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Song of Solomon

Version 59

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Song of Solomon

Introduction to the Song of Songs

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Song of Songs

The bride longs for the bridegroom to arrive (1:1–2:7)
The bridegroom praises the woman he loves (2:8–3:5)
The bridegroom arrives and praises the bride (3:6–5:1)
The bride longs for the bridegroom (5:2–6:9)
The bridegroom praises the beauty of his bride (6:1–8:4)
Final thoughts about love between a man and a woman (8:5–14)

What is the Song of Songs about?

The Song of Songs is a poem or a series of poems that celebrate love and intimacy between a man and a woman. Jews traditionally have interpreted the book as a picture of God's love for his people Israel. In the same way, many Christians interpret it as a picture of love between Christ and his bride, the church of all believers.

Who wrote the Song of Songs?

The first verse of the book ("The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's") gives the idea that King Solomon of Israel wrote it. However, people have interpreted this verse in different ways, so not everyone is persuaded that Solomon wrote it.

How should the title of this book be translated?

This book is traditionally titled "Song of Songs," which means the very best song, or "Song of Solomon." It may also be called "Songs of Love," "Great Poems of Love," or "The Love Songs of Solomon." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What place do the descriptions of sexual behavior have in the Song of Songs?

The Song of Songs approves of sexual behavior expressing love between a husband his wife.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How many characters are in the Song of Songs?

The two main characters in this book are the man and the woman, who love each other. The woman also speaks to a group of women called the "daughters of Jerusalem," and these women make comments. However, it is possible that the group of women is not real and the woman is only imagining them.

Some interpreters believe there may be more characters than these, but this is not certain. The ULT and UST versions recognize only the man, the woman, and the group of women.

What are the lines about people speaking?

The Song of Songs is a poem that shows the thoughts and words of a man, a woman, and the woman's friends. Throughout the poem, the author does not identify the speakers and their audience. So to help readers understand the poem, some translations attempt to identify the speaker and the audience. It is not always certain who the speaker is, so sometimes translations disagree about who is speaking.

Before each speech, the ULT identifies the speaker and the audience like this: "The woman speaking to the other women," "The woman speaking to the man," "The man speaking to the woman," or "The woman speaking to herself." Translators are encouraged to include these ways of identifying the speaker and the audience, and to format them differently from the scripture text. The translators should also include a note explaining that these explanations are not actually part of the scripture.

How should one translate the Song of Songs if the readers will view certain terms as coarse, vulgar, or improper?

Readers might consider many images or forms appearing in the Song of Songs as improper when translated. The translator should try to avoid offensive language if possible, by using expressions that will not cause offense. (See: [Euphemism](#))

How do I translate metaphors and similes in this book?

There are many metaphors and similes in this book. These figures of speech are often unclear. If they have sexual meanings, figures of speech describing feelings or emotions are often used to avoid offense by hiding their meaning. However, since their meanings are often unclear, ambiguity in translation is encouraged. You can translate the words as they are written in order to avoid committing to a specific meaning. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Song of Solomon 1

Song of Songs 1 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Kisses

The kisses in this chapter are a type of kiss that was only done between a husband and a wife. It is an intimate kiss. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Love and affection

This chapter is centered on the feelings of love, affection, and attraction. Different cultural standards may make translation difficult and the translator may use euphemisms to avoid offending people. (See: [Euphemism](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was common to describe a woman using metaphors involving animals. In many cultures today, this can be considered offensive. Different metaphors of beauty are used in different cultures. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“I am dark”

In the ancient Near East, rich people usually had lighter skin because they did not need to work outside in the sun. This young woman had to work out in the sun, and her skin became darker than it was when she was younger.

Song of Solomon 1:1

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

The Song of Songs

“The Best Song” or “The Most Excellent Song”

which is Solomon’s

Possible meanings are “which is about Solomon” or “which Solomon composed.”

Translation Words - ULT

- [Solomon](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [This is King Solomon’s](#)

ULT

¹ The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s. The woman speaking to herself

UST

¹ [This is King Solomon’s](#) most beautiful song. The young woman speaking to herself

Song of Solomon 1:2

General Information:

The first part of the book begins with this verse.

your love is better than wine

“I enjoy having you near me more than I enjoy drinking wine”

Translation Words - ULT

- [good](#), [right](#), [pleasant](#), [better](#), [best](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [more](#)

ULT

² Oh, that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, The woman speaking to the man for your love is better than wine.

UST

² I wish he would kiss me on my lips, The woman speaks to her lover because your love for me is [more](#) delightful than wine.

Song of Solomon 1:3

Your anointing oils

“The oils that you put on your body”

have a delightful fragrance

“smell wonderful”

your name is like flowing perfume

Perfume has a good smell that spreads as the air moves. The name is either a metonym for: (1) the person’s reputation, what other people think of him. Here the speaker says that people always think that the hearer is a good person, or (2) the person himself. (See: [Simile](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- good, right, pleasant, better, best
- love, beloved
- name
- olive
- olive

Translation Words - UST

- of the perfume on your skin is very sweet
- the fragrance of the special oil
- And your honor is very great
- and
- are attracted to you

ULT

³ Your anointing oils have a delightful fragrance; your name is like flowing perfume, so the young women love you.

UST

³ The fragrance of the perfume on your skin is very sweet. And your honor is very great and is spreading, like the fragrance of the special oil that you have put on your skin. That is why the other young women are attracted to you.

Song of Solomon 1:4

with you

“The word “you” refers to the man and so is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Take

“Pull” or “Drag.” Here the woman described as being like a captive who is willing to follow her captor. (See: [Metaphor](#))

we will run

The word “we” refers to the young woman together with the man. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

We are glad ... We rejoice ... let us celebrate

The woman speaks of herself as if she were more than one person. Many versions change the pronoun to “I” as the UST does. Other versions present these as the words of the woman’s friends speaking about either the woman or the man. (See: [Pronouns](#) and [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

about you

“because of you”

let us celebrate

“let us praise”

It is natural for the other women to adore you

“Women who adore you are doing as they should do”

Translation Words - ULT

- love, beloved
- joy, joyful, rejoice, glad
- king, kingship

Translation Words - UST

- He is like a king to me
- The woman speaking to her lover...I am very happy
- my love

ULT

⁴ Take me with you, and we will run. The woman speaking to herself The king has brought me into his rooms. The woman speaking to the man We are glad; We rejoice about you; let us celebrate your love; it is better than wine. It is natural for the other women to adore you. The woman speaking to the other women

UST

⁴ Take me quickly; take me to your home. The woman speaking to herself [He is like a king to me](#); he has brought me into his bedroom. [The woman speaking to her lover I am very happy](#) about you; [my love](#) for you is better than wine. It is not surprising that the other young women adore you. The woman speaking to the other women

Song of Solomon 1:5

I am dark but lovely

“My skin is dark, but I am still beautiful” or “Even though my skin is dark, I am beautiful”

dark like the tents of Kedar

The nomadic tribes in Kedar used black goat skins to build their homes. The woman is comparing her skin to these tents. (See: [Simile](#))

lovely like the curtains of Solomon

Solomon produced beautiful curtains either for his own palace or for the Temple. She says that her skin is beautiful. (See: [Simile](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Jerusalem](#)
- [Kedar](#)
- [Solomon](#)
- [curtain](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [of Jerusalem](#)
- [my dark skin](#)
- [or like the beautiful curtains in](#)
- [Solomon's palace](#)

ULT

⁵ I am dark but lovely, you daughters of Jerusalem— dark like the tents of Kedar, lovely like the curtains of Solomon.

UST

⁵ You women [of Jerusalem](#), I am dark but beautiful; [my dark skin](#) is like the tents in Kedar, [or like the beautiful curtains in Solomon's palace](#).

Song of Solomon 1:6

scorched

This exaggeration for “burned” or “made black” refers to the sun changing her skin from light to dark. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

My mother’s sons

“My half-brothers.” These brothers probably had the same mother as the woman but not the same father.

made me keeper of the vineyards

“made me take care of the vineyards”

but my own vineyard I have not kept

The woman compares herself to a vineyard. Alternate translation: “but I have not been able to take care of myself” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [son](#)
- [vineyard](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [so they](#)
- [forced me to work out in the sunshine](#)

ULT

⁶ Do not stare at me because I am dark, because the sun has scorched me. My mother’s sons were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept. The woman speaking to the man

UST

⁶ But do not stare at me because the sun has made my skin dark. my brothers were angry with me, [so they forced me to work out in the sunshine](#) in the vineyards, so I was not able to take good care of my body. The woman speaking to her lover

Song of Solomon 1:7

my soul loves

The soul is a metonym for the person. Alternate translation: "I love"
(See: [Metonymy](#))

feed your flock

"graze your flocks"

rest your flock

"have your flock lie down"

Why should I be like someone who wanders beside the flocks of your companions?

The woman asks this question to emphasize that she has a closer relationship to the man than other women do. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Tell me so that I will not need to wander around among the flocks of your companions when I am looking for you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

who wanders

"who goes all around." She does not want to have to look for the man. Perhaps she is afraid other men will think she is a prostitute looking for business. (See: [Metaphor](#))

your companions

"your friends" or "your co-workers"

Translation Words - ULT

- [life, live, living, alive](#)
- [flock, herd](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [them](#)
- [the flocks](#)

ULT

⁷ Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where do you feed your flock? Where do you rest your flock at noontime? Why should I be like someone who wanders beside the flocks of your companions? The man speaking to the woman

UST

⁷ You whom I love, where will you take your flock of sheep today? Where will you allow [them](#) to rest at noontime? I want to know because it is not right for me to wander around like a prostitute looking for you among [the flocks](#) that belong to your friends. Her lover answering her

Song of Solomon 1:8

most beautiful among women

“you who are the most beautiful of all women”

follow the tracks of my flock

“follow along behind the flock”

tracks

marks of the hooves of the flock on the ground

pasture your young goats

“graze your young goats” or “let your young goats eat”

Translation Words - ULT

- [tabernacle](#)
- [know, knowledge, unknown, distinguish](#)
- [know, knowledge, unknown, distinguish](#)
- [ewe, ram, sheep, sheepfold, sheepshearers, sheepskins](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [know](#)
- [where I will take my sheep](#)
- [the sheep](#)
- [near the shepherds' tents](#)

ULT

⁸ If you do not know, most beautiful among women, follow the tracks of my flock, and pasture your young goats near the shepherds' tents.

UST

⁸ You who are the most beautiful of all the women, if you search for me and do not [know where I will take my sheep](#), follow the tracks of [the sheep](#). Then allow your young goats to graze [near the shepherds' tents](#).

Song of Solomon 1:9

General Information:

The man continues speaking to the woman.

I compare you, my love, to a mare among Pharaoh's chariot horses

The Jews of those days considered horses beautiful, and the Pharaoh's horses would have been the most beautiful he could find. The man considers the young woman beautiful. Alternate translation: "My love, you are as beautiful as any of Pharaoh's chariot horses" (See: [Simile](#))

my love

"you whom I love"

Pharaoh's chariot horses

"the horses that pull Pharaoh's chariots"

ULT

⁹ I compare you, my love, to a mare among Pharaoh's chariot horses.

UST

⁹ You are beautiful, my darling, like one of the young female horses that pull the chariots belonging to the king of Egypt.

Song of Solomon 1:10

Your cheeks are beautiful with ornaments

These ornaments could be: (1) jewels hanging from a band around the head or (2) earrings or (3) a metaphor for her long hair. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 Your cheeks are beautiful with ornaments, your neck with strings of jewels.

UST

10 Your earrings are decorations for your cheeks, and there are strings of beads around your neck.

Song of Solomon 1:11

We will make

The man speaks as if he were many people. Some versions change this to singular "I." Other versions take these to be the words of the woman's friends. (See: [Pronouns](#) and [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

with silver studs

"with spots of silver"

Translation Words - ULT

- [gold, golden](#)
- [silver](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [silver](#)
- [some gold earrings that are](#)

ULT

11 We will make for you gold ornaments with silver studs. The woman speaking to herself

UST

11 I will make for you some gold earrings that are decorated with [silver](#). The woman speaking to herself

Song of Solomon 1:12

lay on his couch

“sat eating his special meal.” This probably refers to one of the couches on which people would lie around a table at a banquet. You could translate using the common word for what people do with their bodies when they eat special meals.

nard

an oil that people got from the expensive nard or spikenard (valerian plant with small pink or white flowers) and used to make their skin soft and to have a pleasant odor.

emitted its fragrance

“gave off its good smell”

ULT

¹² While the king lay on his couch, my nard emitted its fragrance.

UST

¹² While the king was on his couch, the smell of my perfume spread around the room.

Song of Solomon 1:13

My beloved is to me like a bag of myrrh ... breasts

Women would place a small bag or pouch of myrrh on a necklace so it would lie between their breasts and they could enjoy its pleasant fragrance. This woman enjoys having her beloved close to her. She adds "to me" to show that she does not expect anyone else to enjoy her beloved in this way. Alternate translation: "I enjoy my beloved as much as I enjoy having a bag of myrrh ... breasts" (See: [Simile](#))

My beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as "my lover." Alternate translation: "My dear one" or "My lover"

lying between my breasts

If this phrase would offend your readers, you could use a euphemism. Alternate translation: "close to me" (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

¹³ My beloved is to me like a bag of myrrh that spends the night lying between my breasts.

UST

¹³ The man who loves me stays between my breasts during the night like a bag of perfume tied around my neck.

Song of Solomon 1:14

My beloved is to me like a cluster of henna flowers

Henna flowers have a fragrance that people enjoy. The woman enjoys her beloved. She adds "to me" to show that she does not expect anyone else to enjoy her beloved in this way. Alternate translation: "I enjoy my beloved as much as I enjoy the smell of clusters of henna flowers" (See: [Simile](#))

henna flowers

flowers from a small desert tree that people used as a perfume

Translation Words - ULT

- [En Gedi](#)
- [En Gedi](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [at En](#)
- [Gedi](#)

ULT

14 My beloved is to me like a cluster of henna flowers in the vineyards of En Gedi. The man speaking to the woman

UST

14 He is like a bunch of flowers from the vineyards [at En Gedi](#). Her lover speaking to her

Song of Solomon 1:15

Listen, you

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

my love

“you whom I love.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:9](#)

your eyes are doves

This could mean: (1) the Israelites considered doves to be gentle and soft birds, and the man considers the woman’s eyes beautiful because the way the woman looks at him makes him think she is gentle. Alternate translation: “you are very gentle” or (2) the man is speaking of the woman’s white eyeballs or the shape of her eyes as being like the shape of a dove. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

15 Listen, you are beautiful, my love; listen, you are beautiful; your eyes are doves. The woman speaking to the man

UST

15 You whom I love, you are beautiful; you are very beautiful! Your eyes are as delightful as doves. The woman speaking to her lover

Song of Solomon 1:16

Listen, you

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

handsome

Use the word in your language that describes a good-looking man.

my beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as “my lover.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: “my dear one” or “my lover”

lush plants are our bed

This speaks of the lush plants as if they were a bed. Alternate translation: “lush plants are what we lie down on to sleep” (See: [Metaphor](#))

The lush plants

plants that are green, moist, and grow abundantly

ULT

16 Listen, you are handsome, my beloved, how handsome. The lush plants are our bed.

UST

16 You who love me, you are very delightful, you are wonderful! This green grass in the countryside will be like a couch where we can lie down.

Song of Solomon 1:17

The beams of our house are cedars; our rafters are firs

The woman describes the forest as though it were a house in which they were lying down. (See: [Metaphor](#))

beams ... rafters

This could mean: (1) "beams" refers to large logs used to support everything above the walls and "rafters" refers to the large pieces of wood to which the roof is attached or (2) "beams" refers to the rafters and "rafters" refers to the strips attached to the beams, onto which the builders attached the roofing materials.

cedars ... firs

Cedars were large and strong trees. The word translated "firs" is a general term for trees like cedars but smaller. If cedar and fir trees are unknown in your area, you could use general terms for the tallest and strongest trees. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- cedar, cedarwood
- house, household

Translation Words - UST

- of cedar trees
- will shade us...are like a roof for us

ULT

¹⁷ The beams of our house are cedars; our rafters are firs.

UST

¹⁷ Branches of cedar trees will shade us; the fir branches overhead are like a roof for us.

Song of Solomon 2

Song of Songs 2 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Women are compared to flowers in this chapter. This metaphor may describe a woman's beauty and delicacy. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Euphemisms

It is possible that some of the metaphors used in this chapter are actually euphemisms. These euphemisms would refer to sex or the physical love between a husband a wife. (See: [Euphemism](#))

Song of Solomon 2:1

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

I am a meadow flower of Sharon

The woman speaks as if she were one of many flowers in a land known for beautiful flowers. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Sharon

the name of a land that is flat, has no trees, and grows many different kinds of grasses and flowers

lily of the valleys

The woman speaks as if she were one of many flowers in a land known for beautiful flowers. (See: [Metaphor](#))

lily

a sweet smelling flower that grows in places where there is much water. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:1-2](#).

valleys

flat areas between mountains and near water

ULT

¹ I am a meadow flower of Sharon, a lily of the valleys. The man speaking to the woman

UST

¹ I am like an insignificant flower in the plains, like an insignificant lily growing in a valley. The man speaking to her

Song of Solomon 2:2

As a lily among thorns ... young women

A flower is much more beautiful than a thorn bush. The man thinks the woman is much more beautiful than the other women. (See: [Simile](#))

my love

“you whom I love.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:9](#).

the young women

“the other young women”

ULT

² As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the young women. The woman speaking to herself

UST

² Among all the other young women, you, the one whom I love, are like a lily growing among thorns! The woman speaking to herself

Song of Solomon 2:3

As an apricot tree ... the young men

People enjoy the fruit of an apricot tree, but the trees of the forest do not bear fruit. The woman enjoys being with the man, but not with the other young men. (See: [Simile](#))

apricot tree

a tree that produces a small yellow fruit that is very sweet. If your readers will not know what this is, you could use the word for another fruit tree or the general word "fruit tree."

the forest

The Hebrew word here refers to land where trees grow for which people have no use.

my beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as "my lover." See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: "my dear one" or "my lover"

I sit down under his shadow with great delight

The woman finds great joy and comfort in being so near to the man. (See: [Metaphor](#))

his fruit is sweet to my taste

The woman enjoys eating sweet fruit, and she enjoys being near to the man. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [son](#)
- [fruit](#), [fruitful](#), [unfruitful](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [from the sun](#)
- [fruit](#)

ULT

³ As an apricot tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. I sit down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to my taste.

UST

³ Among all the other men, this man is the one who loves me; he is like a tree that grows in the forest. Under his shade I am safe [from the sun](#). When he is close to me, it is like eating sweet [fruit](#).

Song of Solomon 2:4

the house of wine

This could mean: (1) the very large room where the king would serve many people large meals with wine or (2) a small booth in a vineyard where the man and woman could be alone together.

his banner over me was love

This could mean: (1) the banner is a metonym for a military escort. And, the military escort is a metaphor that represents the man's love which gives courage to the woman who was nervous to enter the large room where the king served many people. Alternate translation: "but his loving protection guided me and gave me courage" or (2) the woman knew that the man wanted to make love to her from the way he looked at her. Alternate translation: "he looked at me lovingly" or "when he looked at me, I knew he wanted to make love to me" or (3) they made love. Alternate translation: "he lovingly covered me" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [house](#), [household](#)
- [wine](#), [wineskin](#), [new wine](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [the room where](#)
- [I feasted](#)

ULT

⁴ He brought me to the house of wine, and his banner over me was love. The woman speaking to the man

UST

⁴ He led me to [the room where I feasted](#) on his love, where he made love to me as if he were covering me with his love. The woman speaking to her lover

Song of Solomon 2:5

Revive me

“Return my strength” or “Give me energy”

with raisin cakes

“by giving me raisin cakes to eat.” Raisin cakes were cakes made of dried grapes pressed together.

refresh me with apricots

“support me by giving me apricots” or “help me by giving me apricots”

for I am weak with love

The woman speaks of feeling weak because her love is so strong as if love were a kind of sickness. Alternate translation: “because my love is so strong that I feel feeble” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ Revive me with raisin cakes and refresh me with apricots, for I am weak with love. The woman speaking to herself

UST

⁵ Refresh me and strengthen me with your lovemaking. It is like eating raisins and other fruit, because I want you to love me even more. The woman speaking to herself

Song of Solomon 2:6

left hand ... right hand

"left arm ... right arm"

embraces me

"holds me"

ULT

⁶ His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me. The woman speaking to the other women

UST

⁶ I hope he puts his left arm under my head and holds me close with his right arm. The woman speaking to the other women

Song of Solomon 2:7

daughters of Jerusalem

“young women of Jerusalem.” These young women could not hear her and were not present, but the woman speaks as if they were present and could hear her. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

by the gazelles and the does of the fields

Although the daughters of Jerusalem could not hear her, the woman speaks to them as if they could hear saying that the gazelles and the does will punish them they break their promise. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

the gazelles

These are animals that look like deer and move quickly.

does

female deer

of the fields

“that live in the countryside.” This was land that has not been farmed.

will not awaken or arouse love until she pleases

Here “love” is spoken of as if it were a person asleep that does not want to be awakened. This is a metaphor that represents the man and woman who do not want to be disturbed until they are finished making love. Alternate translation: “will not disturb us until we have finished making love” (See: [Personification](#) and [Metaphor](#))

will not awaken or arouse

If your language has only one word for waking people out of sleep, you could combine these words. Alternate translation: “will not awaken” (See: [Doublet](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Jerusalem](#)
- [oath, swear, swearing, swear by](#)
- [raise, rise, lift, get up, stir up,](#)
- [raise, rise, lift, get up, stir up,](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Jerusalem](#)
- [take an oath](#)
- [you will not cause us](#)
- [to desire](#)

ULT

⁷ I want you to swear, daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and the does of the fields, that you will not awaken or arouse love until she pleases. The woman speaking to herself

UST

⁷ You young women of [Jerusalem](#), I want you to [take an oath](#), while the does and gazelles are listening, that you will not cause us [to desire](#) love until the right time comes. The woman speaking to herself

Song of Solomon 2:8

General Information:

The second part of the book begins here. It is not clear whether the woman is speaking to herself or to the daughters of Jerusalem.

Listen

This could mean: (1) "Listen carefully to what I am about to say." You could use a word in your language that tells the hearer to listen carefully, or (2) "Listen so you can hear him coming."

my beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as "my lover." See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: "my dear one" or "my lover"

leaping ... jumping

The woman shows that she is excited to see the man come by using as few words as possible to describe what he is doing. Your language may have a different way of showing that the speaker is excited about what is happening.

leaping over the mountains, jumping over the hills

"leaping on the mountains, running quickly on the hills." The woman speaks of the man as if he were "a gazelle or a young stag" (verse 9) coming quickly toward her over rough ground. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

8 There is the sound of my beloved!
Listen, here he comes, leaping over the
mountains, jumping over the hills.

UST

8 I hear the voice of the man who loves
me. It is as though he is leaping over
the mountains and skipping over the
hills

Song of Solomon 2:9

gazing ... peering

The woman shows that she is excited to see the man come by using as few words as possible to describe what he is doing. Your language may have a different way of showing that the speaker is excited about what is happening.

like a gazelle or a young stag

Gazelles and young stags move quickly over rough ground. The woman imagines the man coming as fast as he can to be with her. You could translate using animals in your language that people think of as fast. (See: [Simile](#))

a gazelle

This is an animal that looks like a deer and moves quickly. Translate as the singular of “the gazelles” as in [Song of Songs 2:7](#).

a young stag

“a young male deer”

look

“listen carefully” or “what I am about to say is important.” You could use a word in your language that tells the hearer to listen carefully.

behind our wall

“on the other side of our wall.” The woman is in a house and the man is outside the house.

our wall

The word “our” refers to the woman and the other people in the house with her. If she is speaking to herself, it is inclusive, but if she is speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem, whether she is referring to herself and her companions or to herself only in plural, as in “We are glad ... We rejoice ... let us celebrate” ([Song of Songs 1:4](#)), it is exclusive. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

gazing through the window

“he stares in through the windows”

peering through the lattice

“he peeks through the lattice”

ULT

⁹ My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag; look, he is standing behind our wall, gazing through the window, peering through the lattice.

UST

⁹ like a deer or a gazelle. Now he is [standing](#) outside the wall of our house, looking in the window, and peering through the lattice.

lattice

a cover for a window or some other entrance that someone has made by weaving long strips of wood together. Lattices have holes that people can look through.

Translation Words - ULT

- [appoint, appointed](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [standing](#)

Song of Solomon 2:10

My beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as “my lover.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: “My dear one” or “My lover”

Arise, my love

“Get out of bed, my love”

my love

“you whom I love.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:9](#)

Translation Words - ULT

- [testimony](#), [testify](#), [witness](#), [eyewitness](#), [evidence](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [spoke](#)

ULT

10 My beloved spoke to me and said, “Arise, my love; My beautiful one, come away with me.

UST

10 He [spoke](#) to me and said, “You whom I love, get up; my beautiful one, come with me!

Song of Solomon 2:11

Look

“Listen carefully” or “What I am about to say is important.” You could use a word in your language that tells the hearer to listen carefully.

the winter is past; the rain is over and gone

In winter it is too cold and wet to make love outside, but the cold, wet time has passed.

the winter is past

Winter is the cold time of year when plants do not grow and people prefer to stay inside their houses. You could use the term in your language for that time of year.

the rain is over and gone

In Israel it only rains during the winter. The rain here is cold and unpleasant, not the refreshing rain of the hot season.

Translation Words - ULT

- walk, walked

Translation Words - UST

- has stopped

ULT

¹¹ Look, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone.

UST

¹¹ Look, the winter has ended; the rain [has stopped](#).

Song of Solomon 2:12

The flowers have appeared

“People can see flowers”

in the land

“all over this land”

for pruning

for cutting off branches from a plant so that it will produce more fruit or look better

the singing of birds

“for birds to sing”

the sound of the doves is heard

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “people can hear the sound of doves” or “the doves are cooing” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² The flowers have appeared in the land; the time for pruning and the singing of birds has come, and the sound of the doves is heard in our land.

UST

¹² The flowers are blooming throughout the country. It is now time to sing; we hear the pigeons cooing.

Song of Solomon 2:13

The fig tree ripens her green figs

The tree is spoken of as if it were actively causing its fruit to ripen. This is a collective singular and can be translated as a plural. Alternate translation: “The figs on the trees are becoming ripe” (See: [Personification](#))

vines are in blossom

“vines are flowering” or “vines have flowers”

they give off

The word “they” refers to the blossoms on the vines.

their fragrance

“their sweet smell”

my love

“you whom I love.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:9](#)

Translation Words - ULT

- [walk, walked](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [come with me](#)

ULT

¹³ The fig tree ripens her green figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give off their fragrance. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.

UST

¹³ There are young figs on the fig trees, and there are blossoms on the grapevines and their fragrance fills the air. You whom I love, get up; my beautiful one, [come with me!](#)

Song of Solomon 2:14

General Information:

The man is speaking.

My dove

The Israelites considered doves beautiful birds with pleasant voices. The man thinks the woman's face and voice are beautiful. If calling a woman a "dove" would be offensive, you could leave out the metaphor. Alternate translation: "My beautiful woman" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the clefts

large cracks in the side of mountain rocks large enough for people to hide in

the mountain crags

"the steep rocks on the sides of the mountains"

your face

Some versions translate this as "your appearance" or "your form" or "what you look like."

ULT

14 My dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret clefts of the mountain crags, let me see your face. Let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely." The woman speaking to the man

UST

14 You are like a dove hiding in the rocky cliff. Show me your face, and allow me to hear your voice, because your voice sounds sweet, and your face is lovely." The woman speaking to the man

Song of Solomon 2:15

Catch

This is plural, as if the woman is speaking to more than one man, but most versions translate who she is speaking to as the man, so you could translate this as singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

the foxes

These animals look like small dogs and were often used in love poetry to represent eager young men who would spoil a young woman. (See: [Metaphor](#))

for us ... our vineyard

The words **us** and **our** could possibly be: (1) exclusive, referring to the woman herself, as in [Song of Songs 1:4](#), or (2) inclusive, referring to the woman and the man, or (3) exclusive, referring to the woman and the rest of her family. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

foxes

Another possible meaning is "jackals." A jackal is a type of thin wild dog with long legs.

the little foxes that spoil

Foxes spoil or destroy vineyards by digging holes and eating vines and grapes. This could be a metaphor for young men who spoil young women. (See: [Metaphor](#))

in blossom

This implies that the vineyard is healthy and the grapes have appeared, but they are not ready for harvest. This could be a metaphor for a young lady ready for marriage and bearing children. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:13](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- vineyard
- vineyard

Translation Words - UST

- vineyards
- vineyards

ULT

15 Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that spoil vineyards, for our vineyard is in blossom.

UST

15 There are other men who ruin women as wild dogs ruin vineyards; do not allow those men to attack me.

Song of Solomon 2:16

My beloved is mine

“My beloved belongs to me”

I am his

“I belong to him”

he grazes

“feeds” or “eats grass.” The woman speaks of the man as if he were “a gazelle or a young stag” (verse 17) that eats plants among the lilies. Grazing is probably a metaphor for lovemaking ([Song of Songs 2:1-2](#)). (See: [Metaphor](#))

lilies

sweet-smelling flowers that grow in places where there is much water. Translate as the plural of “lily” in [Song of Songs 2:1](#).

ULT

16 My beloved is mine, and I am his; he grazes among the lilies with pleasure.
The woman speaking to the man

UST

16 This man whom I love—I belong to him, and he belongs to me. He takes great pleasure in kissing my lips, as sheep love to graze in pastures. The woman speaking to her lover

Song of Solomon 2:17

my beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as “my lover.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: “my dear one” or “my lover”

dawn

the part of the day when the sun is rising

the shadows flee away

The woman describes the shadows as though they were running away from the light of the sun. Alternate translation: “the shadows disappear” (See: [Metaphor](#))

like a gazelle or a young stag

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:9](#).

gazelle

an animal that looks like a deer and moves quickly. Translate as the singular of “gazelles” as in [Song of Songs 2:7](#).

stag

an adult male deer

rugged mountains

“rocky mountains” or “rough mountains”

ULT

17 Go away, my beloved, before the soft winds of dawn blow and the shadows flee away. Go away; be like a gazelle or a young stag on the rugged mountains.

