss something that happened at an earlier time than the event that he just talked about. This can be confusing to the reader.

This page answers the question: *Why are some events not listed in the order they happened, and how do I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs]]

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers might think that the events happened in the order that they are told. It is important to help them understand the correct order of events.

### Examples From the Bible

He even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

This could sound like John baptized Jesus after John was locked up in prison, but John baptized Jesus before John was locked up in prison.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed after them. But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

This could sound like Joshua gave the order not to shout after the army had already started their march, but he had given that order before they started marching.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

This sounds like a person must first open the scroll and then break its seals, but the seals that lock the scroll must be broken before the scroll can be unrolled.

### Translation Strategies

- (1) If your language uses phrases or time words to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using one of them.
- (2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that. (See the section on "Aspect" of Verbs.)
- (3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occurred, consider reordering the events so they are in that order. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6). (See Verse Bridges.)

### Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If your language uses phrases, time words or tenses to show that an event happened before the one just mentioned, consider using one of them.

20 he even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

20 But then Herod ... had John locked up in prison. 21 **Before John was put in prison**, while all the people were being baptized by John, Jesus also was baptized.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to open the scroll **after** breaking its seals?

(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets 10 But Joshua **had commanded** the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout."

(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occur, consider reordering the events. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6).

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8,10 Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout." Then just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets...

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?

You may also want to watch the video at [https://ufw.io/figs\\_events](https://ufw.io/figs_events).

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Background Information](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/grammar-connect-words-phrases\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-newevent\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-versebridge\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:15](#); [5:2](#))

# Ordinal Numbers

## Description

Ordinal numbers are used in the Bible mainly to tell the position of something in a list.

And God has indeed appointed some in the church, **first** apostles, **second** prophets, **third** teachers, then miracles. (1 Corinthians 12:28a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are ordinal numbers and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Numbers](#)

This is a list of workers that God gave to the church in their order.

## Ordinal Numbers in English

Most ordinal numbers in English simply have “-th” added to the end.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
4	four	fourth
10	ten	tenth
100	one hundred	one hundredth
1,000	one thousand	one thousandth

Some ordinal numbers in English do not follow that pattern.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
1	one	first
2	two	second
3	three	third
5	five	fifth
12	twelve	twelfth

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have special numbers for showing the order of items in a list. There are different ways to deal with this.

## Examples From the Bible

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

The people cast lots and one went to each of these people in the order given.

You must place in it four rows of precious stones. The **first** row must have a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet. The **second** row must have an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. The **third** row must have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. The **fourth** row must have a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They must be mounted in gold settings. (Exodus 28:17-20 ULT)

This describes four rows of stones. The first row is probably the top row, and the fourth row is probably the bottom row.

## Translation Strategies

If your language has ordinal numbers and using them would give the right meaning, consider using them. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.
- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Tell the total number of items, and use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.

The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim ... the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **another** to Jedaiah, **another** to Harim ... **another** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **the next** to Jedaiah, **the next** to Harim ... **the next** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **the first** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the second** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the third** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. **The fourth** river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10-14 ULT)

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **one** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the next** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the next** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. The **last** river is the Euphrates.

- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

They cast **24** lots. The lots went to Jerhoiarib, Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim ... Delaiah, and Maaziah.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 6:3](#); [6:5](#); [6:7](#); [6:9](#); [6:12](#); [8:1](#); [8:8](#); [11:15](#))

# 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: [Revelation 9:15](#); [21:3](#); [21:6](#); [21:11](#); [22:13](#))



# Personification

## Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

## Examples From the Bible

You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

## Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

- (1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
- (2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
- (3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

This page answers the question: *What is personification?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.

**Sin crouches** at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — God speaks of sin as if it were a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.

Sin is at your door, **waiting to attack you**.

(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — This can be translated with the word “as.”

Sin is crouching at the door, **just as a wild animal does as it waits to attack a person..**

(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Even the **winds and the sea obey him**. (Matthew 8:27b ULT) — The men speak of the “wind and the sea” as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus, just as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.

He even **controls the winds and the sea**.

**NOTE:** We have broadened our definition of “personification” to include “zoomorphism” (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and “anthropomorphism” (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics) because the translation strategies for them are the same.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Apostrophe](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1]]

(Go back to: [Revelation 9:6](#); [Notes](#); [12:16](#); [14:8](#); [14:13](#); [16:8](#); [18:3](#); [19:5](#); [20:6](#); [20:9](#); [20:11](#); [20:13](#))

## Quotations and Quote Margins

### Description

This page answers the question: *What are quote margins and where should I put them?*

When saying that someone said something, we often tell who spoke, whom they spoke to, and what they said. The information about who spoke and whom they spoke to is called the quote margin. What the person said is the quotation. (This is also called a quote.) In some languages the quote margin may come first, last, or even in between two parts of the quotation.

The quote margins are bolded below.

- **She said**, "The food is ready. Come and eat."
- "The food is ready. Come and eat," **she said**.
- "The food is ready," **she said**. "Come and eat."

Also in some languages, the quote margin may have more than one verb meaning "said."

But his mother **answered** and **said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John." (Luke 1:60 ULT)

When writing that someone said something, some languages put the quote (what was said) in quotation marks called inverted commas (" "). Some languages use other symbols around the quotation, such as these angle quote marks (« »), or something else.

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to put the quote margin where it is most clear and natural in their language.
- Translators need to decide whether they want the quote margin to have one or two verbs meaning "said."
- Translators need to decide which marks to use around the quotation.

### Examples From the Bible

#### Quote margin before the quote

**Then Zechariah said to the angel**, "How will I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in her days." (Luke 1:18 ULT)

Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and **they said to him**, "Teacher, what should we do?" (Luke 3:12 ULT)

So **he said to them**, "Collect nothing more than what you have been ordered." (Luke 3:13 ULT)

#### Quote margin after the quote

Yahweh relented concerning this. "It will not happen," **he said**. (Amos 7:3 ULT)

#### Quote margin between two parts of the quote

"I will hide my face from them," **he said**, "and I will see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful." (Deuteronomy 32:20 ULT)

For look, days are coming—**this is Yahweh’s declaration**—when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah. (Jeremiah 30:3a ULT)

## Translation Strategies

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.
- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning “said.”

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.

**He said**, “Therefore, those among you who are leaders should go down with us. If there is something wrong with the man, let them accuse him.” (Acts 25:5 ULT)

“Therefore, those who can should go there with us,” **he said**. “If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him.”

“Therefore, those who can should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him,” **he said**.

“Therefore, those who can,” **he said**, “should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him.”

- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning “said.”

But his mother **answered and said**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.” (Luke 1:60 ULT)

But his mother **replied**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.”

But his mother **said**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.”

But his mother **answered** like this. “No. Rather, he will be called John,” she **said**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](https://en.ta.man/translate/figs-quotations)

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:8](#))

## Reflexive Pronouns

### Description

All languages have ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. English does this by using reflexive pronouns. These are pronouns that refer to someone or something that has already been mentioned in a sentence. In English the reflexive pronouns are: “myself,” “yourself,” “himself,” “herself,” “itself,” “ourselves,” “yourselves,” and “themselves.” Other languages may have other ways to show this.

This page answers the question: *What are reflexive pronouns?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. For those languages, translators will need to know how to translate the English reflexive pronouns.
- The reflexive pronouns in English also have other functions.

### Uses of Reflexive Pronouns

- To show that the same person or things fills two different roles in a sentence
- To emphasize a person or thing in the sentence
- To show that someone did something alone
- To show that someone or something was alone

### Examples From the Bible

Reflexive pronouns are used to show the same person or thing fills two different roles in a sentence.

If **I** should testify about **myself**, my testimony would not be true. (John 5:31 ULT)

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and **many** went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to purify **themselves**. (John 11:55 ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to emphasize a person or thing in the sentence.

**Jesus himself** was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2 ULT)

So they left the crowd, taking Jesus with them, just as he was, in the boat. There also were other boats with him. Then a violent windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already full of water. But **Jesus himself** was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. (Mark 4:36-38a ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to show that someone did something alone.

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15 ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to show that someone or something was alone.

He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. **It** was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)

## Translation Strategies

If a reflexive pronoun would have the same function in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other strategies.

- (1) In some languages people put something on the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.
- (2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.
- (3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it.
- (4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like “alone.”
- (5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) In some languages people modify the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.

If I should testify about **myself** alone, my testimony would not be true. (John 5:31)

“If I should **self-testify** alone, my testimony would not be true.”

