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Habakkuk

Introduction to Habakkuk

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Habakkuk

Habakkuk asks Yahweh questions (1:1–4)
Yahweh responds (1:5–11)
Habakkuk asks Yahweh more questions (1:12–2:1)
Yahweh responds again (2:2–5)
Habakkuk gives five taunts against the wicked (2:6–20)
Habakkuk prays (3:1–19)

What is the Book of Habakkuk about?

Other prophets spoke against Israel sinning and failing to obey Yahweh. But Habakkuk questioned Yahweh about the things he did. Yahweh said he would punish the people of Judah by sending the Babylonian army. Habakkuk complained because the Babylonians were more wicked than the people of Judah. Yahweh assured Habakkuk that he would also punish the Babylonians. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#), [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#) and [evil](#), [wicked](#), [unpleasant](#) and [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

How should the title of this book be translated?

The traditional title of this book is “The Book of Habakkuk” or just “Habakkuk.” Translators may choose to call it “The Sayings of Habakkuk.” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Who wrote the Book of Habakkuk?

The prophet Habakkuk wrote this book. Scripture does not mention Habakkuk except in this book.

The Chaldean empire is another name for the Babylonian empire. The Book of Habakkuk mentions it several times. This helps us to date Habakkuk’s life. The Chaldean empire had power from about 720 to 538 B.C. Habakkuk probably prophesied about the time of Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Nahum during the reigns of Kings Josiah, Jehoahaz, and Jehoiakim in Judah.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Why did Yahweh use an evil nation to punish Judah?

Habakkuk wanted to know why Yahweh used an evil nation to punish Judah. Yahweh responded that he will judge the evil nations also. But righteous people will live by being faithful to Yahweh.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How do I identify the speaker?

Habakkuk spoke to Yahweh and Yahweh answered him. The translator should be careful to identify whether the speaker is Habakkuk or Yahweh in each section. The translator may wish to make the identity of the speaker explicit. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

What style of writing is the Book of Habakkuk?

In the first two chapters, Habakkuk asks Yahweh questions and Yahweh answers him. The third chapter is a psalm. Habakkuk ends by telling the choirmaster to use stringed instruments.

Does Habakkuk question or challenge Yahweh?

Habakkuk spoke directly to Yahweh and seems to be challenging God. Habakkuk was not questioning the authority of Yahweh. He was telling Yahweh that he does not understand what Yahweh is doing. In some cultures, it may be improper to speak to an authority in this way. It may be necessary to rephrase Habakkuk's questions to emphasize his sincere desire to learn why God is doing what he is doing, without doubting him.

Habakkuk 1

Habakkuk 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

This chapter is arranged in a series of questions and answers between Yahweh and Habakkuk.

Special concepts in this chapter

Injustice

Habakkuk sees great injustice, especially in the defeat of Israel by the Assyrians. He cries out to Yahweh to ask him to put an end to it. He is questioning Yahweh, but he trusts in him. (See: [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#) and [trust](#), [trusted](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#))

Chaldeans

Yahweh will raise up the Chaldeans to bring justice to the Hebrew people. They will defeat the Assyrians. At this time, the Chaldeans were an insignificant city and people group. This was probably intended to show the power of Yahweh.

Habakkuk 1:1

The message that Habakkuk the prophet received,

These words introduce the first two chapters of the book. It is implicit that Habakkuk received this message from Yahweh. This can be stated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "This is the message that Habakkuk the prophet received from Yahweh." (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Habakkuk](#)
- [the prophet](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Habakkuk](#)
- [the prophet and Yahweh](#)

ULT

¹ The message that [Habakkuk the prophet](#) received,

UST

¹ This is the conversation between [Habakkuk the prophet and Yahweh](#).

Habakkuk 1:2

Yahweh

This is the name of God that he revealed to his people in the Old Testament. See the translationWord page about Yahweh concerning how to translate this.

how long will I cry for help, and you will not hear?

The reader should understand that Habakkuk has been crying to Yahweh for help for a long time. He asks this question because he is frustrated and wants to know how much longer it will be before Yahweh responds. Alternate translation: "how much longer shall I cry for help before you will respond?" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- Yahweh
- you will...save

Translation Words - UST

- I said, "Yahweh
- but you do...rescue me

ULT

² "Yahweh, how long will I cry for help, and you will not hear? I cry out to you, 'Violence!' but you will not save.

UST

² I said, "Yahweh, how long must I continue to call to you for help before you respond? I cry out, "The people are acting so violently!" but you do not rescue me!

Habakkuk 1:3

Destruction and violence are before me

The words “destruction” and “violence” can be translated with a verbal phrase. The idiom “before me” means that Habakkuk witnesses these things happening. Alternate translation: “I witness people destroying things and acting violently” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Idiom](#))

contention rises up

The word “contention” refers to conflict between people and can be translated with a verbal phrase. Habakkuk speaks of there being more contention between people as if contention rises up. Alternate translation: “there is more conflict between people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ Why do you make me see iniquity and look upon wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention rises up.

UST

³ Why do you make me watch people do what is wrong, but you do nothing? I see people destroying things and acting violently; they fight and quarrel everywhere.

Habakkuk 1:4

the law is weakened

Habakkuk speaks of people not obeying or enforcing the law as if they had made the law weak and unable to act. Alternate translation: “no one enforces the law” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the wicked surround the righteous

Habakkuk speaks of wicked people causing righteous people to suffer injustice as if the wicked people surrounded the righteous people. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Nominal Adjectives](#))

false justice goes out

Habakkuk speaks of judges giving decisions that they say are just but that are not as if “false justice” were going out to the people. Alternate translation: “judges give verdicts that are not just” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [the law](#)
- [justice](#)
- [justice](#)
- [does...last](#)
- [goes out](#) (2)

Translation Words - UST

- [the law](#)
- [acts in a](#)
- [never make](#) (2)
- [for](#)
- [people](#)

ULT

⁴ Therefore [the law](#) is paralyzed, and [justice](#) does not [last](#) for any time. For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore false [justice goes out](#).”

UST

⁴ No one obeys [the law](#) of Moses, and no one [acts in a](#) right way [for](#) very long. Wicked people always defeat the righteous [people](#) in the courts, because judges [never make](#) fair decisions.”

Habakkuk 1:5

General Information:

Yahweh responds to Habakkuk.

be amazed and astonished

The words “amazed” and “astonished” share similar meanings. Together they emphasize the strength of the emotion. Alternate translation: “be very amazed” (See: [Doublet](#))

in your days

This idiom refers to Habakkuk’s lifetime. Alternate translation: “during your lifetime” (See: [Idiom](#))

when it is reported to you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “when someone reports it to you” or “when you hear about it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [at the nations](#)
- [I am surely about to do something](#)
- [that you will...believe](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [at what is happening in the other nations](#)
- [doing](#)
- [have believed would happen](#)

ULT

⁵ “Look [at the nations](#) and observe them; be amazed and astonished! For I [am surely about to do something](#) in your days [that you will](#) not [believe](#) even if it is told to you.

UST

⁵ Yahweh replied to me, “This is happening, but look around [at what is happening in the other nations](#). If you look, you will be amazed, and even astonished, since I am [doing](#) something during this time that you would never [have believed would happen](#), even if someone told you about it.

Habakkuk 1:6

look!

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

impetuous

This could mean: (1) “violent” or (2) “hasty.”

the breadth of the land

This could mean: (1) everywhere in Judah or (2) everywhere in the world. This would be an exaggeration to emphasize how powerful the Chaldean army is. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [that...nation](#)
- [the earth](#)
- [to seize](#)
- [dwelling places](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [earth](#)
- [and conquer many other](#)
- [and conquer many other](#)
- [countries](#)

ULT

⁶ For look! I am about to raise up the Chaldeans—that fierce and impetuous [nation](#)— they are marching throughout the breadth of [the earth to seize dwelling places](#) that were not their own.

UST

⁶ Very soon I will bring the soldiers of Babylonia, who are fierce and swift. They will march across the entire [earth and conquer many other countries](#).

Habakkuk 1:7

They are terrifying and fearsome

The words “terrifying” and “fearsome” share similar meanings. Together they emphasize the fear that the Chaldeans instilled in other people. Alternate translation: “They cause others to be greatly terrified” (See: [Doublet](#))

their judgment and splendor proceed from themselves

The word “splendor” represents their pride in how they view themselves. Yahweh speaks of their opinion of themselves as if the qualities of judgment and splendor came from them. Alternate translation: “because they are prideful, they decide for themselves what judgment looks like” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [and fearsome](#)
- [their judgment](#)
- [proceed](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [They are a people whom](#)
- [others fear very much](#)
- [and they do...and that they have the right to judge everyone else](#)

ULT

⁷ They are terrifying [and fearsome](#); [their judgment](#) and splendor [proceed](#) from themselves.

UST

⁷ They are a people whom others fear very much, [and they do](#) whatever they want to, because they believe that they are very great [and that they have the right to judge everyone else](#).

Habakkuk 1:8

Their horses ... their horses

the horses of the Chaldean soldiers

leopards

large, swift cats (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

the evening wolves

This refers to wolves that hunt their prey at night.

their horsemen

the Chaldean soldiers who ride the horses

they fly like an eagle hurrying to eat

Yahweh speaks of how quickly the Chaldeans move in order to conquer their enemies as if they were flying, like an eagle flies swiftly to capture its prey. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Their horses](#)
- [also are swifter](#)
- [and their horsemen](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [The horses that pull their chariots](#)
- [The horses](#)
- [gallop swiftly](#)

ULT

⁸ [Their horses also are swifter](#) than leopards, quicker than the evening wolves. So their horsemen come galloping, [and their horsemen](#) come from a great distance—they fly like an eagle swift to devour.

UST

⁸ [The horses that pull their chariots](#) go faster than leopards, and they are fiercer than wolves are in the evening. [The horses](#) on which the soldiers ride [gallop swiftly](#); the soldiers riding them come from distant places. They are like eagles that swoop down to snatch their prey.

Habakkuk 1:9

their multitudes go like the desert wind

Yahweh speaks of how quickly the Chaldeans move as if they were a strong wind that blows in the desert. (See: [Metaphor](#))

they gather captives like sand

This could mean: (1) the Chaldeans take people captive as easily as one would scoop up sand with his hand. Alternate translation: “they gather captives as one gathers sand” or (2) the Chaldeans take a great number of people captive, as if those people were as many as the grains of sand in the desert. Alternate translation: “they capture as many people as there are grains of sand” (See: [Simile](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [their faces](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [they are determined to](#)

ULT

⁹ They all come for violence; all [their faces](#) moving forward, and they gather captives like sand. ^[1]

UST

⁹ As they ride along, [they are determined to](#) act violently. They advance eagerly, as fast as the wind over the desert, and gather up as many prisoners as there are grains of sand!

Habakkuk 1:10

So they mock kings, and rulers are only a mockery for them

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The word “mockery” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “So they mock kings, and rulers are only something for them to mock” or “So all they do is mock kings and rulers” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [kings](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [kings](#)

ULT

¹⁰ So they mock [kings](#), and rulers are only a mockery for them. They laugh at every stronghold, for they pile up earth and capture them.

UST

¹⁰ They make fun of [kings](#) and princes of other countries, and they ridicule all the cities that have high walls around them. They pile up earth around those cities to capture them.

Habakkuk 1:11

the wind will rush on

Yahweh speaks of how swiftly the Chaldean army moves from one city to the next as it conquers each one as if it were a wind that blows swiftly along. (See: [Metaphor](#))

guilty men, those whose might is their god

This refers to the Chaldean soldiers.

Translation Words - ULT

- [like the wind](#)
- [and pass on](#)
- [whose might](#)
- [is their god](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [They...like the wind](#)
- [they go to attack other cities](#)
- [that their own power](#)
- [is their god](#)

ULT

11 Then they sweep past [like the wind](#) and [pass on](#)—guilty men, those [whose might is their god](#).”

UST

11 They rush past [like the wind](#), and then [they go to attack other cities](#). But they are very guilty, because they think [that their own power is their god!](#)”

Habakkuk 1:12

General Information:

Habakkuk speaks to Yahweh about the Chaldeans.

Are you not from ancient times, Yahweh my God, my Holy One?

Habakkuk asks this rhetorical question to emphasize the positive answer. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "You surely are from ancient times, Yahweh my God, my Holy One." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

from ancient times

Alternate translation: "eternal"

has ordained them for judgment, and you, Rock, have established them for correction

The word "them" refers to the Chaldeans. The words "judgment" and "correction" can be translated with verbs. The reader should understand that the Chaldeans will judge and correct Yahweh's people. Alternate translation: "has ordained them to judge his people, and you, Rock, have established them to correct your people" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Rock

Habakkuk speaks of Yahweh being the one who protects him and keeps him safe as if he were a rock upon which Habakkuk could stand in order to be out of his enemies' reach. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- O Yahweh
- O Yahweh
- my God
- my Holy One
- you...have established them

Translation Words - UST

- Then I said, "Yahweh, are
- my
- Holy One
- So why have you sent those men from Babylonia
- God? You are

ULT

¹² "Are you not from ancient times, O Yahweh my God, my Holy One? We will not die. O Yahweh, you have ordained them for judgment, and you, O Rock, have established them for correction.

UST

¹² Then I said, "Yahweh, are you not the eternal God? You are my Holy One, so we will not die. So why have you sent those men from Babylonia to judge us and kill us? You are like our Rock, on top of which we can hide, so why have you sent them to punish us?"

Habakkuk 1:13

Your eyes are too pure

Here the word “eyes” represents Yahweh who sees. Alternate translation: “You are too pure” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

those who betray

This refers to the Chaldeans. The word “betray” refers to people who have been disloyal or have broken agreements that they have made.

Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they are?

Habakkuk speaks of wicked people destroying others as if the wicked were swallowing them. Alternate translation: “Why are you silent while the wicked destroy those more righteous than they are?” (See: [Metaphor](#))

those more righteous than they are

This refers to the Israelites, about whom Habakkuk had been complaining. The reader should understand that these are wicked people, but they are “more righteous than” or not as wicked as the Chaldeans. (See: [Irony](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [evil](#)
- [Why are you silent](#)
- [those...righteous](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [at what is evil](#)
- [who are treacherous](#)
- [people who are more righteous](#)

ULT

¹³ Your eyes are too pure to gaze upon [evil](#), and you are not able to look on wrongdoing with favor; why then have you looked favorably on those who betray? [Why are you silent](#) while the wicked swallow up those more [righteous](#) than they are?

UST

¹³ You are pure, and you cannot endure looking [at what is evil](#), so why are you ignoring men [who are treacherous](#)? Why do you do nothing to punish those wicked men from Babylonia, who destroy [people who are more righteous](#) than they are?

Habakkuk 1:14

You make men like fish in the sea

Habakkuk compares the way in which the Chaldeans will kill people without remorse with the way in which people will kill fish without remorse. Alternate translation: “You cause men to become no more important than fish” (See: [Simile](#))

like creeping things without a ruler over them

The words “creeping things” refer to insects and other bugs that crawl about. Just as insects have no ruler to organize and defend them, the people are defenseless before the Chaldean army. The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “you make men as defenseless as insects that have no ruler” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Simile](#))

ULT

14 You make [men](#) like fish in the sea, like creeping things without [a ruler](#) over them.

UST

14 They treat us like fish in the sea, [or like other creatures](#) in the sea, that have no [ruler](#).

Translation Words - ULT

- [men](#)
- [a ruler](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [or like other creatures](#)
- [ruler](#)

Habakkuk 1:15

He brings ... he drags ... his fishnet ... he gathers ... his dragnet ... he rejoices ... he is glad

The words “he” and “his” refer to a Babylonian soldier who represents all of the Babylonian soldiers. These pronouns can be stated as plural. Alternate translation: “They bring ... they drag ... their fishnets ... they gather ... their dragnet ... they rejoice ... they are glad” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

all of them ... drags men away ... gathers them

Here “them” and “men” refer to people in general. This can be stated in first person to include Habakkuk as one of the people. Alternate translation: “all of us ... drags us away ... gathers us” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

He brings all of them up with a fishhook ... in his dragnet

Habakkuk speaks of the Chaldeans conquering people easily as if the people were fish that the Chaldeans catch with fishhooks and fishnets. (See: [Metaphor](#))

fishhook ... fishnet ... dragnet

tools used to catch fish

Translation Words - ULT

- [he rejoices](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [while they rejoice](#)

ULT

¹⁵ He brings all of them up with a fishhook; he drags men away in his fishnet; he gathers them together in his dragnet; so [he rejoices](#) and he is glad.

UST

¹⁵ The soldiers of Babylonia think that we are fish for them to pull out of the sea with hooks or to catch in their nets, [while they rejoice](#) and celebrate.

Habakkuk 1:16

he sacrifices ... his net ... his dragnet ... he lives ... his food

Habakkuk speaks of the weapons that the Chaldeans use to conquer people and nations as if the weapons were fishing nets that they use to catch fish. The words “he” and “his” refer to a Babylonian soldier who represents all of the Babylonian soldiers. These pronouns can be stated as plural. Alternate translation: “they sacrifice ... their nets ... their dragnets ... they live ... their food” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [he sacrifices](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [and offer sacrifices](#)

ULT

¹⁶ Therefore [he sacrifices](#) to his net and burns incense to his dragnet, for by his net his portion is fat, and his food is the richest kind.

UST

¹⁶ If they catch us, they will worship their weapons with which they captured us [and offer sacrifices](#) to them and burn incense in front of them! They will say, ‘These weapons have enabled us to become rich and eat expensive food.’

Habakkuk 1:17

Will he therefore keep emptying his net, and will he continually slaughter the nations without mercy?

Habakkuk asks this question because he is frustrated and wants to know how long Yahweh will allow the Chaldeans to continue to destroy people and nations. Alternate translation: "Will you therefore let them empty their fishing nets and continue to slaughter the nations while they feel no compassion?" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Will he ... keep emptying his net ... will he continually slaughter

In 1:15-17 the singular pronoun "he" and "his" refer to a Babylonian soldier who represents all of the Babylonian soldiers. These pronouns can be stated as plural. Alternate translation: "Will they ... keep emptying their net ... will they continually slaughter" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

keep emptying his net

Habakkuk speaks of the Chaldeans preparing to conquer more nations as if they were fishermen who empty their nets so that they can use them to catch more fish. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- will he...slaughter
- the nations

Translation Words - UST

- to conquer people forever
- of other nations

ULT

17 Will he therefore keep emptying his net, and will he continually slaughter the nations without mercy?"

1:9 ^[1] is very difficult; many modern versions have other interpretations.

UST

17 Will you allow them to continue to conquer people forever? Will you allow them to destroy people of other nations without any mercy for anyone?"