UST

17 You whom I love, you must go away before dawn, when the darkness disappears. Go away quickly, like a gazelle or like a young deer running on the high hills.

Song of Solomon 3

Song of Songs 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Longing

This chapter describes a feeling of longing, or the waiting in anticipation of the one you love. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was common to describe a woman using metaphors involving animals. In many cultures today, this can be considered offensive. Different metaphors of beauty are used in different cultures. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Song of Solomon 3:1

I was longing for him ... could not find him

"I had a strong desire to be with him ... loves, but he was not there"

him whom my soul loves

The soul is a metonym for the whole person. Here it makes a stronger statement of the woman's love for the man than "my beloved" ([Song of Songs 1:14](#)). (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- life, live, living, alive
- seek, search, look for
- seek, search, look for

Translation Words - UST

- I was longing to see
- wanted him
- I

ULT

¹ At night on my bed I was longing for him whom my soul loves; I looked for him, but I could not find him.

UST

¹ During the entire night while I lay on my bed, I was longing to see the one I love with all my heart. I wanted him to come, but he did not.

Song of Solomon 3:2

go through the city

“walk through the city”

through the streets and squares

The word “squares” indicates the center area of a town where streets or roads come together. It is often an area where people sell items, a market, and a place where people come together to talk.

will search

“will to look for”

Translation Words - ULT

- life, live, living, alive
- seek, search, look for
- seek, search, look for

Translation Words - UST

- to search for
- went out to look for him
- the one whom

ULT

² I said to myself, “I will get up and go through the city, through the streets and squares; I will search for him whom my soul loves.” I searched for him, but I did not find him.

UST

² So I said to myself, “I will get up now and walk around the city, through the streets and plazas, [to search for the one whom](#) I love with all my heart.” So I got up and [went out to look for him](#), but I could not find him.

Song of Solomon 3:3

watchmen

men who have the job of keeping guard of the town at night to keep the people safe

as they were making their rounds in the city

“who were walking around the city on the walls”

him whom my soul loves

The soul is a metonym for the whole person. Here it makes a stronger statement of the woman’s love for the man than “my beloved” ([Song of Songs 1:14](#)). See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 3:1](#). (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [life, live, living, alive](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [the one whom](#)

ULT

³ The watchmen found me as they were making their rounds in the city. I asked them, “Have you seen him whom my soul loves?”

UST

³ The city watchmen saw me while they were patrolling in the city. I asked them, “Have you seen [the one whom](#) I love with all my heart?”

Song of Solomon 3:4

the bedroom

“the room for sleeping”

the one who had conceived me

This is a metonym for her mother. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [life, live, living, alive](#)
- [house, household](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [the one whom](#)
- [the room where](#)

ULT

⁴ It was only a little while after I had passed them that I found him whom my soul loves. I held him and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother’s house, into the bedroom of the one who had conceived me. The woman speaking to the other women

UST

⁴ As soon as I walked past them, I found [the one whom](#) I love with all my heart. I clung to him and would not let him go until I brought him to my mother’s house, to [the room where](#) my mother had conceived me. The woman speaking to the other women

Song of Solomon 3:5

General Information:

Translate this verse as in [Song of Songs 2:7](#).

daughters of Jerusalem

“young women of Jerusalem.” These young women could not hear her and were not present, but the woman speaks as if they were present and could hear her. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

by the gazelles and the does of the fields

Although the daughters of Jerusalem are not there to hear her, the woman is telling them that the gazelles and the does will punish them they break their promise. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

the gazelles

animals that look like deer and move quickly.

does

female deer

of the fields

“that live in the countryside.” This refers to land that has not been farmed.

will not awaken or arouse love until she pleases

Here “love” is spoken of as if it were a person asleep that does not want to be awakened. This is a metaphor that represents the man and woman who do not want to be disturbed until they are finished making love. Alternate translation: “will not disturb us until we have finished making love” (See: [Personification](#) and [Metaphor](#))

will not awaken or arouse

If your language has only one word for waking people out of sleep, you could combine these words. Alternate translation: “will not awaken” (See: [Doublet](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Jerusalem](#)
- [oath, swear, swearing, swear by](#)
- [raise, rise, lift, get up, stir up,](#)
- [raise, rise, lift, get up, stir up,](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Jerusalem](#)

ULT

⁵ I want you to swear, daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and the does of the fields, that you will not awaken or arouse love until she pleases. The woman speaking to herself

UST

⁵ You women of [Jerusalem](#), [solemnly promise](#) me, while the does and gazelles are listening, that [you will not disturb us](#) while we are making love until we are ready to stop. The young woman speaking to herself

- solemnly promise
- you will not disturb us
- you will not...disturb us

Song of Solomon 3:6

General Information:

The third part of the book begins here. It begins with a description of sixty men carrying Solomon's bed up from the wilderness to Jerusalem.

What is that coming up from the wilderness

The group of people is traveling from the wilderness to Jerusalem. They must go up in order to reach Jerusalem because the wilderness is low in the Jordan valley and Jerusalem is high in the mountains.

What is that

Many versions translate this "Who is that."

like a column of smoke

The dust looked like smoke from far away because the people raised much dust in the air as they traveled. (See: [Simile](#))

perfumed with myrrh and frankincense

"with the sweet smell of myrrh and frankincense"

with all the powders sold by merchants

The words "perfumed with" are understood from the previous phrase. They can be repeated here. Alternate translation: "perfumed with all the powders sold by merchants" or "and with the sweet smell of all the powders that merchants sell" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

powders

a fine dust made by crushing something solid

ULT

6 What is that coming up from the wilderness like a column of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the powders sold by merchants?

UST

6 What is that I see coming from the wilderness, something that is stirring up dust like a column of smoke like smoke from burning myrrh and incense made from spices imported by merchants?

Song of Solomon 3:7

Look

“Listen carefully” or “What I am about to say is important.” You could use a word in your language that tells the hearer to listen carefully. The speaker now discovers the answer to the question in verse 6.

it is the bed

This refers to a bed with a cover that can be carried from one place to another.

sixty warriors surround it, sixty soldiers of Israel

These two phrases refer to the same sixty people. The second phrase clarifies that the “warriors” are “soldiers of Israel.” (See: [Doublet](#))

warriors

men who fight

Translation Words - ULT

- [Israel, Israelites](#)
- [Solomon](#)
- [might, mighty, mighty works](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Solomon's](#)
- [bodyguards](#)
- [in Israel](#)

ULT

⁷ Look, it is the bed of Solomon; sixty warriors surround it, sixty soldiers of Israel.

UST

⁷ It is [Solomon's](#) litter carried by servants and surrounded by sixty [bodyguards](#) chosen from the strongest soldiers [in Israel](#).

Song of Solomon 3:8

General Information:

The description of sixty men carrying Solomon's bed up from the wilderness to Jerusalem, begun in [Song of Songs 3:6](#), continues.

A description of the bed itself begins in verse 9. You could use words in your language that show that this is background information. (See: [Background Information](#))

are experienced in warfare

"can fight battles well"

armed against

"so that he can fight against"

terrors of the night

The abstract noun "terrors" is a metonym for evil people who frighten others by attacking them. Alternate translation: "evil people who attack others at night" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- sword, swordsmen
- sword, swordsmen

Translation Words - UST

- swords
- has his sword strapped

ULT

⁸ All of them are skilled with a sword and are experienced in warfare. Every man has his sword at his side, armed against the terrors of the night.

UST

⁸ They all have swords and they all are trained to use them. Each one has his sword strapped to his side and is prepared for dangers that can happen during the night or day.

Song of Solomon 3:9

sedan chair

This is a chair or couch for important people to sit or lie on. It rests on long poles that people can use to carry it

Translation Words - ULT

- Lebanon
- Solomon
- king, kingship

Translation Words - UST

- King
- Solomon commanded his servants
- from Lebanon

ULT

⁹ King Solomon made himself a sedan chair of the wood from Lebanon.

UST

⁹ King Solomon commanded his servants to make that litter for him; it was made with wood from Lebanon.

Song of Solomon 3:10

The description of the bed itself that began in [Song of Songs 3:9](#) continues. (See: [Background Information](#))

Its posts

The word “its” refers to King Solomon’s sedan chair.

posts

The word “posts” here refers to pieces either made of silver or made of wood covered with silver that hold up the tent of cloth around his chair.

Its interior was

“The inside of it was”

with love

This could mean: (1) “with love,” indicating that the women made the sedan beautiful in a special way to show their love for Solomon, or (2) “with leather.”

Translation Words - ULT

- [Jerusalem](#)
- [gold, golden](#)
- [column, pillar](#)
- [purple](#)
- [silver](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [The canopy that covered it was held up by...posts](#)
- [silver](#)
- [gold](#)
- [was covered with purple cloth](#)
- [of Jerusalem](#)

ULT

¹⁰ Its posts were made of silver; the back was made of gold, and the seat of purple cloth. Its interior was decorated with love by the daughters of Jerusalem. The woman speaking to the women of Jerusalem

UST

¹⁰ [The canopy that covered it was held up by silver posts](#), and the back of the litter was embroidered with [gold](#). The seat [was covered with purple cloth](#) lovingly made by the women of [Jerusalem](#).

Song of Solomon 3:11

daughters of Zion

“you young women who live in Zion”

gaze on King Solomon

“look at King Solomon.” The word “gaze” refers to look at someone or something for a long time, usually with strong emotional feeling.

bearing the crown

“wearing the crown”

the day of the joy of his heart

The word “heart” is a metonym for the person. Alternate translation: “the day on which he truly rejoiced” or “the happiest day of his life” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [heart](#)
- [Zion, Mount Zion](#)
- [Solomon](#)
- [joy, joyful, rejoice, glad](#)
- [king, kingship](#)
- [know, knowledge, unknown, distinguish](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [of Jerusalem](#)
- [King](#)
- [Solomon](#)
- [put on his head](#)
- [the happiest](#)
- [the happiest](#)

ULT

11 Go out, daughters of Zion, and gaze on King Solomon, bearing the crown with which his mother crowned him on his wedding day, on the day of the joy of his heart.

UST

11 You women [of Jerusalem](#), come and look at [King Solomon](#) wearing the headdress that his mother [put on his head](#) on the day when he was married, [the happiest](#) day of his life.

Song of Solomon 4

Song of Songs 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Beauty

The woman is described as the epitome of beauty in ancient Israel. Not all cultures share the same the same standards of beauty.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was common to describe a woman using metaphors involving animals. In many cultures today, this can be considered offensive. Different metaphors of beauty are used in different cultures. (See: [Metaphor](#))

“My sister, my bride”

The woman described is not the sister of her husband. They are not related. Instead, this is a reference to a woman who is a fellow Israelite.

Song of Solomon 4:1

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

Your eyes are doves

One possibility is that the man is speaking of the woman's white eyeballs or the shape of her eyes, the shape of a dove. Another possibility is that the Israelites considered doves to be gentle and soft birds, and the man considers the woman's eyes beautiful because the way the woman looks at him makes him think she is gentle. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:15](#). Alternate translation: "You are very gentle" (See: [Metaphor](#))

my love

"you whom I love." See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:9](#).

Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from Mount Gilead

Goats in Israel were usually dark in color. The woman's hair was probably dark. You may need to specify that the goats were dark or even use another simile that the reader will understand that refers to something dark and beautiful. People thought of Mount Gilead as beautiful and fertile. The speaker considered the woman beautiful and ready to become the mother of his children. If you remove the simile of the goats, you may have to remove the simile of the mountain as well. Alternate translation: "Your hair is as dark as storm clouds above a fertile land" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

¹ Oh, you are beautiful, my love; you are beautiful. Your eyes are doves behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from Mount Gilead.

UST

¹ My darling, you are beautiful, you are very beautiful! Underneath your veil, your eyes are as gentle as doves. Your long black hair moves from side to side like a flock of black goats moving down the slopes of Mount Gilead.

Song of Solomon 4:2

Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn ewes

After sheep have their wool cut off, they are washed and their skin looks very white. The woman's teeth are white. (See: [Simile](#))

a flock of newly shorn ewes

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "a flock of ewes whose wool people have cut off" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

coming up from the washing place

The ewes are coming up out of the water. Alternate translation: "that are coming up out of the water after people have washed them" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Each one has a twin

Sheep usually give birth to two lambs at one time. These twin lambs usually look like one another. Each of the woman's teeth has a matching tooth on the other side of her mouth. (See: [Metaphor](#))

none among them is bereaved

Each of the woman's teeth has a matching tooth on the other side of her mouth. She has not lost any of her teeth.

bereaved

lost a loved one who has died

ULT

² Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn ewes, coming up from the washing place. Each one has a twin, and none among them is bereaved.

UST

² Your teeth are very white, as white as sheep whose wool people have just cut, as white as sheep that people have just washed in a stream. You have all of your teeth on both sides; none of them is missing.

Song of Solomon 4:3

General Information:

The man continues to praise the woman.

are like a thread of scarlet

Scarlet is a beautiful red color, and scarlet thread was very expensive. The woman's lips were red. Alternate translation: "are a deep red like scarlet thread" or "are red and very beautiful" (See: [Simile](#))

scarlet

a dark red color that is very similar to the color of blood

is lovely

"is beautiful"

are like pomegranate halves

Pomegranates are smooth, round, and rich red. The man thinks the woman's cheeks are beautiful and show that she is healthy. Alternate translation: "are red and round like two halves of a pomegranate" or "are red and full and healthy" (See: [Simile](#))

behind your veil

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:1](#).

ULT

³ Your lips are like a thread of scarlet; your mouth is lovely. Your cheeks are like pomegranate halves behind your veil.

UST

³ Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon, and your mouth is lovely. Beneath your veil, your cheeks are round and rosy like the halves of a pomegranate.

Song of Solomon 4:4

General Information:

The man continues to praise the woman.

Your neck is like the tower of David

No one knows if this was a real tower. A tower is a tall, slender building, and saying that David built it implies that it was beautiful. The man considered the woman's neck long and slender and so beautiful. Alternate translation: "Your neck is long and beautiful like the tower of David" (See: [Simile](#))

of David

"that David built"

built in rows of stone

Women had necklaces that covered their entire necks with rows of decorations. The man compares these rows of decorations with the rows of stone on the tower. Alternate translation: "that has many rows of stone" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

with a thousand shields

The man compares the decorations of the woman's necklace with shields hanging on the tower. The necklace probably went around her neck many times. (See: [Metaphor](#))

a thousand shields

"1,000 shields." (See: [Numbers](#))

all the shields of soldiers

"all of the shields belong to mighty warriors"

Translation Words - ULT

- [David](#)
- [hang, hung](#)
- [might, mighty, mighty works](#)
- [shield](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [King David](#)
- [using layers of stone](#)
- [hanging](#)
- [belongs to a warrior](#)

ULT

⁴ Your neck is like the tower of David built in rows of stone, with a thousand shields hanging on it, all the shields of soldiers.

UST

⁴ Your long neck is beautiful, like the tower of [King David](#) that was built [using layers of stone](#). The ornaments on the necklaces around your neck are like a thousand shields [hanging](#) on the walls of a tower; each one [belongs to a warrior](#).

Song of Solomon 4:5

two breasts

If the word “two” seems unnecessary and so out of place, you could omit it.

like two fawns, twins of a gazelle

The man implies that the woman’s breasts are matching, soft, and perhaps small. (See: [Simile](#))

twins

the babies of a mother who gave birth to two babies at one time

gazelle

an animal that looks like a deer and moves quickly. Translate as the singular of “gazelles” as in [Song of Songs 2:7](#).

grazing among the lilies

“eating plants among the lilies.” While it is clear that the man “grazing among the lilies” is a metaphor for making love ([Song of Songs 2:16](#)), it is not clear what these words refer to. It is best to translate them literally.

lilies

sweet-smelling flowers that grow in places where there is much water. Translate as the plural of “lily” in [Song of Songs 2:1](#).

ULT

⁵ Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, grazing among the lilies.

UST

⁵ Your breasts are as delicate as two young twin deer eating grass among lilies.

Song of Solomon 4:6

General Information:

The man continues to praise the woman.

Until the dawn arrives and the shadows flee away

Translate similar wording in this line as you did the line in [Song of Songs 2:17](#).

I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense

The “mountain of myrrh” and “hill of frankincense” are metaphors for the woman’s breasts ([Song of Songs 1:13](#)). Alternate translation: “I will lie close to your breasts, which are like mountains that smell like myrrh and frankincense” or “I will lie close to your breasts, which smell very sweet” or “I will go to the sweet-smelling mountains” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the mountain of myrrh

“the mountain made of myrrh” or “the mountain that has myrrh growing on it”

the hill of frankincense

“the hill where there are clouds of smoke from burning frankincense in the air”

Translation Words - ULT

- [frankincense](#)
- [walk, walked](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [disappear](#)
- [spices](#)

ULT

⁶ Until the dawn arrives and the shadows flee away, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.

UST

⁶ Until dawn tomorrow morning, when the nighttime shadows [disappear](#), I will lie close to your breasts, because they are like two hills that smell like sweet [spices](#).

Song of Solomon 4:7

You are beautiful in every way

“Every part of you is beautiful” or “All of you is beautiful”

my love

“you whom I love.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:9](#).

there is no blemish in you

“you have no blemish”

ULT

⁷ You are beautiful in every way, my love
and there is no blemish in you.

UST

⁷ My darling, you are completely
beautiful; your body is perfectly formed!

Song of Solomon 4:8

General Information:

The man continues to speak to the woman. He speaks of them not being free to make love as if they were in a wild, dangerous, foreign place. (See: [Metaphor](#))

from Lebanon

“away from Lebanon”

my bride

This Hebrew word can refer to a woman who is married or to one whom a man has arranged to become his son's wife. If your language has a polite word that a man would use to his wife and that has not been used yet in this book, you could use it here. Otherwise you could use any polite term a man would use with his wife.

Amana

the name of a mountain north of Israel (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Senir

the name of a mountain near Amana and Hermon. Some people think that this refers to the same mountain as Hermon. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

dens

places where lions and leopards live, like caves or holes in the ground

Translation Words - ULT

- Lebanon
- Lebanon
- head
- head

Translation Words - UST

- in Lebanon
- in Lebanon
- on the top
- or the nearby peaks, where I cannot go to you

ULT

⁸ Come with me from Lebanon, my bride. Come with me from Lebanon; come from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from lions' dens, from mountain dens of leopards.

UST

⁸ My darling, it is as though you were [in Lebanon](#) far away, where I cannot reach you. Come back to me. It is as though you were [on the top](#) of Mount Hermon [or the nearby peaks, where I cannot go to you](#). Come from the mountains, where the lions have their dens and where the leopards live on the mountains.

Song of Solomon 4:9

General Information:

The man continues to speak to the woman.

You have stolen my heart

This idiom could mean: (1) "My heart now belongs completely to you" or (2) "I strongly desire to make love to you" (See: [Idiom](#))

my sister

This is an idiom of affection. They are not actually brother and sister. Alternate translation: "my dear" or "my darling" (See: [Idiom](#))

my bride

This Hebrew word can refer to a woman who is married or to one whom a man has arranged to become his son's wife. If your language has a polite word that a man would use to his wife and that has not been used yet in this book, you could use it here. Otherwise you could use any polite term a man would use with his wife. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:8](#).

heart, with just one look at me, with just one jewel

"heart. All you have to do is look at me once or show me just one jewel." Both the woman's eyes and her jewelry attract the man to her.

necklace

This necklace probably went around her neck many times ([Song of Songs 4:4](#)).

ULT

⁹ You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride; you have stolen my heart, with just one look at me, with just one jewel of your necklace.

UST

⁹ You who are most dear to me, when I see you, you force me to love you when I see you look at me, when I see a little of the jewelry that you wear around your neck.

Song of Solomon 4:10

General Information:

The man continues to praise the woman.

How beautiful is your love

"Your love is wonderful"

my sister

This is an idiom of affection. They are not actually brother and sister. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:9](#). Alternate translation: "my dear" or "my darling" (See: [Idiom](#))

my bride

This Hebrew word can refer to a woman who is married or to one whom a man has arranged to become his son's wife. If your language has a polite word that a man would use to his wife and that has not been used yet in this book, you could use it here. Otherwise you could use any polite term a man would use with his wife. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:9](#).

How much better is your love than wine

"Your love is much better than wine." See how you translated a similar phrase in [Song of Songs 1:2](#).

the fragrance of your perfume than any spice

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "how much better is the fragrance of your perfume than the fragrance of any spice" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

fragrance ... perfume

See how you translated these words in [Song of Songs 1:3](#).

spice

dried plants or seeds that have a good smell or taste

Translation Words - ULT

- [olive](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [of your perfume](#)

ULT

¹⁰ How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your perfume than any spice.

UST

¹⁰ My bride, your love for me is delightful! It more delightful than wine! The fragrance of your perfume is more pleasing than any spice!

Song of Solomon 4:11

Your lips ... drip honey

Possible meanings are that honey is a metaphor for (1) the sweet taste of the woman's kisses or (2) the woman's words. (See: [Metaphor](#))

honey and milk are under your tongue

Because "milk and honey" is a common phrase in the Bible, you should translate literally. Possible meanings are that honey is a metaphor for: (1) the sweet taste of the woman's kisses or (2) the woman's words. Milk is a metaphor for luxury, owning many things that help people enjoy life. When the woman kisses the man, he enjoys life. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon

"the smell of your clothes is like the smell of Lebanon." Many cedar trees grew in Lebanon. Cedar trees smell very good, so Lebanon would have smelled sweet and fresh.

Translation Words - ULT

- [Lebanon](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Lebanon](#)

ULT

11 Your lips, my bride, drip honey; honey and milk are under your tongue; the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

UST

11 When you kiss me, it is better than when I eat honey. Your kisses are as sweet as milk mixed with honey. The aroma of your clothes is like the aroma of cedar trees in [Lebanon](#).

Song of Solomon 4:12

General Information:

The man continues to praise the woman.

My sister

This is an idiom of affection. They are not actually brother and sister. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:9](#). Alternate translation: "My dear" or "My darling" (See: [Idiom](#))

my bride

This Hebrew word can refer to a woman who is married or to one whom a man has arranged to become his son's wife. If your language has a polite word that a man would use to his wife and that has not been used yet in this book, you could use it here. Otherwise you could use any polite term a man would use with his wife. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:9](#).

is a garden locked up

"is a garden that no one can enter." The garden is a metaphor for the woman, and the lock is a metaphor for her still being a virgin. (See: [Metaphor](#))

a spring that is sealed

"a spring with a cover on it." The spring or well is a metaphor for the woman, and the cover is a metaphor for her being a virgin. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 My sister, my bride is a garden locked up, a garden locked up, a spring that is sealed.

UST

12 You who are most dear to me, you are like a garden that the owner keeps locked in order that other men cannot enter it; you are like a spring that is covered in order that others may not drink from it.

Song of Solomon 4:13

Your branches

branches or channels of rivers, a clear euphemism for the female body part. If any reference to this would be offensive, translate it as a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "You" (See: [Euphemism](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

a grove

a place where many trees grow together

with choice fruits

"with the best kinds of fruits"

nard plants

plants that give oil that people used to make their skin soft and to have a pleasant odor. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:14](#).

henna

small desert trees that people used as a perfume. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:14](#).

Translation Words - ULT

- [fruit](#), [fruitful](#), [unfruitful](#)
- [pomegranate](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [of pomegranate trees](#)
- [fruit](#)

ULT

¹³ Your branches are a grove of pomegranate trees with choice fruits, and of henna and nard plants,

UST

¹³ You are like an orchard of [pomegranate trees](#) full of delicious [fruit](#), and plenty of plants that produce henna and nard spices,

Song of Solomon 4:14

saffron

a spice that comes from the dried parts from the yellow thread in the center of a certain flower

calamus

a reed with a pleasant smell that people used to make anointing oil.

cinnamon

a spice made from the bark of a tree that people used for cooking

myrrh

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#).

aloes

a type of large plant that had a very sweet smell

all the finest spices

“all the best spices”

Translation Words - ULT

- [head](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [fine](#)

ULT

14 Nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon with all kinds of spices, myrrh and aloes with all the finest spices.

UST

14 saffron and calamus and cinnamon and many other kinds of incense, myrrh and aloes and many other [fine](#) spices.

Song of Solomon 4:15

General Information:

The man continues to praise the woman.

You are a garden spring

“You are a spring in a garden.” A garden spring gives sweet, clean water that people enjoy drinking. The man enjoys being close to the woman. (See: [Metaphor](#))

fresh water

water that is good to drink

streams flowing down from Lebanon

Because Lebanon had mountains covered with trees, the streams from Lebanon were clean and cool.

Translation Words - ULT

- [life, live, living, alive](#)
- [Lebanon](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [the mountains of Lebanon](#)
- [The young woman speaking to her lover](#)

ULT

15 You are a garden spring, a well of fresh water, streams flowing down from Lebanon. The woman speaking to the man

UST

15 You are like a fountain in a garden, like a spring of clear water that flows down from [the mountains of Lebanon](#). [The young woman speaking to her lover](#)

Song of Solomon 4:16

Awake, north wind; come, south wind; blow

The woman speaks to the north wind and the south wind as though they were people. Alternate translation: "I wish the north wind and south wind would come and blow" (See: [Personification](#))

Awake, north wind

"North wind, start blowing"

blow on my garden

The garden is a metaphor for her body, which she has covered with sweet-smelling oils ([Song of Songs 4:14](#)). (See: [Metaphor](#))

may give off their fragrance

"may send out their good smells"

May my beloved ... choice fruit

The woman is inviting the man to make love to her. (See: [Metaphor](#))

my beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as "my lover." See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: "my dear one" or "my lover"

choice fruit

"wonderful fruit"

Translation Words - ULT

- [devour](#)
- [fruit](#), [fruitful](#), [unfruitful](#)
- [raise](#), [rise](#), [lift](#), [get up](#), [stir up](#),

Translation Words - UST

- [I want](#)
- [and enjoys eating](#)
- [the fruit](#)

ULT

16 Awake, north wind; come, south wind; blow on my garden so that its spices may give off their fragrance. May my beloved come into his garden and eat some of its choice fruit.

UST

16 [I want](#) the north wind and the south wind to come, and blow on my garden, in order that the fragrance of the spices will spread through the air. Similarly, I want the one who loves me to come and enjoy being close to me like someone comes into a garden [and enjoys eating the fruit](#) that grows there.

Song of Solomon 5

Song of Songs 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verses 2-7 describe a dream the woman had.

Special concepts in this chapter

Beauty

The woman is described as the epitome of beauty in ancient Israel. Not all cultures share the same standards of beauty.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was common to describe a woman using metaphors involving animals. In many cultures today, this can be considered offensive. Different metaphors of beauty are used in different cultures. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“My sister, my bride”

The woman described is not the sister of her husband. They are not related. Instead, this is a reference to a woman who is a fellow Israelite.

Song of Solomon 5:1

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

I have come

It is clearly the woman's lover who is speaking.

have come into my garden

The word "garden" is a metaphor for the woman. The man is finally able to fully enjoy the woman as they make love. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Euphemism](#))

my sister

This is an idiom of affection. They are not actually brother and sister. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:9](#). Alternate translation: "my dear" or "my darling" (See: [Idiom](#))

my bride

This Hebrew word can refer to a woman who is married or to one whom a man has arranged to become his son's wife. If your language has a polite word that a man would use to his wife and that has not been used yet in this book, you could use it here. Otherwise you could use any polite term a man would use with his wife. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:9](#).

myrrh ... spice ... honeycomb ... honey ... wine ... milk

These are all metaphors for the man enjoying the woman's body ([Song of Songs 1:13](#), [Song of Songs 2:4](#), [Song of Songs 4:11](#), and [Song of Songs 4:14](#)). (See: [Metaphor](#))

spice

plants that have a strong smell or taste

Eat ... drink ... be drunk with love

Eating and drinking are metaphors for making love. Alternate translation: "Make love ... make love ... make love until you are fully satisfied" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- devour
- devour
- wine, wineskin, new wine

ULT

¹ I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. The friends speaking to the man and the woman Eat, friends; drink and be drunk with love. The woman speaking to herself

UST

¹ You who are most dear to me, I have come to be next to you. It will be as though I am gathering myrrh with my other spices, eating my honey and honeycomb, and drinking my wine and my milk. The woman's lover speaking to her Friends, enjoy making love; fully enjoy all that you do with each other. The young woman speaking to herself

Translation Words - UST

- eating
- all that you
- my wine

Song of Solomon 5:2

General Information:

The fourth part of the book begins here. The young woman uses euphemisms to describe her dream so that it can be interpreted in two different ways: (1) the woman describes a dream about a night when the man came to visit her at her house; and (2) the woman describes a dream about starting to sleep with the man. (See: [Euphemism](#))

but my heart was awake

The heart is the center of thought and feeling. Alternate translation: “but I could think clearly” or “but I knew what I was feeling” (See: [Idiom](#))

my beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as “my lover.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: “my dear one” or “my lover”

Open to me

This could mean: (1) literal, “Open the door for me,” or (2) metaphorical, “Let me make love to you.” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Metaphor](#))

my sister

This is an idiom of affection. They are not actually brother and sister. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:9](#). Alternate translation: “my dear” or “my darling” (See: [Idiom](#))

my love

“you whom I love.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:9](#).

my dove

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:14](#).

undefiled one

“my perfect one” or “my faithful one” or “my innocent one”

dew

drops of water or mist that form as the night becomes cool

ULT

² I was asleep, but my heart was awake. There is the sound of my beloved knocking and saying, “Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled one, for my head is wet with dew, my hair with the night’s dampness.”