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to **purify themselves**. (John 11:55)

“Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out from country before the Passover in order to **self-purify**.”

- (2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.

**He himself** took our sickness and bore our diseases. (Matthew 8:17 ULT)

“**It was he who** took our sickness and bore our diseases.”

**Jesus himself** was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2)

“**It was not Jesus who** was baptizing, but his disciples were.”

- (3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it. English adds the reflexive pronoun.

But Jesus said this to test Philip, for he **himself** knew what he was going to do. (John 6:6)

- (4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like “alone.”

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15)

“When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again **alone** up the mountain.”

- (5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)

“He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up and lying **in it’s own place.**”

(Go back to: [Revelation 19:2](#); [19:12](#))

# Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is a question that a speaker asks when he is more interested in expressing his attitude about something than in getting information about it. Speakers use rhetorical questions to express deep emotion or to encourage hearers to think deeply about something. The Bible contains many rhetorical questions, often to express surprise, to rebuke or scold the hearer, or to teach. Speakers of some languages use rhetorical questions for other purposes as well.

This page answers the question: *What are rhetorical questions and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentencetypes\]\]](#)

## Description

A rhetorical question is a question that strongly expresses the speaker's attitude toward something. Often the speaker is not looking for information at all. Or, if he is asking for information, it is not usually the information that the question appears to ask for. The speaker is more interested in expressing his attitude than in getting information.

But those who stood by said, **“Are you insulting the high priest of God?”** (Acts 23:4 ULT)

The people who asked Paul this question were not asking if he was insulting God's high priest. Rather, they used this question to accuse Paul of insulting the high priest.

The Bible contains many rhetorical questions. These rhetorical questions might be used for the purposes: of expressing attitudes or feelings, rebuking people, teaching something by reminding people of something they know and encouraging them to apply it to something new, or introducing something they want to talk about.

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use rhetorical questions; for them a question is always a request for information.
- Some languages use rhetorical questions, but for purposes that are different or more limited than in the Bible.
- Because of these differences between languages, some readers might misunderstand the purpose of a rhetorical question in the Bible.

## Examples From the Bible

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

Jezebel used the question above to remind King Ahab of something he already knew: he still ruled the kingdom of Israel. The rhetorical question made her point more strongly than if she had merely stated it, because it forced Ahab to admit the point himself. She did this in order to rebuke him for being unwilling to take over a poor man's property. She was implying that, since he was the king of Israel, he had the power to take the man's property.

**Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils?** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

God used the question above to remind his people of something they already knew: a young woman would never forget her jewelry or a bride forget her veils. He then rebuked his people for forgetting him who is so much greater than those things.

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)



Job used the question above to show deep emotion. This rhetorical question expresses how sad he was that he did not die as soon as he was born. He wished that he had not lived.

And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

Elizabeth used the question above to show how surprised and happy she was that the mother of her Lord came to her.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Jesus used the question above to remind the people of something they already knew: a good father would never give his son something bad to eat. By introducing this point, Jesus could go on to teach them about God with his next rhetorical question:

Therefore, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? (Matthew 7:11 ULT)

Jesus used this question to teach the people in an emphatic way that God gives good things to those who ask him.

**What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to?** It is like a mustard seed that a man took and threw into his garden ... (Luke 13:18b-19a ULT)

Jesus used the question above to introduce what he was going to talk about. He was about to compare the kingdom of God to something. In this case, he compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed.

## Translation Strategies

In order to translate a rhetorical question accurately, first be sure that the question you are translating truly is a rhetorical question and is not an information question. Ask yourself, "Does the person asking the question already know the answer to the question?" If so, it is a rhetorical question. Or, if no one answers the question, did the person who asked it expect to receive an answer? If not, it is a rhetorical question.

When you are sure that the question is rhetorical, then be sure that you understand the purpose for the rhetorical question. Is it to encourage or rebuke or shame the hearer? Is it to bring up a new topic? Is it to do something else?

When you know the purpose of the rhetorical question, then think of the most natural way to express that purpose in the target language. It might be as a question, or a statement, or an exclamation.

If using the rhetorical question would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing so. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Add the answer after the question.
- (2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
- (3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.
- (4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Add the answer after the question.

**Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils?** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? **Of course not!** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? **None of you would do that!**

(2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.

**What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to?** It is like a mustard seed. (Luke 13:18-19a ULT)

**This is what the kingdom of God is like.** It is like a mustard seed ...

**Are you insulting the high priest of God?** (Acts 23:4b ULT) (Acts 23:4 ULT)

**You should not insult God's high priest!**

**Why did I not die when I came out from the womb?** (Job 3:11a ULT)

**I wish I had died when I came out from the womb!**

**And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?** (Luke 1:43 ULT)

**How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!**

(3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.

**Do you not still rule** the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

You still rule the kingdom of Israel, **do you not?**

(4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

If your son asks you for a loaf of bread, **would you give him a stone?**

**Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils?** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

**What virgin would forget her jewelry, and what bride would forget her veils?** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number

(Go back to: [Revelation 5:2](#); [6:17](#); [13:4](#); [15:4](#); [17:7](#); [18:18](#))

# Simile

## Description

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. The simile focuses on a particular trait the two items have in common, and it includes the words “like,” “as,” or “than.”

This page answers the question: *What is a simile?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were troubled and discouraged, **like sheep not having a shepherd**. (Matthew 9:36)

Jesus compared the crowds of people to sheep without a shepherd. Sheep grow frightened when they do not have a good shepherd to lead them in safe places. The crowds were like that because they did not have good religious leaders.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, so be as wise **as the serpents** and harmless **as the doves**. (Matthew 10:16 ULT)

Jesus compared his disciples to sheep and their enemies to wolves. Wolves attack sheep; Jesus’ enemies would attack his disciples.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

God’s word is compared to a two-edged sword. A two-edged sword is a weapon that can easily cut through a person’s flesh. God’s word is very effective in showing what is in a person’s heart and thoughts.

## Purposes of Simile

- A simile can teach about something that is unknown by showing how it is similar to something that is known.
- A simile can emphasize a particular trait, sometimes in a way that gets people’s attention.
- Similes help form a picture in the mind or help the reader experience what he is reading about more fully.

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not know how the two items are similar.
- People may not be familiar with both of the items being compared.

## Examples From the Bible

Suffer hardship with me, **as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3 ULT)

In this simile, Paul compares suffering with what soldiers endure, and he encourages Timothy to follow their example.

Just as the lightning flashing from a place under the sky shines to another place under the sky, so will the Son of Man be. (Luke 17:24b ULT)

This verse does not tell how the Son of Man will be like the lightning. But in context we can understand from the verses before it that just as lighting flashes suddenly and everyone can see it, the Son of Man will come suddenly and everyone will be able to see him. No one will have to be told about it.

## Translation Strategies

If people would understand the correct meaning of a simile, consider using it. If they would not, here are some strategies you can use:

- (1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.
- (2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.
- (3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — This compares the danger that Jesus' disciples would be in with the danger that sheep are in when they are surrounded by wolves.

See, I send **you out among wicked people** and you will be in danger from them **as sheep are in danger when they are among wolves**.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

For the word of God is living and active and **more powerful than a very sharp two-edged sword**.

- (2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — If people do not know what sheep and wolves are, or that wolves kill and eat sheep, you could use some other animal that kills another.

See, I send you out **as chickens in the midst of wild dogs**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to gather your children together, **as a mother closely watches over her infants**, but you refused!

If you have faith **as a grain of mustard** ... (Matthew 17:20)

If you have faith even as small **as a tiny seed**,

- (3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT)

See, I send you out among **people who will want to harm you**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to **protect you**, but you refused!

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metaphor](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1]]

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:10](#); [1:14](#); [1:15](#); [1:17](#); [2:18](#); [2:27](#); [3:3](#); [4:1](#); [4:6](#); [4:7](#); [Notes](#); [6:12](#); [6:14](#); [Notes](#); [8:8](#); [8:10](#); [Notes](#); [9:2](#); [9:10](#); [Notes](#); [10:1](#); [12:15](#); [Notes](#); [13:11](#); [14:14](#); [16:15](#); [18:7](#); [19:6](#); [19:12](#); [20:8](#); [21:2](#); [21:18](#); [21:21](#))

# Symbolic Action

## Description

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their heads up and down to mean “yes” or turn their heads from side to side to mean “no.” Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures. In the Bible, sometimes people perform symbolic actions and sometimes they only refer to the symbolic action.