Habakkuk 2

Habakkuk 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 2:1-20.

This chapter is arranged in a series of questions and answers between Yahweh and Habakkuk.

Special concepts in this chapter

“The righteous will live by his faith”

This is an important phrase in Scripture. Paul also uses it to explain that man is justified by his faith. (See: [righteous](#), [righteousness](#), [unrighteous](#), [unrighteousness](#), [upright](#), [uprightness](#) and [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#) and [faith](#))

Habakkuk 2:1

I will stand at my guard post and station myself on the watchtower

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. This could mean: (1) Habakkuk went to an actual post in the watchtower or (2) this is a metaphor in which Habakkuk speaks of waiting eagerly for Yahweh's response as if he were a watchman waiting at his post for the arrival of a messenger. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

to see what he will say to me

Alternate translation: "to see what Yahweh will say to me"

how I should turn from my complaint

Here the word "turn" refers to returning an answer. Habakkuk considers what answer he will give concerning the things that he has said. (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [I will stand](#)
- [I should turn](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [and stand there](#)
- [and how I should answer](#)

ULT

¹ [I will stand](#) at my guard post and station myself on the watchtower, and I will watch carefully to see what he will say to me and how [I should turn](#) from my complaint. ^[1]

UST

¹ After I said that, I said to myself, "I will climb up into my guard post, [and stand there](#) in my watchtower. I will wait there to find out what Yahweh will say, what he will reply [and how I should answer](#)."

Habakkuk 2:2

General Information:

Yahweh answers Habakkuk.

Record this vision, and write plainly on the tablets

Both of these phrases are saying the same thing in two different ways. Alternate translation: "Write this vision clearly on the tablets" (See: [Parallelism](#))

tablets

These are flat pieces of stone or clay that were used for writing.

so that the one reading them might run

This could mean: (1) that the message is easy enough to read that a messenger can read it as he runs from place to place proclaiming the message. Alternate translation: "so that the one reading the tablets might be able to run as he reads" or (2) this is a metaphor in which Yahweh speaks of reading something very quickly as if the person who reads it is running. Alternate translation: "so that the one reading the tablets might be able to read quickly" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Yahweh](#)
- [the one reading](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [to tell it to other people](#)

ULT

² [Yahweh](#) answered me and said, "Record this vision, and write plainly on the tablets so that [the one reading](#) them might run.

UST

² Then [Yahweh](#) replied to me, "Write plainly on tablets what I am revealing to you in this vision, and then read it to a messenger so he can run with it [to tell it to other people](#).

Habakkuk 2:3

the vision ... will finally speak

Yahweh speaks of the events in the vision happening as if the vision were a person who speaks. Alternate translation: “the vision ... will finally happen” or “the vision ... will finally come true” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

Though it delays, wait for it. For it will surely come and will not tarry

Yahweh speaks of the events of the vision taking a long time to happen as if the vision were a person who does not arrive soon at his destination. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

will not tarry

This could mean: (1) “will not be late” or (2) “will not come slowly”

Translation Words - ULT

- [for an appointed time](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [happen in the future](#)

ULT

³ For the vision is yet [for an appointed time](#) and it hastens to the end and will not fail. Though it delays, wait for it. For it will surely come and will not tarry.

UST

³ In this vision I will talk about things that will [happen in the future](#). Now is not the time when those things will happen, but they certainly will happen, and when they occur, they will occur quickly, and they will not be delayed. You want those things to happen immediately, but they are not happening. But wait patiently for them to happen!

Habakkuk 2:4

Look!

The word “Look!” here adds emphasis to what follows.

is puffed up

Yahweh speaks of the person who is prideful as if the person were “puffed up.” Alternate translation: “is very prideful” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [He whose desires](#)
- [will live](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [people](#)
- [what I want them to do](#)

ULT

⁴ Look! [He whose desires](#) are not right within him is puffed up. But the righteous [will live](#) by his faith.

UST

⁴ Think about the proud people! They are certainly not doing what is righteous. But [people](#) who are righteous will live because they faithfully do [what I want them to do](#).

Habakkuk 2:5

For wine is a betrayer of the arrogant young man

Yahweh speaks of how a person's judgment is impaired by drinking too much wine as if wine were a person who betrays the one who drinks it. Alternate translation: "For the arrogant young man does not get from wine what he wants" (See: [Personification](#))

so that he will not abide

Here the word "abide" refers to dwelling in a home and is a metaphor for having no place to rest. Alternate translation: "so that he will not be able to rest" (See: [Metaphor](#))

enlarges his desire like the grave and, like death, is never satisfied

Yahweh speaks of there always being more people to die as if "the grave" and "death" were people who are never satisfied with eating. In the same way, this person always wants more and is never satisfied. (See: [Metaphor](#))

He gathers to himself every nation and gathers up for himself all of the peoples

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Yahweh speaks of conquering nations and capturing the people as if it were gathering nations and peoples to oneself. Alternate translation: "He conquers for himself the people of every nation" (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [wine](#)
- [his appetite](#)
- [nation](#)
- [the peoples](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [people live for excess](#)
- [such as wine](#)
- [The armies of Babylonia](#)
- [conquer many nations](#)

ULT

⁵ For [wine](#) betrays the arrogant man so that he will not abide, but enlarges [his appetite](#) like Sheol and, like death, is never satisfied. He gathers to himself every [nation](#) and collects for himself all of [the peoples](#).

UST

⁵ If [people live for excess such as wine](#), they will deceive themselves, and proud people are never able to rest. Greedy people open their mouths as wide as the place where dead people are, and they never have enough, just like the place of the dead never has enough dead people. [The armies of Babylonia](#) [conquer many nations](#) for themselves, and capture all their people.

Habakkuk 2:6

Will not all these create

The words “all these” refer to the nations and peoples from [Habakkuk 2:5](#). This negative rhetorical question emphasizes the positive answer. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: “All of these nations and peoples will certainly create” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Woe to the one increasing what is not his

It is implicit that he is increasing his possession of things that do not belong to him. Alternate translation: “Woe to the one who claims for himself more and more things that do not belong to him” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

For how long will you increase the weight of the pledges you have taken?

The word “pledges” refers to objects that people give to others from whom they have borrowed money as a guarantee that they will repay their debt. As the man collects more and more pledges, the total weight of the pledges that he carries increases.

For how long will you increase the weight of the pledges you have taken?

The Chaldeans robbing the people of the nations of their wealth is spoken of as if the Chaldeans were a person who forces others to give him pledges and to pay him what they do not owe. Alternate translation: “For how long will you make yourself rich by extorting others?” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ Will not all these create a saying to ridicule him and a taunting song and riddles about him, saying, ‘Woe to the one increasing what is not his own! For how long will you increase for yourself the weight of the pledges you have taken?’

UST

⁶ But soon all those whom they have captured will ridicule the soldiers from Babylonia! They will make fun of them, saying, ‘Terrible things will happen to you who have stolen things from other countries! You got many things by forcing people to give them to you. But you certainly will not keep those things for long!’

Habakkuk 2:7

Will the ones biting at you not rise up suddenly, and the ones terrifying you awaken?

This negative rhetorical question emphasizes the positive answer. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "The ones biting at you will certainly rise up suddenly, and the ones terrifying you will awaken." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the ones biting at you

The Hebrew word translated here as "the ones biting" can also mean "the ones paying interest" or "debtors." In this context, the word probably has both meanings. The phrase is a metaphor in which those whom the man has oppressed and made debtors by forcing them to give him pledges will now oppress him, which is spoken of as if they were biting him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the ones terrifying you

This refers to the same debtors. They will terrify the Chaldeans by attacking them in revenge for the pledges that they were forced to give.

rise up ... awaken

The people of the nations beginning to act against the Chaldeans is spoken of as if they were to "rise up" and to "awaken" from sleep. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [who will make you tremble](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [to tremble](#)

ULT

⁷ Will not your debtors rise up suddenly, and those awake [who will make you tremble](#)? You will be spoil for them.

UST

⁷ Suddenly those whom you forced to be unjustly indebted to you will rise up and cause you [to tremble](#), and they will take away all the things that you have stolen from them.

Habakkuk 2:8

plunder

to rob or take things by force

you have shed human blood

The idiom “to shed blood” means “to murder.” Alternate translation: “you have murdered people” (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- peoples
- the peoples
- human
- the land

Translation Words - UST

- from the people
- nations
- destroyed their land
- So those

ULT

⁸ Because you have plundered many peoples, all the remnant of the peoples will plunder you. For you have shed human blood and acted with violence against the land, the cities, and all who live in them.

UST

⁸ You stole things from the people of many nations. You murdered people of many people groups, and you destroyed their land and their cities. So those who are still alive will steal valuable things from you.

Habakkuk 2:9

the one who carves out evil gains

A person making a profit by violent means is spoken of as if he were “carving out” gains from something. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the one who carves out evil gains for his house

This could mean: (1) the word “house” is a metaphor in which the Babylonian empire is spoken of as if it were a house that the man builds by means of profits that he gained through violence. Alternate translation: “the one who builds his house with riches that he gained through violence” or (2) the word “house” is a metonym for “family” and the man has made his family rich through violence. Alternate translation: “the one who makes his family rich by violent means” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

so he can set his nest on high to keep himself safe from the hand of evil

The person who builds his house is spoken of as if he were a bird that builds its nest in a high place. The man thinks that his house is secure and free from danger, just as predators are unable to reach the nest. (See: [Metaphor](#))

safe from the hand of evil

Here the word “hand” is a metonym for power, and the word “evil” is a metonym for people who do evil things. Alternate translation: “safe from the power of evil” or “safe from people who will harm him” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [evil](#)
- [evil](#)
- [for his house](#)
- [from the hand of](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Terrible things will happen to you people of Babylonia who build big houses](#)
- [where you can easily defend them](#)
- [and you think that your houses will be safe](#)
- [where you can easily defend them](#)

ULT

⁹ ‘Woe to the one who carves out [evil gains for his house](#), so he can set his nest on high to keep himself safe [from the hand of evil](#).’

UST

⁹ [Terrible things will happen to you people of Babylonia who build big houses](#) with money that you got by forcing others to give it to you. You are proud, [and you think that your houses will be safe](#) because you have built them in places [where you can easily defend them](#).

Habakkuk 2:10

You have devised shame for your house

Here to “devise shame” means that the plans that the man devised have resulted in shame. One possible meaning is that the word “house” is a metaphor in which the Babylonian empire is spoken of as if it were a house that the man has built. Alternate translation: “By your plans, you have brought shame on the house that you have built” Another possibility is that the word “house” is a metonym for “family.” Alternate translation: “By your plans, you have brought shame on your family” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

cutting off many people

Killing many people is spoken of as if it were cutting those people off, like one would cut a branch from a tree. Alternate translation: “killing many people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

have sinned against yourself

The idiom “to sin against oneself” means that the person has done things that will result in his own death or destruction. Alternate translation: “have caused your own ruin” or “have brought about your own death” (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- You have devised
- for your house
- people
- and have sinned against
- yourself

Translation Words - UST

- But because you have...others
- you have
- caused your family...and yourselves
- caused your family...and yourselves
- caused your family and yourselves

ULT

10 You have devised shame for your house by cutting off many people, and have sinned against yourself.

UST

10 But because you have destroyed others, you have caused your family and yourselves shame!

Habakkuk 2:11

For the stones will cry out from the wall, and the rafters of timber will answer them

Here the materials with which the man has built his house are personified as witnesses of the crimes that he has committed. If your culture uses different materials to build houses, you can consider using those materials here. (See: [Personification](#))

cry out

Alternate translation: “cry out against you” or “cry out to accuse you”

will answer them

Alternate translation: “will agree with the stones”

Translation Words - ULT

- [will answer them](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [also say the same things](#)

ULT

¹¹ For the stones will cry out from the wall, and the rafters of timber [will answer them](#),

UST

¹¹ The stones in the walls of your houses cry out to accuse you, and the beams in your ceilings [also say the same things!](#)

Habakkuk 2:12

Woe to the one who builds a city with blood, and who establishes a town in iniquity

These two phrases are saying the same thing in different ways.
Alternate translation: "A warning to the Chaldeans who built their cities with what they have stolen from the people they have killed" (See: [Parallelism](#))

the one who builds a city with blood

Here the word "blood" is a metonym for murder. It is implicit that the person builds a city by means of the goods that he stole from those whom he has killed. Alternate translation: "the one who kills people and steals their goods in order to build a city" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

who establishes a town in iniquity

It is implicit that the person builds a city by means of the goods that he stole from those whom he has killed. Here the word "establishes" means "to begin." Alternate translation: "who starts a town by means of the profit that he has acquired through evil behavior" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹² 'Woe to the one who builds a city with blood, and who establishes a town in iniquity.'

UST

¹² Terrible things will happen to you people of Babylonia who kill people in order to build cities, cities that you build by using money that you have gotten by committing crimes.

Habakkuk 2:13

Is it not from Yahweh of hosts that peoples labor for fire and all the other nations weary themselves for nothing?

This negative rhetorical question emphasizes the positive answer that it anticipates. The two clauses share similar meanings that the work that people do will not last. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "Yahweh is the one who has determined that the things that people work hard to build will be destroyed by fire and result in nothing." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#))

peoples labor for fire

This means that the things that people labor to build are ultimately destined to be fuel for fire. Alternate translation: "peoples labor to build things that will be used as fuel for fire" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Yahweh](#)
- [peoples](#)
- [fire](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh, commander of](#)
- [is built by people who do things like that](#)
- [will be destroyed by fire](#)

ULT

¹³ Is it not indeed from [Yahweh](#) of hosts that [peoples](#) labor for [fire](#) and all the other nations weary themselves for nothing?

UST

¹³ But [Yahweh, commander of](#) the angel armies, has declared that everything that [is built by people who do things like that will be destroyed by fire](#); they will have worked hard uselessly.

Habakkuk 2:14

the land will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea

This simile compares the way in which people everywhere will know of Yahweh's glory with how water fills every part of the sea. (See: [Simile](#))

the land will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh

The word "knowledge" can be translated with a verbal phrase. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "people throughout the land will know the glory of Yahweh" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [the earth](#)
- [the glory of](#)
- [Yahweh](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [are filled](#)
- [the earth](#)
- [that Yahweh is very great](#)

ULT

¹⁴ Yet [the earth](#) will be filled with the knowledge of [the glory of Yahweh](#) as the waters cover the sea.

UST

¹⁴ But in contrast, like the oceans [are filled](#) with water, [the earth](#) will be filled with people who know [that Yahweh is very great!](#)

Habakkuk 2:15

the one who forces his neighbors to drink ... you make them drunk

The way that the Chaldeans cruelly treated other nations is spoken of as if they were a man who forces his neighbors to become drunk so that he can humiliate them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the one who forces his neighbors to drink

It is implied that he makes his neighbor drink wine. Alternate translation: “the one who forces his neighbors to drink wine” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

in order to look at their nakedness

“so you can look at them when they are naked.” This refers to the practice of publicly humiliating people by stripping them naked in front of others. Alternate translation: “so that you can humiliate them publicly by stripping them naked” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁵ ‘Woe to the one who forces his neighbors to drink— you pour out your wrath ^[2] and you make them drunk in order to look at their nakedness.’

UST

¹⁵ Terrible things will happen to you people of Babylonia, who cause people who live in nearby countries to become drunk. You force them to drink a lot of drugged wine until they are drunk and then they walk around naked because you are happy when you see that.

Habakkuk 2:16

You will be filled with shame instead of glory

The Chaldeans passionately pursuing their own glory is spoken of as if they were eating or drinking it greedily and excessively. Instead of attaining glory, they will find only shame. Alternate translation: "You will bring shame upon yourself instead of the glory that you seek" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Drink

Others treating the Chaldeans the way that the Chaldeans had treated others is spoken of as if the Chaldeans were to drink the wine that they had forced others to drink. Alternate translation: "Drink from the cup" or "Drink the wine" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

you will expose your uncircumcised foreskin

This phrase is similar to the Chaldeans forcing others to strip naked so that they could look at their nakedness. Here the words "uncircumcised foreskin" indicate that they will be humiliated not just by being naked, but because their uncircumcision proves that they do not belong to Yahweh's people. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

The cup in Yahweh's right hand is coming around to you

Yahweh punishing the Chaldeans is spoken of as if he were forcing them to drink wine from a cup that he holds in his hand. Yahweh's right hand represents his power. (See: [Metaphor](#))

The cup in Yahweh's right hand

Alternate translation: "The cup that Yahweh holds in his right hand" or "The cup that Yahweh is holding"

is coming around to you

Alternate translation: "will come to you as it did to others" or "will pass along to you"

disgrace will cover your glory

The Chaldeans experiencing disgrace instead of glory is spoken of as if disgrace were an object that covers the glory that they thought they had. Alternate translation: "disgrace will replace your glory" or "people will disgrace you instead of honor you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Yahweh](#)
- [your glory](#)

ULT

16 You will have your fill of shame instead of glory. Now it is your turn! Drink, and you will expose your uncircumcised foreskin! The cup in the right hand of [Yahweh](#) is coming around to you, and disgrace will cover [your glory](#).

UST

16 But you are the ones who soon will be disgraced instead of being honored. It will be as though you are forced to drink a lot of wine until you will also stagger around, drunk. [You will drink the wine that symbolizes that Yahweh will punish you](#), and he will cause others to dishonor you instead of [honoring you](#).

Translation Words - UST

- You will drink the wine that symbolizes that Yahweh will punish you
- honoring you

Habakkuk 2:17

The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you

The Chaldeans being punished for the violence done to Lebanon is spoken of as if their violent actions were a person who will overpower them. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

The violence done to Lebanon

Here, **Lebanon** could mean: (1) it represents the forest of Lebanon. Alternate translation: “The violence done to the trees of Lebanon” or (2) it represents the people of Lebanon. Alternate translation: “The violence done to the people of Lebanon” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the destruction of animals will terrify you

The Chaldeans being punished for destroying the animals in Lebanon is spoken of as if their destruction were a person who will terrify them. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

For you have shed human blood ... all who live in them

See how you translated this sentence in [Habakkuk 2:8](#).

you have shed human blood

The idiom “to shed blood” means “to murder.” Alternate translation: “you have murdered people” (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Lebanon](#)
- [animals](#)
- [will terrify you](#)
- [man](#)
- [the land](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [You did...to the people in Lebanon](#)
- [killed](#)
- [the wild animals there](#)
- [people](#)
- [and you have destroyed their lands](#)

ULT

¹⁷ For the violence done to [Lebanon](#) will overwhelm you and the destruction of [animals will terrify you](#). For you have shed the blood of [man](#) and you have acted with violence against [the land](#), the cities, and all who live in them.