UST

² I was asleep, and I had a dream. [In it](#) I heard my lover knocking at the door. He said, “You who are dearer to me than my sister, my darling, my dear friend, my perfect one, my dove, open the door for me! My hair is wet from the dew, from the mist that has fallen during the night.”

my hair with the night's dampness

The words "is wet" are understood from the previous phrase. They can be repeated here. Alternate translation: "my hair is wet with the night's dampness" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- raise, rise, lift, get up, stir up,

Translation Words - UST

- In it

Song of Solomon 5:3

“I have taken off my robe ... dirty?”

This is what the woman thought to herself when she heard the man speak. ([Song of Songs 5:2](#)). This could be translated with the woman saying that this is what she was thinking, or the woman could just explain the situation and her thoughts as in the UST. Alternate translation: “I thought to myself, ‘I have taken off my robe ... dirty?’” or “I had taken off my robe and I did not want to put it on again. I had washed my feet and I did not want to get them dirty.” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

robe

thin linen clothing that people wore on their skin

must I put it on again?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “I do not want to put it on again.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

I have washed my feet

While the word “feet” can be a euphemism for private parts, this probably refers to literal feet. The woman seems more likely to want to make love than to want to refrain from lovemaking because she has just bathed. (See: [Euphemism](#))

must I get them dirty?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “I do not want to get them dirty.”

Translation Words - ULT

- [tunic](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [robe](#)

ULT

³ “I have taken off my robe; must I put it on again? I have washed my feet; must I get them dirty?”

UST

³ But I had already taken off my [robe](#); I did not want to put it on again to open the door. I had already washed my feet; I did not want them to get dirty again.

Song of Solomon 5:4

My beloved put in his hand through the opening of the door latch

Possible interpretations are: (1) literal, the lover reaches into the house through a hole in the door in order to open the door or (2) euphemistic, they have begun to make love. (See: [Euphemism](#))

My beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as “my lover.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: “My dear one” or “My lover”

door latch

“door lock”

Translation Words - ULT

- [hand](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [hand](#)

ULT

⁴ My beloved put in his hand through the opening of the door latch, and my heart was stirred up for him.

UST

⁴ The one who loves me put his [hand](#) through the opening in the door, and I was thrilled in my inner being that he was there.

Song of Solomon 5:5

I got up to open the door for my beloved

This could mean: (1) literal, the young woman got out of bed in order to let the man into the house, or (2) metaphorical. Alternate translation: "I prepared myself to make love with my beloved" (See: [Metaphor](#))

my hands ... my fingers ... door handle

While these may be euphemisms for the woman's and man's bodies, it is best to translate literally. (See: [Euphemism](#))

with moist myrrh

"with liquid myrrh"

Translation Words - ULT

- [hand](#)
- [hand](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [my hands](#)
- [while I unlatched](#)

ULT

⁵ I got up to open the door for my beloved; my hands were dripping with myrrh, my fingers with moist myrrh, on the door handle.

UST

⁵ I got up to open the door for him, but first I put a lot of myrrh on [my hands](#). It was dripping from my fingers [while I unlatched](#) the bolt.

Song of Solomon 5:6

General Information:

The woman continues to describe her dream.

my beloved

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#).

My heart sank

The heart is a metaphor for the person, and sinking, going down, is a metaphor for becoming weak or sad. Alternate translation: "I was very sad" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- call, call out
- life, live, living, alive
- testimony, testify, witness, eyewitness, evidence
- know, knowledge, unknown, distinguish
- seek, search, look for

Translation Words - UST

- left
- I searched for him
- I called him
- answer
- me, but

ULT

⁶ I opened the door for my beloved, but my beloved had turned and gone. My heart sank when he spoke. ^[1] I looked for him, but I did not find him; I called him, but he did not answer me.

UST

⁶ I opened the door for the man who loves me, but he [left](#). He had turned away and was gone! I was very disappointed. [I searched for him](#), but I could not find him; [I called him](#), but he did not [answer](#).

Song of Solomon 5:7

The watchmen

men who have the job of keeping guard of the town at night to keep the people safe. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 3:3](#).

as they were making their rounds in the city

“who were walking around the city on the walls.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 3:3](#).

found me

found the woman

struck me

“beat me” or “hit me”

wounded me

“injured me”

the guards on the walls

“the men who guard the walls”

cloak

a garment that people wore over the other clothing on their upper body when they went outdoors in public

Translation Words - ULT

- [watch, guard, keep, take heed, beware](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [The young woman speaking to the women...the city](#)

ULT

⁷ The watchmen found me as they were making their rounds in the city. They struck me and wounded me; the guards on the walls took away my cloak from me. The woman speaking to the women of the city

UST

⁷ The city watchmen saw me while they were walking around the city. They beat me and wounded me because they thought I was a prostitute; those men who were guarding the city walls took my robe. [The young woman speaking to the women of the city](#)

Song of Solomon 5:8

I want you to swear

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:7](#).

daughters of Jerusalem

“young women of Jerusalem.” These young women could not hear her and were not present, but the woman speaks as if they were present and could hear her. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:7](#). (See: [Apostrophe](#))

my beloved—What will you make known to him?—that I am

The woman uses a question to introduce what she wants the daughters of Jerusalem to tell her beloved. Alternate translation: “my beloved, this is what I want you to say to him: tell him that” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

sick from love

She loves the man so strongly that she feels sick. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Jerusalem](#)
- [oath, swear, swearing, swear by](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [of Jerusalem](#)
- [take an oath](#)

ULT

⁸ I want you to swear, daughters of Jerusalem, that if you find my beloved—What will you make known to him?—that I am sick from love. The women of the city speaking to the woman

UST

⁸ You young women of Jerusalem, I want you to [take an oath](#) that if you see the man who loves me, you will tell him that I want him so much that I feel sick. The women of the city speaking to the young woman

Song of Solomon 5:9

your beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for the other women to refer to him as “your lover.” See how you translated “my beloved” in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: “your dear one” or “your lover”

most beautiful among women

“you who are the most beautiful of all women.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:8](#).

Why is your beloved better

“What makes your beloved better”

that you ask us to take an oath like this

“and causes you to have us take this oath”

an oath like this

the oath in [Song of Songs 5:8](#)

Translation Words - ULT

- [oath](#), [swear](#), [swearing](#), [swear by](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [us to swear](#)

ULT

⁹ How is your beloved better than another beloved man, most beautiful among women? Why is your beloved better than another beloved, that you ask us to take an oath like this? The woman speaking to the women of the city

UST

⁹ You who are the fairest among women, why do you think that the one who loves you is better than other men? In what way is he better than other men? Why do you want [us to swear](#) that we will tell him that? The young woman speaking to the women of the city

Song of Solomon 5:10

My beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as “my lover.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: “My dear one” or “My lover”

is radiant and ruddy

This phrase refers to his complexion. Alternate translation: “has radiant and ruddy skin” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

radiant

“is completely healthy” or “is pure.” The man has skin that does not have any problems.

ruddy

a healthy color of the skin that is brownish red

outstanding among ten thousand

“the best of 10,000.” Alternate translation: “better than anyone else” or “no one else is like him.” (See: [Metaphor and Numbers](#))

ULT

¹⁰ My beloved is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand.

UST

¹⁰ It is because the man who loves me is handsome and healthy, outstanding among other men.

Song of Solomon 5:11

His head is the purest gold

The man's head is as precious to the woman as the purest gold. (See: [Metaphor](#))

a raven

a bird with very black feathers (See: [Simile](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [head](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [His head is beautiful](#)

ULT

11 His head is the purest gold; his hair is curly and as black as a raven.

UST

11 [His head is beautiful](#), like purest gold; his hair is wavy and as black as a raven.

Song of Solomon 5:12

General Information:

The young woman continues to describe the man.

His eyes are like doves

Translate “eyes are like doves” as in [Song of Songs 1:15](#). This could mean: (1) the Israelites considered doves to be gentle and soft birds, and the woman considers the man’s eyes beautiful because the way the man looks at her makes her think he is gentle. Alternate translation: “His eyes are gentle like doves” or (2) the woman is speaking of the man’s white eyeballs or the shape of his eyes, the shape of a dove. (See: [Metonymy](#))

doves beside streams of water

Birds that the Israelites considered gentle sitting beside a gently flowing stream are a metaphor for a gentle person. (See: [Metaphor](#))

streams of water

“gently flowing water”

bathed in milk

Milk is a metaphor for the whiteness of the doves. Alternate translation: (1) “doves that are white like milk” or (2) milk is a metaphor for the white part of the man’s eyes. Alternate translation: “his pupils are like doves bathing in white milk” (See: [Metaphor](#))

mounted like jewels

His eyes are beautiful. Jewels that a craftsman has carefully put in place are beautiful. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

¹² His eyes are like doves beside streams of water, bathed in milk, mounted like jewels.

UST

¹² His eyes as gentle as doves along the streams; the white parts of his eyes are as white as milk, with what resembles jewels inlaid in them.

Song of Solomon 5:13

General Information:

The young woman continues to describe the man.

His cheeks ... aromatic scents

This explains that his cheeks are like beds of spices because they both give off wonderful smells. (See: [Simile](#))

beds of spices

gardens or parts of gardens where people grow spices. Spices give people pleasure. The man's body gives the woman pleasure. (See: [Metaphor](#))

yielding aromatic scents

"that give off wonderful smells."

His lips are lilies

The woman probably compares his lips with lilies because they are beautiful and smell wonderful. (See: [Metaphor](#))

lilies

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:16](#).

dripping liquid myrrh

"that drip with the best myrrh." His lips are moist and have a wonderful smell like myrrh. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 His cheeks are like beds of spices, yielding aromatic scents. ^[2] His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh.

UST

13 His cheeks are like a garden full of spice trees that produce sweet-smelling perfume. His lips are like lilies that have myrrh dripping from them.

Song of Solomon 5:14

General Information:

The young woman continues to describe the man.

His arms are rounded gold set with jewels

“His arms are cylinders of gold that have jewels all over them.” The woman uses this image to say that his arms are beautiful and precious. The first readers would have understood this as a metaphor for the male body part ([Song of Songs 5:3](#)), but this would be difficult to bring out in translation. (See: [Metaphor](#))

his abdomen is ivory covered with sapphires

“his belly is smooth ivory that has sapphires all over it.” The woman uses this image to say that his belly is beautiful and precious. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ivory

the white tusk or tooth of an animal that is similar to bone. People use ivory to make smooth and shiny pieces of art.

sapphires

valuable stones that are either: (1) blue or (2) clear and either blue or golden

Translation Words - ULT

- [gold, golden](#)
- [hand](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [His arms](#)
- [are like gold](#)

ULT

14 His arms are rounded gold set with jewels; his abdomen is ivory covered with sapphires.

UST

14 [His arms are like gold](#) rods that have rounded ends, and that are decorated with precious stones. His body is like ivory that is decorated with sapphires.

Song of Solomon 5:15

General Information:

The woman continues to describe the man.

His legs are pillars of marble, set on bases of pure gold

Marble and gold are strong and beautiful. (See: [Metaphor](#))

marble

a very strong stone that has many different colors and that people polish to make very smooth

his appearance is like Lebanon

“he looks like Lebanon.” Lebanon was a very beautiful area with many mountains and cedar trees. (See: [Simile](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Lebanon](#)
- [found, founder, foundation](#)
- [column, pillar](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [are like...columns](#)
- [that are set](#)
- [like the mountains of Lebanon](#)

ULT

¹⁵ His legs are pillars of marble, set on bases of pure gold; his appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars.

UST

¹⁵ His legs [are like](#) marble [columns that are set](#) in bases made of pure gold. He is majestic, [like the mountains of Lebanon](#), like delightful cedar trees.

Song of Solomon 5:16

General Information:

The young woman continues to describe the man.

His mouth is most sweet

The mouth is a metonym for either: (1) the man's sweet kisses or (2) the sweet words that he says. (See: [Metonymy](#))

he is completely lovely

"every part of him is lovely" or "all of him is lovely"

This is my beloved, and this is my friend

The word "This" refers to the man that the woman has just finished describing. Alternate translation: "That is what the one I love is like, and that is what my friend is like"

my beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as "my lover." See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: "my dear one" or "my lover"

daughters of Jerusalem

"young women of Jerusalem." These young women could not hear her and were not present, but the woman speaks as if they were present and could hear her. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:7](#). (See: [Apostrophe](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Jerusalem](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [of Jerusalem](#)

ULT

16 His mouth is most sweet; he is completely lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, daughters of Jerusalem.

5:6 ^[1].

5:13 ^[2].

UST

16 His kisses are very sweet; he is completely attractive. You young women of Jerusalem, this is why the man who loves me is better than all other men.

Song of Solomon 6

Song of Songs 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Beauty

The woman is described as the epitome of beauty in ancient Israel. Not all cultures share the same standards of beauty.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was common to describe a woman using metaphors involving animals. In many cultures today, this can be considered offensive. Different metaphors of beauty are used in different cultures. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Song of Solomon 6:1

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#). The fifth part of the book begins here.

In what direction has your beloved gone

“Which way did your beloved go”

your beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for the other women to refer to him as “your lover.” See how you translated “my beloved” in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: “your dear one” or “your lover” or “the man you love”

most beautiful among women

“you who are the most beautiful of all women.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:8](#).

gone, so that we may seek him with you?

The words “tell us” are understood from the context. They can be stated clearly Alternate translation: “gone? Tell us, so that we can look for him with you.” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [seek, search, look for](#)
- [walk, walked](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [we will go](#)
- [to search for him. The young woman speaking to herself](#)

ULT

¹ Where has your beloved gone, most beautiful among women? In what direction has your beloved gone, so that we may seek him with you? The woman speaking to herself

UST

¹ You who are the most beautiful of the women, where has the one who loves you gone? If you tell us which direction he went, [we will go](#) with you to search for him. The young woman speaking to herself

Song of Solomon 6:2

My beloved has gone down to his garden

The word “garden” is a metaphor for the woman. The man is finally able to fully enjoy the woman as they make love. See the explanation of this metaphor in [Song of Songs 5:1](#). (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Euphemism](#))

beds of spices

gardens or parts of gardens where people grow spices. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 5:13](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

to graze in the garden and to gather lilies

These words are metaphors for the man enjoying her body. (See: [Metaphor](#))

graze

“feeds” or “eats grass.” The woman speaks of the man as if he were “a gazelle or a young stag” ([Song of Songs 2:17](#)) that eats plants among the lilies. Grazing is probably a metaphor for lovemaking ([Song of Songs 2:1-2](#)). See how you translated “he grazes” in [Song of Songs 2:16](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

to gather lilies

“to pick lilies”

lilies

sweet-smelling flowers that grow in places where there is much water. Translate as the plural of “lily” in [Song of Songs 2:1](#).

ULT

² My beloved has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices, to graze in the garden and to gather lilies.

UST

² The one who loves me has come to me, I, who am like his garden, He has come to enjoy my charms, to enjoy cuddling embracing me and kissing my lips, which are like lilies.

Song of Solomon 6:3

my beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as “my lover.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: “my dear one” or “my lover”

I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine

See how you translated the similar phrase “My beloved is mine, and I am his” in [Song of Songs 2:16](#).

he grazes among the lilies with pleasure

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:16](#).

ULT

³ I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine; he grazes among the lilies with pleasure. The man speaking to the woman

UST

³ I belong to the one who loves me, and the one who loves me belongs to me. He has pleasure in kissing my lips, like sheep enjoy grazing. The woman’s lover speaking to her

Song of Solomon 6:4

General Information:

Here begins Part Five of the book

as beautiful as Tirzah, my love, as lovely as Jerusalem

These cities were famous for being beautiful and pleasant to be in. The man thinks the woman is beautiful, and he takes pleasure in being with her. (See: [Simile](#))

my love

“you whom I love.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:9](#).

lovely

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:5](#).

as awe-inspiring as an army with its banners

The beauty of the woman is so powerful that it makes the man feel helpless, as if an army were approaching him.

Translation Words - ULT

- [Tirzah](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [as Tirzah the capital city of Israel](#)

ULT

⁴ You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my love, as lovely as Jerusalem, as awe-inspiring as an army with its banners.

UST

⁴ My darling, you are beautiful, [as Tirzah the capital city of Israel](#) and Jerusalem the capital city of Judah are beautiful; you make me tremble, just as if I had seen a great army approach.

Song of Solomon 6:5

General Information:

The man continues to praise the woman.

overwhelm me

“terrify me.” The eyes of the woman are so beautiful that it makes the man feel weak and afraid because he cannot resist their power.

Your hair ... from the slopes of Gilead

Translate “Your hair ... from Mount Gilead” as in [Song of Songs 4:1](#).

Translation Words - ULT

- [Gilead, Gileadite](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [of Mount Gilead](#)

ULT

⁵ Turn your eyes away from me, for they overwhelm me. Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from the slopes of Gilead.

UST

⁵ Stop looking at me like that, because your eyes excite me very much. Your long black hair moves from side to side like a flock of black goats moving down the slopes of [Mount Gilead](#).

Song of Solomon 6:6

General Information:

The man continues to praise the woman.

Your teeth are like a flock of ewes

After sheep have their wool cut off, they are washed and their skin looks very white. The woman's teeth are white. See how "Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn ewes" is translated in [Song of Songs 4:2](#). (See: [Simile](#))

coming up from the washing place

The ewes are coming up out of the water. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:2](#). Alternate translation: "that are coming up out of the water after people have washed them" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Each one has a twin

Sheep usually give birth to two lambs at one time. These twin lamb usually look like one another. Each of the woman's teeth has a matching tooth on the other side of her mouth. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:2](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

none among them is bereaved

Each of the woman's teeth has a matching tooth on the other side of her mouth. She has not lost any of her teeth. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:2](#).

bereaved

lost a loved one who has died. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:2](#).

ULT

⁶Your teeth are like a flock of ewes coming up from the washing place. Each one has a twin, and none among them is bereaved.

UST

⁶Your teeth are very white like a flock of sheep whose wool has just been shorn and have come up from being washed in a stream. You have all of your teeth on both sides; none of them is missing.

Song of Solomon 6:7

are like pomegranate halves

Pomegranates are smooth, round, and rich red. The man thinks the woman's cheeks are beautiful and show that she is healthy. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:3](#). Alternate translation: "are red and round like two halves of a pomegranate" or "are red and full and healthy" (See: [Simile](#))

behind your veil

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:1](#).

ULT

⁷ Your cheeks are like pomegranate halves behind your veil. The man speaking to himself

UST

⁷ Beneath your veil, your cheeks are like the halves of a pomegranate. The woman's lover speaking to himself

Song of Solomon 6:8

There are sixty queens, eighty concubines ... young women without number

These numbers are to be large, then larger, and then beyond counting. Alternate translation: "There are 60 queens, 80 concubines ... more young women than anyone could count" or "There are many queens, even more concubines, and more young women than anyone could count" (See: [Numbers](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁸ There are sixty queens, eighty concubines, and young women without number.

UST

⁸ Even if a king had 60 queens and 80 concubines and more young women than anyone can count,

Song of Solomon 6:9

My dove

The Israelites considered doves beautiful birds with pleasant voices. The man thinks the woman's face and voice are beautiful. If calling a woman a "dove" would be offensive, you could leave out the metaphor. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:14](#). Alternate translation: "You beautiful woman" (See: [Metaphor](#))

my undefiled

"my perfect one" or "my faithful one" or "my innocent one." See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 5:2](#).

the only daughter of her mother

This is an exaggeration. Alternate translation: "her mother's special daughter" or "completely different from her mother's other daughters" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

the woman who bore her

"the woman who gave birth to her." This phrase refers to her mother.

young women ... queens ... concubines

the women spoken of in [Song of Songs 6:8](#).

called her blessed

"said that things had gone especially well for her"

Translation Words - ULT

- [praise, praised, praiseworthy](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [said](#)

ULT

⁹ My dove, my undefiled, is the only one; she is the only daughter of her mother; she is the favorite one of the woman who bore her. The young women saw her and called her blessed; the queens and the concubines saw her also, and they praised her: What the queens and the concubines said

UST

⁹ none of them would be like my dove, who is perfect, you who are your mother's only daughter, whom your mother considers to be very precious. Other young women who see you say that you are fortunate, and the queens and concubines recognize that you are very beautiful. What the queens and the concubines [said](#)

Song of Solomon 6:10

General Information:

The ULT understands this to be what the queens and the concubines said about the woman. However, some versions understand these to be the words of the man.

Who is this who appears like the dawn ... banners?

They are using this question to say that they think the young woman is amazing. Alternate translation: "This is an amazing woman! She comes into view like the dawn ... banners!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

who appears like the dawn

The dawn is beautiful. The woman is beautiful. Alternate translation: "who comes into view like the dawn" (See: [Simile](#))

as awe-inspiring as an army with its banners

The beauty of the woman is so powerful that it makes the other women feel helpless, as if an army were approaching them. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 6:4](#). (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

¹⁰ "Who is this who appears like the dawn, as beautiful as the moon, as bright as the sun, as awe-inspiring as an army with its banners?" The man speaking to himself

UST

¹⁰ Who is this who looks like the dawn, who is as beautiful to look at as the moon, who is an endless mystery? The woman's lover speaking to himself

Song of Solomon 6:11

General Information:

The man finishes speaking to himself. Looking to see if plants had matured is probably a metaphor for enjoying the sight of the woman's body. (See: [Metaphor](#))

grove

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:13](#).

young growth

"young plants" or "new shoots"

had budded

"had grown their buds." Buds are the small round parts of plants which open up into flowers.

were in bloom

"were opening their flowers"

Translation Words - ULT

- [vine](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [if the grapevines](#)

ULT

11 I went down into the grove of nut trees to see the young growth in the valley, to see whether the vines had budded, and whether the pomegranates were in bloom.

UST

11 I went down to some walnut trees to look at the new plants that were growing in the valley. I wanted to see [if the grapevines](#) had budded and if the pomegranate trees were blooming.

Song of Solomon 6:12

I was so happy that I felt I was riding in the chariot of a prince

The man uses this image to express how happy he is. (See: [Simile](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- life, live, living, alive
- chariot, charioteers
- know, knowledge, unknown, distinguish
- people, people group

Translation Words - UST

- I
- was as happy as
- riding in a chariot
- belonging

ULT

¹² I was so happy that I felt I was riding in the chariot of a prince. The friends speaking to the woman

UST

¹² I was as happy as if I were riding in a chariot belonging to a prince. The woman's lover speaking to her

Song of Solomon 6:13

General Information:

This is 7:1, the first verse of chapter seven, in some versions. The ULT understands this to be the friends and the woman talking to each other. Some versions understand this to be the man speaking to the woman.

Turn back ... gaze on you

Possible meanings here are: (1) the friends are speaking to the woman or (2) the man is referring to himself in plural. (See: [Pronouns](#))

Turn back, turn back

"Come back, come back." This is repeated for emphasis.

we may gaze

Some versions understand the plural to refer to the man speaking of himself. Alternate translation: "I may gaze" (See: [Pronouns](#))

gaze

look intently for a long time

Why do you gaze on the perfect woman ... armies

Possible meanings here are: (1) the woman refers to herself as another person and is speaking to the friends or (2) the woman is speaking to the man as if he were many men. (See: [Pronouns](#))

as if on the dance between two armies

"as if she were dancing between two armies"

Translation Words - ULT

- [restore, restoration](#)
- [restore, restoration](#)
- [restore, restoration](#)
- [restore, restoration](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [to](#)
- [come back](#)
- [to us](#)
- [The young woman speaking to her lover](#)

ULT

¹³ Turn back, turn back, you perfect woman; ^[1] turn back, turn back so that we may gaze on you. The woman speaking to the friends Why do you gaze on the perfect woman, ^[2] as if on the dance between two armies? ^[3]
6:13 ^[1] .
6:13 ^[2] .
6:13 ^[3] .

UST

¹³ You who are the perfect one, [come back to us](#), in order that I may see you! [The young woman speaking to her lover](#) Why do you want [to](#) look at me, the one who is perfect, dancing between two rows of dancers?

Song of Solomon 7

Song of Songs 7 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Beauty

The woman is described as the epitome of beauty in ancient Israel. Not all cultures share the same the same standards of beauty.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Similes

There are many similes in this chapter. Their purpose is to describe the beauty of the woman. (See: [Simile](#))

Song of Solomon 7:1

General Information:

This is 7:2, the second verse of chapter seven, in some versions.

How beautiful your feet appear in your sandals

It may be that the woman is dancing ([Song of Songs 6:13](#)). Alternate translation: "Your feet are so very beautiful in your sandals as you dance" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

prince's daughter

Another possible interpretation is "you who have a noble character."

The curves of your thighs are like jewels

The shape of the woman's thighs remind the speaker of a beautiful precious stone that a skilled workman has carved. Alternate translation: "The curves of your thighs are beautiful like the beautiful curves of jewel that a skilled craftsman has made" (See: [Simile](#))

your thighs

The word "thighs" refers to the hips of a woman and the part of her legs that is above her knee.

the work of the hands of a master craftsman

The hands are a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: "the work of a master craftsman" or "something that a master craftsman has made" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [hand](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [by](#)

ULT

¹ How beautiful your feet appear in your sandals, prince's daughter! The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a master craftsman.

UST

¹ You, the daughter of a prince, have lovely feet in your sandals. Your curved hips are like jewels that have been made [by](#) a skilled craftsman.

Song of Solomon 7:2

General Information:

The young woman's lover continues describing the one he loves.

Your navel is like a round bowl

A bowl is round. The woman's navel is round. (See: [Simile](#))

navel

the spot on the stomach left from the cord that attaches a baby to its mother

may it never lack mixed wine

People used large bowls to mix wine with water or spices at feasts. Drinking wine is a metaphor for enjoying beauty. The litotes can be translated as a positive. Alternate translation: "may it always contain mixed wine" or "may I always enjoy its beauty" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Litotes](#))

Your belly is like a mound of wheat encircled with lilies

The Israelites thought mounds of wheat and lilies were pleasant to look at. Much wheat was a sign that there would be much food to eat. They threshed wheat in high, dry places, and lilies grow in low, wet places, so this simile combines beautiful sights that people would not usually see at the same time. (See: [Simile](#))

Your belly is like a mound of wheat

People thought that the color of wheat was the most beautiful color of skin and that round piles of wheat were beautiful. Alternate translation: "Your belly has a beautiful color and is round like a pile of wheat" (See: [Simile](#))

a mound of wheat

This is a pile of the grains of wheat after people remove the parts of it that they do not use.

encircled with lilies

"with lilies all around it"

lilies

sweet-smelling flowers that grow in places where there is much water. Translate as the plural of "lily" in [Song of Songs 2:1](#).

Translation Words - ULT

- [wheat](#)

ULT

² Your navel is like a round bowl; may it never lack mixed wine. Your belly is like a mound of wheat encircled with lilies.

UST

² Your navel is like a round bowl that I hope will always be full of wine mixed with spices. Your waist is like a pile of [wheat](#) with lilies growing around it.

Translation Words - UST

- wheat

Song of Solomon 7:3

General Information:

The man continues describing the woman.

two breasts

If the word “two” seems unnecessary and so out of place, you could omit it. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:5](#).

like two fawns, twins of a gazelle

The man implies that the woman’s breasts are matching, soft, and perhaps small. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:5](#). (See: [Simile](#))

twins

the babies of a mother who gave birth to two babies at one time. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 4:5](#).

gazelle

an animal that looks like a deer and moves quickly. Translate as the singular of “gazelles” as in [Song of Songs 2:7](#).

ULT

³ Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle.

UST

³ Your breasts are as delicate as two young twin deer.

Song of Solomon 7:4

Your neck is like a tower of ivory

A tower is long and straight. Ivory is white. The woman's neck is long and straight, and her skin is light in color. (See: [Simile](#))

a tower of ivory

"a tower that people have decorated with ivory"

ivory

the white tusk or tooth of an animal that is similar to bone. People use ivory to make art and to make things look beautiful.

your eyes are the pools in Heshbon

The woman's eyes are spoken of as if they are clear pools of water. Pools of water are clear and sparkle in the sunlight and so are pleasant to look at. The woman's eyes are clear and sparkle and so are pleasant to look at. This can be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "your eyes are as clear as the pools in Heshbon" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#))

Heshbon

This is the name of a city east of the Jordan River (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Bath Rabbim

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

nose is like the tower in Lebanon

A tower is tall and straight, and her nose is tall and straight. (See: [Simile](#))

that looks toward Damascus

The tower looking is a metonym for people on the tower looking. Alternate translation: "that allows people to look toward Damascus" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Lebanon](#)
- [face, facial](#)
- [gate, gate bars, gatekeeper, gateposts, gateway](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Gate](#)
- [in Lebanon](#)
- [that](#)

ULT

⁴ Your neck is like a tower of ivory; your eyes are the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim. Your nose is like the tower in Lebanon that looks toward Damascus.

UST

⁴ Your neck is like a tower made of ivory. Your eyes sparkle like the pools in the city of Heshbon, near the Bath Rabbim Gate. Your nose is long, like the tower in Lebanon that faces Damascus.

Song of Solomon 7:5

General Information:

The man continues to describe the woman.

Your head is on you like Carmel

Mount Carmel is higher than everything else around it. The man wants to look at the woman's head more than at anything else. Alternate translation: "Your head is on you like a crown, higher than anything else" (See: [Simile](#))

dark purple

Other possible translations are: (1) "dark black" or (2) "dark red."

The king is held captive by its tresses

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Your hair that hangs down is so beautiful that the king is not able to stop admiring it" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

tresses

the clusters of hair that hang down from a woman's head

Translation Words - ULT

- [gird, girded, wrapped around, tied up, belt, tuck in belt, put belt around](#)
- [head](#)
- [head](#)
- [king, kingship](#)
- [purple](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Your head](#)
- [Your head](#)
- [is shiny and black](#)
- [it is as though I, your king](#)
- [am captured](#)

ULT

⁵ Your head is on you like Carmel; the hair on your head is dark purple. The king is held captive by its tresses.

UST

⁵ [Your head](#) is majestic like Mount Carmel. Your long hair [is shiny and black](#); [it is as though I, your king, am captured](#) by your tresses.

Song of Solomon 7:6

my love, with delights

“my love. You delight me”

ULT

⁶ How beautiful and how lovely you are,
my love, with delights! ^[1]

UST

⁶ My love, you are so beautiful and
lovely with all your delights.