This page answers the question: *What is a symbolic action and how do I translate it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Translate Unknowns](#)

## Examples of symbolic actions

- In some cultures people shake hands when they meet to show that they are willing to be friendly.
- In some cultures people bow when they meet to show respect to each other.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

An action may have a meaning in one culture and a different meaning or no meaning at all in another culture. For example, in some cultures raising the eyebrows means “I am surprised” or “What did you say?” In other cultures it means “yes.”

In the Bible, people did things that had certain meanings in their culture. When we read the Bible, we might not understand what someone meant if we interpret the action based on what it means in our own culture today.

You (the translator) need to understand what people in the Bible meant when they used symbolic actions. If an action does not mean the same thing in your own culture, then you need to figure out how to translate what the action meant.

## Examples From the Bible

And behold, a man came whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And **falling at the feet of Jesus**, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: He did this to show great respect to Jesus.

Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: When people wanted someone to welcome them into their home, they stood at the door and knocked on it.

## Translation Strategies

If people would correctly understand what a symbolic action meant to the people in the Bible, consider using it. If not, here are some strategies for translating it.

- (1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.
- (2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning. Do this only in poetry, parables, and sermons. Do not do this when there actually was a person who did a specific action.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet in order to show that he greatly respected him.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Look, I stand at the door and knock on it, asking you to let me in.

(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Jairus showed Jesus great respect.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Look, I stand at the door and ask you to let me in.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT) — Since Jairus actually did this, you should not substitute an action from your own culture.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT) — Jesus was not standing at a real door. Rather he was speaking about wanting to have a relationship with people. So in cultures where it is polite to clear one's throat when wanting to be let into a house, you could use that.

Look, I stand at the door and clear my throat.

(Go back to: [Revelation 3:9](#); [3:20](#); [4:10](#); [10:5](#); [11:10](#))

# Symbolic Language

## Description

Symbolic language in speech and writing is the use of symbols to represent other things, other events, etc. In the Bible it occurs most in prophecy and poetry, especially in visions and dreams about things that will happen in the future. Though people may not immediately know the meaning of a symbol, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.

This page answers the question: *What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)

■ Eat this scroll; then go speak to the house of Israel. (Ezekiel 3:1 ULT)

This was in a dream. Eating the scroll is a symbol of Ezekiel reading and understanding well what was written on the scroll, and accepting these words from God into himself.

## Purposes of Symbolism

- One purpose of symbolism is to help people understand the importance or severity of an event by putting it in other, very dramatic terms.
- Another purpose of symbolism is to tell some people about something while hiding the true meaning from others who do not understand the symbolism.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

People who read the Bible today may find it hard to recognize that the language is symbolic, and they may not know what the symbol stands for.

## Translation Principles

- When symbolic language is used, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.
- It is also important not to explain the symbol more than the original speaker or writer did, since he may not have wanted everyone living then to be able to understand it easily.

## Examples From the Bible

■ After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

The meaning of the bolded symbols is explained in Daniel 7:23-24 as shown below. The animals represent kingdoms, iron teeth represent a powerful army, and the horns represent powerful leaders.

■ This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.' (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

■ I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me, and as I turned I saw **seven golden lampstands**. In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a son of man ... He had **seven**



**stars** in his right hand and **a sword with two sharp edges** was coming out of his mouth. As for the hidden meaning about the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: **The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches**, and **the seven lampstands are the seven churches**. (Revelation 1:12-13a, 16a, 20 ULT)

This passage explains the meaning of the seven lampstands and the seven stars. The two-edged sword represents God's word and judgment.

## Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.
- (2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.

This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.' (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

- (2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

After this I saw in my dream at night a fourth animal, <sup>1</sup> terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had large iron teeth; <sup>2</sup> it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had ten horns. <sup>3</sup>

The footnotes would look like:

[1] The animal is a symbol for a kingdom.

[2] The iron teeth is a symbol for the kingdom's powerful army.

[3] The horns are a symbol of powerful kings.

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:4](#); [1:20](#); [2:1](#); [2:5](#); [2:16](#); [2:28](#); [3:1](#); [3:7](#); [4:5](#); [5:6](#); [5:8](#); [11:4](#); [12:3](#); [12:7](#); [12:13](#); [12:16](#); [13:2](#); [13:4](#); [13:8](#); [13:11](#); [14:1](#); [14:8](#); [14:10](#); [14:14](#); [15:7](#); [16:1](#); [16:13](#); [16:19](#); [17:1](#); [17:2](#); [17:14](#); [18:3](#); [19:7](#); [20:2](#); [20:6](#); [20:14](#); [21:8](#); [21:9](#); [21:27](#); [22:1](#))

# Symbolic Prophecy

## Description

Symbolic prophecy is a type of message that God gave to a prophet so that the prophet would tell others. These messages use images and symbols to show what God will do in the future.

The main books that have these prophecies are Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation. Shorter examples of symbolic prophecy are also found in other Scriptures, such as in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

The Bible tells both how God gave each message and what the message was. When God gave the messages, he often did so in miraculous ways such as in dreams and visions. (See Dream and Vision for help translating “dreams” and “visions.”) When prophets saw these dreams and visions, they often saw images and symbols about God and heaven. Some of these images included a throne, golden lamp stands, a powerful man with white hair and white clothes, and eyes like fire and legs like bronze. Some of these images were seen by more than one prophet.

The prophecies about the world also contain images and symbols. For example, in some of the prophecies, strong animals represent kingdoms, horns represent kings or kingdoms, a dragon or serpent represents the devil, the sea represents the nations, and weeks represent longer periods of time. Some of these images were also seen by more than one prophet.

The prophecies tell about the evil in this world, how God will judge the world and punish sin, and how God will establish his righteous kingdom in the new world he is creating. They also tell about things that will happen concerning heaven and hell.

Much of prophecy in the Bible is presented as poetry. In some cultures people assume that if something is said in poetry, then it might not be true or very important. However, the prophecies in the Bible are true and very important, whether they are presented in poetic forms or non-poetic forms.

Sometimes the past tense is used in these books for events that happened in the past. However, sometimes the past tense is used for events that would happen in the future. There are two reasons for this. When prophets told about things that they saw in a dream or vision, they often used the past tense because their dream was in the past. The other reason for using the past tense to refer to future events was to emphasize that those events would certainly happen. The events were so certain to happen, it was as if they had already happened. We call this second use of the past tense “the predictive past.” (See Predictive Past.)

Some of these things happened after the prophets told about them, and some of them will happen at the end of this world.

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some of the images are hard to understand because we have never seen things like them before.
- Descriptions of things that we have never seen or that do not exist in this world are hard to translate.
- In places where God or the prophet used the past tense, readers may have difficulty knowing whether he was talking about something that had already happened or something that would happen later.

## Translation Principles

- Translate the images in the text. Do not try to interpret them and translate their meaning.

This page answers the question: *What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)

[Symbolic Language](#)

- When an image appears in more than one place in the Bible, and it is described in the same way, try to translate it the same way in all those places.
- If either poetic forms or non-poetic forms would imply to your readers that the prophecy is not true or is unimportant, use a form that would not imply those things.
- Sometimes it is difficult to understand in what order the events described in the various prophecies happen. Simply write them as they appear in each prophecy.
- Translate tense in a way that the readers can understand what the speaker meant. If readers would not understand the predictive past, it is acceptable to use the future tense.
- Some of the prophecies were fulfilled after the prophets wrote about them. Some of them have not been fulfilled yet. Do not clarify in the prophecy when these prophecies were fulfilled or how they were fulfilled.

## Examples From the Bible

The following passages describe powerful beings that Ezekiel, Daniel, and John saw. Images mentioned in these visions include hair that is white as wool, a voice like many waters, a golden belt, and legs or feet like polished bronze. Though the prophets saw various details, it would be good to translate the details that are the same in the same way. The bolded phrases in the passage from Revelation also occur in the passages from Daniel and Ezekiel.

In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a son of man, wearing a robe that reached down to his feet and he wore a golden sash across his chest. **His head and hair were as white as wool**—as white as snow—and his eyes were like a flame of fire. **His feet were like polished bronze**, like bronze that had been refined in a furnace, and **his voice was like the sound of many rushing waters**. He had seven stars in his right hand, and a sword with two sharp edges was coming out of his mouth. His face was shining like the sun at its strongest. (Revelation 1:13-16 ULT)

As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow, and **the hair of his head was like pure wool**. (Daniel 7:9 ULT)

I looked up and saw a man dressed in linen, with a belt around his waist made of pure gold from Uphaz. His body was like topaz, his face was like lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and **his feet were like polished bronze**, and the sound of his words was like the sound of a great crowd. (Daniel 10:5-6 ULT)

Behold! The glory of the God of Israel came from the east; **his voice was like the sound of many waters**, and the earth shone with his glory! (Ezekiel 43:2 ULT)

The following passage shows the use of the past tense to refer to past events. The bolded verbs refer to past events.