UST

¹⁷ [You did](#) violent things [to the people in Lebanon](#), and you [killed the wild animals there](#), but you will be punished severely for doing that. You have killed many [people and you have destroyed their lands](#) and their cities.

Habakkuk 2:18

What does the carved figure profit you?

This rhetorical question emphasizes the negative answer that it anticipates. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "The carved figure profits you nothing!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

you

The word "you" refers to the Chaldeans.

molten metal

This describes metal when it is in its liquid form.

a teacher of lies

This phrase refers to the one who carved or cast the figure. By making a false god, he is teaching a lie.

ULT

18 What does an idol profit you when its maker has shaped it or a metal image, a teacher of lies? For its maker trusts his own handiwork when he makes these mute gods.

UST

18 You people of Babylonia need to know that your idols are completely useless, because it is people who made them. Statues that have been carved or made in a mold deceive you. Those who trust in idols are trusting in things that they themselves created, things that cannot speak!

Habakkuk 2:19

Or to the silent stone

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "Woe to the one saying to the silent stone" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Do these things teach?

This rhetorical question emphasizes the negative answer that it anticipates. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "These things cannot teach." or "Wood and stone cannot teach." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

See, it is overlaid

Alternate translation: "Look at it. You can see for yourself that it is overlaid"

it is overlaid with gold and silver

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "a person overlays the wood or stone with gold and silver" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

there is no breath at all within it

The idiom "no breath ... within it" means that it is not alive, but dead. Alternate translation: "it is not alive" or "it is dead" (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Arise](#)
- [with gold](#)
- [and silver](#)
- [breath](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Wake up](#)
- [with silver](#)
- [and gold](#)
- [alive](#)

ULT

¹⁹ 'Woe to him who says to the wood, Wake up! Or to the silent stone, [Arise!](#)' Can these things teach? See, it is overlaid [with gold and silver](#), but there is no [breath](#) at all within it.

UST

¹⁹ Terrible things will happen to you who say to lifeless idols that are made of wood, '[Wake up!](#)' Stone idols certainly cannot tell you what you should do; they look nice because they are covered [with silver and gold](#), but they are not [alive](#).

Habakkuk 2:20

all the land

Here the word "land" is a metonym for the people who live in the land. Alternate translation: "everyone in the land" or "everyone on earth" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [But Yahweh](#)
- [his holy](#)
- [the earth](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [But Yahweh](#)
- [is in his holy](#)
- [on the earth](#)

ULT

20 [But Yahweh](#) is in [his holy](#) temple! Let all [the earth](#) be silent before him."

2:1 ^[1], which is what the Hebrew text has, some modern versions have or .
2:15 ^[2], or as .

UST

20 [But Yahweh](#) is in [his holy](#) temple; everyone [on the earth](#) should be silent in his presence!"

Habakkuk 3

Habakkuk 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Poetry

Although this is a prayer, it is in the form of poetry. Habakkuk uses startling imagery to show his fear of Yahweh. (See: [Poetry](#) and [fear, afraid, frighten](#))

Habakkuk 3:1

The prayer of Habakkuk the prophet:

These words introduce the third chapter of this book. This can be stated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "This is the prayer that Habakkuk the prophet prayed to Yahweh." (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- The prayer
- of Habakkuk
- the prophet

Translation Words - UST

- A prayer
- Habakkuk
- the prophet

ULT

¹ The prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth. ^[1]

UST

¹ A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet.

Habakkuk 3:2

I have heard your report

This could mean: (1) "I have heard people talk about what you have done in the past" or (2) "I have heard what you just said."

revive your work

Habakkuk speaks of Yahweh doing again the things that he has done in the past as if Yahweh were to cause his work to live again.

Alternate translation: "bring your work back to life" or "what you did before, do again" (See: [Metaphor](#))

in the midst of these times

This idiom refers to the time at which Habakkuk prayed this prayer, as opposed to times when Yahweh had acted in the past to rescue his people. Alternate translation: "in our own times" (See: [Idiom](#))

make it known

Alternate translation: "make your work known" or "cause people to know your work"

Translation Words - ULT

- [Yahweh](#)
- [O Yahweh](#) (2)
- [and I fear](#)
- [revive](#)
- [your work](#)
- [make it known](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [and I](#) (2)
- [revere you](#)
- [do again](#)
- [some of those things that you did](#)
- [Even when you are angry with us](#)

ULT

² [Yahweh](#), I have heard your report, [and I fear](#). [O Yahweh](#), [revive your work](#) in the midst of the years; in the midst of the years [make it known](#); remember to have compassion in your wrath.

UST

² [Yahweh](#), I have heard about you; [and I revere you](#) because of all the amazing things that you have done. In our time, [do again some of those things that you did](#) long ago! [Even when you are angry with us](#), act mercifully toward us!

Habakkuk 3:3

God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran

Teman and Mount Paran were both located south of Judah. Habakkuk speaks of God coming to Judah from the direction of Mount Sinai.

His glory covered the heavens

“His splendor covered the sky.” Here the word “glory” refers to the bright light that biblical writers often associate with God’s presence.

the earth was full of his praise

Here the word “praise” is a metonym for God’s qualities that cause people to praise him. Alternate translation: “the earth was full of his glory” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [God](#)
- [the heavens](#)
- [the earth](#)
- [and...his praise](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [I also saw him coming](#)
- [the sky](#)
- [and the earth](#)
- [of people who were praising him](#)

ULT

³ [God](#) came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. *Selah*. His glory covered [the heavens](#), and [the earth](#) was full of [his praise](#).

UST

³ In a vision, I saw God, the Holy One, coming from the region of Teman in Edom; [I also saw him coming](#) from the Paran hills in the region of Sinai. His glory filled [the sky](#), and [the earth](#) was full of [people who were praising him](#).

Habakkuk 3:4

With brightness like the light

Here the word “brightness” likely refers to the brightness that is often associated with Yahweh’s glory. This could mean: (1) the brightness of Yahweh’s glory was like flashes of lightning or (2) the brightness of Yahweh’s glory was like the rising of the sun.

two-pronged rays flash from his hand

Habakkuk speaks of flashes of lightning as if they were two-pronged weapons that Yahweh holds in his hand. (See: [Metaphor](#))

there he hid his power

The word “there” refers to Yahweh’s hand. This could mean: (1) the lightning bolts that Habakkuk can see are only a small representation of the full power that he cannot see hidden in Yahweh’s hand or (2) Yahweh hides his power in his hand until he is ready to use it.

Translation Words - ULT

- [from his hand](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [from his hands](#)

ULT

⁴ His brightness was like the light; rays flashed [from his hand](#); and there he hid his power.

UST

⁴ His glory was like the sunrise; rays flashed [from his hands](#) where he keeps his power.

Habakkuk 3:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Translation Words - ULT

- went
- and...followed

Translation Words - UST

- He
- came

ULT

⁵ Deadly disease **went** before him, and the plague **followed** at his heels.

UST

⁵ **He** sent plagues in front of him, and other plagues **came** behind him.

Habakkuk 3:6

He stood

This means that Yahweh stopped walking and stood still, not that he stood up from a seated position.

measured the earth

This could mean: (1) the word translated as “measured” can be “shook” or (2) he surveyed the earth the way a conqueror would before assigning portions to his governors.

eternal mountains ... everlasting hills

“mountains that have existed since the beginning of time ... hills that will exist until the end of time.” If your language has no different words for “hills” and “mountains” or for “eternal” and “everlasting,” you can combine them as the UST has done.

Even the eternal mountains were shattered

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “Even the eternal mountains crumbled” or “He shattered even the eternal mountains” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the everlasting hills bowed down

The hills being flattened like level ground is spoken of as if they were people who bow down before Yahweh. Alternate translation: “the everlasting hills collapsed” (See: [Personification](#))

His path is everlasting

This could mean: (1) the words “His path” may be a metaphor that speaks of Yahweh and his actions as a path on which he walks. Alternate translation: “He is everlasting” or (2) Habakkuk speaks of the path upon which Yahweh walks in the vision as being everlasting, indicating that this is the same path that Yahweh had taken in ancient times. Alternate translation: “He walks along an ancient path” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- He stood
- the earth
- the nations

Translation Words - UST

- When he stopped, the earth shook
- When he...at the nations
- and mountains that have existed

ULT

⁶ He stood and measured the earth; he looked and made the nations tremble. Even the eternal mountains were shattered, and the everlasting hills bowed down. His ways are everlasting.

UST

⁶ When he stopped, the earth shook. When he looked at the nations, all the people trembled. The hills and mountains that have existed since the beginning of time collapsed and crumbled. He is the only one who exists eternally!

Habakkuk 3:7

I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction, and the fabric of the tents in the land of Midian trembling

This could mean: (1) the words “the tents” and “the fabric of the tents” are metonyms for the people who live in those tents. Alternate translation: “I saw the people who live in tents in the land of Cushan in affliction, and the people who live in tents in the land of Midian trembling” or (2) this is a metaphor in which Habakkuk speaks of the tents in Cushan and Midian being blown about by a storm as if the tents were people who were trembling in affliction. Alternate translation: “I saw the tents of Cushan blown about like people in affliction, and the fabric of the tents in the land of Midian trembling as if they were people” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Cushan

Here, **Cushan** could mean (1) the name of a people group otherwise unknown or (2) the same as Cush. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Translate Unknowns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [and the tent curtains](#)
- [in the land of](#)
- [trembling](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [were very afraid](#)
- [and the people in the region](#)
- [were trembling](#)

ULT

⁷ I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction, [and the tent curtains in the land of Midian trembling](#).

UST

⁷ In the vision I saw the people who live in tents in the region of Cushan [were very afraid, and the people in the region of Midian were trembling](#).

Habakkuk 3:8

you rode upon your horses and your victorious chariots

The phrases “your horses” and “your victorious chariots” both refer to the same thing. This speaks of Yahweh as if he were a warrior riding a horse-drawn chariot into battle. Alternate translation: “you rode your horse-drawn chariots to victory” (See: [Doublet](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [O Yahweh](#)
- [your horses](#)
- [and your...chariots](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [with horses](#)
- [that were pulling chariots](#)

ULT

⁸ Was your wrath against the rivers, [O Yahweh](#)? Was your anger against the rivers, or your fury against the sea, when you rode upon [your horses and your victorious chariots](#)?

UST

⁸ [Yahweh](#), was it because you were angry with the rivers and streams that you struck them? Did the seas cause you to be furious, with the result that you rode through them [with horses that were pulling chariots](#) that you used to bring victory to your cause?

Habakkuk 3:9

You have brought out your bow without a cover

This means that Yahweh has removed his bow from its protective case and is prepared to shoot. Alternate translation: "You have prepared to shoot your bow" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

You divided the earth with rivers

This could mean: (1) "You created rivers that divide the lands through which they run" or (2) "You split open the earth and rivers flowed forth."

Translation Words - ULT

- many
- the earth

Translation Words - UST

- and prepared to shoot it
- the earth

ULT

⁹ You removed the sheath from your bow; you called for many arrows! *Selah*. You split the earth with rivers.

UST

⁹ It was as though you uncovered your bow and prepared to shoot it, and had grasped arrows to put to your bow. Then you split open the earth, and streams burst out.

Habakkuk 3:10

The mountains saw you and twisted in pain

The effects that Yahweh's presence has on the mountains is spoken of as if the mountains were people who writhe in pain. This may refer either to the mountains shaking from an earthquake or to the water from the storm eroding the sides of the mountains as the streams flow down. (See: [Personification](#))

Downpours of water passed over them

This could mean: (1) torrential rains fell on the mountains or (2) the rain caused raging streams to flow down the mountains.

the deep sea raised a shout

The loud noises that the sea makes as the wind and storm pass over it are spoken of as if the sea were a person who begins to shout loudly. Alternate translation: "the deep sea became loud" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

It lifted up its waves

The level of the water in the sea rising and the storm winds causing waves in the sea is spoken of as if the sea were a person who lifts its waves. Alternate translation: "Waves began to form in the sea" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [its waves](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [rushed by in floods](#)

ULT

¹⁰ The mountains saw you and twisted in pain. Downpours of water passed over them; the deep sea raised its voice. It lifted up [its waves](#) on high.

UST

¹⁰ It is as though the mountains saw you doing that, and they trembled in pain. The water [rushed by in floods](#); it was as though the deep ocean roared and caused its waves to rise up high.

Habakkuk 3:11

The sun and moon stood still

The sun and moon not moving in the sky is spoken of as if they were people who stopped walking and stood still. Alternate translation: "The sun and moon stopped moving" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

in their high places

Alternate translation: "in the sky"

at the flash of your arrows ... at the lightning of your flashing spear

These two phrases share similar meanings and tell why the sun and moon have stood still. The lightning flashes in the sky are spoken of as if they were arrows that Yahweh shoots from his bow or a shining spear that he throws through the sky. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

the flash of your arrows as they fly

Alternate translation: "the flash of your flying arrows"

Translation Words - ULT

- [stood still](#)
- [as they fly](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [stopped moving](#)
- [past](#)

ULT

11 The sun and moon [stood still](#) in their high places at the light of your arrows [as they fly](#), at the gleam of your flashing spear.

UST

11 The sun and moon [stopped moving](#) in the sky, while your lightning flashed [past](#) like a swift arrow, and your glittering spear flashed.

Habakkuk 3:12

indignation

anger of a person who has suffered injustice

you have threshed the nations

Yahweh punishing the people of the nations is spoken of as if he threshed the nations. Threshing refers to the practice of having an ox or some other animal trample upon grain stalks in order to crush them and remove the grain. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [the earth](#)
- [the nations](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [across the earth](#)
- [the armies of many nations](#)

ULT

¹² You have marched over [the earth](#) with indignation. In anger you have threshed [the nations](#).

UST

¹² Being very angry, you walked [across the earth](#) and trampled [the armies of many nations](#)!

Habakkuk 3:13

You went out for the salvation of your people

The word “salvation” can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: “You went out to save your people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

your anointed one

Here this phrase refers to one whom Yahweh has chosen. This could mean: (1) “the people you have chosen” or “the nation you have chosen” or (2) “the king you have chosen.”

You shatter the head of the house of the wicked to lay bare from the base up to the neck

This could mean: (1) killing the leader and destroying the people is spoken of as if someone were destroying a house. Here the leader is the head, that is, the roof of the house; and “base” and “neck” represent other parts of the house. Alternate translation: “You destroy the roof of the wicked house and demolish the rest of the building” or “You kill the leader of the wicked nation and completely destroy the nation” or (2) Killing the leader and removing honor and power from the people is spoken of as if someone were shattering a person’s head and stripping off all of his clothes. Here the leader is the “head,” and “house” represents the people who are the body. Alternate translation: “The wicked people and their leader are like a man whose head you crush and whose body you strip naked from foot to neck” or “You kill the leader of the wicked people and completely remove all of the people’s power” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- You went out
- your people
- the head
- of the house of

Translation Words - UST

- But you also went to
- rescue your people
- the leader of those
- took away all his power completely

ULT

13 You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed one. You crush the head of the house of the wicked to lay him bare from the thigh up to the neck. *Selah*

UST

13 But you also went to rescue your people, and to save the one whom you have chosen. You struck down the leader of those wicked people and took away all his power completely.

Habakkuk 3:14

You have pierced the head of his warriors with his own arrows

The word “his” refers to the leader of the Chaldeans. This could mean: (1) this is a metaphor in which the warriors are spoken of as if they were a body and the leader were the head. Alternate translation: “You have killed with his own spear the one who leads the warriors” or (2) the word “head” refers to the heads of each of the warriors. Alternate translation: “With the leader’s own spear, you have pierced the heads of each of his warriors” (See: [Metaphor](#))

they came like a storm

The power and quickness of the Chaldeans as they attacked the people of Israel is compared to the coming of a sudden storm. Alternate translation: “they came quickly like a storm” (See: [Simile](#))

their gloating was like one who devours the poor in a hiding place

The word “gloating” here means to rejoice for bad reasons and can be translated with a verb. The warriors treating people cruelly or killing them is spoken of as if the warriors were wild beasts who carry their prey to their hiding places in order to eat it. Alternate translation: “they gloated like a person who secretly abuses poor people” or “they rejoiced when they oppressed the poor, acting as if they would eat them like a beast eats its prey in its den” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [the head of](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [head](#)

ULT

14 You have pierced [the head of his](#) warriors with his own arrows since they came like a storm to scatter us, their gloating was like one who devours the afflicted in a hiding place.

UST

14 With his own spear you destroyed the leader of those soldiers who rushed like a whirlwind to attack and scatter us, thinking that they could conquer us as easily as they defeat the weak people who hide from them.

Habakkuk 3:15

heaped up the great waters

Yahweh causing the waters to surge is spoken of as if he heaped the water up into piles. Alternate translation: "caused the great waters to surge" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [with your horses](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [your horses to destroy our enemies](#)

ULT

15 You have trampled on the sea [with your horses](#), on the surge of the great waters.

UST

15 You walked through the sea with [your horses to destroy our enemies](#), and caused the waves to surge.

Habakkuk 3:16

General Information:

Habakkuk describes his reaction to his vision of Yahweh.

I heard

You may indicate what it is that Habakkuk heard. This could mean: (1) "I heard everything in that vision" or (2) "I heard Yahweh approach like a great storm" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

my inner parts trembled

The word translated here as "inner parts" is literally "belly." If your language has a specific internal organ that it uses to express the feeling of great fear, you can consider using it here. Alternate translation: "my heart beat rapidly" or "my stomach turned" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

My lips quivered at the sound

Quivering lips is another spontaneous response that comes with great fear.

Decay comes into my bones

Habakkuk speaks of having no strength in his body as if his bones began to decay. You may consider using an idiom from your own language here. Alternate translation: "My body goes limp, as if my bones were rotting" (See: [Idiom](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

under myself I tremble

The words "under myself" refer to what is below him. This idiom could mean: (1) "my legs tremble" or (2) "I tremble where I stand." (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [tremble](#)
- [I will wait quietly](#)
- [distress](#)
- [the people](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [weak](#)
- [But I will wait quietly](#)
- [people of Babylonia](#)
- [disasters](#)

ULT

16 I heard, and my inner parts trembled! My lips quivered at the sound. Decay enters into my bones, and my legs [tremble](#) beneath me Yet [I will wait quietly](#) for the day of [distress](#) to come upon [the people](#) who invade us.

UST

16 When I saw that vision, my heart pounded and my lips quivered because I became afraid. My legs became [weak](#) and I shook, because I was terrified. [But I will wait quietly](#) for the [people of Babylonia](#), those who invaded our country, to experience [disasters](#)!