Song of Solomon 7:7

General Information:

The man describes what he would like to do with the woman .

Your height is like that of a date palm tree

“You stand up like a date palm tree.” Date palm trees are tall and straight, and their branches are only at the top, with the fruit under the branches. (See: [Simile](#))

date palm tree

a tall, straight tree that produces a sweet, brown, and sticky fruit that grows in groups

your breasts like clusters of fruit

The dates on a palm tree grow soft and round in large bunches that hang from the tree just below the branches, which are all at the top. The woman’s breasts are soft and round and are just lower than her arms. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁷ Your height is like that of a date palm tree, and your breasts like clusters of fruit.

UST

⁷ You are stately like a palm tree, and your breasts are like grape clusters.

Song of Solomon 7:8

I said

"I thought" or "I said to myself." The man said this silently.

I want to climb ... its branches

The man wants to embrace the woman. (See: [Metaphor](#))

May your breasts be like clusters of grapes

The man wants to touch her breasts. Clusters of grapes are round and soft. (See: [Simile](#))

may the fragrance of your nose be like apricots

The word "nose" is a metonym for the breath coming out of the nose. Alternate translation: "may the breath coming from your nose smell sweet like apricots" (See: [Simile](#))

apricots

sweet yellow fruit

Translation Words - ULT

- [vine](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [of grapes that I can feel](#)

ULT

⁸ I said, "I want to climb that palm tree; I will take hold of its branches." May your breasts be like clusters of grapes, and may the fragrance of your nose be like apricots.

UST

⁸ I said to myself, "I will climb that palm tree and take hold of those clusters of dates." I want your breasts to be also like clusters [of grapes that I can feel](#); I want your breath to be like the sweet fragrance of apricots.

Song of Solomon 7:9

General Information:

The man continues describing what he would like to do with the woman.

May your palate be like the best wine

The palate is a metonym for the lips. Wine tastes good. The man wants to kiss the woman's lips. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Simile](#))

flowing smoothly for my beloved

"that flows smoothly for the one I love." The man enjoys the smooth kisses of the woman.

gliding over the lips of those who sleep

"that flows over our lips as we sleep"

Translation Words - ULT

- good, right, pleasant, better, best
- walk, walked

Translation Words - UST

- to be like very good
- as

ULT

⁹ May your palate be like the best wine, flowing smoothly for my beloved, gliding over the lips of those who sleep.
^[2] The woman speaking to the man

UST

⁹ I want your kisses to be like very good wine. When I kiss you, the woman who loves me, I want it to be as if it was wine flowing over our mouths and teeth. The young woman speaking to her lover

Song of Solomon 7:10

I am my beloved's

See how you translated a similar phrase in [Song of Songs 6:3](#).

my beloved's

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as "my lover." See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: "my dear one's" or "my lover's"

he desires me

"he wants to make love to me" or "he wants me"

ULT

¹⁰ I am my beloved's, and he desires me.

UST

¹⁰ I belong to the man who loves me, and he desires me.

Song of Solomon 7:11

spend the night in the villages

Though the words here translated “spends the night” and “villages” appear together in [Song of Songs 1:13-14](#) as “spends the night” and “henna flowers,” and the context both here and there is lovemaking, the ULT chooses this reading because the immediate metaphor is of the man and woman sleeping in the village, rising in the morning, and going out into the vineyards. The word for “henna plants” and the word for “villages” sound exactly the same.

Translation Words - ULT

- [know, knowledge, unknown, distinguish](#)
- [walk, walked](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [let us go](#)
- [to](#)

ULT

11 Come, my beloved, let us go out into the countryside; let us spend the night in the villages. ^[3]

UST

11 You who love me, [let us go to](#) the countryside, and sleep in a village somewhere.

Song of Solomon 7:12

General Information:

The woman continues to speak to the man.

rise early

“get up early” or “wake up early”

have budded

“have begun to bloom”

blossoms

flowers when they are open

are in flower

“have flowers open on the plant”

I will give you my love

“I will make love with you”

Translation Words - ULT

- [vine](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [the grapevines](#)

ULT

¹² Let us rise early to go to the vineyards; let us see whether the vines have budded, whether their blossoms have opened, and whether the pomegranates are in flower. There I will give you my love.

UST

¹² And let us go early to the vineyards to see if [the grapevines](#) have budded and if there are blossoms on them that have opened, and see if the pomegranate trees are blooming, and there I will allow you to make love to me.

Song of Solomon 7:13

General Information:

The woman continues to speak to the man.

mandrakes

This is the name of plants that give off a strong but pleasant scent. The scent is slightly intoxicating and stimulating, which increases the desire to make love. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

give off their fragrance

“produce their scent” or “smell very nice”

at the door

The doors belong to their house. Alternate translation: “above the entrances of our house” or “by the doors of our house” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

are all sorts of choice fruits, new and old

“is every kind of the best fruit, both old fruit and new fruit”

stored up for you

“saved so I can give to you”

my beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as “my lover.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: “my dear one” or “my lover”

ULT

¹³ The mandrakes give off their fragrance; at the door where we are staying are all sorts of choice fruits, new and old, that I have stored up for you, my beloved.

UST

¹³ The mandrake plants are producing a fragrant odor, and we are surrounded by delightful pleasures, new ones and old ones, pleasures that I have been saving to give to you, the man who loves me.

Song of Solomon 8

Song of Songs 8 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Kisses

The kisses in this chapter are a type of kiss that was only done between a husband a wife. It is an intimate kiss. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Passion

The chapter describes the passion that can exist between a husband a wife. This is the feeling of strong or uncontrollable desire for another person.

Song of Solomon 8:1

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

you were like my brother

A woman could show affection for her brother in public. This woman wanted to be able to show affection for the man in public. (See: [Simile](#))

you outside

“you in public”

I could kiss you

A woman would probably kiss her brother on his cheek order to greet him.

would despise me

“would think that I am a bad person”

ULT

¹ I wish that you were like my brother, who nursed at my mother's breasts. Then whenever I met you outside, I could kiss you, and no one would despise me.

UST

¹ I wish that everyone knew that we love each other, just as they all know that I have a brother, my own brother, who nursed at my mother's breasts. Then whenever I met you outside, I could kiss you, and no one would criticize me.

Song of Solomon 8:2

General Information:

The young woman continues to speak to the man.

she who taught me

taught her how to make love (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

I would give you spiced wine to drink and some of the juice of my pomegranates

The woman uses these images to say that she will give herself to the man and make love with him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

spiced wine

“wine with spices” or “wine that has spices in it.” This represents the intoxicating power of lovemaking. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [house, household](#)
- [pomegranate](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [you to our mother’s house](#)
- [from pomegranates](#)

ULT

² I would lead you and bring you into my mother’s house— she who taught me. I would give you spiced wine to drink and some of the juice of my pomegranates. The woman speaking to herself

UST

² No one would object if I led [you to our mother’s house](#), to where our mother, who taught me so many things, lives. I would like to take you to our mother’s house so I could make love to you there. That would be as delightful as juice squeezed [from pomegranates](#), as wine mixed with spices. The young woman speaking to herself

Song of Solomon 8:3

His left hand ... embraces me

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:6](#).

left hand ... right hand

"left arm ... right arm"

embraces me

"holds me"

Translation Words - ULT

- [head](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [my head](#)

ULT

³ His left hand is under my head and his right hand embraces me. The woman speaking to the other women

UST

³ Oh yes! He will put his left arm under [my head](#), and he will hold me close with his right arm. The woman speaking to the other women

Song of Solomon 8:4

I want you to swear

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:7](#)

daughters of Jerusalem

“young women of Jerusalem.” These young women could not hear her and were not present, but the woman speaks as if they were present and could hear her. See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:7](#). (See: [Apostrophe](#))

that you will ... until it pleases

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:7](#).

Translation Words - ULT

- [Jerusalem](#)
- [oath, swear, swearing, swear by](#)
- [raise, rise, lift, get up, stir up,](#)
- [raise, rise, lift, get up, stir up,](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [I want](#)
- [not disturb us](#)
- [promise me](#)
- [of Jerusalem](#)

ULT

⁴ I want you to swear, daughters of Jerusalem, that you will not stir up or awaken love until it pleases. The women of Jerusalem speaking

UST

⁴ I want you to [promise me](#), you women of [Jerusalem](#), that you will [not disturb us](#) while we are making love until we are ready to stop.” The women of Jerusalem speaking

Song of Solomon 8:5

General Information:

The fifth part of the book begins here.

Who is this who is coming up

They are using this question to say that they think the young woman is amazing. A similar phrase was translated in [Song of Songs 6:10](#). Alternate translation: "Look at this amazing woman as she comes up" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

I awakened you

"I woke you up" or "I aroused you"

the apricot tree

a tree that produces a small yellow fruit that is very sweet. If your readers will not know what this is, you could use the word for another fruit tree or the general word "fruit tree." See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:3](#).

there

under the apricot tree

she delivered you

"she bore you"

Translation Words - ULT

- raise, rise, lift, get up, stir up,

Translation Words - UST

- I woke you up

ULT

⁵ Who is this who is coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved? The woman speaking to the man I awakened you under the apricot tree; there your mother conceived you; there she gave birth to you, she delivered you.

UST

⁵ Who is that woman who is coming up from the wilderness, the woman who is leaning on the man who loves her? The young woman speaking to her lover I woke you up when you were under the apricot tree at the place where your mother conceived you, the place where she gave birth to you.

Song of Solomon 8:6

General Information:

The young woman continues to speak to the man.

Set me as a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm

This could mean: (1) because seals were very important, people always kept them around their neck or on their hand. The woman wants to be with the man constantly like a seal, or (2) a seal shows who owns the thing that has the seal on it, and the woman wants herself as the seal on the man's heart and arm to show that all of his thoughts, emotions, and actions belong to her. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#))

for love is as strong as death

Death is very strong because it overcomes even the most powerful people of the world. (See: [Simile](#))

as unrelenting as Sheol

"as tough as Sheol." Sheol never allows people to come back to life after they have already died. Love is as persistent as Sheol because it never changes. (See: [Simile](#))

its flames burst out ... any other fire

Love is very powerful like fire. (See: [Metaphor](#))

burst out

"burn suddenly"

Translation Words - ULT

- [heart](#)
- [fire](#), [firebrands](#), [firepans](#), [fireplace](#), [firepot](#)
- [might](#), [mighty](#), [mighty works](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [heart](#)
- [strong](#)
- [fire](#)

ULT

⁶ Set me as a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm, for love is as strong as death. Passionate devotion is as unrelenting as Sheol; its flames burst out; it is a blazing flame, a flame hotter than any other fire.

UST

⁶ Keep me close to you, like a seal on your [heart](#), or like a bracelet on your arm. Our love for each other is as powerful as death; it is as [strong](#) as the grave. It is as though our love for each other bursts into flames and burns like a hot [fire](#).

Song of Solomon 8:7

General Information:

The young woman continues to speak to the man.

Surging waters cannot quench love

Love is so strong that it is like a fire that is so hot that it cannot be put out even with an ocean full of water. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Surging waters

“Oceans of water” or “Huge amounts of water”

cannot quench

“cannot extinguish” or “cannot put out”

nor can floods sweep it away

Love never changes and always stays the same so it is like something that not even a powerful flood can move. (See: [Metaphor](#))

floods

In Israel, water from the rain flows into deep and narrow valleys. This creates a flood of water so powerful that it can move huge boulders and trees.

sweep it away

“carry it away” or “wash it away”

If a man gave ... the offer would utterly be despised

This is something that could possibly happen. Alternate translation: “Even if a man ... he would be utterly despised” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

gave

offered to give

all the possessions in his house

“everything he owns”

for love

“in order to get love” or “in order to buy love”

ULT

⁷ Surging waters cannot quench love, nor can floods sweep it away. If a man gave all the possessions in his house for love, the offer would utterly be despised. The woman’s brothers speaking among themselves

UST

⁷ Nothing can stop us from loving each other, not even a flood. If a man tried to cause a woman to love him by saying he would give her everything that is [in his house](#), she would refuse. The young woman’s brothers speaking among themselves

the offer would utterly be despised

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “people would completely despise him” or “people would harshly ridicule him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [house, household](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [in his house](#)

Song of Solomon 8:8

little sister

“young sister”

What can we do ... in marriage?

The speaker uses this question to introduce what he wants to say. Alternate translation: “This is what we will do ... in marriage.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

she will be promised in marriage

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “a man comes and wants to marry her” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ We have a little sister, and her breasts have not yet grown. What can we do for our sister on the day when she will be promised in marriage?

UST

⁸ We have a younger sister, and her breasts are not large yet. So this is what we should do for her on the day that we promise some young man that he can marry her:

Song of Solomon 8:9

General Information:

The young woman's brothers continue to speak among themselves.

If she is a wall ... If she is a door

The little sister ([Song of Songs 8:8](#)) has very small breasts that either have not grown or are very small. (See: [Metaphor](#))

we will build on her a tower of silver ... we will adorn her with boards of cedar

The brothers decide to decorate the little sister with silver and cedar, symbols of riches, so that she will be more likely to attract a good husband. (See: [Metaphor](#))

will adorn her

“will decorate her”

Translation Words - ULT

- cedar, cedarwood
- gate, gate bars, gatekeeper, gateposts, gateway
- silver

Translation Words - UST

- silver jewels
- as flat as a door
- we will decorate her with bits...cedar wood. The young woman speaking to herself

ULT

⁹ If she is a wall, we will build on her a tower of silver. If she is a door, we will adorn her with boards of cedar. The woman speaking to herself

UST

⁹ If her chest is as flat as a wall, we will decorate it by putting silver jewels that are like towers on her. If she is as flat as a door, we will decorate her with bits of cedar wood. The young woman speaking to herself

Song of Solomon 8:10

I was a wall

The wall is a metaphor for a woman with small breasts. (See: [Metaphor](#))

my breasts are now like fortress towers

Fortress towers are tall. (See: [Simile](#))

I am in his eyes as one

Here eyes are a metonym for judgment or value. Alternate translation: "I am in his judgment as one" or "he thinks of me as one" (See: [Metonymy](#))

brings peace

You may need to make explicit to whom the woman brings peace. Alternate translation: "brings him peace" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

peace

"well-being"

Translation Words - ULT

- [peace](#), [peaceful](#), [peacemakers](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [am delightful](#)

ULT

10 I was a wall, but my breasts are now like fortress towers; ^[1] so I am in his eyes as one who brings peace. ^[2] The woman speaking to herself

UST

10 My chest was previously flat like a wall, but now my breasts are big like towers. So I [am delightful](#) to my beloved. The young woman speaking to himself

Song of Solomon 8:11

General Information:

Possible interpretations: (1) The woman contrasts the way she wants to give herself to the man, who will give her his love, to the way Solomon leases out his vineyard to those who will give him money. (2) The man contrasts the woman, whom he will not give to another man, to Solomon's vineyard, which he gave to other men.

Baal Hamon

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

gave the vineyard

leased, agreed to let other people pay him so they could grow grapes in the vineyard

to those who would maintain it

"to people who would take care of it"

Each one was to bring a thousand shekels of silver for its fruit

It may be helpful to state that this payment was for the fruit of the vineyard. Alternate translation: "Each man was supposed to give Solomon a thousand shekels as payment for the fruit of the vineyard" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

to bring a thousand shekels of silver

"to bring 1,000 shekels of silver." (See: [Biblical Money](#) and [Numbers](#))

shekels

"coins"

Solomon

Some versions understand the woman to be speaking directly to Solomon. Others understand her to be speaking in an apostrophe to her friends, to the man, or to herself. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Solomon](#)
- [silver](#)
- [vineyard](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [King Solomon](#)

ULT

¹¹ Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon. He gave the vineyard to those who would maintain it. Each one was to bring a thousand shekels of silver for its fruit.

UST

¹¹ [King Solomon](#) had [a vineyard](#) at Baal Hamon, and he rented it to people for them to farm it. He required each one to pay him one thousand pieces of [silver](#) each year for the grapes that they harvested.

- a vineyard
- of silver

Song of Solomon 8:12

My vineyard, my very own

The woman refers to herself as a vineyard, as in [Song of Songs 1:6](#). Here she emphasizes that she and no one else will decide what she does with the "vineyard." (See: [Metaphor](#))

is before me

This is an idiom that means the a person has the right to do what they want with something. Alternate translation: "is at my disposal" or "is mine to do with as I desire" (See: [Idiom](#))

the thousand shekels are for you, Solomon

The woman knows that Solomon has leased out the vineyard so he can get money, but she does not want money.

the two hundred shekels

The speaker has not mentioned these before, but the hearer would understand that she is speaking of the money that those who worked the vineyard would have left for their own after they paid Solomon.

Translation Words - ULT

- [Solomon](#)
- [fruit, fruitful, unfruitful](#)
- [vineyard](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [vineyard](#)
- [and you, my lover whom I call "Solomon"](#)
- [to enjoy my body](#)

ULT

¹² My vineyard, my very own, is before me; the thousand shekels are for you, Solomon, and the two hundred shekels are for those who maintain its fruit. The man speaking to the woman

UST

¹² But my body is like my own [vineyard](#), and you, my lover whom I call "[Solomon](#)," I am giving it to you. You do not need to pay me a thousand pieces of silver [to enjoy my body](#), but I will give two hundred pieces of silver to those who take care of me. The woman's lover speaking to her

Song of Solomon 8:13

You who live

The man is speaking to the woman, so “you” and “live” are feminine singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

listening for your voice

The voice is a metonym for what the person says. If your language has a word for thinking only of what one is listening for, you could use it here. Alternate translation: “waiting to hear you start speaking” or “waiting to hear what you have to say” (See: [Metonymy](#))

let me hear it

“let me hear your voice.”

ULT

13 You who live in the gardens, my companions are listening for your voice; let me hear it. The woman speaking to the man

UST

13 You are staying in the gardens, my friends are listening to your voice; so allow me to hear it, too! The young woman speaking to her lover

Song of Solomon 8:14

my beloved

This phrase refers to the man whom the woman loves. In some languages it may be more natural for her to refer to him as “my lover.” See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 1:13](#). Alternate translation: “my dear one” or “my lover”

like a gazelle or a young stag

See how you translated this in [Song of Songs 2:9](#).

gazelle

a type of slender deer-like animal with long curved horns

stag

an adult male deer

the mountains of spices

“the mountains that have spices all over them.” The woman uses this metaphor to invite the man to make love to her. See how the man uses the metaphor of a mountain of myrrh and a hill of frankincense in [Song of Songs 4:6](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 Hurry, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices.

UST

14 You who love me, come to me quickly; run to me like a gazelle or young deer, because I am as delightful as hills of spices.



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Version 26

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-partspeech]]
[[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: [Song of Solomon 3:8](#))

Active or Passive

Some languages use both active and passive sentences. In active sentences, the subject does the action. In passive sentences, the subject is the one that receives the action. Here are some examples with their subjects bolded:

- Active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
- Passive: **The house** was built in 2010.

Translators whose languages do not use passive sentences will need to know how they can translate passive sentences that they find in the Bible. Other translators will need to decide when to use a passive sentence and when to use the active form.

This page answers the question: *What do active and passive mean, and how do I translate passive sentences?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs\]\]](#)

Description

Some languages have both active and passive forms of sentences.

- In the active form, the subject does the action and is always mentioned.
- In the passive form, the action is done to the subject, and the one who does the action is not always mentioned.

In the examples of active and passive sentences below, we have bolded the subject.

- active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
- passive: **The house** was built by my father in 2010.
- passive: **The house** was built in 2010. (This does not tell who did the action.)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

All languages use active forms. Some languages use passive forms, and some do not. Some languages use passive forms only for certain purposes, and the passive form is not used for the same purposes in all of the languages that use it.

Purposes for the Passive

- The speaker is talking about the person or thing the action was done to, not about the person who did the action.
- The speaker does not want to tell who did the action.
- The speaker does not know who did the action.

Translation Principles Regarding the Passive

- Translators whose language does not use passive forms will need to find another way to express the idea.
- Translators whose language has passive forms will need to understand why the passive is used in a particular sentence in the Bible and decide whether or not to use a passive form for that purpose in his translation of the sentence.

Examples From the Bible

Then their shooters shot at your soldiers from off the wall, and some of the king's servants **were killed**, and your servant Uriah the Hittite **was killed** too. (2 Samuel 11:24 ULT)

This means that the enemy's shooters shot and killed some of the king's servants, including Uriah. The point is what happened to the king's servants and Uriah, not who shot them. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on the king's servants and Uriah.

When the men of the city arose early in the morning, and see, the altar of Baal **was torn down**. (Judges 6:28a ULT)

The men of the town saw what had happened to the altar of Baal, but they did not know who broke it down. The purpose of the passive form here is to communicate this event from the perspective of the men of the town.

It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)

This describes a situation in which a person ends up in the sea with a millstone around his neck. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on what happens to this person. Who does these things to the person is not important.

Translation Strategies

If your language would use a passive form for the same purpose as in the passage that you are translating, then use a passive form. If you decide that it is better to translate without a passive form, here are some strategies that you might consider.

- (1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who or what did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.
- (2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who or what did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."
- (3) Use a different verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21b ULT)

The king's servants gave Jeremiah a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

- (2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."

It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)

It would be better for him if **they were to put** a millstone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea.

It would be better for him if **someone were to put** a heavy stone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea.

- (3) Use a different verb in an active sentence.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21 ULT)

He **received** a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Abstract Nouns](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-order]]

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 2:12](#); [4:2](#); [4:4](#); [7:5](#); [8:7](#); [8:8](#))

Apostrophe

Description

An apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him. He does this to tell his listeners his message or feelings about that person or thing in a very strong way.

This page answers the question: *What is the figure of speech called an apostrophe?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use apostrophe, and readers could be confused by it. They may wonder who the speaker is talking to, or think that the speaker is crazy to talk to things or people who cannot hear.

Examples from the Bible

Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on you. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

King Saul was killed on Mount Gilboa, and David sang a sad song about it. By telling these mountains that he wanted them to have no dew or rain, he showed how sad he was.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to you. (Luke 13:34a ULT)

Jesus was expressing his feelings for the people of Jerusalem in front of his disciples and a group of Pharisees. By speaking directly to Jerusalem as though its people could hear him, Jesus showed how deeply he cared about them.

He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: “**Altar, altar!** This is what Yahweh says, ‘See, ... on you they will burn human bones.’” (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

The man of God spoke as if the altar could hear him, but he really wanted the king, who was standing there, to hear him.

Translation Strategies

If apostrophe would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. But if this way of speaking would be confusing to your people, let the speaker continue speaking to the people that are listening to him as he tells **them** his message or feelings about the people or thing that cannot hear him. See the example below.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: “**Altar, altar!** This is what Yahweh says, ‘See, ... on you they will burn human bones.’” (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

He said this about the altar: “This is what Yahweh says **about this altar**. ‘See, ... they will burn people’s bones on **it**.’”

Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on **you**. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

As for these mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on **them**.

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 2:7](#); [3:5](#); [5:8](#); [5:16](#); [8:4](#); [8:11](#))

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: [Song of Songs 1 General Notes](#); [Notes; 4:2](#); [5:2](#); [5:10](#); [6:1](#); [6:6](#); [7:1](#); [7:13](#); [Notes; 8:2](#); [8:10](#))

Background Information

Description

When people tell a story, they normally tell the events in the order that they happened. This sequence of events makes up the storyline. The storyline is full of action verbs that move the story along in time. But sometimes a writer may take a break from the storyline and give some information to help his listeners understand the story better. This type of information is called background information. The background information might be about things that happened before the events he has already told about, or it might explain something in the story, or it might be about something that would happen much later in the story.

This page answers the question: *What is background information, and how can I show that some information is background information?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-events]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro]]

Example — The bolded phrases in the story below are all background information.

Peter and John went on a hunting trip because **their village was going to have a feast the next day. Peter was the best hunter in the village. He once killed three wild pigs in one day!** They walked for hours through low bushes until they heard a wild pig. The pig ran, but they managed to shoot the pig and kill it. Then they tied up its legs with some rope **they had brought with them** and carried it home on a pole. When they brought it to the village, Peter's cousin saw the pig and realized that it was his own pig. Peter had mistakenly killed his cousin's pig.

Background information often tells about something that had happened earlier or something that would happen much later. Examples of these are: "their village was going to have a feast the next day," "He once killed three wild pigs in one day," and "that they had brought with them."

Often background information uses "be" verbs like "was" and "were," rather than action verbs. Examples of these are "their village was going to have a feast the next day," and "Peter **was** the best hunter in the village."

Background information can also be marked with words that tell the reader that this information is not part of the event line of the story. In this story, some of these words are "because," "once," and "had."

A writer may use background information:

- to help their listeners be interested in the story
- to help their listeners understand something in the story
- to help the listeners understand why something is important in the story
- to tell the setting of a story
 - > * Setting includes:
 - > * where the story takes place
 - > * when the story takes place
 - > * who is present when the story begins
 - > * what is happening when the story begins

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of marking background information and storyline information.
- You (the translator) need to know the order of the events in the Bible, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.
- You will need to translate the story in a way that marks the background information in a way that your own readers will understand the order of events, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.

Examples From the Bible

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram **was 86 years old** when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:15-16 ULT)

The first sentence tells about two events. Hagar gave birth and Abraham named his son. The second sentence is background information about how old Abram was when those things happened.

And Jesus himself **was beginning about 30 years old**. He **was the son** (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli, (Luke 3:23 ULT)

The verses before this tell about when Jesus was baptized. This sentence introduces background information about Jesus' age and ancestors. The story resumes in chapter 4 where it tells about Jesus going to the wilderness.

Then **it happened on a Sabbath** that he **was going through the grain fields**, and his disciples **were picking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands**. But some of the Pharisees said ... (Luke 6:1-2a ULT)

These verses give the setting of the story. The events took place in a grain field on the Sabbath day. Jesus, his disciples, and some Pharisees were there, and Jesus' disciples were picking heads of grain and eating them. The main action in the story starts with the phrase, "But some of the Pharisees said"

Translation Strategies

To keep translations clear and natural you will need to study how people tell stories in your language. Observe how your language marks background information. You may need to write down some stories in order to study this. Observe what kinds of verbs your language uses for background information and what kinds of words or other markers signal that something is background information. Do these same things when you translate, so that your translation is clear and natural and people can understand it easily.

(1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information.

(2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first. (This is not always possible when the background information is very long.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information. The examples below explain how this was done in the ULT English translations.

And Jesus himself **was** beginning about 30 years old. He **was** the son (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli. (Luke 3:23 ULT)

As here, English sometimes uses the word "and" to show that there is some kind of change in the story. The verb "was" shows that it is background information.

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The bolded phrase happened before John rebuked Herod. In English, the helping verb "had" in "had done" shows that Herod did those things before John rebuked him.

(2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first.

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.
Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

"**When Abram was 86 years old**, Hagar gave birth to his son, and Abram named his son Ishmael."

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The translation below reorders John's rebuke and Herod's actions.

"Now Herod the tetrarch married his brother's wife, Herodias, and **he did many other evil things**, so John rebuked him. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/grammar-connect-words-phrases\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-newevent\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 3:8; 3:10](#))

Biblical Money

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of money in the Bible?*

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals, such as silver and gold, and would pay a certain weight of that metal in order to buy things. Later, people started to make coins that each contained a standard amount of a certain metal. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

Unit in OT	Metal	Weight
daric	gold coin	8.4 grams
shekel	various metals	11 grams
talent	various metals	33 kilograms

Unit in NT	Metal	Day's Wage
denarius/denarii	silver coin	1 day
drachma	silver coin	1 day
mite	copper coin	1/64 day
shekel	silver coin	4 days
talent	silver	6,000 days

Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see Biblical Weight. The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament.

- (1) Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)
- (2) Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
- (3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
- (4) Use the biblical term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

(5) Use the biblical term and explain it in a footnote.

Translation Strategies Applied

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

█ The one owed 500 denarii, and the other, 50. (Luke 7:41b ULT)

Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)

█ "The one owed **500 denali**, and the other, **50**."

Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.

█ "The one owed **500 silver coins**, and the other, **50**."

(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.

█ "The one owed **500 days' wages**, and the other, **50**."

(4) Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2"

The footnotes would look like:

█ [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii**,¹ and the other, **50**." (Luke 7:41 ULT)

█ ^[1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-transliterate\]\]](#)
[Translate Unknowns](#)

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 8:11](#))

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "I do not know at what time I will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that he did not know at what time he would arrive.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
(Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, "**Go, show yourself to the priest ...**"

And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you."
(Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming**,
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**"
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, '**Look, here it is!**' or, '**There it is!**'

This page answers the question: *What are direct and indirect quotations?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Pronouns](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-quotations\]\]](#)

Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it. If the kind of quote used in that context is not natural for your language, follow these strategies.

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, **“Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”** (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him to tell no one, but **to go and show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for his cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.**

- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

And he commanded him **to tell no one**, but, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him, **“Tell no one.** But go and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_quotations.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 5:3](#))

Doublet

Description

We are using the word “doublet” to refer to two words or phrases that are used together and either mean the same thing or mean very close to the same thing. Often they are joined with the word “and.” Unlike Hendiadys, in which one of the words modifies the other, in a doublet the two words or phrases are equal and are used to emphasize or intensify the one idea that is expressed by the two words or phrases.

This page answers the question: *What are doublets and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

A very similar issue is the repetition of the same word or phrase for emphasis, usually with no other words between them. Because these figures of speech are so similar and have the same effect, we will treat them here together.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages people do not use doublets. Or they may use doublets, but only in certain situations, so a doublet might not make sense in their language in some verses. People might think that the verse is describing two ideas or actions, when it is only describing one. In this case, translators may need to find some other way to express the meaning expressed by the doublet.

Examples From the Bible

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

The bolded words mean the same thing. Together they mean the people were spread out.

He attacked two men **more righteous** and **better** than himself. (1 Kings 2:32b ULT)

This means that they were “much more righteous” than he was.

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

This means that they had decided to lie, which is another way of saying that they intended to deceive people.

... like of a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

This means that he was like a lamb that did not have any defect—not even one.

Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, “**Master! Master!** We are perishing!” (Luke 8:24 ULT)

The repetition of “Master” means that the disciples called to Jesus urgently and continually.

Translation Strategies

If a doublet would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, consider these strategies.

(1) Translate only one of the words or phrases.

(2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words or phrases and add a word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”

(3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language's ways of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate only one of the words.

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

“You have decided to prepare **false** things to say.”

(2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words and add a word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

“He has one people **very spread out**.”

(3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language's ways of doing that.

... like a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

- English can emphasize this with “any” and “at all.”

“... like a lamb **without any blemish at all**.”

Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, “**Master! Master!** We are perishing!” (Luke 8:24 ULT)

Then they approached {and} woke him up, **urgently shouting, “Master!**
We are perishing!”

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 2:7](#); [3:5](#); [3:7](#))

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis¹ occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, **nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.**
(Psalm 1:5 ULT)

There is ellipsis in the second part because “nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **will sinners stand** in the assembly of the righteous.

[¹] English has a punctuation symbol which is also called an ellipsis. It is a series of three dots (...) used to indicate an intentional omission of a word, phrase, sentence or more from text without altering its original meaning. This translationAcademy article is not about the punctuation mark, but about the concept of omission of words that normally should be in the sentence.

Two Types of Ellipsis

A Relative Ellipsis happens when the reader has to supply the omitted word or words from the context. Usually the word is in the previous sentence, as in the example above.

An Absolute Ellipsis happens when the omitted word or words are not in the context, but the phrases are common enough in the language that the reader is expected to supply what is missing from this common usage or from the nature of the situation.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers who see incomplete sentences or phrases may not know that there is information missing that the writer expects them to fill in. Or readers may understand that there is information missing, but they may not know what information is missing because they do not know the original biblical language, culture, or situation as the original readers did. In this case, they may fill in the wrong information. Or readers may misunderstand the ellipsis if they do not use ellipsis in the same way in their language.

Examples From the Bible

Relative Ellipsis

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf **and Sirion like a young ox.** (Psalm 29:6 ULT)

The writer wants his words to be few and to make good poetry. The full sentence with the information filled in would be:

This page answers the question: *What is ellipsis ?* ([^1])

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences]]

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**not as unwise but as wise**. (Ephesians 5:15b ULT)

The information that the reader must understand in the second parts of these sentences can be filled in from the first parts:

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**walk** not as unwise but **walk** as wise,

Absolute Ellipsis

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

It seems that the man answered in an incomplete sentence because he wanted to be polite and not directly ask Jesus for healing. He knew that Jesus would understand that the only way he could receive his sight would be for Jesus to heal him. The complete sentence would be:

“Lord, **I want you to heal me so** that I might receive my sight.”

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (Titus 1:4 ULT)

The writer assumes that the reader will recognize this common form of a blessing or wish, so he does not need to include the full sentence, which would be:

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. **May you receive** grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Translation Strategies

If ellipsis would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **sinner in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinner will not stand in the assembly** of the righteous.

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

Then when the man was near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, **I want you to heal me** that I might receive my sight.”

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf **and Sirion like a young ox**. (Psalm 29:6 ULT)

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 3:6](#); [4:10](#); [5:2](#); [8:11](#))

Euphemism

Description

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private.

... they found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

This means that Saul and his sons “were dead.” It is a euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

This page answers the question: *What is a euphemism?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples From the Bible

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so **he did not say specifically** what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man?**” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

If euphemism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.
- (2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT) — Some languages might use euphemisms like these:

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **dig a hole**”

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **have some time alone**”

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man?**” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **slept with a man?**”

(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

They found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

“They found Saul and his sons **dead** on Mount Gilboa.”

(Go back to: [Introduction to the Song of Songs](#); [Song of Songs 1 General Notes](#); [1:13](#); [Notes](#); [4:13](#); [5:1](#); [5:2](#); [5:3](#); [5:4](#); [5:5](#); [6:2](#))

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

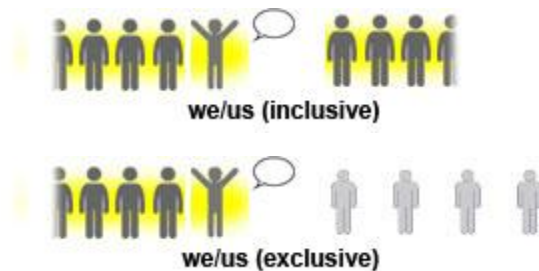
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also true for "us," "our," "ours," and "ourselves." Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these. Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms for these words will need to understand what the speaker meant so that they can decide which form to use.

This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Pronouns](#)

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive "we" and the exclusive "we" refer to.



Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for "we." If your language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of "we," then you will need to understand what the speaker meant so that you can decide which form of "we" to use.

Examples From the Bible

Exclusive

They said, "There are not more than five loaves of bread and two fish with us—unless **we** go and buy food for all these people." (Luke 9:13 ULT)

In the second clause, the disciples are talking about some of them going to buy food. They were speaking to Jesus, but Jesus was not going to buy food. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" would use the **exclusive** form there.

We have seen it, and **we** bear witness to it. **We** are announcing to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and which has been made known to **us**. (1 John 1:2 ULT)

John is telling people who have not seen Jesus what he and the other apostles have seen. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **exclusive** forms in this verse.

Inclusive

The shepherds said one to each other, "Let **us** now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to **us**." (Luke 2:15b ULT)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said "us," they were including the people they were speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Now it happened that on one of those days, he indeed got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let **us** go over to the other side of the lake." So they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULT)

When Jesus said "us," he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-gendernotations]]

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:4; 1:11; 2:9; 2:15](#))

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.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_younum.

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses a singular form of “you” even though he is speaking to a crowd.

- Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups

Formal and Informal

Some languages have more than one form of “you” based on the relationship between the speaker and the person he is talking to. People use the **formal** form of “you” when speaking to someone who is older, or has higher authority, or is someone they do not know very well. People use the **informal** form when speaking to someone who is not older, or does not have higher authority, or is a family member or close friend.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_youform.

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- Forms of “You” — Formal or Informal

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:4; 2:15; 8:13](#))

This page answers the question: *What are the different forms of you?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-yousingular\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-youdual\]\]](#)

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see Borrow Words.
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

Saul was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

Translation Strategies

(1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

(2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.

(5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

(2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like ‘drawn out’)**, and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.”

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called “Saul” before Acts 13 and “Paul” after Acts 13. You could translate his name as “Paul” all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** 1

The footnote would look like:

[1] Most versions say “Saul” here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called “Paul.”

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write “Saul” where the source text has “Saul” and “Paul” where the source text has “Paul.”

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

[1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-transliterate]]

(Go back to: [Introduction to the Song of Songs](#); [Song of Solomon 4:8](#); [7:4](#); [8:11](#))

Hyperbole

Description

A speaker or writer can use exactly the same words to say something that he means as completely true, or as generally true, or as a hyperbole. This is why it can be hard to decide how to understand a statement. For example, the sentence below could mean three different things.

It rains here every night.

The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.

The speaker means this as a **generalization** if he means that it rains here most nights.

The speaker means this as a **hyperbole** if he wants to say that it rains more than it actually does, usually in order to express a strong attitude toward the amount or frequency of rain, such as being annoyed or being happy about it.

This page answers the question: *What are hyperboles? What are generalizations? How can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Hyperbole

In hyperbole, a figure of speech that uses exaggeration, a speaker deliberately describes something with an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it. He expects people to understand that he is exaggerating.

They will not leave **stone upon stone in you**. (Luke 19:44b ULT)

This is an exaggeration. It means that the enemies will completely destroy Jerusalem.

Moses was educated in **all the wisdom of the Egyptians**. (Acts 7:22a ULT)

This hyperbole means that he had learned everything an Egyptian education could offer.

Generalization

This is a statement that is true most of the time or in most situations that it could apply to.

The one who ignores instruction **will have poverty and shame**, but **honor will come** to him who learns from correction. (Proverbs 13:18)

These generalizations tell about what normally happens to people who ignore instruction and what normally happens to people who learn from correction. There may be some exceptions to these statements, but they are generally true.

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as **the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words**. (Matthew 6:7)

This generalization tells about what Gentiles were known for doing. Many Gentiles did this. It does not matter if a few did not. The point was that the hearers should not join in this well-known practice.

Even though a hyperbole or a generalization may have a strong-sounding word like "all," "always," "none," or "never," it does not necessarily mean **exactly** "all," "always," "none," or "never." It simply means "most," "most of the time," "hardly any," or "rarely."

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.

If readers realize that a statement is not literally true, they need to be able to understand whether it is a hyperbole, a generalization, or a lie. (Though the Bible is completely true, it tells about people who did not always tell the truth.)

Examples From the Bible

Examples of Hyperbole

If your hand causes you to stumble, **cut it off**. It is better for you to enter into life maimed ... (Mark 9:43a ULT)

When Jesus said to cut off your hand, he meant that we should **do whatever extreme things** we need to do in order not to sin. He used this hyperbole to show how extremely important it is to try to stop sinning.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel with 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The bolded phrase is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that the Philistine army was overwhelming in number. It means that there were **many, many** soldiers in the Philistine army.

But as his anointing teaches you **everything** and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27b ULT)

This is a hyperbole. It expresses the assurance that God's Spirit teaches us about **all things that we need to know**. God's Spirit does not teach us about everything that it is possible to know.

When they found him, they also said to him, "**Everyone** is looking for you." (Mark 1:37 ULT)

The disciples probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for Jesus, but that **many people** were looking for him, or that all of Jesus' closest friends there were looking for him. This is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that they and many others were worried about him.

Examples of Generalization

Can **any good thing** come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46b ULT)

This rhetorical question is meant to express the generalization that there is nothing good in Nazareth. The people there had a reputation for being uneducated and not strictly religious. Of course, there were exceptions.

One of them, of their own prophets, has said, "**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies**." (Titus 1:12 ULT)

This is a generalization that means that Cretans had a reputation to be like this because, in general, this is how Cretans behaved. It is possible that there were exceptions.

A lazy hand causes a person to be poor, but the hand of the diligent person gains riches. (Proverbs 10:4 ULT)

This is generally true, and it reflects the experience of most people. It is possible that there are exceptions in some circumstances.

Caution

- Do not assume that something is an exaggeration just because it seems to be impossible. God does miraculous things.

They saw Jesus **walking on the sea** and coming near the boat. (John 6:19b ULT)

This is not hyperbole. Jesus really walked on the water. It is a literal statement.

- Do not assume that the word “all” is always a generalization that means “most.”
 - > Yahweh is righteous in **all** his ways
 - > and gracious in **all** he does. (Psalms 145:17 ULT)

Yahweh is always righteous. This is a completely true statement.

Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole or generalization would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here are other options.

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.
- (4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and **a great number of troops**.

- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”

The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame. (Proverbs 13:18a ULT)

In general, the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame

When you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the **Gentiles do**, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. (Matthew 6:7 ULT)

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles **generally** do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

Almost all the country of Judea and **almost all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him.
or:

Many of the country of Judea and **many** of the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:6; 6:9](#))

Hypothetical Situations

Consider these phrases: “If the sun stopped shining ...” “What if the sun stopped shining ...” “Suppose the sun stopped shining ...” and “If only the sun had not stopped shining.” We use such expressions to set up hypothetical situations, imagining what might have happened or what could happen in the future but probably will not. We also use them to express regret or wishes. Hypothetical expressions occur often in the Bible. You (the translator) need to translate them in a way that people will know that the event did not actually happen and so that they will understand why the event was imagined.

This page answers the question: *What is a hypothetical situation?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)

Description

Hypothetical situations are situations that are not real. They can be in the past, present, or future. Hypothetical situations in the past and present have not happened, are not happening now, and ones in the future are not expected to happen.

People sometimes tell about conditions and what would happen if those conditions were met, but they know that these things have not happened or probably will not happen. (The conditions comprise a phrase that starts with “if.”)

- If he had lived to be 100 years old, he would have seen his grandson’s grandson. (But he did not.)
- If he lived to be 100 years old, he would still be alive today. (But he is not.)
- If he lives to be 100 years old, he will see his grandson’s grandson. (But he probably will not.)

People sometimes express wishes about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- I wish he had come.
- I wish he were here.
- I wish he would come.

People sometimes express regrets about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- If only he had come.
- If only he were here.
- If only he would come.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to recognize the different kinds of hypothetical situations in the Bible and understand that they are unreal.
- Translators need to know their own language’s ways of talking about different kinds of hypothetical situations.

Examples From the Bible

Hypothetical Situations in the Past

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **If the mighty deeds had been done** in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, **they would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

Here in Matthew 11:21, Jesus said that **if** the people living in the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon had been able to see the miracles that he performed, they would have repented long ago. The people of Tyre and Sidon did not actually see his miracles, and they did not repent. He said this to rebuke the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida who had seen his miracles and yet did not repent.

Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, **if you had been here, my brother would not have died.**” (John 11:21 ULT)

Martha said this to express her wish that Jesus would have come sooner so that her brother would not have died. But Jesus did not come sooner and her brother did die.

Hypothetical Situations in the Present

And no man puts new wine into old wineskins. **But if he did do that, the new wine would burst the wineskins, and it would be spilled out, and the wineskins would be destroyed.** (Luke 5:37 ULT)

Jesus told about what would happen if a person were to put new wine into old wineskins. But no one would do that. He used this imaginary situation as an example to show that there are times when it is unwise to mix new things with old things. He did this so that people could understand why his disciples were not fasting as people traditionally did.

Jesus said to them, “What man would there be among you, who, **if he had just one sheep, and if this sheep fell into a deep hole on the Sabbath, would not grasp hold of it and lift it out?**” (Matthew 12:11 ULT)

Jesus asked the religious leaders what they would do on the Sabbath if one of their sheep fell into a hole. He was not saying that their sheep would fall into a hole. He used this imaginary situation to show them that they were wrong to judge him for healing people on the Sabbath.

Hypothetical Situation in the Future

Unless those days are shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:22 ULT)

Jesus was talking about a future time when very bad things would happen. He told what would happen if those days of trouble were to last a long time. He did this to show how bad those days will be—so bad that if they lasted a long time, no one would be saved. But then he clarified that God will shorten those days of trouble so that the elect (those he has chosen) will be saved.

Expressing Emotion About a Hypothetical Situation

People sometimes talk about hypothetical situations in order to express regrets and wishes. Regrets are about the past and wishes are about the present and future.

The Israelites said to them, “**If only we had died by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt when we were sitting by the pots of meat and were eating bread to the full.** For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill our whole community with hunger.” (Exodus 16:3 ULT)

Here the Israelites were afraid that they would have to suffer and die of hunger in the wilderness, and so they wished that they had stayed in Egypt and died there with full stomachs. They were complaining, expressing regret that this had not happened.

I know what you have done, and that you are neither cold nor hot. **I wish that you were either cold or hot!** (Revelation 3:15 ULT)

Jesus wished that the people were either hot or cold, but they are neither. He was rebuking them, expressing anger at this.

Translation Strategies

Find out how people speaking your language show:

- that something could have happened, but did not.
- that something could be true now, but is not.
- that something could happen in the future, but will not unless something changes.
- that they wish for something, but it does not happen.
- that they regret that something did not happen.

Use your language's ways of showing these kinds of things.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_hypo.

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 8:7](#))

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: [Song of Solomon 4:9; 4:10; 4:12; 5:1; 5:2; 6:8; 8:8; 8:12](#))

Litotes

Description

Litotes is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses a strong positive meaning by using two negative words or a negative word with a word that means the opposite of the meaning he intends. A few examples of negative words are “no,” “not,” “none,” and “never.” The opposite of “good” is “bad.” Someone could say that something is “not bad” to mean that it is extremely good.

This page answers the question: *What is litotes?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use litotes. People who speak those languages might not understand that a statement using litotes actually strengthens the positive meaning. Instead, they might think that it weakens or even cancels the positive meaning.

Examples From the Bible

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**, (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

By using litotes, Paul emphasized that his visit with them was **very** useful.

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

By using litotes, Luke emphasized that there was a **lot** of excitement or anxiety among the soldiers about what happened to Peter. (Peter had been in prison, and even though there were soldiers guarding him, he escaped when an angel let him out. So they were very agitated.)

But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are **not the least** among the leaders of Judah,
for from you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel. (Matthew 2:6 ULT)

By using litotes, the prophet emphasized that Bethlehem would be a **very important city**.

Translation Strategies

If the litotes would be understood correctly, consider using it.

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**. (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

“For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you **did much good**.”

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

“Now when it became day, there was **great excitement** among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter.”

or:

“Now when it became day, the soldiers were **very concerned** because of what had happened to Peter.”

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 7:2](#))

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: [Introduction to the Song of Songs](#); [Song of Songs 1 General Notes](#); [1:4](#); [1:6](#); [1:7](#); [1:10](#); [1:16](#); [1:17](#); [Notes](#); [2:1](#); [2:3](#); [2:4](#); [2:5](#); [2:7](#); [2:8](#); [2:14](#); [2:15](#); [2:16](#); [2:17](#); [Notes](#); [3:5](#); [Notes](#); [4:1](#); [4:2](#); [4:4](#); [4:6](#); [4:8](#); [4:11](#); [4:12](#); [4:15](#); [4:16](#); [Notes](#); [5:1](#); [5:2](#); [5:5](#); [5:6](#); [5:8](#); [5:10](#); [5:11](#); [5:12](#); [5:13](#); [5:14](#); [5:15](#); [Notes](#); [6:2](#); [6:6](#); [6:9](#); [6:11](#); [7:2](#); [7:4](#); [7:5](#); [7:8](#); [8:2](#); [8:6](#); [8:7](#); [8:9](#); [8:10](#); [8:12](#); [8:14](#))

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: [Song of Solomon 1:3; 1:7; 1:15; 2:4; 3:1; 3:3; 3:4; 3:8; 3:11; 5:12; 5:16; 7:4; 7:9; 8:10; 8:13](#))

Numbers

Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words (“five”) or as numerals (“5”). Some numbers are very large, such as “two hundred” (200), “twenty-two thousand” (22,000), or “one hundred million” (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

▮ Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

▮ That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word “about” shows that it is not an exact number.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

Examples From the Bible

▮ When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

▮ Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands**. (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Write numbers using numerals.
- (2) Write numbers using your language’s words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
- (3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

(1) Write numbers using numerals.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents), ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord® Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord® Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died.
(Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-ordinal]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-fraction]]

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 4:4](#); [5:10](#); [6:8](#); [8:11](#))

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: [Song of Solomon 1:1; 2:1; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; 8:1](#))

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: [Song of Solomon 2:7](#); [2:13](#); [3:5](#); [4:16](#))

Poetry

Description

Poetry is one of the ways that people use the words and sounds of their language to make their speech and writing more beautiful and to express strong emotion. Through poetry, people can communicate deeper emotion than they can through simple non-poetic forms. Poetry gives more weight and elegance to statements of truth, such as proverbs, and is also easier to remember than ordinary speech.

This page answers the question: *What is poetry and how do I translate it into my language?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)

In poetry we commonly find:

- many figures of speech such as [Apostrophe](#)
- arrangements of clauses into particular patterns such as:
 - parallel lines (See [Parallelism](#))
 - acrostics (beginning lines with successive letters of the alphabet)
 - chiasms (in which the first line relates to the last line, the second to the next-to-last line, etc.):
 - > You should not give what is holy to the dogs,
 - >
 - >> and should not throw your pearls in front of the pigs.
 - >>
 - >> Otherwise they will trample them under their feet,
 - >
 - > and having turned, they might tear you to pieces. (Matt 7:6 ULT)

- repetition of some or all of a line:

Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. (Psalm 148:2-3 ULT)

- lines of similar length:

Listen to my call to you,
Yahweh; think about my groanings.
Listen to the sound of my call, my King and my God,
for it is to you that I pray. (Psalm 5:1-2 ULT)

- the same sound used at the end or at the beginning of two or more lines:

“Twinkle, twinkle little **star**. How I wonder what you **are**.” (from an English rhyme)

- the same sound repeated many times:

“Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater” (from an English rhyme)

We also find:

- old words and expressions
- dramatic imagery
- different use of grammar — including:

- incomplete sentences
- lack of connective words

Some places to look for poetry in your language

Songs, particularly old songs or songs used in children's games
 Religious ceremony or chants of priests or witch doctors
 Prayers, blessings, and curses
 Old legends

Elegant or fancy speech

Elegant or fancy speech is similar to poetry in that it uses beautiful language, but it does not use all of the language's features of poetry, and it does not use them as much as poetry does. Popular speakers in the language often use elegant speech, and this is probably the easiest source of text to study to find out what makes speech elegant in your language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

- Different languages use poetry for different things. If a poetic form would not communicate the same meaning in your language, you may need to write it without the poetry.
- Different languages use different poetic devices. A poetic device that conveys elegance or emotion in a biblical language may be confusing or misunderstood in another language.
- In some languages, using poetry for a particular part of the Bible would make it much more powerful.

Examples From the Bible

The Bible uses poetry for songs, teaching, and prophecy. Almost all of the books of the Old Testament have poetry in them and many of the books are completely made up of poetry.

... for you saw my affliction; you knew the distress of my soul. (Psalm 31:7b ULT)

This example of [Parallelism](#) has two lines that mean the same thing.

Yahweh, judge the nations; vindicate me, Yahweh, because I am righteous and innocent, Most High. (Psalm 7:8 ULT)

This example of parallelism shows the contrast between what David wants God to do to him and what he wants God to do to the unrighteous nations. (See [Parallelism](#).)

Keep your servant also from arrogant sins; let them not rule over me. (Psalm 19:13a ULT)

This example of personification speaks of sins as if they could rule over a person. (See [Personification](#).)

Oh, give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good,
 for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
 Oh, give thanks to the God of gods,
 for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords,
 for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
 (Psalm 136:1-3 ULT)

This example repeats the phrases “give thanks” and “his covenant faithfulness endures forever.”

Translation Strategies

If the style of poetry that is used in the source text would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other ways of translating it.

- (1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry.
- (2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.
- (3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

If you use poetry it may be more beautiful.

If you use ordinary speech it may be more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of mockers. But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2 ULT)

The following are examples of how people might translate Psalm 1:1-2.

- (1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry. (The style in this example has words that sound similar at the end of each line.)

“Happy is the person not encouraged **to sin**, Disrespect for God he will not **begin**, To those who laugh at God he is **no kin**. God is his constant **delight**, He does what God says **is right**, He thinks of it all day **and night**.”

- (2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.

This is the kind of person who is truly blessed: the one who does not follow the advice of wicked people nor stop along the road to speak with sinners nor join the gathering of those who mock God. Rather, he takes great joy in Yahweh’s law, and he meditates on it day and night.

- (3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

The people who do not listen to the advice of bad people are really happy. They do not spend time with people who continually do evil things or join with those who do not respect God. Instead, they love to obey Yahweh’s law, and they think about it all the time.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-symlanguage\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:1](#); [2:1](#); [4:1](#); [5:1](#); [6:1](#); [8:1](#))

Pronouns

Description

Pronouns are words that people might use instead of using a noun when referring to someone or something. Some examples are “I,” “you,” “he,” “it,” “this,” “that,” “himself,” “someone,” and others. The personal pronoun is the most common type of pronoun.

This page answers the question: *What are pronouns, and what kinds of pronouns are in some languages?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns refer to people or things and show whether the speaker is referring to himself, the person he is speaking to, or someone or something else. The following are kinds of information that personal pronouns may provide. Other types of pronouns may give some of this information, as well.

Person

- First Person — The speaker and possibly others (I, me, we, us)
 - [Exclusive and Inclusive “We”](#)
- Second Person — The person or people that the speaker is talking to and possibly others (you)
 - [Forms of You](#)
- Third Person — Someone or something other than the speaker and those he is talking to (he, she, it, they)

Number

- Singular — one (I, you, he, she, it)
- Plural — more than one (we, you, they)
 - [Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups](#)
- Dual — two (Some languages have pronouns specifically for two people or two things.)

Gender

- Masculine — he
- Feminine — she
- Neuter — it

Relationship to other words in the sentence

- Subject of the verb: I, you, he, she, it, we, they
- Object of the verb or preposition: me, you, him, her, it, us, them
- Possessor with a noun: my, your, his, her, its, our, their
- Possessor without a noun: mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs

Other Types of pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns refer to another noun or pronoun in the same sentence: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.

- John saw **himself** in the mirror. The word “himself” refers to John.

Interrogative Pronouns are used to make a question that needs more than just a yes or no for an answer: what, which, who, whom, whose.

- **Who** built the house?

Relative Pronouns mark a relative clause. The relative pronouns, who, whom, whose, which and that give more information about a noun in the main part of the sentence. Sometimes, the relative adverbs when and where can also be used as relative pronouns.

- I saw the house **that John built**. The clause “that John built” tells which house I saw.
- I saw the man **who built the house**. The clause “who built the house” tells which man I saw.

Demonstrative Pronouns are used to draw attention to someone or something and to show distance from the speaker or something else. The demonstrative pronouns are: this, these, that, and those.

- Have you seen **this** here?
- Who is **that** over there?

Indefinite pronouns are used when no particular noun is being referred to. The indefinite pronouns are: any, anyone, someone, anything, something, and some. Sometimes a personal pronoun is used in a generic way to do this: you, they, he or it.

- He does not want to talk to **anyone**.
- **Someone** fixed it, but I do not know who.
- **They** say that **you** should not wake a sleeping dog.

In the last example, “they” and “you” just refer to people in general.

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:4](#); [1:11](#); [6:13](#))

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: [Song of Solomon 1:7; 5:3; 5:8; 6:10; 8:5; 8:8](#))

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: [Song of Solomon 1:3; 1:5; 1:9; 1:13; 1:14; 2:2; 2:3; 2:9; 3:6; 4:1; 4:2; 4:3; 4:4; 4:5; 5:11; 5:12; 5:13; 5:15; 6:4; 6:6; 6:7; 6:10; 6:12; Notes; 7:1; 7:2; 7:3; 7:4; 7:5; 7:7; 7:8; 7:9; 8:1; 8:6; 8:10](#))

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: [Song of Solomon 4:13; 7:1](#))

Translate Unknowns

While working to translate the Bible, you (the translator) might find yourself asking: “How do I translate words like lion, fig tree, mountain, priest, or temple when people in my culture have never seen these things and we do not have a word for them?”

This page answers the question: *How can I translate ideas that my readers are not familiar with?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)

Description

Unknowns are things that occur in the source text that are not known to the people of your culture. The unfoldingWord® Translation Words pages and the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes will help you understand what they are. After you understand them, you will need to find ways to refer to those things so that people who read your translation will understand what they are.

They said to him, “We have nothing here except five loaves of **bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread and do not know what it is.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God’s commands and historical facts accurately.

Examples From the Bible

So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals**. (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

They offered him wine mixed with **myrrh**, but he did not drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
- (4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.
- (5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but **inwardly they are very hungry and dangerous animals**.

"Ravenous wolves" is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See [Translating Metaphors](#).)

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked grain seeds** and two fish.

- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.

Your sins ... will be white like **milk**.

Your sins ... will be white like **the moon**.

- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **myrrh**. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT) — People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word “medicine.”

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **a medicine called myrrh**. But he refused to drink it.

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT) — People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).

We have nothing here except five loaves of **baked crushed seed bread** and two fish.

(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **wild dogs**

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked food** and two fish.

(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

to him who made **the sun and the moon**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-transliterate\]\]](#)

[How to Translate Names](#)

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:17; 7:13](#))



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 29

appoint, appointed

Definition:

The terms “appoint” and “appointed” refer to choosing someone to fulfill a specific task or role.

- To “be appointed” can also refer to being “chosen” to receive something, as in “appointed to eternal life.” That people were “appointed to eternal life” means they were chosen to receive eternal life.
- The phrase “appointed time” refers to God’s “chosen time” or “planned time” for something to happen.
- The word “appoint” may also mean to “command” or “assign” someone to do something.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “appoint” could include “choose” or “assign” or “formally choose” or “designate.”
- The term “appointed” could be translated as “assigned” or “planned” or “specifically chose.”
- The phrase “be appointed” could also be translated as “be chosen.”

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 8:11
- Acts 3:20
- Acts 6:2
- Acts 13:48
- Genesis 41:33-34
- Numbers 3:9-10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0561, H0977, H2163, H2296, H2706, H2708, H2710, H3198, H3245, H3259, H3677, H3983, H4150, H4151, H4152, H4483, H4487, H4662, H5324, H5344, H5414, H5567, H5975, H6310, H6485, H6565, H6635, H6680, H6923, H6942, H6966, H7760, H7896, G03220, G06060, G12990, G13030, G19350, G25250, G27490, G42870, G42960, G43840, G49290, G50210, G50870

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 2:9](#))

call, call out

Definition:

The terms "call" and "call out" usually mean to speak loudly, but the term "call" can also mean to name or summon a person. There are also some other meanings.

- To "call out" to someone means to shout, to announce, or to proclaim. It can also mean to ask someone for help, especially God.
- Often in the Bible, "call" has a meaning of "summon" or "command to come" or "request to come."
- God calls people to come to him and be his people. This is their "calling."
- When God "calls" people, it means that God has appointed or chosen people to be his children, to be his servants and proclaimers of his message of salvation through Jesus.
- This term is also used in the context of naming someone. For example, "His name is called John," means "He is named John" or "His name is John."
- To be "called by the name of" means that someone is given the name of someone else. God says that he has called his people by his name.
- A different expression, "I have called you by name" means that God has specifically chosen that person.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "call" could be translated by a word that means "summon," which includes the idea of being intentional or purposeful in calling.
- The expression "call out to you" could be translated as "ask you for help" or "pray to you urgently."
- When the Bible says that God has "called" us to be his servants, this could be translated as "specially chose us" or "appointed us" to be his servants.
- "You must call his name" can also be translated as "you must name him."
- "His name is called" could also be translated as "his name is" or "he is named."
- To "call out" could be translated as "say loudly" or "shout" or "say with a loud voice." Make sure the translation of this does not sound like the person is angry.
- The expression "your calling" could be translated as "your purpose" or "God's purpose for you" or "God's special work for you."
- To "call on the name of the Lord" could be translated as "seek the Lord and depend on him" or "trust in the Lord and obey him."
- To "call for" something could be translated by "demand" or "ask for" or "command."
- The expression "you are called by my name" could be translated as "I have given you my name, showing that you belong to me."
- When God says, "I have called you by name," this could be translated as "I know you and have chosen you."