The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, that he **saw** concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. (Isaiah 1:1 ULT)

Hear, heavens, and give ear, earth; for Yahweh **has spoken**: (Isaiah 1:2a ULT)

“I **have nourished** and **brought up** children, but they **have rebelled** against me.” (Isaiah 1:2b ULT)

The following passage shows the future tense and different uses of the past tense. The bolded verbs are examples of the predictive past, where the past tense is used to show that the events certainly will happen.

The gloom will be dispelled from her who was in anguish. In an earlier time he humiliated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the later time he will make it glorious, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness **have seen** a great light; those who have lived in the land of the shadow of death, the light **has shone** on them. (Isaiah 9:1-2 ULT)

## Translation Strategies

- If the prophecy uses the past tense to talk about the future and this would be misunderstood in your language, use the strategies in Predictive Past.
- If the images in the prophecy are of things that are unknown in your culture, use the strategies in [Translate Unknowns](#).

(Go back to: [Introduction to Revelation](#); [Revelation 4 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

# Synecdoche

## Description

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole thing, or uses the whole to refer to a part.

■ **My soul** magnifies the Lord. (Luke 1:46b ULT)

Mary was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said “my soul,” which means the inner, emotional part of herself, to refer to her whole self.

■ So **the Pharisees** said to him, “Look, why are they doing that which is not lawful?” (Mark 2:24a ULT)

The Pharisees who were standing there did not all say the same words at the same time. Instead, it is more likely that one man representing the group said those words.

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some readers may not recognize the synecdoche and thus misunderstand the words as a literal statement.
- Some readers may realize that they are not to understand the words literally, but they may not know what the meaning is.

## Example From the Bible

■ Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

“My hands” is a synecdoche for the whole person because clearly the arms and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved in the person’s accomplishments. The hands are chosen to represent the person because they are the parts of the body most directly involved in the work.

## Translation Strategies

If the synecdoche would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

■ **“My soul** magnifies the Lord.” (Luke 1:46b ULT)

■ **“I** magnify the Lord.”

So **the Pharisees** said to him ... (Mark 2:24a ULT)

■ **A representative of the Pharisees** said to him ...

Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What is a synecdoche, and how can I translate such a thing into my language?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

I looked on all the deeds that I had accomplished

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metonymy](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part2]]

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:7](#); [1:12](#); [3:9](#); [9:13](#); [9:14](#); [10:4](#); [10:8](#); [16:3](#); [16:4](#))

## 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> <sup>[1]</sup>

[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."] <sup>[2]</sup>

[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.

<sup>14</sup> He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. <sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. <sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> 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 Revelation](#))



## Translate Unknowns

While working to translate the Bible, you (the translator) might find yourself asking: “How do I translate words like lion, fig tree, mountain, priest, or temple when people in my culture have never seen these things and we do not have a word for them?”

This page answers the question: *How can I translate ideas that my readers are not familiar with?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)

## Description

Unknowns are things that occur in the source text that are not known to the people of your culture. The unfoldingWord® Translation Words pages and the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes will help you understand what they are. After you understand them, you will need to find ways to refer to those things so that people who read your translation will understand what they are.

They said to him, “We have nothing here except five loaves of **bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread and do not know what it is.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

## Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God’s commands and historical facts accurately.

## Examples From the Bible

So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals**. (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

They offered him wine mixed with **myrrh**, but he did not drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

■ Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

## Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
- (4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.
- (5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.

■ Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

■ Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but **inwardly they are very hungry and dangerous animals**.

"Ravenous wolves" is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See [Translating Metaphors](#).)

■ "We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

■ We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked grain seeds** and two fish.

- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

■ Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.

■ Your sins ... will be white like **milk**.

■ Your sins ... will be white like **the moon**.

- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **myrrh**. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT) — People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word “medicine.”

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **a medicine called myrrh**. But he refused to drink it.

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT) — People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).

We have nothing here except five loaves of **baked crushed seed bread** and two fish.

(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **wild dogs**

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked food** and two fish.

(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

to him who made **the sun and the moon**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

[How to Translate Names](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 4:3](#); [8:11](#); [9:3](#); [Notes](#); [14:14](#); [17:4](#); [17:12](#); [18:12](#); [18:16](#); [21:11](#); [21:18](#); [21:19](#); [21:20](#); [21:21](#))

# 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: [Revelation 1:6](#); [2:18](#); [2:28](#); [3:5](#); [3:21](#); [14:1](#))



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Words**

**Version 28**

## authority

### Definition:

The term “authority” usually refers to a position of influence, responsibility, or rule over another person.

- Kings and other governing rulers have authority over the people they are ruling.
- The word “authorities” can refer to people, governments, or organizations that have authority over others.
- The word “authorities” can also refer to spirit beings who have power over people who have not submitted themselves to God’s authority.
- Masters have authority over their servants or slaves. Parents have authority over their children.
- Governments have the authority or right to make laws that govern their citizens.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “authority” can also be translated as “control” or “right” or “qualifications.”
- Sometimes “authority” is used with the meaning of “power.”
- When “authorities” is used to refer to people or organizations who rule people, it could also be translated as “leaders” or “rulers” or “powers.”
- The phrase “by his own authority” could also be translated as “with his own right to lead” or “based on his own qualifications.”
- The expression, “under authority” could be translated as “responsible to obey” or “having to obey others’ commands.”

(See also: dominion, king, ruler, power)

### Bible References:

- Colossians 2:10
- Esther 9:29
- Genesis 41:35
- Jonah 3:6-7
- Luke 12:5
- Luke 20:1-2
- Mark 1:22
- Matthew 8:9
- Matthew 28:19
- Titus 3:1

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H8633, G08310, G14130, G18490, G18500, G20030, G27150, G52470

(Go back to: [Revelation 5 General Notes](#))

# die, dead, deadly, death

## Definition:

The term “death” refers to being physically dead instead of alive.

## 1. Physical death

- To “die” means to stop living. Death is the end of physical life.
- The expression “put to death” refers to killing or murdering someone, especially when a king or other ruler gives an order for someone to be killed.

## 2. Eternal death

- Eternal death is the separation of a person from God.
- This is the kind of death that happened to Adam when he sinned and disobeyed God. His relationship with God was broken. He became ashamed and tried to hide from God.
- This same kind of death happens to every person, because we sin. But God gives us eternal life when we have faith in Jesus Christ.

## Translation Suggestions:

- To translate this term, it is best to use the everyday, natural word or expression in the target language that refers to death.
- In some languages, to “die” may be expressed as to “not live.” The term “dead” may be translated as “not alive” or “not having any life” or “not living.”
- Many languages use figurative expressions to describe death, such as to “pass away” in English. However, in the Bible it is best to use the most direct term for death that is used in everyday language.
- In the Bible, eternal life and eternal death are often compared to physical life and physical death. It is important in a translation to use the same word or phrase for both physical death and eternal death.
- In some languages it may be more clear to say “eternal death” when the context requires that meaning. Some translators may also feel it is best to say “physical death” in contexts where it is being contrasted to spiritual death.
- The expression “the dead” is a nominal adjective that refers to people who have died. Some languages will translate this as “dead people” or “people who have died.” (See: [nominal adjective](#))
- The expression “put to death” could also be translated as “kill” or “murder” or “execute.”