Habakkuk 3:17

General Information:

Habakkuk describes his reaction to his vision of Yahweh.

though the produce of the olive tree disappoints

Alternate translation: “though the produce of the olive tree fails” or “though the olive tree fails to produce olives”

though the flock is cut off from the fold

The word “flock” may refer to sheep or goats, or both. The word “fold” refers to the fenced-in area where shepherds keep their flock. Habakkuk speaks of the flock dying as if someone were to cut off the flock, as a person would cut a branch from a tree. Alternate translation: “though all the flock dies and the folds are empty” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [the fig tree](#)
- [and though...fails](#)
- [the olive tree](#)
- [and though...is cut off](#)
- [the flock](#)
- [cattle](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [on the fig trees](#)
- [on the grapevines](#)
- [and even if there are no olives growing on the olive trees](#)
- [and even if there are no olives growing on the olive trees](#)
- [and even if the flocks of sheep and goats die in the fields](#)
- [cattle](#)

ULT

¹⁷ Though [the fig tree](#) does not bud and there is no fruit on the vines; [and though](#) the produce of [the olive tree](#) fails and the fields yield no food; [and though the flock is cut off](#) from the fold and there are no [cattle](#) in the stalls,

UST

¹⁷ Therefore, even if there are no blossoms [on the fig trees](#), and there are no grapes [on the grapevines](#), [and even if there are no olives growing on the olive trees](#), and there are no crops in the fields, [and even if the flocks of sheep and goats die in the fields](#), and there are no [cattle](#) in the stalls, this is what I will do.

Habakkuk 3:18

the God of my salvation

The word “salvation” can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: “the God who saves me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [in Yahweh](#)
- [because of the God of](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [my God](#)

ULT

¹⁸ yet, I will rejoice [in Yahweh](#). I will be joyful [because of the God of](#) my salvation.

UST

¹⁸ I will rejoice because of [Yahweh](#)! I will be joyful because [my God](#) is the one who saves me!

Habakkuk 3:19

he makes my feet like the deer's. He makes me go forward on my high places

Habakkuk speaks of Yahweh keeping him safe and enabling him to survive during difficult times as if Yahweh were to make him as sure-footed as a deer that can climb easily on rugged and dangerous mountain sides. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [The Lord](#)
- [is my strength](#)
- [and he makes](#)
- [For the music director](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [the Lord is the one](#)
- [who gives me strength](#)
- [and he enables me to climb safely](#)
- [it is to be accompanied by people](#)

ULT

¹⁹ [The Lord](#) Yahweh [is my strength and he makes](#) my feet like the feet of a deer. He makes me tread on my high places. [For the music director](#), on my stringed instruments.

3:1 ^[1], which may refer to musical directions for singers.

UST

¹⁹ Yahweh [the Lord is the one who gives me strength, and he enables me to climb safely](#) like a deer does, he makes me walk on my high hills. (This message is for the choir director: When this prayer is sung, [it is to be accompanied by people](#) playing stringed instruments.)



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Abstract Nouns

Description

Abstract nouns are nouns that refer to attitudes, qualities, events, or situations. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as happiness, weight, unity, friendship, health, and reason. This is a translation issue because some languages may express a certain idea with an abstract noun, while others would need a different way to express it.

This page answers the question: *What are abstract nouns and how do I deal with them in my translation?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences]]

Remember that nouns are words that refer to a person, place, thing, or idea. Abstract nouns are the nouns that refer to ideas. These can be attitudes, qualities, events, situations, or even relationships between those ideas. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as joy, peace, creation, goodness, contentment, justice, truth, freedom, vengeance, slowness, length, weight, and many, many more.

Some languages, such as Biblical Greek and English, use abstract nouns a lot. They provide a way of giving names to actions or qualities. With names, people who speak these languages can talk about the concepts as though they were things. For example, in languages that use abstract nouns, people can say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sin."

But some languages do not use abstract nouns very much. In these languages, speakers may not have the two abstract nouns "forgiveness" and "sin," but they would express the same meaning in other ways. For example, they would express, "I believe that God is willing to forgive people after they have sinned," by using verb phrases instead of nouns for those ideas.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible that you translate from may use abstract nouns to express certain ideas. Your language might not use abstract nouns for some of those ideas. Instead, it might use phrases to express those ideas. Those phrases will use other kinds of words such as adjectives, verbs, or adverbs to express the meaning of the abstract noun. For example, "What is its **weight**?" could be expressed as "How much does it **weigh**?" or "How **heavy** is it?"

Examples From the Bible

From **childhood** you have known the sacred writings ... (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)

The abstract noun "childhood" refers to when someone was a child.

But **godliness** with **contentment** is great **gain**. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULT)

The abstract nouns "godliness" and "contentment" refer to being godly and content. The abstract noun "gain" refers to something that benefits or helps someone.

Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:9 ULT)

The abstract noun "salvation" here refers to being saved.

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **slowness** to be (2 Peter 3:9a ULT)

The abstract noun "slowness" refers to the lack of speed with which something is done.

He will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the **purposes** of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5b ULT)

The abstract noun “purposes” refers to the things that people want to do and the reasons they want to do them.

Translation Strategies

If an abstract noun would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun. Alternative translations are indented below the Scripture example.

... from **childhood** you have known the sacred writings ... (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)

Ever since **you were a child** you have known the sacred writings.

But **godliness** with **contentment** is great **gain**. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULT)

But **being godly** and **content** is very **beneficial**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **are godly** and **content**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **honor and obey God** and when we are **happy with what we have**.

Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:9 ULT)

Today the people in this house **have been saved** ... Today God **has saved** the people in this house ...

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **slowness** to be. (2 Peter 3:9a ULT)

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **moving slowly** to be.

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the **purposes** of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5b ULT)

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal **the things that people want to do and the reasons that they want to do them**.

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:3](#); [1:10](#); [1:12](#); [2:14](#); [3:13](#); [3:14](#); [3:18](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:5](#); [2:14](#); [2:19](#); [3:6](#))

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: [Introduction to Habakkuk](#); [Habakkuk 1:1](#); [1:2](#); [1:12](#); [1:17](#); [2:6](#); [2:12](#); [2:13](#); [2:15](#); [2:16](#); [3:1](#); [3:9](#); [3:16](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:5](#); [1:7](#); [3:8](#))

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 ?*

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 **sinners in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinners 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: [Habakkuk 1:14](#); [2:19](#))

First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as “I” and the person he is speaking to as “you.” Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than “I” or “you.”

Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns “I” and “we.” (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun “you.” (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns “he,” “she,” “it,” and “they.” (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like “the man” or “the woman” are also third person.

This page answers the question: *What are first, second, and third person, and how do I translate when a third person form does not refer to the third person?*

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

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses the third person to refer to himself or to the people he is speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant “I” or “you.”

Examples From the Bible

Sometimes people used the third person instead of “I” or “me” to refer to themselves.

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34 ULT)

David referred to himself in the third person as “your servant” and used “his.” He was calling himself Saul’s servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said,
“... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words “God’s” and “his.” He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful.

Sometimes people use the third person instead of “you” or “your” to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

Abraham answered and said, “Look, I have undertaken to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!” (Genesis 18:27 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as “My Lord” rather than as “you.” He did this to show his humility before God.

So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

After saying “each of you,” Jesus used the third person “his” instead of “your.”

Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean “I” or “you” would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”
- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34)

But David said to Saul, “**I, your servant**, used to keep **my** father’s sheep.”

- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **mine**? Can you thunder with a voice like **mine**?”

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **your** brother from your heart.

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:15](#))

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 Habakkuk](#); [Habakkuk 3:7](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:6](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:3](#); [1:5](#); [2:1](#); [2:8](#); [2:10](#); [2:17](#); [2:19](#); [3:2](#); [3:16](#))

Irony

Description

Irony is a figure of speech in which the sense that the speaker intends to communicate is actually the opposite of the literal meaning of the words. Sometimes a person does this by using someone else's words, but in a way that communicates that he does not agree with them. People do this to emphasize how different something is from what it should be, or how someone else's belief about something is wrong or foolish. It is often humorous.

This page answers the question: *What is irony and how can I translate it?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "People who are well do not have need of a physician, but those who have sickness. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
(Luke 5:31-32 ULT)

When Jesus spoke of "righteous people," he was not referring to people who were truly righteous, but to people who wrongly believed that they were righteous. By using irony, Jesus communicated that they were wrong to think that they were better than others and did not need to repent.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

If someone does not realize that a speaker is using irony, he will think that the speaker actually believes what he is saying. He will understand the passage to mean the opposite of what it was intended to mean.

Examples From the Bible

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9b ULT)

Here Jesus praises the Pharisees for doing something that is obviously wrong. Through irony, he communicates the opposite of praise: He communicates that the Pharisees, who take great pride in keeping the commandments, are so far from God that they do not even recognize that their traditions are breaking God's commandments. The use of irony makes the Pharisee's sin more obvious and startling.

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. **"Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled."** (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

People worshiped idols as if their idols had knowledge or power, and Yahweh was angry at them for doing that. So he used irony and challenged their idols to tell what would happen in the future. He knew that the idols could not do this, but by speaking as if they could, he mocked the idols, making their inability more obvious, and rebuked the people for worshipping them.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work?
Can you find the way back to their houses for them?
Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then; "the number of your days is so large!" (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Job thought that he was wise. Yahweh used irony to show Job that he was not so wise. The two phrases in bold above are irony. They emphasize the opposite of what they say, because they are so obviously false. They

emphasize that Job could not possibly answer God's questions about the creation of light because Job was not born until many, many years later.

Already you are satisfied! Already you have become rich! **You began to reign** apart from us, and I wish you really did reign, so that we also might reign with you. (1 Corinthians 4:8 ULT)

The Corinthians considered themselves to be very wise, self-sufficient, and not in need of any instruction from the Apostle Paul. Paul used irony, speaking as if he agreed with them, to show how proudly they were acting and how far from being wise they really were.

Translation Strategies

If the irony would be understood correctly in your language, translate it as it is stated. If not, here are some other strategies.

(1) Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.

(2) The irony is **not** found in the literal words of the speaker, but instead the true meaning is found in the opposite of the literal meaning of the speaker's words.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

You think that you are doing well when you reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!

You act like it is good to reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!

I did not come to call **the righteous**, but sinners to repentance. (Luke 5:32 ULT)

I did not come to call **people who think that they are righteous** to repentance, but to call sinners to repentance.

(2) Translate the actual, intended meaning of the statement of irony.

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

You are doing a terrible thing when you reject the commandment of God so you may keep your tradition!

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. "**Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled.**" (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

'Present your case,' says Yahweh; 'present your best arguments for your idols,' says the King of Jacob. Your idols **cannot bring us their own arguments or come forward to declare to us what will happen** so we may know these things well. We cannot hear them because **they cannot speak** to tell us their earlier predictive declarations, so we cannot reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work?
Can you find the way back to their houses for them?
**Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then;
the number of your days is so large!** (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You act like you know how light and darkness were created, as if you were there; as if you are as old as creation, but you are not!**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-litotes]]

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:13](#))

Metaphor

Description

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of one thing as if it were a different thing because he wants people to think about how those two things are alike.

For example, someone might say, “The girl I love is a red rose.”

A girl and a rose are very different things, but the speaker considers that they are alike in some way. The hearer’s task is to understand in what way they are alike.

This page answers the question: *What is a metaphor and how can I translate a Bible passage that has one?*

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

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

[Simile](#)

The Parts of a Metaphor

The example above shows us that a metaphor has three parts. In this metaphor, the speaker is talking about “the girl I love.” This is the **Topic**. The speaker wants the hearer to think about what is similar between her and “a red rose.” The red rose is the **Image** to which he compares the girl. Most probably, he wants the hearer to consider that they are both beautiful. This is the **Idea** that the girl and the rose both share, and so we may also call it the **Point of Comparison**.

Every metaphor has three parts:

- The **Topic**, the item being immediately discussed by the writer/speaker.
- The **Image**, the physical item (object, event, action, etc.) which the speaker uses to describe the topic.
- The **Idea**, the abstract concept or quality that the physical **Image** brings to the mind of the hearer when he thinks of how the **Image** and the **Topic** are similar. Often, the **Idea** of a metaphor is not explicitly stated in the Bible, but it is only implied from the context. The hearer or reader usually needs to think of the **Idea** himself.

Using these terms, we can say that a metaphor is a figure of speech that uses a physical **Image** to apply an abstract **Idea** to the speaker’s **Topic**.

Usually, a writer or speaker uses a metaphor in order to express something about a **Topic**, with at least one **Point of Comparison (Idea)** between the **Topic** and the **Image**. Often in metaphors, the **Topic** and the **Image** are explicitly stated, but the **Idea** is only implied. The writer/speaker often uses a metaphor in order to invite the readers/listeners to think about the similarity between the **Topic** and the **Image** and to figure out for themselves the **Idea** that is being communicated.

Speakers often use metaphors in order to strengthen their message, to make their language more vivid, to express their feelings better, to say something that is hard to say in any other way, or to help people remember their message.

Sometimes speakers use metaphors that are very common in their language. However, sometimes speakers use metaphors that are uncommon, and even some metaphors that are unique. When a metaphor has become very common in a language, often it becomes a “passive” metaphor, in contrast to uncommon metaphors, which we describe as being “active.” Passive metaphors and active metaphors each present a different kind of translation problem, which we will discuss below.

Passive Metaphors

A passive metaphor is a metaphor that has been used so much in the language that its speakers no longer regard it as one concept standing for another. Linguists often call these “dead metaphors.” Passive metaphors are extremely common. Examples in English include the terms “table **leg**,” “family **tree**,” “book **leaf**” (meaning a page in

a book), or the word “crane” (meaning a large machine for lifting heavy loads). English speakers simply think of these words as having more than one meaning. Examples of passive metaphors in Biblical Hebrew include using the word “hand” to represent “power,” using the word “face” to represent “presence,” and speaking of emotions or moral qualities as if they were “clothing.”

Patterned Pairs of Concepts Acting as Metaphors

Many ways of metaphorical speaking depend on pairs of concepts, where one underlying concept frequently stands for a different underlying concept. For example, in English, the direction “up” (the Image) often represents the concepts of “more” or “better” (the Idea). Because of this pair of underlying concepts, we can make sentences such as “The price of gasoline is going **up**,” “A **highly** intelligent man,” and also the opposite kind of idea: “The temperature is going **down**,” and “I am feeling very **low**.”

Patterned pairs of concepts are constantly used for metaphorical purposes in the world’s languages because they serve as convenient ways to organize thought. In general, people like to speak of abstract qualities (such as power, presence, emotions, and moral qualities) as if they were body parts, or as if they were objects that could be seen or held, or as if they were events that could be watched as they happened.

When these metaphors are used in normal ways, it is rare that the speaker and audience regard them as figurative speech. Examples of metaphors in English that go unrecognized are:

- “Turn the heat **up**.” More is spoken of as up.
- “Let us **go ahead** with our debate.” Doing what was planned is spoken of as walking or advancing.
- “You **defend** your theory well.” Argument is spoken of as war.
- “A **flow** of words.” Words are spoken of as liquids.

English speakers do not view these as metaphorical expressions or figures of speech, so it would be wrong to translate them into other languages in a way that would lead people to pay special attention to them as figurative speech. For a description of important patterns of this kind of metaphor in biblical languages, please see *Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns* and the pages it will direct you to.

When translating something that is a passive metaphor into another language, do not treat it as a metaphor. Instead, just use the best expression for that thing or concept in the target language.

Active Metaphors

These are metaphors that people recognize as one concept standing for another concept, or one thing for another thing. Metaphors make people think about how the one thing is like the other thing, because in most ways the two things are very different. People also easily recognize these metaphors as giving strength and unusual qualities to the message. For this reason, people pay attention to these metaphors. For example,

But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.
(Malachi 4:2a ULT)

Here, God speaks about his salvation as if it were the sun rising in order to shine its rays on the people whom he loves. He also speaks of the sun’s rays as if they were wings. Also, he speaks of these wings as if they were bringing medicine that would heal his people. Here is another example:

And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox ...” (Luke 13:32a ULT)

Here, “that fox” refers to King Herod. The people listening to Jesus certainly understood that Jesus was intending for them to apply certain characteristics of a fox to Herod. They probably understood that Jesus intended to communicate that Herod was evil, either in a cunning way or as someone who was destructive, murderous, or who took things that did not belong to him, or all of these.

Active metaphors require the translator’s special care to make a correct translation. To do so, you need to understand the parts of a metaphor and how they work together to produce meaning.

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” (John 6:35 ULT)

In this metaphor, Jesus called himself the bread of life. The **Topic** is “I” (meaning Jesus himself) and the **Image** is “bread.” Bread was the primary food that people ate in that place and time. The similarity between bread and Jesus is that people need both to live. Just as people need to eat food in order to have physical life, people need to trust in Jesus in order to have eternal life. The **Idea** of the metaphor is “life.” In this case, Jesus stated the central Idea of the metaphor, but often the Idea is only implied.

Purposes of Metaphor

- One purpose of metaphor is to teach people about something that they do not know (the **Topic**) by showing that it is like something that they already do know (the **Image**).
- Another purpose is to emphasize that something (the **Topic**) has a particular quality (the **Idea**) or to show that it has that quality in an extreme way.
- Another purpose is to lead people to feel the same way about the **Topic** as they would feel about the **Image**.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not recognize that something is a metaphor. In other words, they may mistake a metaphor for a literal statement, and thus, misunderstand it.
- People may not be familiar with the thing that is used as an image, and so, not be able to understand the metaphor.
- If the topic is not stated, people may not know what the topic is.
- People may not know the points of comparison that the speaker wants them to understand. If they fail to think of these points of comparison, they will not understand the metaphor.
- People may think that they understand the metaphor, but they do not. This can happen when they apply points of comparison from their own culture, rather than from the biblical culture.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of a metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning of a metaphor more clear to the target audience than you think it was to the original audience.

Examples From the Bible

Listen to this word, **you cows of Bashan**, (Amos 4:1q ULT)

In this metaphor Amos speaks to the upper-class women of Samaria (“you,” the Topic) as if they were cows (the Image). Amos does not say what similarity(s) he intends between these women and cows. He wants the reader to think of them, and he fully expects that readers from his culture will easily do so. From the context, we can see that he means that the women are like cows in that they are fat and interested only in feeding themselves. If we were to apply similarities from a different culture, such as that cows are sacred and should be worshiped, we would get the wrong meaning from this verse.

NOTE: Amos does not actually mean that the women are cows. He speaks to them as human beings.