(See also: pray, cry)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 18:24
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- 2 Timothy 1:9
- Ephesians 4:1
- Galatians 1:15
- Matthew 2:15
- Philippians 3:14

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0559, H2199, H4744, H6817, H7121, H7123, H7769, H7773, G01540, G03630, G14580, G15280, G19410, G19510, G20280, G20460, G25640, G28210, G28220, G28400, G29190, G30040, G31060, G33330, G33430, G36030, G36860, G36870, G43160, G43410, G43770, G47790, G48670, G54550, G55370, G55810

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 5:6](#))

cedar, cedarwood

Definition:

The term "cedar" refers to a large fir tree which normally has reddish-brown wood. Like other firs, it has cones and needle-like leaves.

- The Old Testament often mentions cedar trees in connection with Lebanon, where they grew plentifully.
- Cedar wood was used in the construction of the Jerusalem temple.
- It was also used for sacrifices and purification offerings.

(See also: fir, pure, sacrifice, temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 14:1-2
- 1 Kings 7:1-2
- Isaiah 2:13
- Zechariah 11:2

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0730

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:17; 8:9](#))

chariot, charioteers

Definition:

In ancient times, chariots were lightweight, two-wheeled carts that were pulled by horses.

- People would sit or stand in chariots, using them for war or travel.
- In war, an army that had chariots had a great advantage of speed and mobility over an army that did not have chariots.
- The ancient Egyptians and Romans were well-known for their use of horses and chariots.

(See also: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: Egypt, Rome)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 9:22
- 2 Chronicles 18:28-30
- Acts 8:29
- Acts 8:38
- Daniel 11:40-41
- Exodus 14:25
- Genesis 41:43

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:10** So they followed the Israelites onto the path through the sea, but God caused the Egyptians to panic and caused their **chariots** to get stuck.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2021, H4817, H4818, H7393, H7395, H7398, G07160, G44800

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 6:12](#))

column, pillar

Definition:

The term “pillar” usually refers to a large vertical structure that is used to hold up a roof or other part of a building. Another word for “pillar” is “column.”

- In Bible times, pillars used as support in buildings were normally carved from a single piece of stone.
- When Samson in the Old Testament was captured by the Philistines, he destroyed their pagan temple by pushing the supporting pillars and causing the temple to collapse.
- The word “pillar” sometimes refers to a large stone or boulder that is set up as a memorial to mark a grave or to mark the place where an important event happened.
- It can also refer to an idol that was made to worship a false god. It is another name for a “carved image” and could be translated as “statue.”
- The term “pillar” is used to refer to something that is shaped like a pillar, such as the “pillar of fire” that led the Israelites at night through the desert or the “pillar of salt” that Lot’s wife became after she looked back at the city.
- As a structure supporting a building, the term “pillar” or “column” could be translated as “upright stone support beam” or “supporting stone structure.”
- Other uses of “pillar” could be translated as “statue” or “pile” or “mound” or “monument” or “tall mass,” depending on the context.

(See also: [foundation](#), false god, image)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 18:4
- Exodus 13:21
- Exodus 33:9
- Genesis 31:45
- Proverbs 9:1-2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0352, H0547, H2106, H2553, H3730, H4552, H4676, H4678, H4690, H5324, H5333, H5982, H8490, G47690

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 3:10](#); [5:15](#))

curtain

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “curtain” refers to a very thick, heavy piece of material used in the making of the tabernacle and the temple.

- The tabernacle was built using four layers of curtains for the top and sides. These curtain coverings were made of cloth or animal skins.
- Cloth curtains were also used to form a wall surrounding the tabernacle courtyard. These curtains were made out of “linen” which was a kind of cloth made out of the flax plant.
- In both the tabernacle and temple building, a thick cloth curtain hung between the holy place and the most holy place. It was this curtain that was miraculously torn into two parts when Jesus died.

Translation Suggestions:

- Since modern-day curtains are very different from the curtains used in the Bible, it may be more clear to use a different word or to add words that describe the curtains.
- Depending on the context, ways to translate this term could include, “curtain covering” or “covering” or “piece of thick cloth” or “animal skin covering” or “hanging piece of cloth.”

(See also: holy place, [tabernacle](#), temple)

Bible References:

- Hebrews 10:20
- Leviticus 4:17
- Luke 23:45
- Matthew 27:51
- Numbers 4:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1852, H3407, H4539, H6532, H7050, G26650

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:5](#))

David

Facts:

David was the second king of Israel and he loved and served God. He was the main writer of the book of Psalms.

- When David was still a young boy caring for his family's sheep, God chose him to become the next king of Israel.
- David became a great fighter and led the Israelite army in battles against their enemies. His defeat of Goliath the Philistine is well known.
- King Saul tried to kill David, but God protected him, and made him king after Saul's death.
- David committed a terrible sin, but he repented and God forgave him.
- Jesus, the Messiah, is called the "Son of David" because he is a descendant of King David.

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: Goliath, Philistines, Saul (OT))

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 17:12-13
- 1 Samuel 20:34
- 2 Samuel 5:2
- 2 Timothy 2:8
- Acts 2:25
- Acts 13:22
- Luke 1:32
- Mark 2:26

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:2** God chose a young Israelite named **David** to be king after Saul. **David** was a shepherd from the town of Bethlehem. ... **David** was a humble and righteous man who trusted and obeyed God.
- **17:3** **David** was also a great soldier and leader. When **David** was still a young man, he fought against a giant named Goliath.
- **17:4** Saul became jealous of the people's love for **David**. Saul tried many times to kill him, so **David** hid from Saul.
- **17:5** God blessed **David** and made him successful. **David** fought many battles and God helped him defeat Israel's enemies.
- **17:6** **David** wanted to build a temple where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him sacrifices.
- **17:9** **David** ruled with justice and faithfulness for many years, and God blessed him. However, toward the end of his life he sinned terribly against God.
- **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. **David** repented of his sin and God forgave him. For the rest of his life, **David** followed and obeyed God, even in difficult times.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1732, G11380

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 4:4](#))

devour

Definition:

The term "devour" means to eat or consume in an aggressive manner.

- Using this word in a figurative sense, Paul warned believers to not devour one another, meaning to not attack or destroy each other with words or actions (Galatians 5:15).
- Also in a figurative sense, the term "devour" is often used with a meaning of "completely destroy" as when talking about nations devouring each other or a fire devouring buildings and people.
- This term could also be translated as "completely consume" or "totally destroy."

(See also: consume)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 5:8
- Amos 1:10
- Exodus 24:17
- Ezekiel 16:20
- Luke 15:30
- Matthew 23:13-15
- Psalms 21:9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0398, H0399, H0400, H0402, H1104, H1105, H3216, H3615, H3857, H3898, H7462, H7602, G20680, G26660, G27190, G53150

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 4:16; 5:1](#))

En Gedi

Definition:

En Gedi was the name of a city in the wilderness of Judah southeast of Jerusalem.

- En Gedi was located on the western bank of the Salt Sea.
- Part of its name means “fountain,” referring to a spring of water that flows down from the city into the sea.
- En Gedi was known for having beautiful vineyards and other fertile land, probably due to the continual watering by the fountain of water.
- There were strongholds in En Gedi which David fled to when he was being chased by King Saul.

(See also: [David](#), desert, fountain, Judah, rest, Salt Sea, Saul (OT), stronghold, [vineyard](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 20:2
- Song of Songs 1:12-14

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5872

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:14](#))

ewe, ram, sheep, sheepfold, sheepshearers, sheepskins

Definition:

A “sheep” is a medium-sized animal with four legs that has wool all over its body. A male sheep is called a “ram.” A female sheep is called a “ewe.” The plural of “sheep” is also “sheep.”

- A baby sheep is called a “lamb.”
- The Israelites often used sheep for sacrifices, especially male sheep and young sheep.
- People eat meat from sheep and use their wool to make clothing and other things.
- Sheep are very trusting, weak, and timid. They are easily influenced to wander away. They need a shepherd to lead them, protect them, and provide them with food, water, and shelter.
- In the Bible, people are compared to sheep who have God as their shepherd.

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: [Israel](#), lamb, sacrifice, shepherd)

Bible References:

- Acts 8:32
- Genesis 30:32
- John 2:14
- Luke 15:5
- Mark 6:34
- Matthew 9:36
- Matthew 10:6
- Matthew 12:12
- Matthew 25:33

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:12** One day while Moses was taking care of his **sheep**, he saw a bush that was on fire.
- **17:2** David was a shepherd from the town of Bethlehem. At different times while he was watching his father’s **sheep**, David had killed both a lion and a bear that had attacked the **sheep**.
- **30:3** To Jesus, these people were like **sheep** without a shepherd.
- **38:8** Jesus said, “All of you will all abandon me tonight. It is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd and all the **sheep** will be scattered.’”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0352, H1494, H1798, H2169, H3104, H3532, H3535, H3733, H3775, H5739, H5763, H6260, H6629, H6792, H7353, H7462, H7716, G41650, G42620, G42630

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:8](#))

face, facial

Definition:

The word “face” literally refers to the front part of a person’s head. This term also has several figurative meanings in the Bible.

- In the Bible, the term “face” is often used figuratively to mean a person’s presence, the front of an object, or the surface of something.
- When referring to a person, the term “face” is often used figuratively to mean the action of seeing, which can represent that person’s knowledge, perception, notice, attention, or judgment.
- In a physical sense, to “face” someone or something means to look in the direction of that person or thing.
- To “face each other” means to “look directly at each other.”
- Being “face to face” means that two people are seeing each other in person, at a close distance.
- When Jesus “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,” it means that he very firmly decided to go.
- To “set one’s face against” people or a city means to firmly decide to no longer support, or to reject that city or person.
- The expression “face of the land” refers to the surface of the earth and often is a general reference to the whole earth. For example, a “famine covering the face of the earth” refers to a widespread famine affecting many people living on earth.
- The figurative expression “do not hide your face from your people” means “do not reject your people” or “do not desert your people” or “do not stop taking care of your people.”

Translation Suggestions:

- If possible, it is best to keep the expression or use an expression in the project language that has a similar meaning.
- The term to “face” could be translated as to “turn toward” or to “look at directly” or to “look at the face of.”
- The expression “face to face” could be translated as “up close” or “right in front of” or “in the presence of.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “before his face” could be translated as “ahead of him” or “in front of him” or “before him” or “in his presence.”
- The expression “set his face toward” could be translated as “began traveling toward” or “firmly made up his mind to go to.”
- The expression “hide his face from” could be translated as “turn away from” or “stop helping or protecting” or “reject.”
- To “set his face against” a city or people could be translated as “look at with anger and condemn” or “refuse to accept” or “decide to reject” or “condemn and reject” or “pass judgment on.”
- The expression “say it to their face” could be translated as “say it to them directly” or “say it to them in their presence” or “say it to them in person.”
- The expression “on the face of the land” could also be translated as “throughout the land” or “over the whole land” or “living throughout the land.”

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 5:4
- Genesis 33:10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0600, H0639, H5869, H6440, H8389, G37990, G43830, G47500

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 7:4](#))

fire, firebrands, firepans, fireplace, firepot

Definition:

Fire is the heat, light, and flames that are produced when something is burned.

- Burning wood by fire turns the wood into ashes.
- Fire could also refer to lightning in the context of a storm or it being from heaven.
- The term “fire” is also used figuratively, usually referring to judgment or purification.
- The final judgment of unbelievers is in the fire of hell.
- Fire is used to refine gold and other metals. In the Bible, this process is used to explain how God refines people through difficult things that happen in their lives.
- The phrase “baptize with fire” could also be translated as “cause to experience suffering in order to be purified.”

(See also: pure)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 16:18-20
- 2 Kings 1:10
- 2 Thessalonians 1:8
- Acts 7:29-30
- John 15:6
- Luke 3:16
- Matthew 3:12
- Nehemiah 1:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0215, H0217, H0398, H0784, H0800, H0801, H1197, H1200, H1513, H2734, H3341, H3857, H4071, H4168, H5135, H6315, H8316, G04390, G04400, G10670, G27410, G44420, G44430, G44470, G44480, G44510, G53940, G54570

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 8:6](#))

flock, herd

Definition:

In the Bible, “flock” refers to a group of sheep or goats and “herd” refers to a group of cattle or pigs.

- Different languages may have different ways of naming groups of animals or birds.

Translation Suggestions

- Consider what terms are used in your language to refer to different groups of animals, and use the appropriate term for each kind of animal.
- If your language uses the same word to refer to both groups of sheep and cattle, then you may need to say “groups of sheep” where the Bible says only “flocks,” and “groups of cattle” where the Bible says only “herds.” Alternatively, if the Biblical context does not demand differentiation (if the text simply says “flocks and herds,” meaning all their domesticated animals) you may just use the one word once.

(See also: goat, cow, pig, [sheep](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 10:28-29
- 2 Chronicles 17:11
- Deuteronomy 14:22-23
- Luke 2:8-9
- Matthew 8:30
- Matthew 26:31

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0951, H1241, H2835, H4029, H4735, H4830, H5349, H5739, H6251, H6629, H7399, H7462, G00340, G41670, G41680

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:7](#))

found, founder, foundation

Definition:

The verb “found” means build, create, or lay a base for. The phrase “founded on” means supported by or based on. A “foundation” is the base of support on which something is built or created.

- The foundation of a house or building must be strong and dependable in order to support the entire structure.
- The term “foundation” can also refer to the beginning of something or to the time when something was first created.
- In a figurative sense, believers in Christ are compared to a building that is founded on the teachings of the apostles and prophets, with Christ himself being the cornerstone of the building.
- A “foundation stone” was a stone that was laid as part of the foundation. These stones were tested to make sure they were strong enough to support an entire building.

Translation Suggestions:

- The phrase “before the foundation of the world” could be translated as “before the creation of the world” or “before the time when the world first existed” or “before everything was first created.”
- The term “founded on” could be translated as “securely built on” or “firmly based on.”
- Depending on the context, “foundation” could be translated as “strong base” or “solid support” or “beginning” or “creation.”

(See also: cornerstone, create)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 6:37-38
- 2 Chronicles 3:1-3
- Ezekiel 13:13-14
- Luke 14:29
- Matthew 13:35
- Matthew 25:34

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0134, H0787, H2713, H3245, H3247, H3248, H4143, H4144, H4146, H4328, H4349, H4527, H8356, G23100, G23110, G26020

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 5:15](#))

frankincense

Definition:

Frankincense is a fragrant spice made from tree resin. It is used to make perfumes and incense.

- In Bible times, frankincense was an important spice used to prepare dead bodies for burial.
- This spice is also valuable for its healing and calming qualities.
- When learned men came from an eastern country to visit baby Jesus in Bethlehem, frankincense was one of the three gifts they brought him.

(See also: Bethlehem, learned men)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:28-29
- Exodus 30:34-36
- Matthew 2:11-12
- Numbers 5:15

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3828, G30300

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 4:6](#))

fruit, fruitful, unfruitful

Definition:

The term “fruit” literally refers to the part of a plant that can be eaten. Something that is “fruitful” has a lot of fruit. These terms are also used figuratively in the Bible.

- The Bible often uses “fruit” to refer to a person’s actions. Just as fruit on a tree shows what kind of tree it is, in the same way a person’s words and actions reveal what his character is like.
- A person can produce good or bad spiritual fruit, but the term “fruitful” always has the positive meaning of producing much good fruit.
- The term “fruitful” is also used figuratively to mean “prosperous.” This often refers to having many children and descendants, as well as having plenty of food and other wealth.
- In general, the expression “fruit of” refers to anything that comes from or that is produced by something else. For example, the “fruit of wisdom” refers to the good things that come from being wise.
- The expression “fruit of the land” refers generally to everything that the land produces for people to eat. This includes not only fruits such as grapes or dates, but also vegetables, nuts, and grains.
- The figurative expression “fruit of the Spirit” refers to godly qualities that the Holy Spirit produces in the lives of people who obey him.
- The expression “fruit of the womb” refers to “what the womb produces”—that is children.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term using the general word for “fruit” that is commonly used in the project language to refer to the edible fruit of a fruit tree. In many languages it may be more natural to use the plural “fruits” whenever it refers to more than one fruit.
- Depending on the context, the term “fruitful” could be translated as “producing much spiritual fruit” or “having many children” or “prosperous.”
- The expression “fruit of the land” could also be translated as “food that the land produces” or “food crops that are growing in that region.”
- When God created animals and people, he commanded them to “be fruitful and multiply,” which refers to having many offspring. This could also be translated as “have many offspring” or “have many children and descendants” or “have many children so that you will have many descendants.”
- The expression “fruit of the womb” could be translated as “what the womb produces” or “children a woman gives birth to” or just “children.” When Elizabeth says to Mary “blessed is the fruit of your womb,” she means “blessed is the child you will give birth to.” The project language may also have a different expression for this.
- Another expression “fruit of the vine,” could be translated as “vine fruit” or “grapes.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “will be more fruitful” could also be translated as “will produce more fruit” or “will have more children” or “will be prosperous.”
- The apostle Paul’s expression “fruitful labor” could be translated as “work that brings very good results” or “efforts that result in many people believing in Jesus.”
- The “fruit of the Spirit” could also be translated as “works that the Holy Spirit produces” or “words and actions that show that the Holy Spirit is working in someone.”

(See also: descendant, grain, grape, Holy Spirit, [vine](#), womb)

Bible References:

- Galatians 5:23
- Genesis 1:11
- Luke 8:15
- Matthew 3:8

- Matthew 7:17

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0004, H1061, H1063, H1069, H2233, H2981, H3581, H3759, H3899, H3978, H4022, H5108, H6509, H6529, H7019, H8393, H8570, G10810, G25900, G25920, G25930, G37030, G50520, G53520

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 2:3](#); [4:13](#); [4:16](#); [8:12](#))

gate, gate bars, gatekeeper, gateposts, gateway

Definition:

The term "gate" refers to an access point in a fence, wall, or other kind of barrier that surrounds a house, property, city, etc.

- A city gate could be opened to allow people, animals, and cargo to travel in and out of the city.
- To protect the city, its walls and gates were thick and strong. Gates were closed and locked with a metal or wooden bar to prevent enemy soldiers from entering the city.
- A "bar" for a gate refers to a wood or metal bar that can be moved into place so that the doors of the gate cannot be opened from the outside.
- In Bible times, a city gate was often the social center for that town or city. It was a place where news of current events was exchanged between people, where business transactions occurred, and where civil judgments were made.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate "gate" could be "door" or "wall opening" or "barrier" or "entranceway."
- The phrase "bars of the gate" could be translated as "gate bolts" or "wooden beams to lock the gate" or "metal locking rods of the gate."

Bible References:

- Acts 9:24
- Acts 10:18
- Deuteronomy 21:18-19
- Genesis 19:1
- Genesis 24:60
- Matthew 7:13

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1817, H5592, H6607, H8179, G23740, G44390, G44400

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 7:4; 8:9](#))

Gilead, Gileadite

Definition:

Gilead was the name of a mountainous region east of the Jordan river where the Israelite tribes of Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh lived.

- This region was also referred to as the “hill country of Gilead” or “Mount Gilead.”
- “Gilead” was also the name of several men in the Old Testament. One of these men was the grandson of Manasseh. Another Gilead was the father of Jephthah.

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: Gad, Jephthah, Manasseh, Reuben, twelve tribes of Israel)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 2:22
- 1 Samuel 11:1
- Amos 1:3
- Deuteronomy 2:36-37
- Genesis 31:21
- Genesis 37:25-26

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1568, H1569

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 6:5](#))

gird, girded, wrapped around, tied up, belt, tuck in belt, put belt around

Definition:

The term “gird” means to fasten something around something else. It often refers to using a belt or sash around the waist to keep a robe or tunic in place.

- The common biblical phrase, “gird up the loins” refers to tucking the bottom of a garment into a belt to allow a person to move more freely, usually to do work.
- This phrase can also mean “get ready to work” or to be prepared to do something difficult.
- The expression “gird up the loins” could be translated using an expression in the target language that has the same meaning. Or it could be translated figuratively as “prepare yourself for action” or “get yourself ready.”
- The term “girded with” could be translated as “encircled by” or “wrapped with” or “belted with.”

(See also: loins)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 1:13
- Job 38:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0640, H0247, H2290, H2296, H8151, G03280, G12410, G40240

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 7:5](#))

gold, golden

Definition:

Gold is a yellow, high quality metal that was used for making jewelry and religious objects. It was the most valuable metal in ancient times.

- In Bible times, many different kinds of objects were made out of solid gold or were covered with a thin layer of gold.
- These objects included earrings and other jewelry, and idols, altars, and other objects used in the tabernacle or temple, such as the ark of the covenant.
- In Old Testament times, gold was used as a means of exchange in buying and selling. It was weighed on a scale to determine its value.
- Later on, gold and other metals such as silver were used to make coins to use in buying and selling
- When referring to something that is not solid gold, but only has a thin covering of gold, the term “golden” or “gold-covered” or “gold-overlaid” could also be used.
- Sometimes an object is described as “gold-colored,” which means it has the yellow color of gold, but may not actually be made of gold.

(See also: altar, ark of the covenant, false god, [silver](#), [tabernacle](#), temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 1:7
- 1 Timothy 2:8-10
- 2 Chronicles 1:15
- Acts 3:6
- Daniel 2:32

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1220, H1722, H2091, H2742, H3800, H5458, H6884, H6885, G55520, G55530, G55540, G55570

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:11](#); [3:10](#); [5:14](#))

good, right, pleasant, better, best

Definition:

The term “good” generally refers to a positive evaluation of the quality of something or someone, often in a moral or emotional sense. However, the term conveys various nuances throughout the Bible depending on the context.

- Something that is “good” could be emotionally pleasant, morally right, excellent, helpful, suitable, or profitable.
- In the Bible, the general meaning of “good” is often contrasted with “evil.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The general term for “good” in the target language should be used wherever this general meaning is accurate and natural, especially in contexts where it is contrasted to evil.
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this term could include “kind” or “excellent” or “pleasing to God” or “righteous” or “morally upright” or “profitable.”
- “Good land” could be translated as “fertile land” or “productive land”; a “good crop” could be translated as a “plentiful harvest” or “large amount of crops.”
- The phrase “do good to” means to do something that benefits others and could be translated as “be kind to” or “help” or “benefit” someone or “cause someone to prosper.”
- To “do good on the Sabbath” means to “do things that help others on the Sabbath.”
- Depending on the context, ways to translate the term “goodness” could include “blessing” or “kindness” or “moral perfection” or “righteousness” or “purity.”

(See also: righteous, prosper, evil)

Bible References:

- Galatians 5:22-24
- Genesis 1:12
- Genesis 2:9
- Genesis 2:17
- James 3:13
- Romans 2:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:4** God saw that what he had created was **good**.
- **1:11** God planted the tree of the knowledge of **good** and evil.
- **1:12** Then God said, “It is not **good** for man to be alone.”
- **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.”
- **8:12** “You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, but God used the evil for **good!**”
- **14:15** Joshua was a **good** leader because he trusted and obeyed God.
- **18:13** Some of these kings were **good** men who ruled justly and worshiped God.
- **28:1** “**Good** teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me ‘**good**?’ There is only one who is **good**, and that is God.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0117, H0145, H0155, H0202, H0239, H0410, H1580, H1926, H1935, H2532, H2617, H2623, H2869, H2895, H2896, H2898, H3190, H3191, H3276, H3474, H3788, H3966, H4261, H4399, H5232, H5750, H6287, H6643, H6743, H7075, H7368, H7399, H7443, H7999, H8231, H8232, H8233, H8389, H8458, G00140, G00150, G00180, G00190, G05150, G07440, G08650, G09790, G13800, G20950, G20970, G21060, G21070, G21080, G21090, G21140, G21150, G21330, G21400, G21620, G21630, G21740, G22930, G25650, G25670, G25700, G25730, G28870, G29860, G31400, G36170, G37760, G41470, G46320, G46740, G48510, G52230, G52240, G53580, G55420, G55430, G55440

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:2](#); [1:3](#); [7:9](#))

hand

Definition:

The word “hand” refers to the part of the body at the end of the arm. This term is often used figuratively to refer to a person’s power, control, or action, whether it be in reference to God or in reference to a human person.

Some of the various uses of the term “hand” include the following:

- The term “hand” can be used figuratively to refer to the position of being “beside” a person, an object, or a location.
- To “lay a hand on” means to “harm.” To “save from the hand of” means to prevent someone from being harmed by another person.
- The position of being “on the right hand” means “on the right side” or “to the right.”
- The expression “by the hand of” someone means “by” or “through” the action of that person. For example, the phrase “by the hand of the Lord” means that God caused something to happen.
- Expressions such as “hand over to” or “deliver into the hands of” refer to causing someone to be under the control or power of someone else.
- The term “laying on of hands” can refer to placing a hand on a person in order to dedicate that person to God’s service, to pray for healing, or to ask God to bless that person.
- When Paul says “written by my hand,” it means that he himself wrote that part of the letter rather than speaking it to someone else to write down.

Translation Suggestions

- These expressions and other figures of speech could be translated using other figurative expressions that have the same meaning. Or the meaning could be translated using direct, literal language (see examples above).
- The expression “handed him the scroll” could also be translated as “gave him the scroll” or “put the scroll in his hand.” It was not given to him permanently, but just for the purpose of using it at that time.
- An expression such as “delivered them into the hands of their enemies” or “handed them over to their enemies,” could be translated as “allowed their enemies to conquer them” or “caused them to be captured by their enemies” or “empowered their enemies to gain control over them.”
- To “die by the hand of” could be translated as “be killed by.”
- The expression “on the right hand of” could be translated as “on the right side of.”
- In regard to Jesus being “seated at the right hand of God,” if this does not communicate in the language that it refers to a position of high honor and equal authority, a different expression with that meaning could be used. Or a short explanation could be added: “on the right side of God, in the position of highest authority.”

(See also: power, right hand, honor, bless)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:25
- Acts 8:17
- Acts 11:21
- Genesis 9:5
- Genesis 14:20
- John 3:35
- Mark 7:32
- Matthew 6:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2026, H2651, H2947, H2948, H3027, H3028, H3225, H3231, H3233, H3709, H7126, H7138, H8040, H8042, H8168, G07100, G11880, G14480, G14510, G21760, G29020, G40840, G44740, G54950, G54960, G54970

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 5:4](#); [5:5](#); [5:14](#); [7:1](#))

hang, hung

Definition:

The term “hang” means to suspend something or someone above the ground.

- In modern times, death by hanging is usually done by tying a rope around a person’s neck and suspending him from an elevated object until he dies. This elevated object can be any number of things, such as a tree or a gallows, that is, a platform built specifically for the purpose of hanging a person in order to kill him.
- In biblical times, however, ancient cultures may not have killed people by hanging in precisely the same way. For example, Jesus died while hanging on a wooden cross (sometimes called a “tree”), but there was nothing around his neck. The soldiers suspended him by nailing his hands (or wrists) and his feet to the cross.
- Some ancient cultures “hung” a person by impaling him on a wooden pole in such a way that he was suspended above the ground so that he could not escape. The person would be left there until he died.
- For many references to death by “hanging” in the Bible, the specific means of death is unknown.

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 17:23
- Acts 10:39
- Galatians 3:13
- Genesis 40:22
- Matthew 27:3-5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2614, H3363, H8518, G05190

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 4:4](#))

head

Definition:

The word “head” refers to the uppermost body part of a human body, above the neck. This term is often used figuratively to mean many different things, including “top,” “first,” “beginning,” “source,” and other concepts.

Some examples of various uses of the term “head” include:

- The expression “no razor will ever touch his head” means that he should never cut or shave his hair.
- The expression “let their blood be on his own head” means that the man is responsible for their deaths and will receive the punishment for that.
- The expression “heads of grain” refers to the top part of wheat or barley plants that contains the seeds. Similarly, the expression “head of a mountain” refers to the top part of the mountain.
- The term “head” can also refer to the beginning or source of something, or the first in a series of things (can be objects or people).
- Often the term “head” refers to the most important person in a group or to a person who is in authority over others. For example, the phrase “You have made me the head over nations” means “You have made me the ruler...” or “You have given me authority over....”

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, the term “head” could be translated as “authority” or “ruler” or “the one who is responsible for.”
- The expression “will be on his own head” could be translated as “will be on him” or “he will be punished for” or “he will be held responsible for” or “he will be considered guilty for.”
- Depending on the context, some other ways to translate this term might include “top” or “beginning” or “source” or “leader.”

(See also: chief, grain)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 1:51-54
- 1 Kings 8:1-2
- 1 Samuel 9:22
- Colossians 2:10
- Colossians 2:19
- Numbers 1:4

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0441, H1270, H1538, H3852, H4425, H4761, H4763, H5110, H5324, H6285, H6287, H6797, H6915, H6936, H7139, H7144, H7146, H7217, H7226, H7218, H7541, H7636, H7641, H7872, G03460, G07550, G27750, G27760, G47190

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 4:8](#); [4:14](#); [5:11](#); [7:5](#); [8:3](#))

heart

Definition:

The term “heart” refers to the internal bodily organ that pumps blood throughout the body in people and animals. However, in the Bible the term “heart” is often used figuratively to refer to a person’s thoughts, emotions, desires, or will.

- To have a “hard heart” is a common expression that means a person stubbornly refuses to obey God.
- The expressions “with all my heart” or “with my whole heart” mean to do something with complete sincerity, commitment, or willingness, holding nothing back.
- The expression “take it to heart” means to treat something seriously and apply it to one’s life.
- The term “brokenhearted” describes a person who is very sad. That person has been deeply hurt emotionally.