(See also: believe, [faith](#), life)

## Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 15:21
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Acts 10:42
- Acts 14:19
- Colossians 2:15
- Colossians 2:20
- Genesis 2:15-17
- Genesis 34:27
- Matthew 16:28
- Romans 5:10



- Romans 5:12
- Romans 6:10

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:11** God told Adam that he could eat from any tree in the garden except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If he ate from this tree, he would **die**.
- **2:11** "Then you will **die**, and your body will return to dirt."
- **7:10** Then Isaac **died**, and Jacob and Esau buried him.
- **37:5** Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he **dies**. Everyone who believes in me will never **die**."
- **40:8** Through his **death**, Jesus opened a way for people to come to God.
- **43:7** "Although Jesus **died**, God raised him from the dead."
- **48:2** Because they sinned, everyone on earth gets sick and everyone **dies**.
- **50:17** He (Jesus) will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, evil, pain, or **death**.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0006, H1478, H1826, H1934, H2491, H4191, H4192, H4193, H4194, H4463, H5038, H5315, H6297, H6757, H7496, H7523, H8045, H8546, H8552, G03360, G03370, G05200, G05990, G06150, G06220, G16340, G19350, G20790, G22530, G22860, G22870, G22880, G22890, G23480, G28370, G29660, G34980, G34990, G35000, G44300, G48800, G48810, G50530, G50540

(Go back to: [Revelation 21 General Notes](#))

## eternity, everlasting, eternal, forever

### Definition:

The terms “everlasting” and “eternal” have very similar meanings and refer to something that will always exist or that lasts forever.

- The term “eternity” refers to a state of being that has no beginning or end. It can also refer to life that never ends.
- After this present life on earth, humans will spend eternity either in heaven with God or in hell apart from God.
- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” are used in the New Testament to refer to living forever with God in heaven.

The term “forever” refers to never-ending time.

- The phrase “forever and ever” has the idea of time that never ends and expresses what eternity or eternal life is like. It emphasizes that something will always happen or exist. It refers to time that never ends.
- God said that David’s throne would last “forever.” This is referred to the fact that David’s descendant Jesus will reign as king forever.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “eternal” or “everlasting” could include “unending” or “never stopping” or “always continuing.”
- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” could also be translated as “life that never ends” or “life that continues without stopping” or “the raising up of our bodies to live forever.”
- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “eternity” could include “existing outside of time” or “unending life” or “life in heaven.”
- Also consider how this word is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))
- “Forever” could also be translated by “always” or “never ending.”
- The phrase “will last forever” could also be translated as “always exist” or “will never stop” or “will always continue.”
- The emphatic phrase “forever and ever” could also be translated as “for always and always” or “not ever ending” or “which never, ever ends.”
- David’s throne lasting forever could be translated as “David’s descendant will reign forever” or “a descendant of David will always be reigning.”

(See also: David, reign, life)

### Bible References:

- Genesis 17:8
- Genesis 48:4
- Exodus 15:17
- 2 Samuel 3:28-30
- 1 Kings 2:32-33
- Job 4:20-21
- Psalms 21:4
- Isaiah 9:6-7
- Isaiah 40:27-28
- Daniel 7:18

- Luke 18:18
- Acts 13:46
- Romans 5:21
- Hebrews 6:19-20
- Hebrews 10:11-14
- 1 John 1:2
- 1 John 5:12
- Revelation 1:4-6
- Revelation 22:3-5

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:1** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit **eternal life**?”
- **28:1** One day, a rich young ruler came up to Jesus and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to have **eternal life**?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only One who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have **eternal life**, obey God’s laws.”
- **28:10** Jesus answered, “Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or property for my name’s sake, will receive 100 times more and will also receive **eternal life**.”

## Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3117, H4481, H5331, H5703, H5705, H5769, H5865, H5957, H6924, G01260, G01650, G01660, G13360

(Go back to: [Revelation 20 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

## evil, wicked, unpleasant

### Definition:

In the Bible, the term “evil” can refer either to the concept of moral wickedness or emotional unpleasantness. The context will usually make it clear which meaning is intended in the specific instance of the term.

- While “evil” may describe a person’s character, “wicked” may refer more to a person’s behavior. However, both terms are very similar in meaning.
- The term “wickedness” refers to the state of being that exists when people do wicked things.
- The results of evil are clearly shown in how people mistreat others by killing, stealing, slandering and being cruel and unkind.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the terms “evil” and “wicked” can be translated as “bad” or “sinful” or “immoral.”
- Other ways to translate these could include “not good” or “not righteous” or “not moral.”
- Make sure the words or phrases that are used to translate these terms fit the context that is natural in the target language.

(See also: disobey, [sin](#), good, [righteous](#), demon)

### Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 24:11
- 1 Timothy 6:10
- 3 John 1:10
- Genesis 2:17
- Genesis 6:5-6
- Job 1:1
- Job 8:20
- Judges 9:57
- Luke 6:22-23
- Matthew 7:11-12
- Proverbs 3:7
- Psalms 22:16-17

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:4** “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand good and **evil** like he does.”
- **3:1** After a long time, many people were living in the world. They had become very **wicked** and violent.
- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a righteous man living among **wicked** people.
- **4:2** God saw that if they all kept working together to do **evil**, they could do many more sinful things.
- **8:12** “You tried to do **evil** when you sold me as a slave, but God used the **evil** for good!”
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false gods and did many **evil** things.
- **17:1** But then he (Saul) became a **wicked** man who did not obey God, so God chose a different man who would one day be king in his place.
- **18:11** In the new kingdom of Israel, all the kings were **evil**.
- **29:8** The king was so angry that he threw the **wicked** servant into prison until he could pay back all of his debt.

- **45:2** They said, "We heard him (Stephen) speak **evil** things about Moses and God!"
- **50:17** He (Jesus) will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, **evil**, pain, or death.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H0605, H1100, H1681, H1942, H2154, H2162, H2254, H2617, H3399, H3415, H4209, H4849, H5753, H5766, H5767, H5999, H6001, H6090, H7451, H7455, H7489, H7561, H7562, H7563, H7564, G00920, G01130, G04590, G09320, G09870, G09880, G14260, G25490, G25510, G25540, G25550, G25560, G25570, G25590, G25600, G26350, G26360, G41510, G41890, G41900, G41910, G53370

(Go back to: [Revelation 20 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: [Revelation 14 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

## glory, glorious, glorify

### Definition:

The term “glory” is a general term for a family of concepts including value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, or majesty. The term “glorify” means to ascribe glory to someone or something, or to show or tell how glorious something or someone is.

- In the Bible, the term “glory” is especially used to describe God, who is more valuable, more worthy, more important, more honorable, more splendid, and more majestic than anyone or anything in the universe. Everything about his character reveals his glory.
- People can glorify God by telling about the wonderful things he has done. They can also glorify God by living in accordance with God’s character, because doing so shows to others his value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, and majesty.
- The expression to “glory in” means to boast about or take pride in something.

### Old Testament

- The specific phrase “the glory of Yahweh” in the Old Testament usually refers to some perceptible manifestation of Yahweh’s presence in a particular location.

### New Testament

- God the Father will glorify God the Son by revealing to all people the full extent of how glorious Jesus is.
- Everyone who believes in Christ will be glorified with him. This use of the term “glorify” carries a unique meaning. It means that when people who believe in Christ are raised to life, they will be changed physically to be like Jesus as he appeared after his resurrection.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “glory” could include “splendor” or “majesty” or “awesome greatness” or “extreme value.”
- The term “glorious” could be translated as “full of glory” or “extremely valuable” or “brightly shining” or “awesomely majestic.”
- The expression “give glory to God” could be translated as “honor God’s greatness” or “praise God because of his splendor” or “tell others how great God is.”
- The expression “glory in” could also be translated as “praise” or “take pride in” or “boast about” or “take pleasure in.”
- “Glorify” could also be translated as “give glory to” or “bring glory to” or “cause to appear great.”
- The phrase “glorify God” could also be translated as “praise God” or “talk about God’s greatness” or “show how great God is” or “honor God (by obeying him).”
- The term “be glorified” could also be translated as “be shown to be very great” or “be praised” or “be exalted.”

(See also: honor, majesty, exalt, obey, praise)

### Bible References:

- Exodus 24:17
- Numbers 14:9-10
- Isaiah 35:2

- Luke 18:43
- Luke 2:9
- John 12:28
- Acts 3:13-14
- Acts 7:1-3
- Romans 8:17
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- Philippians 2:14-16
- Philippians 4:19
- Colossians 3:1-4
- 1 Thessalonians 2:5
- James 2:1-4
- 1 Peter 4:15-16
- Revelation 15:4

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “**Glory** to God in heaven and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- **25:6** Then Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and all their **glory** and said, “I will give you all this if you bow down and worship me.”
- **37:1** When Jesus heard this news, he said, “This sickness will not end in death, but it is for the **glory** of God.”
- **37:8** Jesus responded, “Did I not tell you that you would see God’s **glory** if you believe in me?”

## Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0117, H0142, H0155, H0215, H1342, H1921, H1926, H1935, H1984, H3367, H3513, H3519, H3520, H6286, H6643, H7623, H8597, G13910, G13920, G17400, G17410, G27440, G48880

(Go back to: [Revelation 4 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: [Revelation 11 General Notes](#))

## heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly

### Definition:

The term that is translated as “heaven” usually refers to where God lives. The same word can also mean “sky,” depending on the context.