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; **we are the clay. You are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

The example above has two related metaphors. The Topic(s) are “we” and “you,” and the Image(s) are “clay” and “potter.” The similarity between a potter and God is the fact that both make what they wish out of their material. The potter makes what he wishes out of the clay, and God makes what he wishes out of his people. The Idea being expressed by the comparison between the potter’s clay and “us” is that **neither the clay nor God’s people have a right to complain about what they are becoming.**

Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of **the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**” The disciples reasoned among themselves and said, “It is because we did not take bread.” (Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

Jesus used a metaphor here, but his disciples did not realize it. When he said “yeast,” they thought he was talking about bread, but “yeast” was the Image in his metaphor, and the Topic was the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Since the disciples (the original audience) did not understand what Jesus meant, it would not be good to state clearly here what Jesus meant.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the metaphor in the same way that the original readers would have understood it, go ahead and use it. Be sure to test the translation to make sure that people do understand it in the right way.

If people do not or would not understand it, here are some other strategies.

- (1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, it is a passive metaphor), then express the **Idea** in the simplest way preferred by your language.
- (2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible.** If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.
- (3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.” See [Simile](#).
- (4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see [Translate Unknowns](#) for ideas on how to translate that image.
- (5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.
- (6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the Topic was.)
- (7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity (the **Idea**) between the topic and the image, then state it clearly.
- (8) If none of these strategies is satisfactory, then simply state the **Idea** plainly without using a metaphor.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, a passive metaphor), then express the Idea in the simplest way preferred by your language.

Then, see, one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **fell at his feet.** (Mark 5:22 ULT)

Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **immediately bowed down in front of him.**

(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible.** If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.

But Jesus said to them, “He wrote this commandment to you because of your **hardness of heart.**” (Mark 10:5 ULT)

It was because of your **hard hearts** that he wrote you this law.

We made no change to this one, but it must be tested to make sure that the target audience correctly understands this metaphor.

(3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.”

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we **are the clay.** You **are our potter;** and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are **like** clay. You are **like** a potter; and we all are the work of your hand.

(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see [Translate Unknowns](#) for ideas on how to translate that image.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad.** (Acts 26:14b ULT)

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to **kick against a pointed stick.**

(5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **clay.** You are our **potter;** and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

“And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **wood.** You are our **carver;** and we all are the work of your hand.”

“And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **string.** You are the **weaver;** and we all are the work of your hand.”

(6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the topic was.)

Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)

Yahweh lives; **He is my rock**. May he be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity between the Topic and the Image, then state it clearly.

Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)

Yahweh lives; may he be praised because he is the rock **under which I can hide from my enemies**. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14 ULT)

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? You **fight against me and hurt yourself like an ox that kicks against its owner's pointed stick**.

(8) If none of these strategies are satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.

I will make you to become **fishers of men**. (Mark 1:17b ULT)

I will make you to become **people who gather men**.
Now you gather fish. I will make you **gather people**.

To learn more about specific metaphors, see Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns.

(Go back to: Habakkuk 1:3; 1:4; 1:7; 1:8; 1:9; 1:11; 1:12; 1:13; 1:15; 1:16; 1:17; 2:1; 2:2; 2:3; 2:4; 2:5; 2:6; 2:7; 2:9; 2:10; 2:15; 2:16; 2:17; 3:2; 3:4; 3:6; 3:7; 3:10; 3:11; 3:12; 3:13; 3:14; 3:15; 3:17; 3:19)

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: [Habakkuk 1:7](#); [2:9](#); [2:10](#); [2:12](#); [2:17](#); [2:20](#); [3:3](#); [3:7](#); [3:13](#))

Nominal Adjectives

Description

In some languages an adjective can be used to refer to a class of things that the adjective describes. When it does, it acts like a noun. For example, the word “rich” is an adjective. Here are two sentences that show that “rich” is an adjective.

The rich man had huge numbers of flocks and herds. (2 Samuel 12:2 ULT)

The adjective “rich” comes before the word “man” and describes “man.”

He will not be rich; his wealth will not last. (Job 15:29a ULT)

The adjective “rich” comes after the verb “be” and describes “He.”

Here is a sentence that shows that “rich” can also function as a noun.

The rich must not give more than the half shekel, and **the poor** must not give less. (Exodus 30:15b ULT)

In Exodus 30:15, the word “rich” acts as a noun in the phrase “the rich,” and it refers to rich people. The word “poor” also acts as a noun and refers to poor people.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate adjectives that act like nouns?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Many times in the Bible adjectives are used as nouns to describe a group of people.
- Some languages do not use adjectives in this way.
- Readers of these languages may think that the text is talking about one particular person when it is really talking about the group of people whom the adjective describes.

Examples From the Bible

The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **the righteous**. (Psalms 125:3a ULT)

“The righteous” here are people who are righteous, not one particular righteous person.

Blessed are **the meek**. (Matthew 5:5a ULT)

“The meek” here are all people who are meek, not one particular meek person.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses adjectives as nouns to refer to a class of people, consider using the adjectives in this way. If it would sound strange, or if the meaning would be unclear or wrong, here is another option:

(1) Use the adjective with a plural form of the noun that the adjective describes.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the adjective with a plural form of the noun that the adjective describes.

The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **the righteous**. (Psalms 125:3a ULT)

The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **righteous people**.

Blessed are **the meek**. (Matthew 5:5a ULT)

Blessed are **people who are meek**.

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:4](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:10](#); [2:1](#); [2:2](#); [2:5](#); [2:12](#); [2:13](#); [3:11](#))

Personification

Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples From the Bible

You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

- (1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
- (2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
- (3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

This page answers the question: *What is personification?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — God speaks of sin as if it were a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.

Sin is at your door, **waiting to attack you**.

(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — This can be translated with the word “as.”

Sin is crouching at the door, **just as a wild animal does as it waits to attack a person..**

(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Even the **winds and the sea obey him**. (Matthew 8:27b ULT) — The men speak of the “wind and the sea” as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus, just as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.

He even **controls the winds and the sea**.

NOTE: We have broadened our definition of “personification” to include “zoomorphism” (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and “anthropomorphism” (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics) because the translation strategies for them are the same.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-apostrophe]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1]]

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 2:3](#); [2:5](#); [2:11](#); [2:17](#); [3:6](#); [3:10](#); [3:11](#))

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: [Habakkuk 3 General Notes](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:12](#); [2:6](#); [2:7](#); [2:13](#); [2:18](#); [2:19](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:9](#); [1:14](#); [2:14](#); [3:14](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:13](#); [1:15](#); [1:16](#); [1:17](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:8](#); [3:7](#))



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 31

Adam

Facts:

Adam was the first person whom God created. He and his wife Eve were made in the image of God.

- God formed Adam from dirt and breathed life into him.
- Adam's name sounds similar to the Hebrew word for "red dirt" or "ground."
- The name "Adam" is the same as the Old Testament word for "mankind" or "human being."
- All people are descendants of Adam and Eve.
- Adam and Eve disobeyed God. This separated them from God and caused sin and death to come into the world.

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [death](#), descendant, Eve, image of God, [life](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 2:14
- Genesis 3:17
- Genesis 5:1
- Genesis 11:5
- Luke 3:38
- Romans 5:15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:9** Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image to be like us."
- **1:10** This man's name was **Adam**. God planted a garden where **Adam** could live, and put him there to care for it.
- **1:12** Then God said, "It is not good for man to be alone." But none of the animals could be **Adam's** helper.
- **2:11** And God clothed **Adam** and Eve with animal skins.
- **2:12** So God sent **Adam** and Eve away from the beautiful garden.
- **49:8** When **Adam** and Eve sinned, it affected all of their descendants.
- **50:16** Because **Adam** and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin into this world, God cursed it and decided to destroy it.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0120, G00760

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:14; 2:8; 2:17](#))

advice, advise, advisor, counsel, counselor, counsels

Definition:

The terms “counsel” and “advice” have the same meaning and refer to helping someone decide wisely about what to do in a certain situation. A wise “counselor” or “advisor” is someone who gives advice or counsel that will help a person make right choices.

- Kings often have official advisors or counselors to help them decide important matters that affect the people they are ruling.
- Sometimes the advice or counsel that is given is not good. Evil advisors may urge a king to take action or make a decree that will harm him or his people.
- Depending on the context, “advice” or “counsel” could also be translated as “help in deciding” or “warnings” or “exhortations” or “guidance.”
- The action, to “counsel” could be translated as to “advise” or to “make suggestions” or to “exhort.”
- Note that “counsel” is a different word than “council,” which refers to a group of people.

(See also: exhort, Holy Spirit, wise)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1697, H1847, H1875, H1884, H1907, H3272, H3289, H3982, H4156, H4431, H5475, H5779, H6440, H6963, H6098, H7592, H8458, G10110, G10120, G11060, G48230, G48250

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 2:10](#))

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: [Habakkuk 2:1](#); [3:6](#); [3:11](#); [3:19](#))

beast

Facts:

In the Bible, the term “beast” is often just another way of saying “animal.”

- A wild beast is a type of animal that lives freely in the forest or fields and has not been trained by people.
- A domestic beast is an animal that lives with people and is kept for food or for performing work, such as plowing fields. Often the term “livestock” is used to refer to this kind of animal.
- The Old Testament book of Daniel and the New Testament book of Revelation describe visions which have beasts that represent evil powers and authorities that oppose God. (See: [Metaphor](#))
- Some of these beasts are described as having strange features, such as several heads and many horns. They often have power and authority, indicating that they may represent countries, nations, or other political powers.
- Ways to translate this could include “creature” or “created thing” or “animal” or “wild animal,” depending on the context.

(See also: authority, Daniel, livestock, [nation](#), power, reveal, Beelzebul)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 15:32
- 1 Samuel 17:44
- 2 Chronicles 25:18
- Jeremiah 16:1-4
- Leviticus 7:21
- Psalms 49:12-13

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0338, H0929, H1165, H2123, H2416, H2423, H2874, H3753, H4806, H7409, G22260, G23410, G23420, G29340, G49680, G50740

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 2:17](#))

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: [Habakkuk 2:2](#))

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: [Habakkuk 3:8](#))

command, commandment

Definition:

The term "command" means to order someone to do something. The term "commandment" refers to the thing that a person is commanded to do.

- The term "commandment" sometimes refers to certain commands of God which are more formal and permanent, such as the "Ten Commandments."
- A command can be positive ("Honor your parents") or negative ("Do not steal").
- To "take command" means to "take control" or "take charge" of something or someone.

Translation Suggestions

- It is best to translate this term differently from the term, "law." Also compare with the definitions of "decree" and "statute."
- Some translators may prefer to translate "command" and "commandment" with the same word in their language.
- Others may prefer to use a special word for commandment that refers to lasting, formal commands that God has made.

(See [decree](#), statute, law, Ten Commandments)

Bible References:

- Luke 1:6
- Matthew 1:24
- Matthew 22:38
- Matthew 28:20
- Numbers 1:17-19
- Romans 7:7-8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0559, H0560, H0565, H1296, H1696, H1697, H1881, H2706, H2708, H2710, H2941, H2942, H2951, H3027, H3982, H3983, H4406, H4662, H4687, H4929, H4931, H4941, H5057, H5713, H5749, H6213, H6310, H6346, H6490, H6673, H6680, H7101, H7218, H7227, H7262, H7761, H7970, H8269, G12630, G12910, G12960, G12970, G12990, G16900, G17780, G17810, G17850, G20030, G20040, G20080, G20360, G27530, G30560, G37260, G38520, G38530, G43670, G44830, G44870, G55060

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 3:5](#))

courage, courageous, encourage, encouragement, discourage, discouragement

Facts:

The term "courage" refers to boldly facing or doing something that is difficult, frightening, or dangerous.

- The term, "courageous" describes someone who shows courage, who does the right thing even when feeling afraid or pressured to give up.
- A person shows courage when he faces emotional or physical pain with strength and perseverance.
- The expression "take courage" means "don't be afraid" or "be assured that things will turn out well."
- When Joshua was preparing to go into the dangerous land of Canaan, Moses exhorted him to be "strong and courageous."
- The term "courageous" could also be translated as "brave" or "unafraid" or "bold."
- Depending on the context, to "have courage" could also be translated as "be emotionally strong" or "be confident" or "stand firm."
- To "speak with courage" could be translated as "speak boldly" or "speak without being afraid" or "speak confidently."

The terms "encourage" and "encouragement" refer to saying and doing things to cause someone to have comfort, hope, confidence, and courage.

- A similar term is "exhort," which means to urge someone to reject an activity that is wrong and to instead do things that are good and right.
- The apostle Paul and other New Testament writers taught Christians to encourage one another to love and serve others.

The term "discourage" refers to saying and doing things that cause people to lose hope, confidence, and courage and so to have less desire to keep working hard to do what they know they should do.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, ways to translate "encourage" could include "urge" or "comfort" or "say kind things" or "help and support."
- The phrase "give words of encouragement" means "say things that cause other people to feel loved, accepted, and empowered."

(See also: confidence, exhort, [fear](#), [strength](#))

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 1:37-38
- 2 Kings 18:19-21
- 1 Chronicles 17:25
- Matthew 9:20-22
- 1 Corinthians 14:1-4
- 2 Corinthians 7:13
- Acts 5:12-13
- Acts 16:40
- Hebrews 3:12-13
- Hebrews 13:5-6

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0533, H0553, H1368, H2388, H2388, H2428, H3820, H3824, H7307, G21140, G21150, G21740, G22920, G22930, G22940, G38700, G38740, G39540, G43890, G48370, G51110

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 2:17](#))

cow, bull, calf, cattle, heifer, ox

Definition:

The terms “cow,” “bull,” “heifer,” “ox,” and “cattle” all refer to a kind of large, four-legged bovine animal that eats grass.

- The female of this kind of animal is called a “cow,” the male is a “bull,” and their offspring is a “calf.”
- In the Bible, cattle were among the “clean” animals that the people could eat and use for sacrifice. They were primarily raised for their meat and milk.

A “heifer” is an adult female cow that has not yet given birth to a calf.

An “ox” is a type of cattle that is specifically trained to do agricultural work. The plural of this term is “oxen.” Usually oxen are male and have been castrated.

- Throughout the Bible, oxen were depicted as animals tied together by a yoke to pull a cart or a plow.
- Having oxen work together under a yoke was such a common occurrence in the Bible that the phrase to “be under a yoke” became a metaphor for hard work and labor.
- A bull is also a male type of cattle, but it has not been castrated and has not been trained as a work animal.

(See also: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: yoke)

Bible References:

- Genesis 15:9-11
- Exodus 24:5-6
- Numbers 19:1-2
- Deuteronomy 21:3-4
- 1 Samuel 1:24-25
- 1 Samuel 15:3
- 1 Samuel 16:2-3
- 1 Kings 1:9
- 2 Chronicles 11:15
- 2 Chronicles 15:10-11
- Matthew 22:4
- Luke 13:15
- Luke 14:5
- Hebrews 9:13

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0047, H0441, H0504, H0929, H1165, H1241, H4399, H4735, H4806, H5695, H5697, H6499, H6510, H6629, H7214, H7716, H7794, H7921, H8377, H8450, G10160, G11510, G23530, G29340, G34470, G34480, G41650, G50220

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 3:17](#))

curse, cursed, cursing

Definition:

The term "curse" means to cause negative things to happen to the person or thing that is being cursed.

- A curse can be a statement that harm will happen to someone or something.
- To curse someone can also be an expression of desire that bad things will happen to them.
- It can also refer to the punishment or other negative things that someone causes to happen to someone.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated as "cause bad things to happen to" or "declare that something bad will happen to" or "swear to cause evil things to happen to."
- In the context of God sending curses on his disobedient people, it could be translated as "punish by allowing bad things to happen."
- The term "cursed" when used to describe people could be translated as "(this person) will experience much trouble."
- The phrase "cursed be" could be translated as "May (this person) experience great difficulties."
- The phrase, "Cursed is the ground" could be translated as "The soil will not be very fertile."
- However, if the target language has the phrase "cursed be" and it has the same meaning, then it is good to keep the same phrase.

(See also: bless)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 14:24-26
- 2 Peter 2:12-14
- Galatians 3:10
- Galatians 3:14
- Genesis 3:14
- Genesis 3:17
- James 3:10
- Numbers 22:6
- Psalms 109:28

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:9** God said to the snake, "You are **cursed!**"
- **2:11** "Now the ground is **cursed**, and you will need to work hard to grow food."
- **4:4** "I will bless those who bless you and **curse** those who **curse** you."
- **39:7** Then Peter vowed, saying, "May God **curse** me if I know this man!"
- **50:16** Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin into this world, God **cursed** it and decided to destroy it.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0422, H0423, H0779, H1288, H2763, H2764, H3994, H5344, H6895, H7043, H7045, H7621, H8381, G03310, G03320, G06850, G19440, G25510, G26520, G26530, G26710, G26720, G60350

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:8](#))

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: [Habakkuk 3:7](#))

deceive, lie, deception, illusions

Definition:

The term "deceive" means to cause someone to believe something that is not true, often by telling a "lie." The act of deceiving someone is called "lying," "deceit," or "deception."

- Someone who causes others to believe something false is a "deceiver." For example, Satan is called a "deceiver." The evil spirits that he controls are also deceivers.
- To "lie" is to say something that is not true.
- A person, action, or message that is not truthful can be described as "deceptive."
- The terms "deceit" and "deception" have the same meaning, but there are some small differences in how they are used.
- The descriptive terms "deceitful" and "deceptive" have the same meaning and are used in the same contexts.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate "deceive" could include "lie to" or "cause to have a false belief" or "cause someone to think something that is not true."
- The term "deceived" could also be translated as "caused to think something false" or "lied to" or "tricked" or "fooled" or "misled."
- "Deceiver" could be translated as "liar" or "one who misleads" or "someone who deceives."
- Depending on the context, the terms "deception" or "deceit" could be translated with a word or phrase that means "falsehood" or "lying" or "trickery" or "dishonesty."
- The terms "deceptive" or "deceitful" could be translated as "untruthful" or "misleading" or "lying" to describe a person who speaks or acts in a way that causes other people to believe things that are not true.

(See also: true)

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:8
- 1 Timothy 2:14
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4
- Genesis 3:12-13
- Genesis 31:26-28
- Leviticus 19:11-12
- Matthew 27:64
- Micah 6:11

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0898, H2048, H3577, H3584, H3868, H4123, H4820, H4860, H5230, H5377, H5558, H6121, H6231, H6601, H7411, H7423, H7683, H7686, H7952, H8267, H8496, H8582, H8591, H8649, G05380, G05390, G13860, G13870, G13880, G18180, G38840, G41050, G41060, G41080, G54220, G54230

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 3:17](#))

decree, decreed

Definition:

The term “decree” means to give an order that must be obeyed. The order itself can also be called a “decree.”