Translation Suggestions

- Some languages use a different body part such as “stomach” or “liver” to refer to these ideas.
- Other languages may use one word to express some of these concepts and another word to express others.
- If “heart” or other body part does not have this meaning, some languages may need to express this literally with terms such as “thoughts” or “emotions” or “desires.”
- Depending on the context, “with all my heart” or “with my whole heart” could be translated as “with all my energy” or “with complete dedication” or “completely” or “with total commitment.”
- The expression “take it to heart” could be translated as “treat it seriously” or “carefully think about it.”
- The expression “hard-hearted” could also be translated as “stubbornly rebellious” or “refusing to obey” or “continually disobeying God.”
- Ways to translate “brokenhearted” could include “very sad” or “feeling deeply hurt.”

(See also: hard)

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:17
- 1 Thessalonians 2:4
- 2 Thessalonians 3:13-15
- Acts 8:22
- Acts 15:9
- Luke 8:15
- Mark 2:6
- Matthew 5:8
- Matthew 22:37

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1079, H2436, H2504, H2910, H3519, H3629, H3820, H3821, H3823, H3824, H3825, H3826, H4578, H5315, H5640, H7130, H7307, H7356, H7907, G06740, G12820, G12710, G21330, G25880, G25890, G46410, G46980, G55900

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 3:11](#); [8:6](#))

house, household

Definition:

The term “house” refers to a small building, shelter, or tent, usually the place where a family sleeps. The term is often used figuratively in the Bible to mean various concepts such as “household” or “descendants,” etc.

- Sometimes the term “house” means “household,” referring to all the people who live together in one house or multi-structure home compound (whether buildings or tents), including family members and all their servants.
- Sometimes the term “house” means “family” or “descendants,” referring to all the people related to or descended from a particular person. For example, the phrase “house of David” refers to all the descendants of King David.
- The terms “house of God” and “house of Yahweh” refer to the tabernacle or temple. These expressions can also refer generally to a central place where Yahweh was worshipped.
- The phrase “house of Israel” can refer generally to the entire nation of Israel or more specifically to the tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, “house” could be translated as “household” or “people” or “family” or “descendants” or “temple” or “dwelling place.”
- The phrase “house of David” could be translated as “clan of David” or “family of David” or “descendants of David.” Related expressions could be translated in a similar way.
- Different ways to translate “house of Israel” could include “people of Israel” or “Israel’s descendants” or “Israelites.”
- The phrase “house of Yahweh” could be translated as “Yahweh’s temple” or “place where Yahweh is worshipped” or “place where Yahweh meets with his people” or “where Yahweh dwells.” The phrase “house of God” could be translated in a similar way.

(See also: descendant, house of God, [tabernacle](#), temple, house of David, kingdom of Israel)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:42
- Acts 7:49
- Genesis 39:4
- Genesis 41:40
- Luke 8:39
- Matthew 10:6
- Matthew 15:24

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1004, H1005, G36090, G36130, G36140, G36240

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:17](#); [2:4](#); [3:4](#); [8:2](#); [8:7](#))

Israel, Israelites

Facts:

The term "Israel" is the name that God gave to Jacob. Often it refers to the nation that is descended from him.

- The name Israel probably means "He struggles with God."
- The descendants of Jacob became known as the "sons of Israel" or the "people of Israel" or the "nation of Israel" or the "Israelites."
- God formed his covenant with the people of Israel. They were his chosen people.
- The nation of Israel consisted of twelve tribes.
- Soon after King Solomon died, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the southern kingdom, called "Judah," and the northern kingdom, called "Israel."
- Often the term "Israel" can be translated as "the people of Israel" or "the nation of Israel," depending on the context.

(See also: Jacob, kingdom of Israel, Judah, nation, twelve tribes of Israel)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 10:1
- 1 Kings 8:2
- Acts 2:36
- Acts 7:24
- Acts 13:23
- John 1:49-51
- Luke 24:21
- Mark 12:29
- Matthew 2:6
- Matthew 27:9
- Philippians 3:4-5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:15** The descendants of the twelve sons became the twelve tribes of **Israel**.
- **9:3** The Egyptians forced the **Israelites** to build many buildings and even whole cities.
- **9:5** A certain **Israelite** woman gave birth to a baby boy.
- **10:1** They said, "This is what the God of **Israel** says, 'Let my people go!'"
- **14:12** But despite all this, the people of *_Israel_* complained and grumbled against God and against Moses.
- **15:9** God fought for **Israel** that day. He caused the Amorites to be confused and he sent large hailstones that killed many of the Amorites.
- **15:12** After this battle, God gave each tribe of **Israel** *its own section of the Promised Land. Then God gave _Israel_ peace along all its borders.*
- **16:16** So God punished *_Israel_* again for worshipping idols.
- **43:6** "Men of **Israel**, Jesus was a man who did many mighty signs and wonders by the power of God, as you have seen and already know."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3478, H3479, H3481, H3482, G09350, G24740, G24750

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 3:7](#))

Jerusalem

Facts:

Jerusalem was originally an ancient Canaanite city that later became the most important city in Israel. It is located about 34 kilometers west of the Salt Sea and just north of Bethlehem. It is still the capital city of Israel today.

- The name "Jerusalem" is first mentioned in the book of Joshua. Other Old Testament names for this city include "Salem" "city of Jebus," and "Zion." Both "Jerusalem" and "Salem," have the root meaning of "peace."
- Jerusalem was originally a Jebusite fortress called "Zion" which King David captured and made into his capital city.
- It was in Jerusalem that David's son Solomon built the first temple in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, which was the mountain where Abraham had offered his son Isaac to God. The temple was rebuilt there after it was destroyed by the Babylonians.
- Because the temple was in Jerusalem, the major Jewish festivals were celebrated there.
- People normally referred to going "up" to Jerusalem since it is located in the mountains.

(See also: Babylon, Christ, [David](#), Jebusites, Jesus, [Solomon](#), temple, [Zion](#))

Bible References:

- Galatians 4:26-27
- John 2:13
- Luke 4:9-11
- Luke 13:5
- Mark 3:7-8
- Mark 3:20-22
- Matthew 3:6
- Matthew 4:23-25
- Matthew 20:17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:5** David conquered **Jerusalem** and made it his capital city.
- **18:2** In **Jerusalem**, Solomon built the Temple for which his father David had planned and gathered materials.
- **20:7** They (Babylonians) captured the city of **Jerusalem**, destroyed the Temple, and took away all the treasures of the city and the Temple.
- **20:12** So, after seventy years in exile, a small group of Jews returned to the city of **Jerusalem** in Judah.
- **38:1** About three years after Jesus first began preaching and teaching publicly, Jesus told his disciples that he wanted to celebrate this Passover with them in **Jerusalem**, and that he would be killed there.
- **38:2** After Jesus and the disciples arrived in **Jerusalem**, Judas went to the Jewish leaders and offered to betray Jesus to them in exchange for money.
- **42:8** "It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to receive forgiveness for their sins. They will do this starting in **Jerusalem**, and then go to all people groups everywhere."
- **42:11** Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he told his disciples, "Stay in **Jerusalem** until you receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3389, H3390, G24140, G24150, G24190

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:5](#); [2:7](#); [3:5](#); [3:10](#); [5:8](#); [5:16](#); [8:4](#))

joy, joyful, rejoice, glad

Definition:

joy

The term “joy” refers to a feeling of delight or deep satisfaction. The related term “joyful” describes a person who feels very glad and is full of deep happiness.

- A person feels joy when he has a deep sense that what he is experiencing is very good.
- God is the one who gives true joy to people.
- Having joy does not depend on pleasant circumstances. God can give people joy even when very difficult things are happening in their lives.
- Sometimes places are described as joyful, such as houses or cities. This means that the people who live there are joyful.

rejoice

The term “rejoice” means to be full of joy and gladness.

- This term often refers to being very happy about the good things that God has done.
- It could be translated as “be very happy” or “be very glad” or “be full of joy.”
- When Mary said “my soul rejoices in God my Savior,” she meant “God my Savior has made me very happy” or “I feel so joyful because of what God my Savior has done for me.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “joy” could also be translated as “gladness” or “delight” or “great happiness.”
- The phrase, “be joyful” could be translated as “rejoice” or “be very glad” or it could be translated “be very happy in God’s goodness.”
- A person who is joyful could be described as “very happy” or “delighted” or “deeply glad.”
- A phrase such as “make a joyful shout” could be translated as “shout in a way that shows you are very happy.”
- A “joyful city” or “joyful house” could be translated as “city where joyful people live” or “house full of joyful people” or “city whose people are very happy.” (See: [metonymy](#))

Bible References:

- Nehemiah 8:10
- Psalm 48:2
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Jeremiah 15:15-16
- Matthew 2:9-10
- Luke 15:7
- Luke 19:37-38
- John 3:29
- Acts 16:32-34
- Romans 5:1-2
- Romans 15:30-32
- Galatians 5:23
- Philippians 4:10-13

- 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16
- Philemon 1:4-7
- James 1:2
- 3 John 1:1-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **33:7** "The rocky ground is a person who hears God's word and accepts it with **joy**."
- **34:4** "The kingdom of God is also like hidden treasure that someone hid in a field.. Another man found the treasure and then buried it again. He was so filled with **joy**, that he went and sold everything he had and used the money to buy that field."
- **41:7** The women were full of fear and great **joy**. They ran to tell the disciples the good news.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1523, H1524, H1525, H2302, H2304, H2305, H2654, H2898, H4885, H5937, H5947, H5965, H5970, H6342, H6670, H7440, H7442, H7444, H7445, H7797, H7832, H8055, H8056, H8057, H8342, H8643, G00200, G00210, G21650, G21670, G27440, G46400, G47960, G49130, G54630, G54790

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:4; 3:11](#))

Kedar

Facts:

Kedar was Ishmael's second son. It was also an important city, which was probably named after the man.

- The city of Kedar is located in the northern part of Arabia near the southern border of Palestine. In Bible times, it was known for its greatness and beauty.
- The descendants of Kedar formed a large people group that is also called "Kedar."
- The phrase "dark tents of Kedar" refers to the black goathair tents the people of Kedar lived in.
- These people raised sheep and goats. They also used camels for transporting things.
- In the Bible, the phrase "the glory of Kedar" refers to the greatness of that city and its people.

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: Arabia, goat, Ishmael, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- Song of Songs 1:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6938

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:5](#))

king, kingship

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “king” refers to a man who is the supreme ruler of a particular group of people or a particular region of land (or both).

- In biblical times, a king was usually chosen to rule on the basis of family relation to the previous king(s). When a king died, usually his oldest son became the next king.
- The Bible often refers to God as a king who rules over the entire universe (in a general sense) and over his people (in a specific sense).
- The New Testament refers to Jesus as a king in various ways, including: “king of the Jews;” “king of Israel;” and “king of kings.”
- Depending on the context, the term “king” might also be translated as “supreme chief” or “sovereign ruler.”
- The phrase “king of kings” might be translated as “king who rules over all other kings” or “supreme ruler who has authority over all other rulers.”

(See also: authority, Herod Antipas, kingdom, kingdom of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 6:15-16
- 2 Kings 5:18
- 2 Samuel 5:3
- Acts 7:9-10
- Acts 13:22
- John 1:49-51
- Luke 1:5
- Luke 22:24-25
- Matthew 5:35
- Matthew 14:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:6** One night, the Pharaoh, which is what the Egyptians called their kings, had two dreams that disturbed him greatly.
- **16:1** The Israelites had no **king**, so everyone did what they thought was right for them.
- **16:18** Finally, the people asked God for a **king** like all the other nations had.
- **17:5** Eventually, Saul died in battle, and David became **king** of Israel. He was a good **king**, and the people loved him.
- **21:6** God’s prophets also said that the Messiah would be a prophet, a priest, and a **king**.
- **48:14** David was the **king** of Israel, but Jesus is the **king** of the entire universe!

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4427, H4428, H4430, G09350, G09360

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:4](#); [3:9](#); [3:11](#); [7:5](#))

know, knowledge, unknown, distinguish

Definition:

The term “know” and “knowledge” means generally to understand something or someone. It can also mean to be aware of a fact or to be familiar with a person. The expression “to make known” means to tell information.

- The term “knowledge” refers to information that people know. It can apply to knowing physical concepts or abstract concepts.
- To “know about” God means to understand facts about him because of what he has revealed to us.
- To “know” God means to have a relationship with him. This also applies to knowing people.
- To know God’s will means to be aware of what he has commanded, or to understand what he wants a person to do.
- To “know the Law” means to be aware of what God has commanded or to understand what God has instructed in the laws he gave to Moses.
- Sometimes “knowledge” is used as a synonym for “wisdom,” which includes living in a way that is pleasing to God.
- The “knowledge of God” is sometimes used as a synonym for the “fear of Yahweh.”
- When used of a man and a woman to “know” is often an euphemism that refers to having sexual intercourse.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “know” could include “understand” or “be familiar with” or “be aware of” or “be acquainted with” or “be in relationship with.”
- In the context of understanding the difference between two things, the term is usually translated as “distinguish.” When used in this way, the term is often followed by the preposition “between.”
- Some languages have two different words for “know,” one for knowing facts and one for knowing a person and having a relationship with him.
- The term “make known” could be translated as “cause people to know” or “reveal” or “tell about” or “explain.”
- To “know about” something could be translated as “be aware of” or “be familiar with.”
- The expression “know how to” means to understand the process or method of getting something done. It could also be translated as “be able to” or “have the skill to.”
- The term “knowledge” could also be translated as “what is known” or “wisdom” or “understanding,” depending on the context.

(See also: law, reveal, understand, wise)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 2:12-13
- 1 Samuel 17:46
- 2 Corinthians 2:15
- 2 Peter 1:3-4
- Deuteronomy 4:39-40
- Genesis 19:5
- Luke 1:77

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1843, H1844, H1847, H1875, H3045, H3046, H4093, H4486, H5046, H5234, H5475, H5869, G00500, G00560, G10970, G11070, G11080, G14920, G19210, G19220, G19870, G24670, G25890, G42670, G48940

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:8](#); [3:11](#); [5:6](#); [6:12](#); [7:11](#))

Lebanon

Facts:

Lebanon is a beautiful mountainous region located along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Israel. In Bible times this region was thickly wooded with fir trees, such as cedar and cypress.

- King Solomon sent workers to Lebanon to harvest cedar trees for use in building God's temple.
- Ancient Lebanon was inhabited by Phoenician people, who were skilled builders of ships that were used for a successful trading industry.
- The cities of Tyre and Sidon were located in Lebanon. It was in these cities that a valuable purple dye was first used.

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [cedar](#), cypress, fir, Phoenicia)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 4:32-34
- 2 Chronicles 2:8-10
- Deuteronomy 1:7-8
- Psalms 29:3-5
- Zechariah 10:8-10

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3844

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 3:9](#); [4:8](#); [4:11](#); [4:15](#); [5:15](#); [7:4](#))

life, live, living, alive

Definition:

The term “life” refers to being physically alive as opposed to being physically dead.

1. Physical life

- A “life” can also refer to an individual person as in “a life was saved”.
- Sometimes the word “life” refers to the experience of living as in, “his life was enjoyable.”
- It can also refer to a person’s lifespan, as in the expression, “the end of his life.”
- The term “living” may refer to being physically alive, as in “my mother is still living.” It may also refer to dwelling somewhere as in, “they were living in the city.”
- In the Bible, the concept of “life” is often contrasted with the concept of “death.”

2. Eternal life

- A person has eternal life when he believes in Jesus. God gives that person a transformed life with the Holy Spirit living in him.
- The opposite of eternal life is eternal death, which means being separated from God and experiencing eternal punishment.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “life” can be translated as “existence” or “person” or “soul” or “being” or “experience.”
- The term “live” could be translated by “dwell” or “reside” or “exist.”
- The expression “end of his life” could be translated as “when he stopped living.”
- The expression “spared their lives” could be translated as “allowed them to live” or “did not kill them.”
- The expression “they risked their lives” could be translated as “they put themselves in danger” or “they did something that could have killed them.”
- When the Bible text talks about eternal life, the term “life” could be translated in the following ways: “eternal life” or “God making us alive in our spirits” or “new life by God’s Spirit” or “being made alive in our inner self.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “give life” could also be translated as “cause to live” or “give eternal life” or “cause to live eternally.”

(See also: death, everlasting)

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 1:3
- Acts 10:42
- Genesis 2:7
- Genesis 7:22
- Hebrews 10:20
- Jeremiah 44:2
- John 1:4
- Judges 2:18
- Luke 12:23
- Matthew 7:14

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:10** So God took some dirt, formed it into a man, and breathed **life** into him.
- **3:1** After a long time, many people were *_living_* in the world.
- **8:13** When Joseph's brothers returned home and told their father, Jacob, that Joseph was still **alive**, he was very happy.
- **17:9** However, toward the end of his [David's] **life** he sinned terribly before God.
- **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**?"
- **35:5** Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection and the **Life**."
- **44:5** "You are the ones who told the Roman governor to kill Jesus. You killed the author of **life**, but God raised him from the dead."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1934, H2416, H2417, H2421, H2425, H5315, G01980, G02220, G02270, G08060, G05900

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:7](#); [3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:3](#); [3:4](#); [4:15](#); [5:6](#); [6:12](#))

love, beloved

Definition:

To love another person is to care for that person and do things that will benefit him. There are different meanings for "love" some languages may express using different words:

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on the good of others even when it doesn't benefit oneself. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do. God himself is love and is the source of true love.

- Jesus showed this kind of love by sacrificing his life in order to rescue us from sin and death. He also taught his followers to love others sacrificially.
- When people love others with this kind of love, they act in ways that show they are thinking of what will cause the others to thrive. This kind of love especially includes forgiving others.
- In the ULT, the word "love" refers to this kind of sacrificial love, unless a Translation Note indicates a different meaning.

Another word in the New Testament refers to brotherly love, or love for a friend or family member.

- This term refers to natural human love between friends or relatives.
- The term can also be used in such contexts as, "They love to sit in the most important seats at a banquet." This means that they "like very much" or "greatly desire" to do that.

The word "love" can also refer to romantic love between a man and a woman.

Translation Suggestions:

- Unless indicated otherwise in a Translation Note, the word "love" in the ULT refers to the kind of sacrificial love that comes from God.
- Some languages may have a special word for the kind of unselfish, sacrificial love that God has. Ways to translate this might include, "devoted, faithful caring" or "care for unselfishly" or "love from God." Make sure that the word used to translate God's love can include giving up one's own interests to benefit others and loving others no matter what they do.
- Sometimes the English word "love" describes the deep caring that people have for friends and family members. Some languages might translate this with a word or phrase that means "like very much" or "care for" or "have strong affection for."
- In contexts where the word "love" is used to express a strong preference for something, this could be translated by "strongly prefer" or "like very much" or "greatly desire."
- Some languages may also have a separate word that refers to romantic or sexual love between a husband and wife.
- Many languages must express "love" as an action. So for example, they might translate "love is patient, love is kind" as, "when a person loves someone, he is patient with him and kind to him."

(See also: covenant, death, sacrifice, save, sin)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 13:7
- 1 John 3:2
- 1 Thessalonians 4:10
- Galatians 5:23
- Genesis 29:18
- Isaiah 56:6
- Jeremiah 2:2

- John 3:16
- Matthew 10:37
- Nehemiah 9:32-34
- Philippians 1:9
- Song of Songs 1:2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:2** The law expert replied that God's law says, "**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. And **love** your neighbor as yourself."
- **33:8** "The thorny ground is a person who hears God's word, but, as time passes, the cares, riches, and pleasures of life choke out his **love** for God."
- **36:5** As Peter was talking, a bright cloud came down on top of them and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son whom I **love**."
- **39:10** "Everyone who **loves** the truth listens to me."
- **47:1** She (Lydia) **loved** and worshiped God.
- **48:1** When God created the world, everything was perfect. There was no sin. Adam and Eve **loved** each other, and they **loved** God.
- **49:3** He (Jesus) taught that you need to **love** other people the same way you love yourself.
- **49:4** He (Jesus) also taught that you need to **love** God more than you **love** anything else, including your wealth.
- **49:7** Jesus taught that God **loves** sinners very much.
- **49:9** But God **loved** everyone in the world so much that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be punished for his sins, but will live with God forever.
- **49:13** God **loves** you and wants you to believe in Jesus so he can have a close relationship with you.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0157, H0158, H0159, H0160, H2245, H2617, H2836, H3039, H4261, H5689, H5690, H5691, H7355, H7356, H7453, H7474, G00250, G00260, G53600, G53610, G53620, G53630, G53650, G53670, G53680, G53690, G53770, G53810, G53820, G53830, G53880

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:3; 1:4](#))

might, mighty, mighty works

Definition:

The terms “mighty” and “might” refer to having great strength or power.

- Often the word “might” is another word for “strength.” When talking about God, it can mean “power.”
- The phrase “mighty men” often refers to men who are courageous and victorious in battle. David’s band of faithful men who helped protect and defend him were often called “mighty men.”
- God is also referred to as the “mighty one.”
- The phrase “mighty works” usually refers to the amazing things God does, especially miracles.
- This term is related to the term “almighty,” which is a common description for God, meaning that he has complete power.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “mighty” could be translated as “powerful” or “amazing” or “very strong.”
- The phrase “his might” could be translated as “his strength” or “his power.”
- In Acts 7, Moses is described as a man who was “mighty in word and deed.” This could be translated as “Moses spoke powerful words from God and did miraculous things” or “Moses spoke God’s word powerfully and did many amazing things.”
- Depending on the context, “mighty works” could be translated as “amazing things that God does” or “miracles” or “God doing things with power.”
- The term “might” could also be translated as “power” or “great strength.”
- Do not confuse this term with the English word that is used to express a possibility, as in “It might rain.”

(See also: Almighty, miracle, power, strength)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:22
- Genesis 6:4
- Mark 9:38-39
- Matthew 11:23

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0046, H0047, H0117, H0202, H0386, H0410, H0430, H0533, H0650, H1219, H1368, H1369, H1396, H1397, H1419, H2220, H2389, H2428, H3201, H3524, H3581, H3966, H4101, H5794, H5797, H6099, H6105, H6108, H6184, H7227, H7580, H8623, H8624, G14110, G14150, G14980, G24780, G24790, G29000, G29040, G31670, G31730

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 3:7](#); [4:4](#); [8:6](#))

name

Definition:

The term “name” refers to the word by which a specific person or thing is called. In the Bible, however, the term “name” is used in several different ways to refer to several different concepts.

- In some contexts, “name” could refer to a person’s reputation, as in “let us make a name for ourselves.”
- The term “name” could also refer to the memory of something. For example, “cut off the names of the idols” means to destroy those idols so that they are no longer remembered or worshiped.
- Speaking “in the name of God” meant speaking with his power and authority, or as his representative.
- The “name” of someone could refer to the entire person, as in “there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.” (See: [metonymy](#))

Translation Suggestions:

- An expression like “his good name” could be translated as “his good reputation.”
- Doing something “in the name of” could be translated as “with the authority of” or “with the permission of” or “as the representative of” that person.
- The expression “make a name for ourselves” could be translated “cause many people to know about us” or “make people think we are very important.”
- The expression “call his name” could be translated as “name him” or “give him the name.”
- The expression “those who love your name” could be translated as “those who love you.”
- The expression “cut off the names of idols” could be translated as “get rid of pagan idols so that they are not even remembered” or “cause people to stop worshiping false gods” or “completely destroy all idols so that people no longer even think about them.”

(See also: [call](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:12
- 2 Timothy 2:19
- Acts 4:7
- Acts 4:12
- Acts 9:27
- Genesis 12:2
- Genesis 35:10
- Matthew 18:5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5344, H7121, H7761, H8034, H8036, G25640, G36860, G36870, G51220

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:3](#))

oath, swear, swearing, swear by

Definition:

The term "oath" in the Bible refers to a formal promise, usually made in a legal or religious context, in which the person making the oath accepts some kind of accountability or punishment if he does not fulfill his promise. In the Bible, the term "swear" means to make an oath.

- In a court of law, a witness often gives an oath to promise that whatever he says will be true and factual.
- In modern times, one meaning of the word "swear" is to use foul or vulgar language. This is never its meaning in the Bible.
- The term "swear by" means to use the name of something or someone as the basis or power on which the oath is made.
- Abraham and Abimelech swore an oath when they made a covenant together concerning the use of a well.
- Abraham told his servant to swear (formally promise) that he would find Isaac a wife from among Abraham's relatives.
- God also made oaths in which he made promises to his people.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, "an oath" could also be translated as "a pledge" or "a solemn promise."
- To "swear" could be translated as to "formally promise" or to "pledge" or to "commit to do something."
- Other ways to translate "swear by my name" could include "make a promise using my name to confirm it."
- To "swear by heaven and earth" could be translated as to, "promise to do something, stating that heaven and earth will confirm it."
- Make sure the translation of "swear" or "oath" does not refer to cursing. In the Bible it does not have that meaning.

(See also: Abimelech, covenant, vow)

Bible References:

- Genesis 21:23
- Genesis 24:3
- Genesis 31:51-53
- Genesis 47:31
- Luke 1:73
- Mark 6:26
- Matthew 5:36
- Matthew 14:6-7
- Matthew 26:72

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0422, H0423, H3027, H5375, H7621, H7650, G03320, G36600, G37270, G37280

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 2:7](#); [3:5](#); [5:8](#); [5:9](#); [8:4](#))

olive

Definition:

The olive is the small, oval fruit from an olive tree, which is mostly grown in the regions surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

- Olive trees are a type of large evergreen shrub with tiny white flowers. They grow best in hot weather and can survive well with little water.
- The olive tree's fruit starts out green and changes to black as they ripen. Olives were useful for food and for the oil that could be extracted from them.
- Olive oil was used for cooking in lamps and for religious ceremonies.
- In the Bible, olive trees and branches are sometimes used figuratively to refer to people.

(See also: lamp, the sea, Mount of Olives)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 27:28-29
- Deuteronomy 6:10-12
- Exodus 23:10-11
- Genesis 8:11
- James 3:12
- Luke 16:6
- Psalms 52:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2132, H3323, H8081, G00650, G16360, G16370, G25650

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:3; 4:10](#))

peace, peaceful, peacemakers

Definition:

The term “peace” refers to a state of being or a feeling of having no conflict, anxiety, or fearfulness. A person who is “peaceful” feels calm and assured of being safe and secure.

- In the Old Testament, the term “peace” often means a general sense of a person’s welfare, wellness, or wholeness.
- “Peace” can also refer to a time when people groups or countries are not at war with each other. These people are said to have “peaceful relations.”
- To “make peace” with a person or a group of people means to take actions to cause fighting to stop.
- A “peacemaker” is someone who does and says things to influence people to live at peace with each other.
- To be “at peace” with other people means being in a state of not fighting against those people.
- A good or right relationship between God and people happens when God saves people from their sin. This is called having “peace with God.”
- The greeting “grace and peace” was used by the apostles in their letters to their fellow believers as a blessing.
- The term “peace” can also refer to being in a good relationship with other people or with God.

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3
- Acts 7:26
- Colossians 1:18-20
- Colossians 3:15
- Galatians 5:23
- Luke 7:50
- Luke 12:51
- Mark 4:39
- Matthew 5:9
- Matthew 10:13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **15:6** God had commanded the Israelites not to make a **peace** treaty with any of the people groups in Canaan.
- **15:12** Then God gave Israel **peace** along all its borders.
- **16:3** Then God provided a deliverer who rescued them from their enemies and brought **peace** to the land.
- **21:13** He (Messiah) would die to receive the punishment for other people’s sin. His punishment would bring **peace** between God and people.
- **48:14** David was the king of Israel, but Jesus is the king of the entire universe! He will come again and rule his kingdom with justice and **peace**, forever.
- **50:17** Jesus will rule his kingdom with **peace** and justice, and he will be with his people forever.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5117, H7961, H7962, H7965, H7999, H8001, H8002, H8003, H8252, G02690, G15140, G15150, G15160, G15170, G15180, G22720

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 8:10](#))

people, people group

Definition:

The terms “people” and “people group” refer to some group of people that shares a common language and culture. The term “the people” often refers to a gathering of people in a certain place or at a specific event.

- In Bible times, the members of a people group usually had the same ancestors and lived together in a particular country or area of land.
- Depending on the context, the term “people” can refer to a “people group” or “family” or “relatives” or “army.”
- In plural form, the term “peoples” often refers to all people groups on the earth. Sometimes it refers more specifically to people who are not Israelites or who do not serve Yahweh. In some English Bible translations, the term “nations” is also used in this way.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “people group” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “large family group” or “clan” or “ethnic group.”
- A phrase such as “my people” could be translated as “my relatives” or “my fellow Israelites” or “my family” or “my people group,” depending on the context.
- The expression “scatter you among the peoples” could also be translated as “cause you to go live with many different people groups” or “cause you to separate from each other and go live in many different regions of the world.”
- The term “the peoples” or “the people” could also be translated as “the people in the world” or “people groups,” depending on the context.
- The phrase “the people of” could be translated as “the people living in” or “the people descended from” or “the family of,” depending on whether it is followed by the name of a place or a person.
- “All the peoples of the earth” could be translated as “everyone living on earth” or “every person in the world” or “all people.”
- The phrase “a people” could also be translated as “a group of people” or “certain people” or “a community of people” or “a family of people.”

(See also: descendant, nation, tribe, world)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 8:51-53
- 1 Samuel 8:7
- Deuteronomy 28:9
- Genesis 49:16
- Ruth 1:16

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **14:2** God had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that he would give the Promised Land to their descendants, but now there were many **people groups** living there.
- **21:2** God promised Abraham that through him all **people groups** of the world would receive a blessing. This blessing would be that the Messiah would come sometime in the future and provide the way of salvation for people from all the **people groups** of the world.

- **42:8** "It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to receive forgiveness for their sins. They will do this starting in Jerusalem, and then go to all **people groups** everywhere."
- **42:10** "So go, make disciples of all **people groups** by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."
- **48:11** Because of this New Covenant, anyone from any **people group** can become part of God's people by believing in Jesus.
- **50:3** He (Jesus) said, "Go and make disciples of all **people groups!**" and, "The fields are ripe for harvest!"