- The term “heavens” refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars. It also includes the heavenly bodies, such as far-off planets, that we can’t directly see from the earth.
- The term “sky” refers to the blue expanse above the earth that has clouds and the air we breathe. Often the sun and moon are also said to be “up in the sky.”
- In some contexts in the Bible, the word “heaven” could refer to either the sky or the place where God lives.

### Translation Suggestions:

- For “kingdom of heaven” in the book of Matthew, it is best to keep the word “heaven” since this is distinctive to Matthew’s gospel.
- The terms “heavens” or “heavenly bodies” could also be translated as “sun, moon, and stars” or “all the stars in the universe.”
- The phrase, “stars of heaven” could be translated as “stars in the sky” or “stars in the galaxy” or “stars in the universe.”

(See also: kingdom of God)

### Bible References:

- 1 Kings 8:22-24
- 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Deuteronomy 9:1
- Ephesians 6:9
- Genesis 1:1
- Genesis 7:11
- John 3:12
- John 3:27
- Matthew 5:18
- Matthew 5:46-48

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:2** They even began building a tall tower to reach **heaven**.
- **14:11** He (God) gave them bread from **heaven**, called “manna.”
- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “Glory to God in **heaven** and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- **29:9** Then Jesus said, “This is what my **heavenly** Father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”
- **37:9** Then Jesus looked up to **heaven** and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me.”
- **42:11** Then Jesus went up to **heaven**, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1534, H6160, H6183, H7834, H8064, H8065, G09320, G20320, G33210, G37700, G37710, G37720

(**Go back to:** [Revelation 15 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

## hell, lake of fire

### Definition:

Hell is the final place of unending pain and suffering where God will punish everyone who rebels against him and rejects his plan of saving them through Jesus' sacrifice. It is also referred to as the "lake of fire."

- Hell is described as a place of fire and severe suffering.
- Satan and the evil spirits who follow him will be thrown into hell for eternal punishment.
- People who do not believe in Jesus' sacrifice for their sin and do not trust in him to save them, will be punished forever in hell.

### Translation Suggestions:

- These terms should probably be translated differently since they occur in different contexts.
- Some languages cannot use "lake" in the phrase "lake of fire" because it refers to water.
- The term "hell" could be translated as "place of suffering" or "final place of darkness and pain."
- The term "lake of fire" could also be translated as "sea of fire" or "huge fire (of suffering)" or "field of fire."

(See also: [heaven](#), [death](#), Hades, abyss)

### Bible References:

- James 3:6
- Luke 12:5
- Mark 9:42-44
- Matthew 5:21-22
- Matthew 5:29
- Matthew 10:28-31
- Matthew 23:33
- Matthew 25:41-43
- Revelation 20:15

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **50:14** He (God) will throw them into **hell**, where they will weep and grind their teeth in anguish forever. A fire that never goes out will continually burn them, and worms will never stop eating them.
- **50:15** He will throw Satan into **hell** where he will burn forever, along with everyone who chose to follow him rather than to obey God.

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H7585, G00860, G04390, G04400, G10670, G30410, G44420, G44430, G44470, G44480, G50200, G53940, G54570

(Go back to: [Revelation 9 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

## judge, judgment

### Definition:

The terms “judge” and “judgment” often refer to making a decision about whether or not something is good, wise, or right. However, these terms can also refer to actions performed by a person as the result of a decision, usually in the context of deciding that something is bad, wrong, or evil.

- The terms “judge” and “judgment” can also mean “to cause harm to” (usually because God has decided a person or nation’s actions are wicked).
- The “judgment of God” often refers to his decision to condemn something or someone as sinful.
- God’s judgment usually includes punishing people for their sin.
- The term “judge” can also mean “condemn.” God instructs his people not to judge each other in this way.
- Another meaning is “arbitrate between” or “judge between,” as in deciding which person is right in a dispute between them.
- In some contexts, God’s “judgments” are what he has decided is right and just. They are similar to his decrees, laws, or precepts.
- “Judgment” can refer to wise decision-making ability. A person who lacks “judgment” does not have the wisdom to make wise decisions.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate to “judge” could include to “decide” or to “condemn” or to “punish” or to “decree.”
- The term “judgment” could be translated as “punishment” or “decision” or “verdict” or “decree” or “condemnation.”
- In some contexts, the phrase “in the judgment” could also be translated as “on judgment day” or “during the time when God judges people.”

(See also: decree, judge, judgment day, just, law, law)

### Bible References:

- 1 John 4:17
- 1 Kings 3:9
- Acts 10:42-43
- Isaiah 3:14
- James 2:4
- Luke 6:37
- Micah 3:9-11
- Psalm 54:1

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **19:16** The prophets warned the people that if they did not stop doing evil and start obeying God, then God would **judge** them as guilty, and he would punish them.
- **21:8** A king is someone who rules over a kingdom and **judges** the people. The Messiah would come would be the perfect king who would sit on the throne of his ancestor David. He would reign over the whole world forever, and who would always **judge** honestly and make the right decisions.
- **39:4** The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted to the other religious leaders, “We do not need any more witnesses! You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your **judgment**?”

- **50:14** But God will **judge** everyone who does not believe in Jesus. He will throw them into hell, where they will weep and grind their teeth in anguish forever.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0148, H0430, H1777, H1778, H1779, H1780, H1781, H1782, H2940, H4055, H4941, H6414, H6415, H6416, H6417, H6419, H6485, H8196, H8199, H8201, G01440, G03500, G09680, G11060, G12520, G13410, G13450, G13480, G13490, G29170, G29190, G29200, G29220, G29230, G42320

(Go back to: [Revelation 18 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

## lamb, Lamb of God

### Definition:

The term “lamb” refers to a young sheep. Sheep are four-legged animals with thick, woolly hair, used for sacrifices to God. Jesus is called the “Lamb of God” because he was sacrificed to pay for people’s sins.

- These animals are easily led astray and need protecting. God compares human beings to sheep.
- God instructed his people to sacrifice physically perfect sheep and lambs to him.
- Jesus is called the “Lamb of God” who was sacrificed to pay for people’s sins. He was a perfect, unblemished sacrifice because he was completely without sin.

### Translation Suggestions:

- If sheep are known in the language area, the name for their young should be used to translate the terms “lamb” and “Lamb of God.”
- “Lamb of God” could be translated as “God’s (sacrificial) Lamb,” or “Lamb sacrificed to God” or “(sacrificial) Lamb from God.”
- If sheep are not known, this term could be translated as “a young sheep” with a footnote that describes what sheep are like. The note could also compare sheep and lambs to an animal from that area that lives in herds, that is timid and defenseless, and that often wanders away.
- Also consider how this term is translated in a Bible translation of a nearby local or national language.

(See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: sheep, shepherd)

### Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 12:3
- Ezra 8:35-36
- Isaiah 66:3
- Jeremiah 11:19
- John 1:29
- John 1:36
- Leviticus 14:21-23
- Leviticus 17:1-4
- Luke 10:3
- Revelation 15:3-4

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:7** As Abraham and Isaac walked to the place of the sacrifice Isaac asked, “Father, we have wood for the sacrifice, but where is the **lamb**?”
- **11:2** God provided a way to save the firstborn son of anyone who believed in him. Each family had to choose a perfect **lamb** or goat and kill it.
- **24:6** The next day, Jesus came to be baptized by John. When John saw him, he said, “Look! There is the **Lamb of God** who will take away the sin of the world.”
- **45:8** He read, “They led him like a **lamb** to be killed, and as a **lamb** is silent, he did not say a word.”
- **48:8** When God told Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice, God provided a **lamb** for the sacrifice instead of his son, Isaac. We all deserve to die for our sins! But God provided Jesus, the **Lamb** of God, as a sacrifice to die in our place.



- **48:9** When God sent the last plague on Egypt, he told each Israelite family to kill a perfect **lamb** and spread its blood around the tops and sides of their door frames.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H7716, G07210, G23160

(Go back to: [Revelation 6 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: [Revelation 11 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

## prostrate, bow down, worship

### Definition:

To “prostrate” oneself means to lie flat on the ground, usually in submission to a person of authority such as a king or some other powerful person. This same term can also mean to “worship,” referring to the actions of honoring, praising, and obeying God.