- A “decree” is similar to a “law,” but is generally used more often to refer to something spoken rather than written.
- The term “decree” could be translated as to “order” or to “command” or to “formally require” or to “publicly make a law.”
- God’s laws are also called decrees, statutes, or commandments.
- An example of a decree by a human ruler was the proclamation by Caesar Augustus that everyone living in the Roman Empire must go back to their hometown in order to be counted in a census.

(See also: [command](#), declare, law)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 15:13-15
- 1 Kings 8:57-58
- Acts 17:5-7
- Daniel 2:13
- Esther 1:22
- Luke 2:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0559, H0633, H1697, H5715, H1504, H1510, H1881, H1882, H1696, H2706, H2708, H2710, H2711, H2782, H2852, H2940, H2941, H2942, H3791, H3982, H4055, H4406, H4687, H4941, H5407, H5713, H6599, H6680, H7010, H8421, G13780

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 3:17](#))

deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue

Definition:

To “deliver” someone means to rescue that person. The term “deliverer” refers to someone who rescues or frees people from slavery, oppression, or other dangers. The term “deliverance” refers to what happens when someone rescues or frees people from slavery, oppression, or other dangers.

- In the Old Testament, God appointed deliverers to protect the Israelites by leading them in battle against other people groups who came to attack them.
- These deliverers were also called “judges” and the Old Testament book of Judges records the time in history when these judges were governing Israel.
- God is also called a “deliverer.” Throughout the history of Israel, he delivered or rescued his people from their enemies.
- The term “deliver over to” or “deliver up to” has a very different meaning of handing or turning someone over to an enemy, such as when Judas delivered Jesus over to the Jewish leaders.

Translation Suggestions:

- In the context of helping people escape from their enemies, the term “deliver” can be translated as “rescue” or “liberate” or “save.”
- When it means to deliver someone over to the enemy, “deliver over” can be translated as “betray to” or “hand over” or “give over.”
- The word “deliverer” can also be translated as “rescuer” or “liberator.”
- When the term “deliverer” refers to the judges who led Israel, it could also be translated as “governor” or “judge” or “leader.”

(See also: [judge](#), save)

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 1:10
- Acts 7:35
- Galatians 1:4
- Judges 10:12

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **16:3** Then God provided a **deliverer** who rescued them from their enemies and brought peace to the land.
- **16:16** They (Israel) finally asked God for help again, and God sent them another **deliverer**.
- **16:17** Over many years, God sent many **deliverers** who saved the Israelites from their enemies.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1350, H2020, H2502, H3205, H3444, H3467, H4042, H4422, H4672, H5337, H5414, H5462, H6299, H6403, H6413, H6475, H6561, H7725, H7804, H8199, G03250, G05250, G06290, G10800, G13250, G15600, G16590, G18070, G19290, G26730, G30860, G38600, G45060, G49910, G50880, G54830

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:2](#))

die, dead, deadly, death

Definition:

The term "death" refers to being physically dead instead of alive.

1. Physical death

- To "die" means to stop living. Death is the end of physical life.
- The expression "put to death" refers to killing or murdering someone, especially when a king or other ruler gives an order for someone to be killed.

2. Eternal death

- Eternal death is the separation of a person from God.
- This is the kind of death that happened to Adam when he sinned and disobeyed God. His relationship with God was broken. He became ashamed and tried to hide from God.
- This same kind of death happens to every person, because we sin. But God gives us eternal life when we have faith in Jesus Christ.

Translation Suggestions:

- To translate this term, it is best to use the everyday, natural word or expression in the target language that refers to death.
- In some languages, to "die" may be expressed as to "not live." The term "dead" may be translated as "not alive" or "not having any life" or "not living."
- Many languages use figurative expressions to describe death, such as to "pass away" in English. However, in the Bible it is best to use the most direct term for death that is used in everyday language.
- In the Bible, eternal life and eternal death are often compared to physical life and physical death. It is important in a translation to use the same word or phrase for both physical death and eternal death.
- In some languages it may be more clear to say "eternal death" when the context requires that meaning. Some translators may also feel it is best to say "physical death" in contexts where it is being contrasted to spiritual death.
- The expression "the dead" is a nominal adjective that refers to people who have died. Some languages will translate this as "dead people" or "people who have died." (See: [nominal adjective](#))
- The expression "put to death" could also be translated as "kill" or "murder" or "execute."

(See also: believe, [faith](#), [life](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 15:21
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Acts 10:42
- Acts 14:19
- Colossians 2:15
- Colossians 2:20
- Genesis 2:15-17
- Genesis 34:27
- Matthew 16:28
- Romans 5:10

- Romans 5:12
- Romans 6:10

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:11** God told Adam that he could eat from any tree in the garden except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If he ate from this tree, he would **die**.
- **2:11** "Then you will **die**, and your body will return to dirt."
- **7:10** Then Isaac **died**, and Jacob and Esau buried him.
- **37:5** Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he **dies**. Everyone who believes in me will never **die**."
- **40:8** Through his **death**, Jesus opened a way for people to come to God.
- **43:7** "Although Jesus **died**, God raised him from the dead."
- **48:2** Because they sinned, everyone on earth gets sick and everyone **dies**.
- **50:17** He (Jesus) will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, evil, pain, or **death**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0006, H1478, H1826, H1934, H2491, H4191, H4192, H4193, H4194, H4463, H5038, H5315, H6297, H6757, H7496, H7523, H8045, H8546, H8552, G03360, G03370, G05200, G05990, G06150, G06220, G16340, G19350, G20790, G22530, G22860, G22870, G22880, G22890, G23480, G28370, G29660, G34980, G34990, G35000, G44300, G48800, G48810, G50530, G50540

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:17](#))

dominion

Definition:

The term "dominion" refers to power, control, or authority over people, animals, or land.

- Jesus Christ is said to have dominion over all the earth, as prophet, priest, and king.
- Satan's dominion has been defeated forever by Jesus Christ's death on the cross.
- At creation, God said that man is to have dominion over fish, birds, and all creatures on the earth.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this term could include "authority" or "power" or "control."
- The phrase "have dominion over" could be translated as "rule over" or "manage."

(See also: authority, power)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 5:10-11
- Colossians 1:13
- Jude 1:25

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1166, H4474, H4475, H4896, H4910, H4915, H7287, H7300, H7980, H7985, G26340, G29040, G29610, G29630

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:14](#))

earth, land

Definition:

The term "earth" refers to the world on which human beings and other living things live. In the Bible, this term is sometimes translated as "land" when used in a general way to refer to the ground or the soil, or when used in a specific way to refer to a particular geographical area, usually a country or nation.

- In the Bible, the term "earth" is often paired with the term "heaven" as a way of indicating the abode of humankind on the earth in contrast with the abode of God in heaven.
- This term is usually translated "land" when paired with the name of people group to denote the territory belonging to those people, such as "the land of Canaan."
- The term "earthly" is sometimes used to refer to things that are physical and/or visible in contrast to things that are non-physical and/or invisible.
- This term can be used figuratively to refer to the people who live on the earth or what the earth contains, such as in "let the earth be glad" and "he will judge the earth."

Translation Suggestions:

- This term can be translated by the word or phrase that the local language or nearby national languages use to refer to the planet earth on which we live.
- Depending on the context, "earth" could also be translated as "world" or "land" or "dirt" or "soil."
- When used figuratively, "earth" could be translated as "people on the earth" or "people living on earth" or "everything on earth."
- Ways to translate "earthly" could include "physical" or "things of this earth" or "visible."

(See also: world, [heaven](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 1:38-40
- 2 Chronicles 2:11-12
- Daniel 4:35
- Luke 12:51
- Matthew 6:10
- Matthew 11:25
- Zechariah 6:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0127, H0772, H0776, H0778, H2789, H3007, H3335, H6083, H7494, G10930, G19190, G27090, G28860, G36250, G45780, G55170

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:6](#); [2:8](#); [2:14](#); [2:17](#); [2:20](#); [3:3](#); [3:6](#); [3:7](#); [3:9](#); [3:12](#))

evil, wicked, unpleasant

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “evil” can refer either to the concept of moral wickedness or emotional unpleasantness. The context will usually make it clear which meaning is intended in the specific instance of the term.

- While “evil” may describe a person’s character, “wicked” may refer more to a person’s behavior. However, both terms are very similar in meaning.
- The term “wickedness” refers to the state of being that exists when people do wicked things.
- The results of evil are clearly shown in how people mistreat others by killing, stealing, slandering and being cruel and unkind.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the terms “evil” and “wicked” can be translated as “bad” or “sinful” or “immoral.”
- Other ways to translate these could include “not good” or “not righteous” or “not moral.”
- Make sure the words or phrases that are used to translate these terms fit the context that is natural in the target language.

(See also: disobey, [sin](#), good, [righteous](#), demon)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 24:11
- 1 Timothy 6:10
- 3 John 1:10
- Genesis 2:17
- Genesis 6:5-6
- Job 1:1
- Job 8:20
- Judges 9:57
- Luke 6:22-23
- Matthew 7:11-12
- Proverbs 3:7
- Psalms 22:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:4** “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand good and **evil** like he does.”
- **3:1** After a long time, many people were living in the world. They had become very **wicked** and violent.
- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a righteous man living among **wicked** people.
- **4:2** God saw that if they all kept working together to do **evil**, they could do many more sinful things.
- **8:12** “You tried to do **evil** when you sold me as a slave, but God used the **evil** for good!”
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false gods and did many **evil** things.
- **17:1** But then he (Saul) became a **wicked** man who did not obey God, so God chose a different man who would one day be king in his place.
- **18:11** In the new kingdom of Israel, all the kings were **evil**.
- **29:8** The king was so angry that he threw the **wicked** servant into prison until he could pay back all of his debt.
- **45:2** They said, “We heard him (Stephen) speak **evil** things about Moses and God!”

- **50:17** He (Jesus) will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, **evil**, pain, or death.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H0605, H1100, H1681, H1942, H2154, H2162, H2254, H2617, H3399, H3415, H4209, H4849, H5753, H5766, H5767, H5999, H6001, H6090, H7451, H7455, H7489, H7561, H7562, H7563, H7564, G00920, G01130, G04590, G09320, G09870, G09880, G14260, G25490, G25510, G25540, G25550, G25560, G25570, G25590, G25600, G26350, G26360, G41510, G41890, G41900, G41910, G53370

(Go back to: [Introduction to Habakkuk](#); [Habakkuk 1:13](#); [2:9](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:9](#))

faith

Definition:

In general, the term “faith” refers to a belief, trust or confidence in someone or something.

- To “have faith” in someone is to believe that what he says and does is true and trustworthy.
- To “have faith in Jesus” means to believe all of God’s teachings about Jesus. It especially means that people trust in Jesus and his sacrifice to cleanse them from their sin and to rescue them from the punishment they deserve because of their sin.
- True faith or belief in Jesus will cause a person to produce good spiritual fruits or behaviors because the Holy Spirit is living in him.
- Sometimes “faith” refers generally to all the teachings about Jesus, as in the expression “the truths of the faith.”
- In contexts such as “keep the faith” or “abandon the faith,” the term “faith” refers to the state or condition of believing all the teachings about Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, “faith” can be translated as “belief” or “conviction” or “confidence” or “trust.”
- For some languages these terms will be translated using forms of the verb “believe.” (See: [abstractnouns](#))
- The expression “keep the faith” could be translated by “keep believing in Jesus” or “continue to believe in Jesus.”
- The sentence “they must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith” could be translated by “they must keep believing all the true things about Jesus that they have been taught.”
- The expression “my true son in the faith” could be translated by something like “who is like a son to me because I taught him to believe in Jesus” or “my true spiritual son, who believes in Jesus.”

(See also: [believe](#), [faithful](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:7
- Acts 6:7
- Galatians 2:20-21
- James 2:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:6** When Isaac was a young man, God tested Abraham’s **faith** by saying, “Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a sacrifice to me.”
- **31:7** Then he (Jesus) said to Peter, “You man of little **faith**, why did you doubt?”
- **32:16** Jesus said to her, “Your **faith** has healed you. Go in peace.”
- **38:9** Then Jesus said to Peter, “Satan wants to have all of you, but I have prayed for you, Peter, that your **faith** will not fail.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0529, H0530, G16800, G36400, G41020, G60660

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 2 General Notes](#))

faithful, faithfulness, trustworthy

Definition:

To be “faithful” to God means to consistently live according to God’s teachings. It means to be loyal to him by obeying him. The state or condition of being faithful is “faithfulness.”

- A person who is faithful can be trusted to always keep his promises and to always fulfill his responsibilities to other people.
- A faithful person perseveres in doing a task, even when it is long and difficult.
- Faithfulness to God is the consistent practice of doing what God wants us to do.

Translation Suggestions:

- In many contexts, “faithful” can be translated as “loyal” or “dedicated” or “dependable.”
- In other contexts, “faithful” can be translated by a word or phrase that means “continuing to believe” or “persevering in believing and obeying God.”
- Ways that “faithfulness” could be translated could include “persevering in believing” or “loyalty” or “trustworthiness” or “believing and obeying God.”

(See also: believe, [faith](#), believe)

Bible References:

- Genesis 24:49
- Leviticus 26:40
- Numbers 12:7
- Joshua 2:14
- Judges 2:16-17
- 1 Samuel 2:9
- Psalm 12:1
- Proverbs 11:12-13
- Isaiah 1:26
- Jeremiah 9:7-9
- Hosea 5:7
- Luke 12:46
- Luke 16:10
- Colossians 1:7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:24
- 3 John 1:5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:5** Even in prison, Joseph remained **faithful** to God, and God blessed him.
- **14:12** Even so, God was still **faithful** to His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- **15:13** The people promised to remain **faithful** to God and follow his laws.
- **17:9** David ruled with justice and **faithfulness** for many years, and God blessed him. However, toward the end of his life he sinned terribly against God.
- **35:12** “The older son said to his father, ‘All these years I have worked **faithfully** for you!’”
- **49:17** But God is **faithful** and says that if you confess your sins, he will forgive you.
- **50:4** “If you remain **faithful** to me to the end, then God will save you.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0529, H0530, H0539, H0540, H0571, H0898, H2181, H4603, H4604, H4820, G05690, G05710, G41030

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:5](#))

fear, afraid, frighten

Definition:

The terms "fear" refers to the unpleasant emotion a person feels when experiencing a potential threat to their safety or well-being. In the Bible, however, the term "fear" can also mean an attitude of worship, respect, awe, or obedience toward another person, usually someone powerful such as God or a king.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term "fear" can be translated in various ways. Some possibilities include: "be afraid;" "deeply respect;" or "deep respect;" "revere;" or "reverence;" or perhaps "be in awe of."
- The phrase "fear not" could also be translated as "do not be afraid" or "stop being afraid."
- The sentence "The fear of God fell on all of them" might be translated in various ways. Some possibilities include: "Suddenly they all felt a deep awe and respect for God;" or "Immediately, they all felt very amazed and revered God deeply;" or "Right then, they all felt very afraid of God (because of his great power)."

(See also: awe, [Yahweh](#), [Lord](#), marvel, power)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:18
- Acts 2:43
- Acts 19:15-17
- Genesis 50:21
- Isaiah 11:3-5
- Job 6:14
- Jonah 1:9
- Luke 12:5
- Matthew 10:28
- Proverbs 10:24-25

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0367, H0926, H1204, H1481, H1672, H1674, H1763, H2119, H2296, H2727, H2729, H2730, H2731, H2844, H2849, H2865, H3016, H3025, H3068, H3372, H3373, H3374, H4032, H4034, H4035, H4116, H4172, H6206, H6342, H6343, H6345, H6427, H7264, H7267, H7297, H7374, H7461, H7493, H8175, G08700, G11670, G11680, G11690, G16300, G17190, G21240, G21250, G29620, G53980, G53990, G54000, G54010

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:7](#); [Notes](#); 3:2)

feast, feasting

Definition:

The term “feast” is a very general term that refers to an event where people gather to celebrate something by eating a large meal together. In biblical times, a feast sometimes lasted for several days or more.

- Often there are special kinds of food that are eaten at a certain feast.
- The religious festivals that God commanded the Jews to celebrate usually included having a feast together. For this reason the festivals are often called “feasts.”
- In biblical times, kings and other rich and powerful people often gave feasts to entertain their family or friends.
- In the story about the lost son, the father had a special feast prepared to celebrate the return of his son.
- The term to “feast” could also be translated as to “eat lavishly” or to “celebrate by eating lots of food” or to “eat a special, large meal.”
- Depending on the context, “feast” could be translated as “celebrating together with a large meal” or “a meal with a lot of food” or “a celebration meal.”

(See also: festival, banquet)

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 2:12-14
- Genesis 26:30
- Genesis 29:22
- Genesis 40:20
- Jude 1:12-13
- Luke 2:43
- Luke 14:7-9
- Matthew 22:1

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0398, H2077, H2282, H3899, H3900, H4150, H4797, H4960, H7646, H8057, H8354, G00260, G10620, G11730, G18590, G21650, G49100

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 2:3](#))

fig

Definition:

A fig is a small, soft, sweet fruit that grows on trees. When ripe, this fruit can be a variety of colors, including brown, yellow, or purple.

- Fig trees can grow 6 meters in height and their large leaves provide pleasant shade. The fruit is about 3-5 centimeters long.
- Adam and Eve used the leaves from fig trees to make clothing for themselves after they had sinned.
- Figs can be eaten raw, cooked, or dried. People also chop them into small pieces and press them into cakes to eat later.
- In Bible times, figs were important as a source of food and income.
- The presence of fruitful fig trees is frequently mentioned in the Bible as a sign of prosperity.
- Several times Jesus used fig trees as an illustration to teach his disciples spiritual truths.

Bible References:

- Habakkuk 3:17
- James 3:12
- Luke 13:7
- Mark 11:14
- Matthew 7:17
- Matthew 21:18

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1061, H1690, H6291, H8384, G36530, G48080, G48100

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 3:17](#))

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: [Habakkuk 2:13](#))

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: [Habakkuk 3:17](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:12](#))

glory, glorious, glorify

Definition:

The term “glory” is a general term for a family of concepts including value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, or majesty. The term “glorify” means to ascribe glory to someone or something, or to show or tell how glorious something or someone is.

- In the Bible, the term “glory” is especially used to describe God, who is more valuable, more worthy, more important, more honorable, more splendid, and more majestic than anyone or anything in the universe. Everything about his character reveals his glory.
- People can glorify God by telling about the wonderful things he has done. They can also glorify God by living in accordance with God’s character, because doing so shows to others his value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, and majesty.
- The expression to “glory in” means to boast about or take pride in something.

Old Testament

- The specific phrase “the glory of Yahweh” in the Old Testament usually refers to some perceptible manifestation of Yahweh’s presence in a particular location.