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0249, H0523, H0524, H0776, H1121, H1471, H3816, H5712, H5971, H5972, H6153, G10740, G10850, G12180, G14840, G25600, G29920, G37930

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 6:12](#))

pomegranate

Facts:

A pomegranate is a kind of fruit that has a thick, tough skin filled with many seeds that are covered with edible red pulp.

- The outer rind is reddish in color and the pulp surrounding the seeds is shiny and red.
- Pomegranates are very commonly grown in countries with a hot, dry climate, such as Egypt and Israel.
- Yahweh promised the Israelites that Canaan was a land with abundant water and fertile soil so that food was plentiful there, including pomegranates.
- The construction of Solomon's temple included bronze decorations in the shape of pomegranates.

(See also: bronze, Canaan, Egypt, [Solomon](#), temple)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 25:16-17
- Deuteronomy 8:7-8
- Jeremiah 52:22-23
- Numbers 13:23-24
- Numbers 20:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7416

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 4:13](#); [8:2](#))

praise, praised, praiseworthy

Definition:

To praise someone is to express admiration and honor for that person.

- People praise God because of how great he is and because of all the amazing things he has done as the Creator and Savior of the world.
- Praise for God often includes being thankful for what he has done.
- Music and singing is often used as a way to praise God.
- Praising God is part of what it means to worship him.
- The term to “praise” could also be translated as to “speak well of” or to “highly honor with words” or to “say good things about.”
- The noun “praise” could be translated as “spoken honor” or “speech that honors” or “speaking good things about.”

(See also: worship)

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 1:3
- Acts 2:47
- Acts 13:48
- Daniel 3:28
- Ephesians 1:3
- Genesis 49:8
- James 3:9-10
- John 5:41-42
- Luke 1:46
- Luke 1:64-66
- Luke 19:37-38
- Matthew 11:25-27
- Matthew 15:29-31

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:13** The Israelites sang many songs to celebrate their new freedom and to **praise** God because he saved them from the Egyptian army.
- **17:8** When David heard these words, he immediately thanked and **praised** God because he had promised David this great honor and many blessings.
- **22:7** Zechariah said, “**Praise** God, because he has remembered his people!”
- **43:13** They (disciples) enjoyed **praising** God together and they shared everything they had with each other.
- **47:8** They put Paul and Silas in the most secure part of the prison and even locked up their feet. Yet in the middle of the night, they were singing songs of **praise** to God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1319, H7121, H8416, G29800, G38530

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 6:9](#))

purple

Facts:

The term “purple” is the name of a color that is a mixture of blue and red.

- In ancient times, purple was a rare and highly valuable color of dye that was used to dye the clothing of kings and other high officials.
- Because it was costly and time-consuming to produce this dye, purple clothing was considered a sign of wealth, distinction, and royalty.
- Purple was also one of the colors used for the curtains in the tabernacle and temple, and for the ephod worn by the priests.
- Purple dye was extracted from a kind of sea snail by either crushing or boiling the snails or by causing them to release the dye while still alive. This was an expensive process.
- Roman soldiers put a purple royal robe on Jesus before his crucifixion, to mock him for his claim to be King of the Jews.
- Lydia from the town of Philippi was a woman who made her living by selling purple cloth.

(Translation suggestions: [Translate Names](#))

(See also: ephod, Philippi, royal, [tabernacle](#), temple)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 2:13-14
- Daniel 5:7
- Daniel 5:29-31
- Proverbs 31:22-23

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0710, H0711, H0713, G42090, G42100, G42110

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 3:10; 7:5](#))

raise, rise, lift, get up, stir up,

Definition:

raise, raise up

In general, the word “raise” means to “lift up” or “make higher.”

- The phrase “raise up” sometimes means to cause something to come into being or to appear. It can also mean to appoint someone to do something.
- Sometimes “raise up” means to “restore” or “rebuild.”
- “Raise” has a specialized meaning in the phrase “raise from the dead.” It means to cause a dead person to become alive again.
- Sometimes “raise up” means to “exalt” someone or something.

rise, arise

To “rise” or “arise” means to “go up” or “get up.” The terms “risen,” “rose,” and “arose” express past action.

- When a person gets up to go somewhere, this is sometimes expressed as “he arose and went” or “he rose up and went.”
- If something “arises” it means it “happens” or “begins to happen.”
- Jesus predicted that he would “rise from the dead.” Three days after Jesus died, the angel said, “He has risen!”

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “raise” or “raise up” could be translated as “lift up” or “make higher.”
- To “raise up” could also be translated as to “cause to appear” or to “appoint” or to “bring into existence.”
- To “raise up the strength of your enemies” could be translated as “cause your enemies to be very strong.”
- The phrase “raise someone from the dead” could be translated as “cause someone to return from death to life” or “cause someone to come back to life.”
- Depending on the context, “raise up” could also be translated as “provide” or to “appoint” or to “cause to have” or “build up” or “rebuild” or “repair.”
- The phrase “arose and went” could be translated as “got up and went” or “went.”
- Depending on the context, the term “arose” could also be translated as “began” or “started up” or “got up” or “stood up.”

(See also: resurrection, [appoint](#), exalt)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 6:41
- 2 Samuel 7:12
- Acts 10:40
- Colossians 3:1
- Deuteronomy 13:1-3
- Jeremiah 6:1
- Judges 2:18
- Luke 7:22
- Matthew 20:19

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **21:14** The prophets foretold that the Messiah would die and that God would also **raise** him from the dead.
- **41:5** "Jesus is not here. He has **risen** from the dead, just like he said he would!"
- **43:7** "Although Jesus died, God **raised** him from the dead. This fulfills the prophecy which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.' We are witnesses to the fact that God **raised** Jesus to life again."
- **44:5** "You killed the author of life, but God **raised** him from the dead."
- **44:8** Peter answered them, "This man stands before you healed by the power of Jesus the Messiah. You crucified Jesus, but God **raised** him to life again!"
- **48:4** This meant that Satan would kill the Messiah, but God would **raise** him to life again, and then the Messiah will crush the power of Satan forever.
- **49:2** He (Jesus) walked on water, calmed storms, healed many sick people, drove out demons, **raised** the dead to life, and turned five loaves of bread and two small fish into enough food for over 5,000 people.
- **49:12** You must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died on the cross instead of you, and that God **raised** him to life again.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2210, H2224, H5549, H5782, H5927, H5975, H6965, H6966, H6974, H7613, G03050, G03860, G03930, G04500, G10960, G13260, G14530, G15250, G18170, G18250, G18920, G19990, G48910

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 2:7](#); [3:5](#); [4:16](#); [5:2](#); [8:4](#); [8:5](#))

restore, restoration

Definition:

The terms “restore” and “restoration” refer to causing something to return to its original place or condition.

- When a diseased body part is restored, this means it has been “healed.”
- A broken relationship that is restored has been “reconciled.” God restores sinful people and brings them back to himself.
- If people have been restored to their home country, they have been “brought back” or “returned” to that country.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “restore” could include “renew” or “repay” or “return” or “heal” or “bring back.”
- Other expressions for this term could be “make new” or “make like new again.”
- When property is “restored,” it has been “repaired” or “replaced” or “given back” to its owner.
- Depending on the context, “restoration” could be translated as “renewal” or “healing” or “reconciliation.”

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 5:10
- Acts 3:21
- Acts 15:15-18
- Isaiah 49:5-6
- Jeremiah 15:19-21
- Lamentations 5:22
- Leviticus 6:5-7
- Luke 19:8
- Matthew 12:13
- Psalm 80:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7725, H7999, H8421, G06000, G26750

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 6:13](#))

seek, search, look for

Definition:

The term “seek” means to look for something or someone. In the past tense, the verb is “sought.” This term is sometimes used figuratively, meaning to “attempt” or “make an effort” to do something or to ask for something.

- To “seek” or “look for” an opportunity to do something can mean to “try to find a time” to do it.
- To “seek Yahweh” means to “spend time and energy getting to know Yahweh and learning to obey him.”
- To “seek protection” means to “try to find a person or place that will protect you from danger.”
- To “seek justice” means to “make an effort to see that people are treated justly or fairly.”
- To “seek the truth” means to “make an effort to find out what the truth is.”
- To “seek favor” means to “urgently ask for favor” or to “do things to cause someone to help you.”

(See also: just, true)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 10:14
- Acts 17:26-27
- Hebrews 11:6
- Luke 11:9
- Psalms 27:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0579, H1156, H1239, H1243, H1245, H1556, H1875, H2470, H2603, H2658, H2664, H3289, H7125, H7592, H7836, H8446, G03270, G15670, G19340, G20520, G22120

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 3:1](#); [3:2](#); [5:6](#); [6:1](#))

shield

Definition:

A shield was an object held by a soldier in battle to protect himself from being injured by the enemy's weapons. To "shield" someone means to protect that person from harm.

- Shields were often circular or oval, were made of materials such as leather, wood, or metal, and were sturdy and thick enough to keep a sword or arrow from piercing them.
- Using this term as a metaphor, the Bible refers to God as a protective shield for his people. (See: Metaphor)
- Paul talked about the "shield of faith," which is a figurative way of saying that having faith in Jesus and living out that faith in obedience to God will protect believers from the spiritual attacks of Satan.

(See also: faith, obey, Satan, spirit)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 14:26
- 2 Chronicles 23:8-9
- 2 Samuel 22:36
- Deuteronomy 33:29
- Psalms 18:35

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2653, H3591, H4043, H5437, H5526, H6793, H7982, G23750

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 4:4](#))

silver

Definition:

Silver is a shiny, gray precious metal used to make coins, jewelry, containers, and ornaments.

- The various containers that are made include silver cups and bowls, and other things used for cooking, eating, or serving.
- Silver and gold were used in the building of the tabernacle and the temple. The temple in Jerusalem had containers made of silver.
- In Bible times, a shekel was a unit of weight, and a purchase was often priced at a certain number of shekels of silver. By New Testament times there were silver coins of various weights that were measured in shekels.
- Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave for twenty shekels of silver.
- Judas was paid thirty silver coins for betraying Jesus.

(See also: [tabernacle](#), temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 18:9-11
- 1 Samuel 2:36
- 2 Kings 25:13-15
- Acts 3:6
- Matthew 26:15

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3701, H3702, H7192, G06930, G06940, G06950, G06960, G14060

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:11](#); [3:10](#); [8:9](#); [8:11](#))

Solomon

Facts:

Solomon was one of King David's sons. His mother was Bathsheba.

- When Solomon became king, God told him to ask for anything he wanted. So Solomon asked for wisdom to rule the people justly and well. God was pleased with Solomon's request and gave him both wisdom and much wealth.
- Solomon is also well known for having a magnificent temple built in Jerusalem.
- Although Solomon ruled wisely in the first years of his reign, later on he foolishly married many foreign women and started worshiping their gods.
- Because of Solomon's unfaithfulness, after his death God divided the Israelites into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. These kingdoms often fought against each other.

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: Bathsheba, [David](#), [Israel](#), Judah, kingdom of Israel, temple)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:47-50
- Luke 12:27
- Matthew 1:7-8
- Matthew 6:29
- Matthew 12:42

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:14** Later, David and Bathsheba had another son, and they named him **Solomon**.
- **18:1** After many years, David died, and his son **Solomon** began to rule. God spoke to **Solomon** and asked him what he wanted most. When **Solomon** asked for wisdom, God was pleased and made him the wisest man in the world. **Solomon** learned many things and was a very wise judge. God also made him very wealthy.
- **18:2** In Jerusalem, **Solomon** built the Temple for which his father David had planned and gathered materials.
- **18:3** But **Solomon** loved women from other countries....When **Solomon** was old, he also worshiped their gods.
- **18:4** God was angry with **Solomon** and, as a punishment for **Solomon's** unfaithfulness, he promised to divide the nation of Israel into two kingdoms after **Solomon's** death.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H8010, G46720

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:1](#); [1:5](#); [3:7](#); [3:9](#); [3:11](#); [8:11](#); [8:12](#))

son

Definition:

The male offspring of a man and a woman is called their “son” for his entire life. He is also called a son of that man and a son of that woman. An “adopted son” is a male who has been legally placed into the position of being a son.

- The phrase “son of” can be used to identify a person’s father, mother, or an ancestor from some previous generation. This phrase is used in genealogies and many other places.
- The “sons of Israel” are usually the Israelite nation (after Genesis).
- Using “son of” to give the name of the father frequently helps distinguish people who have the same name. For example, “Azariah son of Zadok” and “Azariah son of Nathan” in 1 Kings 4, and “Azariah son of Amaziah” in 2 Kings 15 are three different men.
- The phrase “son of” can be used to associate the person with whatever person or concept comes next. The meaning is then greatly determined by context. It can be positive (eg. 2 Kings 2:16: “sons of ability”), negative (eg. 2 Samuel 7:10: “sons of wickedness”), denote membership in a group, express contempt by not naming the person (eg. “you sons of Zeruiah”), etc.

Translation Suggestions:

- In most occurrences of this term, it is best to translate “son” by the literal term in the language that is used to refer to a son.
- When translating the term “Son of God,” the project language’s common term for “son” should be used.
- Sometimes “sons” can be translated as “children,” when both males and females are being referred to. For example, “sons of God” could be translated as “children of God” since this expression also includes girls and women.

(See also: descendant, ancestor, Son of God, sons of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 18:15
- 1 Kings 13:2
- 1 Thessalonians 5:5
- Galatians 4:7
- Hosea 11:1
- Isaiah 9:6
- Matthew 3:17
- Matthew 5:9
- Matthew 8:12
- Nehemiah 10:28

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:8** God spoke to Abram and promised again that he would have a **son** and as many descendants as the stars in the sky.
- **4:9** God said, “I will give you a **son** from your own body.”
- **5:5** About a year later, when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90, Sarah gave birth to Abraham’s **son**.
- **5:8** When they reached the place of sacrifice, Abraham tied up his **son** Isaac and laid him on an altar. He was about to kill his **son** when God said, “Stop! Do not hurt the boy! Now I know that you fear me because you did not keep your only **son** from me.”

- **9:7** When she saw the baby, she took him as her own **son**.
- **11:6** God killed every one of the Egyptians' firstborn **sons**.
- **18:1** After many years, David died, and his **son** Solomon began to rule.
- **26:4** "Is this the **son** of Joseph?" they said.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1060, H1121, H1123, H1248, H3173, H3206, H3211, H4497, H5209, H5220, G38160, G50430, G52070

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:6; 2:3](#))

sword, swordsmen

Definition:

A sword is a flat-bladed metal weapon used to cut or stab. It has a handle and a long, pointed blade with a very sharp cutting edge.

- In ancient times the length of a sword's blade was about 60 to 91 centimeters.
- Some swords have two sharp edges and are called "double-edged" or "two-edged" swords.
- Jesus' disciples had swords for self defense. With his sword, Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.
- Both John the Baptist and the apostle James were beheaded with swords.

Translation Suggestions

- A sword is used as a metaphor for God's word. God's teachings in the Bible exposed people's innermost thoughts and convicted them of their sin. In a similar way, a sword cuts deeply, causing pain. (See: [Metaphor](#))
- One way to translate this figurative use would be, "God's word is like a sword, which cuts deeply and exposes sin."
- Another figurative use of this term occurred in the book of Psalms, where the tongue or speech of a person was compared to a sword, which can injure people. This could be translated as "the tongue is like a sword that can badly injure someone."
- If swords are not known in your culture, this word could be translated with the name of another long-bladed weapon that is used to cut or stab.
- A sword could also be described as a "sharp weapon" or "long knife." Some translations could include a picture of a sword.

(See also: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: James (brother of Jesus), John (the Baptist), tongue, word of God)

Bible References:

- Acts 12:2
- Genesis 27:40
- Genesis 34:25
- Luke 2:33-35
- Luke 21:24
- Matthew 10:34
- Matthew 26:55
- Revelation 1:16

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0019, H1300, H2719, H4380, H6609, H7524, H7973, G31620, G45010

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 3:8](#))

tabernacle

Definition:

The tabernacle was a special tent-like structure where the Israelites worshiped God during the 40 years they traveled around in the desert.

- God had given the Israelites detailed instructions for building this large tent, which had two rooms and was surrounded by an enclosed courtyard.
- Each time the Israelites moved to a different place in the desert to live, the priests would take the tabernacle apart and carry it to their next campsite. Then they would set it up again in the center of their new camp.
- The tabernacle was constructed of wood frames hung with curtains made of cloth, goat hair, and animal skins. The courtyard surrounding it was enclosed with more curtains.
- The two sections of the tabernacle were the Holy Place (where the altar for burning incense was located) and the Most Holy Place (where the ark of the covenant was kept).
- The courtyard of the tabernacle had an altar for burning animal sacrifices and a special washbasin for ritual cleansing.
- The Israelites stopped using the tabernacle when the temple was built in Jerusalem by Solomon.

Translation Suggestions:

- The word “tabernacle” means “dwelling place.” Other ways to translate it could include, “sacred tent” or “tent where God was” or “God’s tent.”
- Make sure that the translation of this term is different from the translation of “temple.”

(See also: altar, altar of incense, ark of the covenant, temple, tent of meeting)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 21:30
- 2 Chronicles 1:2-5
- Acts 7:43
- Acts 7:45
- Exodus 38:21
- Joshua 22:19-20
- Leviticus 10:16-18

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0168, H4908, H5520, H5521, H5522, H7900, G46330, G46340, G46360, G46380

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:8](#))

testimony, testify, witness, eyewitness, evidence

Definition:

When a person gives “testimony” he makes a statement about something he knows, claiming that the statement is true. To “testify” is to give “testimony.”

- In some places in the Old Testament, “Testimony” refers specifically to the tablets of stone on which Yahweh wrote his ten commandments. From that use it came to refer to God’s law more broadly.
- Often a person “testifies” about something he has experienced directly.
- A witness who gives “false testimony” does not tell the truth about what happened.
- Sometimes the term “testimony” refers to a prophecy that a prophet has stated.
- In the New Testament, this term was often used to refer to how Jesus’ followers testified about the events of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

The term “witness” refers to a person who has personally experienced something that happened. Usually a witness is also someone who testifies about what they know is true. The term “eyewitness” emphasizes that the person was actually there and saw what happened.

- To “witness” something means to see it happen.
- At a trial, a witness “gives witness” or “bears witness.” This has the same meaning as “testify.”
- Witnesses are expected to tell the truth about what they have seen or heard.
- A witness who does not tell the truth about what happened is called a “false witness.” He is said to “give false witness” or to “bear false witness.”
- The expression “be a witness between” means that something or someone will be evidence that a contract has been made. The witness will make sure each person does what he has promised to do.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “testify” or “give testimony” could also be translated as “tell the facts” or “tell what was seen or heard” or “tell from personal experience” or “give evidence” or “tell what happened.”
- Ways to translate “testimony” could include, “report of what happened” or “statement of what is true” or “evidence” or “what has been said” or “prophecy.”
- Ways to translate “Testimony” could include, “the stone slabs on which I wrote my commands” or “God’s law” or “God’s commands” or “the record of the agreement between Yahweh and Israel.”
- The phrase, “as a testimony to them” could be translated as to “show them what is true” or to “prove to them what is true.”
- The phrase, “as a testimony against them” could be translated as “which will show them their sin” or “exposing their hypocrisy” or “which will prove that they are wrong.”
- To “give false testimony” could be translated as “say false things about” or “state things that are not true.”
- The term “witness” or “eyewitness” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person seeing it” or “the one who saw it happen” or “those who saw and heard (those things).”
- Something that is “a witness” could be translated as “guarantee” or “sign of our promise” or “something that testifies that this is true.”
- The phrase “you will be my witnesses” could also be translated as “you will tell other people about me” or “you will teach people the truth that I taught you” or “you will tell people what you have seen me do and heard me teach.”
- To “witness to” could be translated as to “tell what was seen” or to “testify” or to “state what happened.”
- To “witness” something could be translated as to “see something” or to “experience something happen.”

(See also: ark of the covenant, guilt, judge, prophet, true)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 31:28
- Micah 6:3
- Matthew 26:60
- Mark 1:44
- John 1:7
- John 3:33
- Acts 4:32-33
- Acts 7:44
- Acts 13:31
- Romans 1:9
- 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12
- 1 Timothy 5:19-20
- 2 Timothy 1:8
- 2 Peter 1:16-18
- 1 John 5:6-8
- 3 John 1:12
- Revelation 12:11

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **39:2** Inside the house, the Jewish leaders put Jesus on trial. They brought many **false witnesses** who lied about him.
- **39:4** The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted, "We do not need any more **witnesses**. You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your judgment?"
- **42:8** "It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to receive forgiveness for their sins. They will do this starting in Jerusalem, and then go to all people groups everywhere. You are **witnesses** of these things."
- **43:7** "We are **witnesses** to the fact that God raised Jesus to life again."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5707, H5713, H5715, H5749, H6030, H8584, G02670, G12630, G19570, G26490, G31400, G31410, G31420, G31430, G31440, G43030, G48280, G49010, G55750, G55760, G55770, G60200

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 2:10; 5:6](#))

Tirzah

Facts:

Tirzah was an important Canaanite city that was conquered by the Israelites. It was also the name of a daughter of Gilead, a descendant of Manasseh.

- The city Tirzah was located in the region occupied by the tribe of Manasseh. It is thought that the city was about 10 miles north of the city of Shechem.
- Years later, Tirzah became a temporary capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel, during the reigns of four kings of Israel.
- Tirzah was also the name of one of Manasseh's granddaughters. They asked to be given a portion of the land since their father had died and he had no sons to inherit it as would normally be the custom.

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: Canaan, inherit, kingdom of Israel, Manasseh, Shechem)

Bible References:

- Numbers 27:1
- Numbers 36:11
- Song of Songs 6:4

Word Data:

- Strong's: H8656

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 6:4](#))

tunic

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “tunic” referred to a garment that was worn next to the skin, under other clothing.

- A tunic reached from the shoulders down to the waist or knees and was usually worn with a belt. Tunics worn by wealthy people sometimes had sleeves and reached down to the ankles.
- Tunics were made of leather, haircloth, wool, or linen, and were worn by both men and women.
- A tunic was normally worn under a longer over-garment, such as a toga or outer robe. In warmer weather a tunic was sometimes worn with no outer garment.
- This term could be translated as “long shirt” or “long undergarment” or “shirt-like garment.” It could also be written in a similar way to “tunic,” with a note to explain what kind of clothing it was.

(See also: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See Also: robe)

Bible References:

- Daniel 3:21-23
- Isaiah 22:21
- Leviticus 8:12-13
- Luke 3:11
- Mark 6:7-9
- Matthew 10:10

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2243, H3801, H6361, G55090

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 5:3](#))

vine

Definition:

The term “vine” refers to a plant that grows by trailing along the ground or by climbing trees and other structures. The word “vine” in the Bible is used only of fruit-bearing vines and usually refers to grape vines.

- In the Bible, the word “vine” almost always means “grapevine.”
- The branches of the grapevine are attached to the main stem which gives them water and other nutrients so that they can grow.
- Jesus called himself the “vine” and called his people the “branches.” In this context, the word “vine” could also be translated as “grapevine stem” or “grape plant stem.” (See: [Metaphor](#))

(See also: [grape](#), [vineyard](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 40:9
- Genesis 49:11
- John 15:1
- Luke 22:18
- Mark 12:3
- Matthew 21:35-37

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5139, H1612, H8321, G02880, G02900, G10090, G10920

(**Go back to:** [Song of Solomon 6:11; 7:8; 7:12](#))

vineyard

Definition:

A vineyard is a large garden area where grapevines are grown and grapes are cultivated.

- A vineyard often has a wall around it to protect the fruit from thieves and animals.
- God compared the people of Israel to a vineyard that did not bear good fruit. (See: [Metaphor](#))
- Vineyard could be also translated as “grapevine garden” or “grape plantation.”

(See also: [grape](#), [Israel](#), [vine](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 9:20-21
- Luke 13:6
- Luke 20:15
- Matthew 20:2
- Matthew 21:40-41

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1612, H3754, H3755, H8284, G02900

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 1:6](#); [2:15](#); [8:11](#); [8:12](#))

walk, walked

Definition:

The term “walk” is often used in a figurative sense to mean “live.”

- “Enoch walked with God” means that Enoch lived in a close relationship with God.
- To “walk by the Spirit” means to be guided by the Holy Spirit so that we do things that please and honor God.
- To “walk in” God’s commands or God’s ways means to “live in obedience to” his commands, that is, to “obey his commands” or “do his will.”
- When God says he will “walk among” his people, it means that he is living among them or closely interacting with them.
- To “walk contrary to” means to live or behave in a way that is against something or someone.
- To “walk after” means to seek or pursue someone or something. It can also mean to act in the same way as someone else.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate “walk” literally, as long as the correct meaning will be understood.
- Otherwise, figurative uses of “walk” could also be translated by “live” or “act” or “behave.”
- The phrase “walk by the Spirit” could be translated by, “live in obedience to the Holy Spirit” or “behave in a way that is pleasing to the Holy Spirit” or “do things that are pleasing to God as the Holy Spirit guides you.”
- To “walk in God’s commands” could be translated by “live by God’s commands” or “obey God’s commands.”
- The phrase “walked with God” could be translated as “lived in close relationship with God by obeying and honoring him.”

(See also: Holy Spirit, honor)

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:7
- 1 Kings 2:4
- Colossians 2:7
- Galatians 5:25
- Genesis 17:1
- Isaiah 2:5
- Jeremiah 13:10
- Micah 4:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1869, H1980, H1981, H3212, H4108, G17040, G40430, G41980, G47480

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 2:11](#); [2:13](#); [4:6](#); [6:1](#); [7:9](#); [7:11](#))

watch, guard, keep, take heed, beware

Definition:

The term “watch” means to look at something very closely and carefully. It also has several figurative meanings. A “watchman” was someone whose job was to guard a city by looking carefully all around him for any danger or threat to the people in the city.

- The command to “watch your life and doctrine closely” means to be careful to live wisely and to not believe false teachings.
- To “watch out” is a warning to be careful to avoid a danger or harmful influence.
- To “watch” or “keep watch” means to always be alert and on guard against sin and evil. It can also mean to “be ready.”
- To “keep watch over” or “keep close watch” can mean to guard, protect or take care of someone or something.
- Other ways of translating “watch” could include “pay close attention to” or “be diligent” or “be very careful” or “be on guard.”
- Other words for “watchman” are “sentry” or “guard.”

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:6
- Hebrews 13:17
- Jeremiah 31:4-6
- Mark 8:15
- Mark 13:33-34
- Matthew 25:10-13

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0821, H2370, H4929, H4931, H5027, H5341, H6486, H6822, H6836, H6974, H7462, H7789, H7919, H8104, H8108, H8245, G00690, G09910, G11270, G14920, G23340, G28920, G35250, G37080, G39060, G43370, G46480, G50830, G54380

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 5:7](#))

wheat

Definition:

Wheat is a type of grain that people grow for food. When the Bible mentions “grain” or “seeds,” it is often talking about wheat grain or seeds.

- The wheat seeds or grains grow at the top of the wheat plant.
- After harvesting the wheat, the grain is separated from the stalk of the plant by threshing it. The stalk of the wheat plant is also called “straw” and is often placed on the ground for animals to sleep on.
- After threshing, the chaff surrounding the grain seed is separated from the grain by winnowing and is thrown away.
- People grind the wheat grain into flour, and use this for making bread.

(See also: barley, chaff, grain, seed, thresh, winnow)

Bible References:

- Acts 27:36-38
- Exodus 34:21-22
- John 12:24
- Luke 3:17
- Matthew 3:12
- Matthew 13:26

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1250, H2406, G46210

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 7:2](#))

wine, wineskin, new wine

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “wine” refers to a kind of fermented drink made from the juice of a fruit called grapes. Wine was stored in “wineskins,” which were containers made out of animal skin.

- The term “new wine” referred to grape juice that had just been taken from the grape and was not fermented yet. Sometimes the term “wine” also referred to unfermented grape juice.
- To make wine, grapes are crushed in a winepress so that the juice comes out. The juice eventually ferments and alcohol forms in it.
- In Bible times, wine was the normal drink with meals. It did not have as much alcohol as present-day wine has.
- Before wine was served for a meal, it was often mixed with water.
- A wineskin that was old and brittle would get cracks in it, which allowed the wine to leak out. New wineskins were soft and flexible, which meant they did not tear easily and could store the wine safely.
- If wine is unknown in your culture, it could be translated as “fermented grape juice” or “fermented drink made from a fruit called grapes” or “fermented fruit juice.” (See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))
- Ways to translate “wineskin” could include “bag for wine” or “animal skin wine bag” or “animal skin container for wine.”

(See also: grape, [vine](#), [vineyard](#), winepress)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 5:23
- Genesis 9:21
- Genesis 49:12
- John 2:3-5
- John 2:10
- Matthew 9:17
- Matthew 11:18

smashed

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2561, H2562, H3196, H4469, H4997, H5435, H6025, H6071, H8492, G10980, G36310, G38200, G39430

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 2:4; 5:1](#))

Zion, Mount Zion

Definition:

Originally, the term “Zion” or “Mount Zion” referred to a stronghold or fortress that King David captured from the Jebusites. Both these terms became other ways of referring to Jerusalem.

- Mount Zion and Mount Moriah were two of the hills that the city of Jerusalem was located on. Later, “Zion” and “Mount Zion” became used as general terms to refer to both of these mountains and to the city of Jerusalem. Sometimes they also referred to the temple that was located in Jerusalem. (See: [metonymy](#))
- David named Zion, or Jerusalem, the “City of David.” This is different from David’s hometown, Bethlehem, which was also called the City of David.
- The term “Zion” is used in other figurative ways, to refer to Israel or to God’s spiritual kingdom or to the new, heavenly Jerusalem that God will create.

(See also: Abraham, [David](#), [Jerusalem](#), Bethlehem, Jebusites)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:5
- Amos 1:2
- Jeremiah 51:35
- Psalm 76:1-3
- Romans 11:26

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6726

(Go back to: [Song of Solomon 3:11](#))

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