- This term often means literally “bow down” or “prostrate oneself” to humbly honor someone.
- We worship God when we serve and honor him, by praising him and obeying him.
- When the Israelites worshiped God, it often included sacrificing an animal on an altar.
- This term can be used both of people who worship Yahweh as the One True God and others who worship false gods.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “worship” could be translated as “bow down to” or “honor and serve” or “honor and obey.”
- In some contexts, it could also be translated as “humbly praise” or “give honor and praise.”

(See also: bow, fear, sacrifice, praise, honor)

### Bible References:

- Colossians 2:18-19
- Deuteronomy 29:18
- Exodus 3:11-12
- Luke 4:7
- Matthew 2:2
- Matthew 2:8

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, “I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not **worship** other gods.”
- **14:2** The Canaanites did not **worship** or obey God. They **worshiped** false gods and did many evil things.
- **17:6** David wanted to build a temple where all the Israelites could **worship** God and offer him sacrifices.
- **18:12** All of the kings and most of the people of the kingdom of Israel **worshiped** idols.
- **25:7** Jesus replied, “Get away from me, Satan! In God’s word he commands his people, ‘**Worship** only the Lord your God and only serve him.’”
- **26:2** On the Sabbath, he (Jesus) went to the place of **worship**.
- **47:1** There they met a woman named Lydia who was a merchant. She loved and **worshiped** God.
- **49:18** God tells you to pray, to study his word, to **worship** him with other Christians, and to tell others what he has done for you.

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5457, H5647, H6087, H7812, G13910, G14790, G21510, G23180, G23230, G23560, G30000, G35110, G43520, G43530, G45730, G45740, G45760

(Go back to: [Revelation 4 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

## repent, repentance

### Definition:

The terms “repent” and “repentance” refer to turning away from sin and turning back to God.

- To “repent” literally means to “change one’s mind.”
- In the Bible, “repent” usually means to turn away from a sinful, human way of thinking and acting, and to turn to God’s way of thinking and acting.
- When people truly repent of their sins, God forgives them and helps them start obeying him.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “repent” can be translated with a word or phrase that means “turn back (to God)” or “turn away from sin and toward God” or “turn toward God, away from sin.”
- Often the term “repentance” can be translated using the verb “repent.” For example, “God has given repentance to Israel” could be translated as “God has enabled Israel to repent.”
- Other ways to translate “repentance” could include “turning away from sin” or “turning to God and away from sin.”

(See also: forgive, [sin](#), turn)

### Bible References:

- Acts 3:19-20
- Luke 3:3
- Luke 3:8
- Luke 5:32
- Luke 24:47
- Mark 1:14-15
- Matthew 3:3
- Matthew 3:11
- Matthew 4:17
- Romans 2:4

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **16:2** After many years of disobeying God and being oppressed by their enemies, the Israelites **repented** and asked God to rescue them.
- **17:13** David **repented** of his sin and God forgave him.
- **19:18** They (prophets) warned people that God would destroy them if they did not **repent**.
- **24:2** Many people came out to the wilderness to listen to John. He preached to them, saying, “**Repent**, for the kingdom of God is near!”
- **42:8** “It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to **receive** forgiveness for their sins.”
- **44:5** “So now, **repent** and turn to God so that your sins will be washed away.”

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5150, H5162, H5164, G02780, G33380, G33400, G33410

(**Go back to:** [Revelation 9 General Notes](#))

## reveal, revealed, revelation

### Definition:

The term “reveal” means to cause something to be known. A “revelation” is something that has been made known.

- God has revealed himself through everything he has created and through his communication with people by spoken and written messages.
- God also reveals himself through dreams or visions.
- When Paul said that he received the gospel by “revelation from Jesus Christ,” he means that Jesus himself explained the gospel to him.
- In the New Testament book “Revelation” is about God revealed events that will happen in the end times. He revealed them to the apostle John through visions.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “reveal” could include “make known” or “disclose” or “show clearly.”
- Depending on the context, possible ways to translate “revelation” could be “communication from God” or “things that God has revealed” or “teachings about God.” It is best to keep the meaning of “reveal” in the translation.
- The phrase “where there is no revelation” could be translated as “when God is not revealing himself to people” or “when God is not speaking to people” or “among people whom God has not communicating.”

(See also: good news, good news, dream, vision)

### Bible References:

- Daniel 11:1-2
- Ephesians 3:5
- Galatians 1:12
- Lamentations 2:13-14
- Matthew 10:26
- Philippians 3:15
- Revelation 1:1

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0241, H1540, H1541, G06010, G06020, G55370

(Go back to: [Revelation 10 General Notes](#))

# righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness

## Definition:

The term “righteousness” refers to God’s absolute goodness, justice, faithfulness, and love. Having these qualities makes God “righteous.” Because God is righteous, he must condemn sin.

- These terms are also often used to describe a person who obeys God and is morally good. However, because all people have sinned, no one except God is completely righteous.
- Examples of people the Bible who were called “righteous” include Noah, Job, Abraham, Zachariah, and Elisabeth.
- When people trust in Jesus to save them, God cleanses them from their sins and declares them to be righteous because of Jesus’ righteousness.

The term “unrighteous” means to be sinful and morally corrupt. “Unrighteousness” refers to sin or the condition of being sinful.

- These terms especially refer to living in a way that disobeys God’s teachings and commands.
- Unrighteous people are immoral in their thoughts and actions.
- Sometimes “the unrighteous” refers specifically to people who do not believe in Jesus.

The terms “upright” and “uprightness” refer to acting in a way that follows God’s laws.

- The meaning of these words includes the idea of standing up straight and looking directly ahead.
- A person who is “upright” is someone who obeys God’s rules and does not do things that are against his will.
- Terms such as “integrity” and “righteous” have similar meanings and are sometimes used in parallelism constructions, such as “integrity and uprightness.” (See: [parallelism](#))

## Translation Suggestions:

- When it describes God, the term “righteous” could be translated as “perfectly good and just” or “always acting rightly.”
- God’s “righteousness” could also be translated as “perfect faithfulness and goodness.”
- When it describes people who are obedient to God, the term “righteous” could also be translated as “morally good” or “just” or “living a God-pleasing life.”
- The phrase “the righteous” could also be translated as “righteous people” or “God-fearing people.”
- Depending on the context, “righteousness” could also be translated with a word or phrase that means “goodness” or “being perfect before God” or “acting in a right way by obeying God” or “doing perfectly good.”
- The term “unrighteous” could simply be translated as “not righteous.”
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this could include “wicked” or “immoral” or “people who rebel against God” or “sinful.”
- The phrase “the unrighteous” could be translated as “unrighteous people.”
- The term “unrighteousness” could be translated as “sin” or “evil thoughts and actions” or “wickedness.”
- If possible, it is best to translate this in a way that shows its relationship to “righteous, righteousness.”
- Ways to translate “upright” could include “acting rightly” or “one who acts rightly” or “following God’s laws” or “obedient to God” or “behaving in a way that is right.”
- The term “uprightness” could be translated as “moral purity” or “good moral conduct” or “rightness.”
- The phrase “the upright” could be translated as “people who are upright” or “upright people.”

(See also: [evil](#), faithful, good, holy, integrity, just, law, law, obey, pure, [righteous](#), [sin](#), unlawful)



## Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 19:16
- Job 1:8
- Psalms 37:30
- Psalms 49:14
- Psalms 107:42
- Ecclesiastes 12:10-11
- Isaiah 48:1-2
- Ezekiel 33:13
- Malachi 2:6
- Matthew 6:1
- Acts 3:13-14
- Romans 1:29-31
- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- Galatians 3:7
- Colossians 3:25
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 1 Peter 3:18-20
- 1 John 1:9
- 1 John 5:16-17

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a **righteous** man, living among wicked people.
- **4:8** God declared that Abram was **righteous** because he believed in God's promise.
- **17:2** David was a humble and **righteous** man who trusted and obeyed God.
- **23:1** Joseph, the man Mary was engaged to, was a **righteous** man.
- **50:10** Then the **righteous** ones will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God their Father.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H1368, H2555, H3072, H3474, H3476, H3477, H3483, H4334, H4339, H4749, H5228, H5229, H5324, H5765, H5766, H5767, H5977, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6665, H6666, H6968, H8535, H8537, H8549, H8552, G00930, G00940, G04580, G13410, G13420, G13430, G13440, G13450, G13460, G21180, G37160, G37170

(Go back to: [Revelation 1 General Notes](#))

## scroll

### Definition:

In ancient times, a scroll was a type of book made of one long, rolled-up sheet of papyrus or leather.