New Testament

- God the Father will glorify God the Son by revealing to all people the full extent of how glorious Jesus is.
- Everyone who believes in Christ will be glorified with him. This use of the term “glorify” carries a unique meaning. It means that when people who believe in Christ are raised to life, they will be changed physically to be like Jesus as he appeared after his resurrection.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “glory” could include “splendor” or “majesty” or “awesome greatness” or “extreme value.”
- The term “glorious” could be translated as “full of glory” or “extremely valuable” or “brightly shining” or “awesomely majestic.”
- The expression “give glory to God” could be translated as “honor God’s greatness” or “praise God because of his splendor” or “tell others how great God is.”
- The expression “glory in” could also be translated as “praise” or “take pride in” or “boast about” or “take pleasure in.”
- “Glorify” could also be translated as “give glory to” or “bring glory to” or “cause to appear great.”
- The phrase “glorify God” could also be translated as “praise God” or “talk about God’s greatness” or “show how great God is” or “honor God (by obeying him).”
- The term “be glorified” could also be translated as “be shown to be very great” or “be praised” or “be exalted.”

(See also: honor, majesty, exalt, obey, [praise](#))

Bible References:

- Exodus 24:17
- Numbers 14:9-10
- Isaiah 35:2

- Luke 18:43
- Luke 2:9
- John 12:28
- Acts 3:13-14
- Acts 7:1-3
- Romans 8:17
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- Philippians 2:14-16
- Philippians 4:19
- Colossians 3:1-4
- 1 Thessalonians 2:5
- James 2:1-4
- 1 Peter 4:15-16
- Revelation 15:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “**Glory** to God in heaven and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- **25:6** Then Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and all their **glory** and said, “I will give you all this if you bow down and worship me.”
- **37:1** When Jesus heard this news, he said, “This sickness will not end in death, but it is for the **glory** of God.”
- **37:8** Jesus responded, “Did I not tell you that you would see God’s **glory** if you believe in me?”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0117, H0142, H0155, H0215, H1342, H1921, H1926, H1935, H1984, H3367, H3513, H3519, H3520, H6286, H6643, H7623, H8597, G13910, G13920, G17400, G17410, G27440, G48880

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 2:14](#); [2:16](#))

God

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “God” refers to the eternal being who created the universe out of nothing. God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God’s personal name is “Yahweh.”

- God has always existed; he existed before anything else existed, and he will continue to exist forever.
- He is the only true God and has authority over everything in the universe.
- God is perfectly righteous, infinitely wise, holy, sinless, just, merciful, and loving.
- He is a covenant-keeping God, who always fulfills his promises.
- People were created to worship God and he is the only one they should worship.
- God revealed his name as “Yahweh,” which means “he is” or “I am” or “the One who (always) exists.”
- The Bible also teaches about false “gods,” which are nonliving idols that people wrongly worship.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “God” could include “Deity” or “Creator” or “Supreme Being” or “Supreme Creator” or “Infinite Sovereign Lord” or “Eternal Supreme Being.”
- Consider how God is referred to in a local or national language. There may also already be a word for “God” in the language being translated. If so, it is important to make sure that this word fits the characteristics of the one true God as described above.
- Many languages capitalize the first letter of the word for the one true God, to distinguish it from the word for a false god. Another way to make this distinction would be to use different terms for “God” and “god.”
NOTE: In the biblical text, when a person who does not worship Yahweh speaks about Yahweh and uses the word “god,” it is acceptable to render the term without a capital letter in reference to Yahweh (see Jonah 1:6, 3:9).
- The phrase “I will be their God and they will be my people” could also be translated as “I, God, will rule over these people and they will worship me.”

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: create, false god, God the Father, Holy Spirit, false god, Son of God, [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:7
- 1 Samuel 10:7-8
- 1 Timothy 4:10
- Colossians 1:16
- Deuteronomy 29:14-16
- Ezra 3:1-2
- Genesis 1:2
- Hosea 4:11-12
- Isaiah 36:6-7
- James 2:20
- Jeremiah 5:5
- John 1:3
- Joshua 3:9-11
- Lamentations 3:43
- Micah 4:5
- Philippians 2:6
- Proverbs 24:12

- Psalms 47:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:1 God** created the universe and everything in it in six days.
- **1:15 God** made man and woman in his own image.
- **5:3** "I am **God** Almighty. I will make a covenant with you."
- **9:14 God** said, "I AM WHO I AM. Tell them, 'I AM has sent me to you.' Also tell them, 'I am Yahweh, the **God** of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is my name forever.'"
- **10:2** Through these plagues, **God** showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's gods.
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of Yahweh, the true **God**.
- **22:7** "You, my son, will be called the prophet of the **Most High God** who will prepare the people to receive the Messiah!"
- **24:9** There is only one **God**. But John heard **God** the Father speak, and saw Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit when he baptized Jesus.
- **25:7** "Worship only the Lord your **God** and only serve him."
- **28:1** "There is only one who is good, and that is **God**."
- **49:9** But **God** loved everyone in the world so much that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be punished for his sins, but will live with **God** forever.
- **50:16** But some day **God** will create a new heaven and a new earth that will be perfect.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0136, H0305, H0410, H0426, H0430, H0433, H2486, H2623, H3068, H3069, H3863, H4136, H6697, G01120, G05160, G09320, G09350, G10960, G11400, G20980, G21240, G21280, G21500, G21520, G21530, G22990, G23040, G23050, G23120, G23130, G23140, G23150, G23160, G23170, G23180, G23190, G23200, G33610, G37850, G41510, G52070, G53770, G54630, G55370, G55380

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:11](#); [1:12](#); [3:3](#); [3:18](#))

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: [Habakkuk 2:19](#))

Habakkuk

Facts:

Habakkuk was an Old Testament prophet who lived around the time that King Jehoiakim was reigning over Judah. The prophet Jeremiah was also alive during some of this time.

- This prophet wrote the book of Habakkuk around 600 BC when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and took many of the people of Judah into exile.
- Yahweh gave Habakkuk the prophecy about how the “Chaldeans” (Babylonians) would come and conquer the people of Judah.
- One of Habakkuk’s most well-known statements is: “the righteous person shall live by his faith.”

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: Babylon, Jehoiakim, Jeremiah)

Bible References:

- Habakkuk 1:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2265

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:1](#); [3:1](#))

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: [Habakkuk 2:9](#); [3:4](#); [3:10](#))

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: [Habakkuk 3:13](#); [3:14](#))

heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly

Definition:

The term that is translated as “heaven” usually refers to where God lives. The same word can also mean “sky,” depending on the context.

- The term “heavens” refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars. It also includes the heavenly bodies, such as far-off planets, that we can’t directly see from the earth.
- The term “sky” refers to the blue expanse above the earth that has clouds and the air we breathe. Often the sun and moon are also said to be “up in the sky.”
- In some contexts in the Bible, the word “heaven” could refer to either the sky or the place where God lives.

Translation Suggestions:

- For “kingdom of heaven” in the book of Matthew, it is best to keep the word “heaven” since this is distinctive to Matthew’s gospel.
- The terms “heavens” or “heavenly bodies” could also be translated as “sun, moon, and stars” or “all the stars in the universe.”
- The phrase, “stars of heaven” could be translated as “stars in the sky” or “stars in the galaxy” or “stars in the universe.”

(See also: kingdom of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 8:22-24
- 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Deuteronomy 9:1
- Ephesians 6:9
- Genesis 1:1
- Genesis 7:11
- John 3:12
- John 3:27
- Matthew 5:18
- Matthew 5:46-48

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:2** They even began building a tall tower to reach **heaven**.
- **14:11** He (God) gave them bread from **heaven**, called “manna.”
- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “Glory to God in **heaven** and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- **29:9** Then Jesus said, “This is what my **heavenly** Father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”
- **37:9** Then Jesus looked up to **heaven** and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me.”
- **42:11** Then Jesus went up to **heaven**, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1534, H6160, H6183, H7834, H8064, H8065, G09320, G20320, G33210, G37700, G37710, G37720

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 3:3](#))

holy, holiness, unholy, sacred

Definition:

The terms "holy" and "holiness" refer to the character of God that is totally set apart and separated from everything that is sinful and imperfect.

- Only God is absolutely holy. He makes people and things holy.
- A person who is holy belongs to God and has been set apart for the purpose of serving God and bringing him glory.
- An object that God has declared to be holy is one that he has set apart for his glory and use, such as an altar that is for the purpose of offering sacrifices to him.
- People cannot approach him unless he allows them to, because he is holy and they are merely human beings, sinful and imperfect.
- In the Old Testament, God set apart the priests as holy for special service to him. They had to be ceremonially cleansed from sin in order to approach God.
- God also set apart as holy certain places and things that belonged to him or in which he revealed himself, such as his temple.

Literally, the term "unholy" means "not holy." It describes someone or something that does not honor God.

- This word is used to describe someone who dishonors God by rebelling against him.
- A thing that is called "unholy" could be described as being common, profane or unclean. It does not belong to God.

The term "sacred" describes something that relates to worshiping God or to the pagan worship of false gods.

- In the Old Testament, the term "sacred" was oftentimes used to describe the stone pillars and other objects used in the worship of false gods. This could also be translated as "religious."
- "Sacred songs" and "sacred music" refer to music that was sung or played for God's glory. This could be translated as "music for worshiping Yahweh" or "songs that praise God."
- The phrase "sacred duties" referred to the "religious duties" or "rituals" that a priest performed to lead people in worshiping God. It could also refer to the rituals performed by a pagan priest to worship a false god.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate "holy" might include "set apart for God" or "belonging to God" or "completely pure" or "perfectly sinless" or "separated from sin."
- To "make holy" is often translated as "sanctify" in English. It could also be translated as "set apart (someone) for God's glory."
- Ways to translate "unholy" could include "not holy" or "not belonging to God" or "not honoring to God" or "not godly."
- In some contexts, "unholy" could be translated as "unclean."

(See also: Holy Spirit, consecrate, sanctify, set apart)

Bible References:

- Genesis 28:22
- 2 Kings 3:2
- Lamentations 4:1
- Ezekiel 20:18-20
- Matthew 7:6

- Mark 8:38
- Acts 7:33
- Acts 11:8
- Romans 1:2
- 2 Corinthians 12:3-5
- Colossians 1:22
- 1 Thessalonians 3:13
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:16** He (God) blessed the seventh day and made it **holy**, because on this day he rested from his work.
- **9:12** "You are standing on **holy** ground."
- **13:1** "If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a **holy** nation."
- **13:5** "Always be sure to keep the Sabbath day **holy**."
- **22:5** "So the baby will be **holy**, the Son of God."
- **50:2** As we wait for Jesus to return, God wants us to live in a way that is **holy** and that honors him.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H2455, H2623, H4676, H4720, H6918, H6922, H6942, H6944, H6948, G00370, G00380, G00400, G00400, G00410, G00420, G04620, G18590, G21500, G24120, G24130, G28390, G37410, G37420

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:12](#); [2:20](#))

horse, warhorse, horseback

Definition:

A horse is a large, four-legged animal that in Bible times was mostly used for war and for transporting people.

- Some horses were used to pull carts or chariots, while others were used to carry individual riders.
- In the Bible, horses were considered to be valuable possessions and a measure of wealth, mainly because of their use in war. For example, part of King Solomon's great wealth was the thousands of horses and chariots that he had.
- Animals that are similar to the horse are the donkey and the mule.
- Horses often wear a bit and bridle on their heads so they can be guided.

(See also: [chariot](#), donkey, Solomon)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 18:4
- 2 Kings 2:11
- Exodus 14:23-25
- Ezekiel 23:5-7
- Zechariah 6:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0047, H5483, H5484, H6571, H7409, G24620

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:8](#); [3:8](#); [3:15](#))

horseman

Definition:

In Bible times, the term “horsemen” referred to men who rode horses into battle.

- Warriors who rode in horse-pulled chariots may also have been called “horsemen,” though this term usually refers to men who were actually riding on horses.
- Yahweh commanded the Israelites not to have many horsemen because having a strong army would cause them to trust their own strength rather than Yahweh in battle.
- This term could also be translated as “horse riders” or “men on horses.”

(See also: [chariot](#), [horse](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 1:5
- Daniel 11:40-41
- Exodus 14:23-25
- Genesis 50:7-9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6571, H7395, G24600

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:8](#))

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 worshiped” 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: [Habakkuk 2:9](#); [2:10](#); [3:13](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:15](#))

judge, judgment

Definition:

The terms “judge” and “judgment” often refer to making a decision about whether or not something is good, wise, or right. However, these terms can also refer to actions performed by a person as the result of a decision, usually in the context of deciding that something is bad, wrong, or evil.

- The terms “judge” and “judgment” can also mean “to cause harm to” (usually because God has decided a person or nation’s actions are wicked).
- The “judgment of God” often refers to his decision to condemn something or someone as sinful.
- God’s judgment usually includes punishing people for their sin.
- The term “judge” can also mean “condemn.” God instructs his people not to judge each other in this way.
- Another meaning is “arbitrate between” or “judge between,” as in deciding which person is right in a dispute between them.
- In some contexts, God’s “judgments” are what he has decided is right and just. They are similar to his decrees, laws, or precepts.
- “Judgment” can refer to wise decision-making ability. A person who lacks “judgment” does not have the wisdom to make wise decisions.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate to “judge” could include to “decide” or to “condemn” or to “punish” or to “decree.”
- The term “judgment” could be translated as “punishment” or “decision” or “verdict” or “decree” or “condemnation.”
- In some contexts, the phrase “in the judgment” could also be translated as “on judgment day” or “during the time when God judges people.”

(See also: [decree](#), [judge](#), [judgment day](#), [just](#), [law](#), [law](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:17
- 1 Kings 3:9
- Acts 10:42-43
- Isaiah 3:14
- James 2:4
- Luke 6:37
- Micah 3:9-11
- Psalm 54:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **19:16** The prophets warned the people that if they did not stop doing evil and start obeying God, then God would **judge** them as guilty, and he would punish them.
- **21:8** A king is someone who rules over a kingdom and **judges** the people. The Messiah would come would be the perfect king who would sit on the throne of his ancestor David. He would reign over the whole world forever, and who would always **judge** honestly and make the right decisions.
- **39:4** The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted to the other religious leaders, “We do not need any more witnesses! You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your **judgment**?”

- **50:14** But God will **judge** everyone who does not believe in Jesus. He will throw them into hell, where they will weep and grind their teeth in anguish forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0148, H0430, H1777, H1778, H1779, H1780, H1781, H1782, H2940, H4055, H4941, H6414, H6415, H6416, H6417, H6419, H6485, H8196, H8199, H8201, G01440, G03500, G09680, G11060, G12520, G13410, G13450, G13480, G13490, G29170, G29190, G29200, G29220, G29230, G42320

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:4](#); [1:7](#))

just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification

Definition:

“Just” and “justice” refer to treating people fairly according to God’s laws. Human laws that reflect God’s standard of right behavior toward others are also just.

- To be “just” is to act in a fair and right way toward others. It also implies honesty and integrity to do what is morally right in God’s eyes.
- To act “justly” means to treat people in a way that is right, good, and proper according to God’s laws.
- To receive “justice” means to be treated fairly under the law, either being protected by the law or being punished for breaking the law.
- Sometimes the term “just” has the broader meaning of “righteous” or “following God’s laws.”

The terms “unjust” and “unjustly” refer to treating people in an unfair and often harmful manner.

- An “injustice” is something bad that is done to someone that the person did not deserve. It refers to treating people unfairly.
- Injustice also means that some people are treated badly while others are treated well.
- Someone who is acting in an unjust way is being “partial” or “prejudiced” because he is not treating people equally.

The terms “justify” and “justification” refer to causing a guilty person to be righteous. Only God can truly justify people.

- When God justifies people, he forgives their sins and makes it as though they have no sin. He justifies sinners who repent and trust in Jesus to save them from their sins.
- “Justification” refers to what God does when he forgives a person’s sins and declares that person to be righteous in his sight.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate “just” could include “morally right” or “fair.”
- The term “justice” could be translated as “fair treatment” or “deserved consequences.”
- To “act justly” could be translated as “treat fairly” or “behave in a just way.”
- In some contexts, “just” could be translated as “righteous” or “upright.”
- Depending on the context, “unjust” could also be translated as “unfair” or “partial” or “unrighteous.”
- The phrase “the unjust” could be translated as “the unjust ones” or “unjust people” or “people who treat others unfairly” or “unrighteous people” or “people who disobey God.”
- The term “unjustly” could be translated as “in an unfair manner” or “wrongly” or “unfairly.”
- Ways to translate “injustice” could include, “wrong treatment” or “unfair treatment” or “acting unfairly.” (See: [abstractnouns](#))
- Other ways to translate “justify” could include “declare (someone) to be righteous” or “cause (someone) to be righteous.”
- The term “justification” could be translated as “being declared righteous” or “becoming righteous” or “causing people to be righteous.”
- The phrase “resulting in justification” could be translated as “so that God justified many people” or “which resulted in God causing people to be righteous.”
- The phrase “for our justification” could be translated as “in order that we could be made righteous by God.”

(See also: forgive, guilt, [judge](#), [righteous](#), [righteous](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 44:16
- 1 Chronicles 18:14
- Isaiah 4:3-4
- Jeremiah 22:3
- Ezekiel 18:16-17
- Micah 3:8
- Matthew 5:43-45
- Matthew 11:19
- Matthew 23:23-24
- Luke 18:3
- Luke 18:8
- Luke 18:13-14
- Luke 21:20-22
- Luke 23:41
- Acts 13:38-39
- Acts 28:4
- Romans 4:1-3
- Galatians 3:6-9
- Galatians 3:11
- Galatians 5:3-4
- Titus 3:6-7
- Hebrews 6:10
- James 2:24
- Revelation 15:3-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:9** David ruled with **justice** and faithfulness for many years, and God blessed him.
- **18:13** Some of these kings (of Judah) were good men who ruled **justly** and worshiped God.
- **19:16** They (the prophets) all told the people to stop worshipping idols and to start showing **justice** and mercy to others.
- **50:17** Jesus will rule his kingdom with peace and **justice**, and he will be with his people forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H2555, H3477, H4941, H5765, H5766, H5767, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6666, H8003, H8264, H8636, G00910, G00930, G00940, G13420, G13440, G13450, G13460, G13470, G17380

(Go back to: [Introduction to Habakkuk](#); [Habakkuk 1 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:10](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:4](#); [1:7](#); [3:2](#); [3:13](#))

law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God

Definition:

Most simply, the term “law” refers to a rule or instruction that should be followed. In the Bible, the term “law” is often used generally to refer to anything and everything God wants his people to obey and do. The specific term “law of Moses” refers to the commandments and instructions that God gave Moses for the Israelites to obey.