- After writing on a scroll or reading from it, people rolled it up by using the rods attached to its ends.
- Scrolls were used for legal documents and scripture.
- Sometimes scrolls that were delivered by a messenger were sealed with wax. If the wax was still present when the scroll was received, then the receiver knew that no one had opened the scroll to read it or write on it since it had been sealed.
- Scrolls containing the Hebrew Scriptures were read aloud in the synagogues.

(See also: seal, synagogue, word of God)

### Bible References:

- Jeremiah 29:3
- Luke 4:17
- Numbers 21:14-15
- Revelation 5:2

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H4039, H4040, H5612, G09740, G09750

(Go back to: [Revelation 5 General Notes](#))

## sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

### Definition:

The term “sin” refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God’s will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people don’t know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God’s will are called “sinful.”
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a “sinful nature,” a nature that controls them and causes them to sin.
- A “sinner” is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word “sinners” was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who didn’t keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term “sinner” was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- To “sin” could also be translated as to “disobey God” or to “do wrong.”
- Depending on the context “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebellious against God.”
- Depending on the context the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people don’t see or know about.
- The term “sin” should be general, and different from the terms for “wickedness” and “evil.”

(See also: disobey, [evil](#), flesh, tax collector)

### Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3
- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31

- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:4

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, "I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children."
- **13:12** God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- **20:1** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- **21:13** The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no **sin**. He would die to receive the punishment for other people's **sin**.
- **35:1** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinner**s who had gathered to hear him.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**."
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**."
- **48:8** We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- **49:17** Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

(Go back to: [Revelation 9 General Notes; Notes](#))

## soul, self, person

### Definition:

The term “soul” can either refer generally to the non-physical part of a person or refer specifically to a person’s awareness of themselves as a person distinct from others.

- In the Bible, the terms “soul” and “spirit” may be two different concepts, or they may be two terms that refer to the same concept.
- When a person dies, his soul leaves his body.
- In contrast to the body, the “soul” can be spoken of as the part of a person that “relates to God.”
- The word “soul” is sometimes used figuratively to refer to the whole person. For example, “the soul who sins” means “the person who sins” and “my soul is tired” means “I am tired.”

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “soul” could also be translated as “inner self” or “inner person.”
- In some contexts, “my soul” could be translated as “I” or “me.”
- Usually the phrase “the soul” can be translated as “the person” or “he” or “him,” depending on the context.
- Some languages might only have one word for the concepts “soul” and “spirit.”
- In Hebrews 4:12, the figurative phrase “dividing soul and spirit” could mean “deeply discerning or exposing the inner person.”

(See also: [spirit](#))

### Bible References:

- 2 Peter 2:8
- Acts 2:27-28
- Acts 2:41
- Genesis 49:6
- Isaiah 53:10-11
- James 1:21
- Jeremiah 6:16-19
- Jonah 2:7-8
- Luke 1:47
- Matthew 22:37
- Psalms 19:7
- Revelation 20:4

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5082, H5315, H5397, G55900

(Go back to: [Revelation 21 General Notes](#))

## spirit, wind, breath

### Definition:

The term “spirit” refers to the non-physical part of a person which cannot be seen. In biblical times, the concept of a person’s spirit was closely related to the concept of a person’s breath. The term can also refer to wind, that is, the movement of air in the natural world.

- The term “spirit” can refer to a being that does not have a physical body, such as an evil spirit.
- In general, the term “spiritual” describes things in the non-physical world.
- The term “spirit of” can also mean “having the characteristics of,” such as in “spirit of wisdom” or “in the spirit of Elijah.” Sometimes the Bible applies this term in the context of a person’s attitude or emotional state, such as “spirit of fear” and “spirit of jealousy.”
- Jesus said that God is a spirit.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, some ways to translate “spirit” might include “non-physical being” or “inside part” or “inner being.”
- In some contexts, the term “spirit” could be translated as “evil spirit” or “evil spirit being.”
- Sometimes the term “spirit” is used to express the feelings of a person, as in “my spirit was grieved in my inmost being.” This could also be translated as “I felt grieved in my spirit” or “I felt deeply grieved.”
- The phrase “spirit of” could be translated as “character of” or “influence of” or “attitude of” or “thinking (that is) characterized by.”
- Depending on the context, “spiritual” could be translated as “non-physical” or “from the Holy Spirit” or “God’s” or “part of the non-physical world.”
- The phrase “spiritual maturity” could be translated as “godly behavior that shows obedience to the Holy Spirit.”
- The term “spiritual gift” could be translated as “special ability that the Holy Spirit gives.”
- Sometimes this term can be translated as “wind” when referring to the simple movement of air or “breath” when referring to air movement caused by living beings.

(See also: [soul](#), Holy Spirit, demon, breath)

### Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:5
- 1 John 4:3
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- Acts 5:9
- Colossians 1:9
- Ephesians 4:23
- Genesis 7:21-22
- Genesis 8:1
- Isaiah 4:4
- Mark 1:23-26
- Matthew 26:41
- Philippians 1:27

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:3** Three days later, after the people had prepared themselves **spiritually**, God came down on top of Mount Sinai with thunder, lightning, smoke, and a loud trumpet blast.
- **40:7** Then Jesus cried out, "It is finished! Father, I give my **spirit** into your hands." Then he bowed his head and gave up his **spirit**.
- **45:5** As Stephen was dying, he cried out, "Jesus, receive my **spirit**."
- **48:7** All the people groups are blessed through him, because everyone who believes in Jesus is saved from sin, and becomes a **spiritual** descendant of Abraham.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0178, H1172, H5397, H7307, H7308, G41510, G41520, G41530, G53260, G54270

(Go back to: [Revelation 2 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

## worthy, worth, unworthy, worthless

### Definition:

The term “worthy” describes someone or something that deserves respect or honor. To “have worth” means to be valuable or important. The term “worthless” means to not have any value.

- Being worthy is related to being valuable or having importance
- To be “unworthy” means to not be deserving of any special notice.
- To not feel worthy means to feel less important than someone else or to not feel deserving of being treated with honor or kindness.
- The term “unworthy” and the term “worthless” have related, but different meanings. To be “unworthy” means to not be deserving of any honor or recognition. To be “worthless” means to not have any purpose or value.

### Translation Suggestions:

- “Worthy” could be translated as “deserving” or “important” or “valuable.”
- The word “worth” could be translated as “value” or “importance.”
- The phrase to “have worth” could also be translated as to “be valuable” or to “be important.”
- The phrase “is worth more than” could be translated as “is more valuable than.”
- Depending on the context, the term, “unworthy” could also be translated as “unimportant” or “dishonorable” or “undeserving.”
- The term “worthless” could be translated as “with no value” or “with no purpose” or “worth nothing.”

(See also: honor)

### Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 22:4
- 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12
- Acts 13:25
- Acts 25:25-27
- Acts 26:31
- Colossians 1:9-10
- Jeremiah 8:19
- Mark 1:7
- Matthew 3:10-12
- Philippians 1:25-27

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0117, H0639, H1929, H3644, H4242, H4373, H4392, H4592, H4941, H6994, H7386, H7939, G00960, G05140, G05150, G05160, G24250, G26610, G27350

(Go back to: [Revelation 4 General Notes](#))



## wrath, fury

### Definition:

Wrath is an intense anger that is sometimes long-lasting. The Bible describes both people and God as experiencing intense anger. When speaking about God's "wrath," make sure the word or phrase used to translate this term does not refer to a sinful fit of rage (which might be true of a human person).

- In the Bible, "wrath" often refers to God's righteous judgment of sin and punishment of people who rebel against him.
- The "wrath of God" can also refer to his judgment and punishment for sin.
- God's wrath is the righteous penalty for those who do not repent of their sin.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways this term could be translated include "intense anger" or "righteous judgment" or "anger."
- God's wrath is just and holy. When talking about God's wrath, make sure the word or phrase used to translate this term does not refer to a sinful human rage.

(See also: [judge](#), [sin](#))

### Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10
- 1 Timothy 2:8-10
- Luke 3:7
- Luke 21:23
- Matthew 3:7
- Revelation 14:10
- Romans 1:18
- Romans 5:9

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H0639, H2197, H2528, H2534, H2740, H3707, H3708, H5678, H7107, H7109, H7110, H7265, H7267, G23720, G37090, G39490, G39500

(Go back to: [Revelation 16 General Notes](#))

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