- Depending on the context, the “law” can refer to:
 - the Ten Commandments that God wrote on stone tablets for the Israelites
 - all the laws given to Moses
 - the first five books of the Old Testament
 - the entire Old Testament (also referred to as “scriptures” in the New Testament).
 - all of God’s instructions and will
- The phrase “the Law and the Prophets” is used in the New Testament to refer to the Hebrew scriptures (or “Old Testament”)

Translation Suggestions:

- These terms could be translated using the plural, “laws,” since they refer to many instructions.
- The term “law of Moses” could be translated as “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Depending on the context, “the law of Moses” could also be translated as “the law that God told to Moses” or “God’s laws that Moses wrote down” or “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Ways to translate “the law” or “law of God” or “God’s laws” could include “laws from God” or “God’s commands” or “laws that God gave” or “everything that God commands” or “all of God’s instructions.”
- The phrase “law of Yahweh” could also be translated as “Yahweh’s laws” or “laws that Yahweh said to obey” or “laws from Yahweh” or “things Yahweh commanded.”

(See also: instruct, Moses, Ten Commandments, lawful, [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 15:6
- Daniel 9:13
- Exodus 28:42-43
- Ezra 7:25-26
- Galatians 2:15
- Luke 24:44
- Matthew 5:18
- Nehemiah 10:29
- Romans 3:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:7** God also gave many other **laws** and rules to follow. If the people obeyed these **laws**, God promised that he would bless and protect them. If they disobeyed them, God would punish them.
- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed **God’s law** could bring an animal to the altar in front of the Tent of Meeting as a sacrifice to God.
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the covenant that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai. The people promised to remain faithful to God and follow **his laws**.
- **16:1** After Joshua died, the Israelites disobeyed God and did not drive out the rest of the Canaanites or obey **God’s laws**.

- **21:5** In the New Covenant, God would write **his law** on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would forgive their sins.
- **27:1** Jesus answered, "What is written in **God's law**?"
- **28:1** Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me 'good?' There is only one who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have eternal life, obey **God's laws**."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H1881, H1882, H2706, H2710, H3068, H4687, H4872, H4941, H8451, G23160, G35510, G35650

(Go back to: [Introduction to Habakkuk](#); [Habakkuk 1:4](#))

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: [Habakkuk 2:17](#))

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: [Habakkuk 2:4](#); [2:5](#); [2:10](#); [3:2](#))

lord, Lord, master, sir

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “lord” generally refers to someone who has ownership or authority over other people. In the Bible, however, the term is used to address many different kinds of people, including God.

- This word is sometimes translated as “master” when addressing Jesus or when referring to someone who owns slaves.
- Some English versions translate this as “sir” in contexts where someone is politely addressing someone of higher status.

When “Lord” is capitalized, it is a title that refers to God. (Note, however, that when it is used as a form of addressing someone or it occurs at the beginning of a sentence it may be capitalized and have the meaning of “sir” or “master.”)

- In the Old Testament, this term is also used in expressions such as “Lord God Almighty” or “Lord Yahweh” or “Yahweh our Lord.”
- In the New Testament, the apostles used this term in expressions such as “Lord Jesus” and “Lord Jesus Christ,” which communicate that Jesus is God.
- The term “Lord” in the New Testament is also used alone as a direct reference to God, especially in quotations from the Old Testament. For example, the Old Testament text has “Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh” and the New Testament text has “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”
- In the ULT and UST, the title “Lord” is only used to translate the actual Hebrew and Greek words that mean “Lord.” It is never used as a translation of God’s name (Yahweh), as is done in many translations.
- Some languages translate “Lord” as “Master” or “Ruler” or some other term that communicates ownership or supreme rule.
- In the appropriate contexts, many translations capitalize the first letter of this term to make it clear to the reader that this is a title referring to God.
- For places in the New Testament where there is a quote from the Old Testament, the term “Lord God” could be used to make it clear that this is a reference to God.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term can be translated with the equivalent of “master” when it refers to a person who owns slaves. It can also be used by a servant to address the person he works for.
- When it refers to Jesus, if the context shows that the speaker sees him as a religious teacher, it can be translated with a respectful address for a religious teacher, such as “master.”
- If the person addressing Jesus does not know him, “lord” could be translated with a respectful form of address such as “sir.” This translation would also be used for other contexts in which a polite form of address to a man is called for.
- When referring to God the Father or to Jesus, this term is considered a title, written as “Lord” (capitalized) in English.

(See also: [God](#), [Jesus](#), [ruler](#), [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 39:2
- Joshua 3:9-11
- Psalms 86:15-17
- Jeremiah 27:4
- Lamentations 2:2

- Ezekiel 18:29
- Daniel 9:9
- Daniel 9:17-19
- Malachi 3:1
- Matthew 7:21-23
- Luke 1:30-33
- Luke 16:13
- Romans 6:23
- Ephesians 6:9
- Philippians 2:9-11
- Colossians 3:23
- Hebrews 12:14
- James 2:1
- 1 Peter 1:3
- Jude 1:5
- Revelation 15:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **25:5** But Jesus replied to Satan by quoting from the Scriptures. He said, "In God's word, he commands his people, 'Do not test the **Lord** your God.'"
- **25:7** Jesus replied, "Get away from me, Satan! In God's word he commands his people, 'Worship only the **Lord** your God and only serve him.'"
- **26:3** This is the year of the **Lord's** favor.
- **27:2** The law expert replied that God's law says, "Love the **Lord** your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind."
- **31:5** Then Peter said to Jesus, "**Master**, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water"
- **43:9** "But know for certain that God has caused Jesus to become both **Lord** and Messiah!"
- **47:3** By means of this demon she predicted the future for people, she made a lot of money for her **masters** as a fortuneteller.
- **47:11** Paul answered, "Believe in Jesus, the **Master**, and you and your family will be saved."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0113, H0136, H1167, H1376, H4756, H7980, H8323, G02030, G06340, G09620, G12030, G29620

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 3:19](#))

nation

Definition:

A nation is a large group of people ruled by some form of government. The people of a nation often have the same ancestors and share a common ethnicity.

- A “nation” usually has a well-defined culture and territorial boundaries.
- In the Bible, a “nation” could be a country (like Egypt or Ethiopia), but often it is more general and refers to a people group, especially when used in the plural. It is important to check the context.
- Nations in the Bible included the Israelites, the Philistines, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Canaanites, the Romans, and the Greeks, among many others.
- Sometimes the word “nation” was used figuratively to refer to the ancestor of a certain people group, as when Rebekah was told by God that her unborn sons were “nations” that would fight against each other. This could be translated as “the founders of two nations” or the “ancestors of two people groups.”
- The word translated as “nation” was also sometimes used to refer to “Gentiles” or to people who do not worship Yahweh. The context usually makes the meaning clear.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the word “nation” could also be translated as “people group” or “people” or “country.”
- If a language has a term for “nation” that is distinct from these other terms, then that term can be used wherever it occurs in the Bible text, as long as it is natural and accurate in each context.
- The plural term “nations” can often be translated as “people groups.”
- In certain contexts, this term could also be translated as “Gentiles” or “nonJews.”

(See also: Assyria, Babylon, Canaan, Gentile, Greek, [people group](#), Philistines, Rome)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 14:15-17
- 2 Chronicles 15:6
- 2 Kings 17:11-12
- Acts 2:5
- Acts 13:19
- Acts 17:26
- Acts 26:4
- Daniel 3:4
- Genesis 10:2-5
- Genesis 27:29
- Genesis 35:11
- Genesis 49:10
- Luke 7:5
- Mark 13:7-8
- Matthew 21:43
- Romans 4:16-17

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0523, H0524, H0776, H1471, H3816, H4940, H5971, G02460, G10740, G10850, G14840

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:5](#); [1:6](#); [1:17](#); [2:5](#); [2:8](#); [3:6](#); [3:12](#))

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: [Habakkuk 3:9](#))

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: [Habakkuk 3:17](#))

oversee, overseer, keeper

Definition:

The term "overseer" refers to a person who is in charge of the work and welfare of other people. In the Bible, often the term "keeper" means "overseer."

- In the Old Testament, an overseer had the job of making sure the workers under him did their work well.
- In the New Testament, this term is used to describe leaders of the early Christian church. Their work was to take care of the spiritual needs of the church, making sure the believers received accurate biblical teaching.
- Paul refers to an overseer as being like a shepherd who takes care of the believers in a local church, who are his "flock."
- The overseer, like a shepherd, keeps watch over the flock. He guards and protects the believers from false spiritual teaching and other evil influences.
- In the New Testament, the terms "overseers," "elders," and "shepherds/pastors" are different ways of referring to the same spiritual leaders.

Translation Suggestions

- Other ways to translate this term could be "supervisor" or "caretaker" or "manager."
- When referring to a leader of a local group of God's people, this term could be translated with a word or phrase that means "spiritual supervisor" or "someone who takes care of the spiritual needs of a group of believers" or "person who oversees the spiritual needs of the Church."

(See also: church, elder, pastor, shepherd)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 26:31-32
- 1 Timothy 3:2
- Acts 20:28
- Genesis 41:33-34
- Philippians 1:1

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5329, H6485, H6496, H7860, H8104, G19830, G19840, G19850

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 3:19](#))

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: [Habakkuk 2:5](#); [2:8](#); [2:10](#); [2:13](#); [3:13](#); [3:16](#))

possess, possessed, possession, dispossess

Facts:

The terms “possess” and “possession” usually refer to owning something. They can also mean to gain control over something or occupy an area of land.

- In the Old Testament, this term is often used in the context of “possessing” or “taking possession of” an area of land.
- When Yahweh commanded the Israelites to “possess” the land of Canaan, it meant that they should go into the land and live there. This involved first conquering the Canaanite peoples who were living on that land.
- Yahweh told the Israelites that he had given them the land of Canaan as “their possession.” This could also be translated as “their rightful place to live.”
- The people of Israel were also called Yahweh’s “special possession.” This means that they belonged to him as his people whom he had specifically called to worship and serve him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “possess” could also be translated as “own” or “have” or “have charge over.”
- The phrase “take possession of” could be translated as “take control of” or “occupy” or “live on,” depending on the context.
- When referring to things that people own, “possessions” could be translated as “belongings” or “property” or “owned things” or “things they owned.”
- When Yahweh calls the Israelites, “my special possession” this could also be translated as “my special people” or “people who belong to me” or “my people whom I love and rule.”
- The sentence, “they will become their possession” when referring to land, means “they will occupy the land” or “the land will belong to them.”
- The expression, “found in his possession” could be translated as “that he was holding” or “that he had with him.”
- The phrase “as your possession” could also be translated as “as something that belongs to you” or “as a place where your people will live.”
- The phrase, “in his possession” could be translated as “that he owned” or “which belonged to him.”

(See also: Canaan, worship, inherit)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 6:70
- 1 Kings 9:17-19
- Acts 2:45
- Deuteronomy 4:5-6
- Genesis 31:36-37
- Matthew 13:44

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0270, H0272, H0834, H2505, H2631, H3027, H3423, H3424, H3425, H3426, H4180, H4181, H4672, H4735, H4736, H5157, H5159, H5459, H7069, G11390, G21920, G26970, G27220, G29320, G29330, G29350, G40470, G52240, G55640

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:6](#))

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: [Habakkuk 3:3](#))

pray, prayer

Definition:

The terms “pray” and “prayer” refer to talking with God. These terms are also used to refer to people trying to talk to a false god.

- People can pray silently, talking to God with their thoughts, or they can pray aloud, speaking to God with their voice. Sometimes prayers are written down, such as when David wrote his prayers in the Book of Psalms.
- Prayer can include asking God for mercy, for help with a problem, and for wisdom in making decisions.
- Often people ask God to heal people who are sick or who need his help in other ways.
- People also thank and praise God when they are praying to him.
- Praying includes confessing our sins to God and asking him to forgive us.
- Talking to God is sometimes called “communing” with him as our spirit communicates with his spirit, sharing our emotions and enjoying his presence.
- This term could be translated as “talking to God” or “communicating with God.” The translation of this term should be able to include praying that is silent.

(See also: false god, forgive, [praise](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 3:9
- Acts 8:24
- Acts 14:26
- Colossians 4:4
- John 17:9
- Luke 11:1
- Matthew 5:43-45
- Matthew 14:22-24

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **6:5** Isaac **prayed** for Rebekah, and God allowed her to get pregnant with twins.
- **13:12** But Moses **prayed** for them, and God listened to his **prayer** and did not destroy them.
- **19:8** Then the prophets of Baal **prayed** to Baal, “Hear us, O Baal!”
- **21:7** Priests also **prayed** to God for the people.
- **38:11** Jesus told his disciples to **pray** that they would not enter into temptation.
- **43:13** The disciples continually listened to the teaching of the apostles, spent time together, ate together, and **prayed** with each other.
- **49:18** God tells you to **pray**, to study his word, to worship him with other Christians, and to tell others what he has done for you.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0559, H0577, H1156, H2470, H3863, H3908, H4994, H6279, H6293, H6419, H6739, H7592, H7878, H7879, H7881, H8034, H8605, G01540, G11620, G11890, G17830, G20650, G21710, G21720, G38700, G43350, G43360

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 3:1](#))

preach, preaching, preacher, proclaim, proclamation

Definition:

To “preach” means to speak to a group of people, teaching them about God and urging them to obey him. To “proclaim” means to announce or declare something publicly and boldly.

- Often preaching is done by one person to a large group of people. It is usually spoken, not written.
- “Preaching” and “teaching” are similar, but are not exactly the same.
- “Preaching” mainly refers to publicly proclaiming spiritual or moral truth, and urging the audience to respond. “Teaching” is a term that emphasizes instruction, that is, giving people information or teaching them how to do something.
- The term “preach” is usually used with the word “gospel.”
- What a person has preached to others can also be referred to in general as his “teachings.”
- Often in the Bible, “proclaim” means to announce publicly something that God has commanded, or to tell others about God and how great he is.
- In the New Testament, the apostles proclaimed the good news about Jesus to many people in many different cities and regions.
- The term “proclaim” can also be used for decrees made by kings or for denouncing evil in a public way.
- Other ways to translate “proclaim” could include “announce” or “openly preach” or “publicly declare.”
- The term “proclamation” could also be translated as “announcement” or “public preaching.”

(See also: declare, good news, Jesus, kingdom of God)

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:1-2
- Acts 8:4-5
- Acts 10:42-43
- Acts 14:21-22
- Acts 20:25
- Luke 4:42
- Matthew 3:1-3
- Matthew 4:17
- Matthew 12:41
- Matthew 24:14
- Acts 9:20-22
- Acts 13:38-39
- Jonah 3:1-3
- Luke 4:18-19
- Mark 1:14-15
- Matthew 10:26

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **24:2** He (John) **preached** to them, saying, “Repent, for the Kingdom of God is near!”
- **30:1** Jesus sent his apostles to **preach** and to teach people in many different villages.
- **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.
- **45:6** But in spite of this, they **preached** about Jesus everywhere they went.
- **45:7** He (Philip) went to Samaria where he preached about Jesus and many people were saved.
- **46:6** Right away, Saul began **preaching** to the Jews in Damascus, saying, “Jesus is the Son of God!”
- **46:10** Then they sent them off to **preach** the good news of Jesus in many other places.

- **47:14** Paul and other Christian leaders traveled to many cities, **preaching** and teaching people the good news about Jesus.
- **50:2** When Jesus was living on earth he said, "My disciples will **preach** the good news about the kingdom of God to people everywhere in the world, and then the end will come."

Word Data:

- Strong's:
 - preach: H1319, H7121, H7150, G12290, G20970, G26050, G27820, G27830, G27840, G29800, G42830
 - proclaim: H1319, H1696, H1697, H2199, H3045, H3745, H4161, H5046, H5608, H6963, H7121, H7440, H8085, G51800, G59100, G12290, G18610, G20970, G26050, G27820, G27840, G29800, G31420, G41350

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:11](#))

prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess

Definition:

A “prophet” is a man who speaks God’s messages to people. A woman who does this is called a “prophetess.”

- Often prophets warned people to turn away from their sins and obey God.
- A “prophecy” is the message that the prophet speaks. To “prophesy” means to speak God’s messages.
- Often the message of a prophecy was about something that would happen in the future.
- Many prophecies in the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.
- In the Bible the collection of books written by prophets are sometimes referred to as “the prophets.”
- For example the phrase, “the law and the prophets” is a way of referring to all the Hebrew scriptures, which are also known as the “Old Testament.”
- An older term for a prophet was “seer” or “someone who sees.”
- Sometimes the term “seer” refers to a false prophet or to someone who practices divination.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “prophet” could be translated as “God’s spokesman” or “man who speaks for God” or “man who speaks God’s messages.”
- A “seer” could be translated as “person who sees visions” or “man who sees the future from God.”
- The term “prophetess” could be translated as “spokeswoman for God” or “woman who speaks for God” or “woman who speaks God’s messages.”
- Ways to translate “prophecy” could include, “message from God” or “prophet message.”
- The term “prophesy” could be translated as “speak words from God” or “tell God’s message.”
- The figurative expression, “law and the prophets” could also be translated as “the books of the law and of the prophets” or “everything written about God and his people, including God’s laws and what his prophets preached.” (See: [synecdoche](#))
- When referring to a prophet (or seer) of a false god, it may be necessary to translate this as “false prophet (seer)” or “prophet (seer) of a false god” or “prophet of Baal,” for example.

(See also: Baal, divination, false god, false prophet, fulfill, [law](#), vision)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
- Acts 3:25
- John 1:43-45
- Malachi 4:4-6
- Matthew 1:23
- Matthew 2:18
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalm 51:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they trusted in God and believed that Moses was a **prophet** of God.
- **17:13** God was very angry about what David had done, so he sent the **prophet** Nathan to tell David how evil his sin was.
- **19:1** Throughout the history of the Israelites, God sent them **prophets**. The **prophets** heard messages from God and then told the people God’s messages.

- **19:6** All the people of the entire kingdom of Israel, including the 450 **prophets** of Baal, came to Mount Carmel.
- **19:17** Most of the time, the people did not obey God. They often mistreated the **prophets** and sometimes even killed them.
- **21:9** The **prophet** Isaiah **prophesied** that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- **43:5** "This fulfills the **prophecy** made by the **prophet** Joel in which God said, 'In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.'"
- **43:7** "This fulfills the **prophecy** which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.'"
- **48:12** Moses was a great **prophet** who proclaimed the word of God. But Jesus is the greatest **prophet** of all. He is the Word of God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2372, H2374, H4853, H5012, H5013, H5016, H5017, H5029, H5030, H5031, H5197, G24950, G43940, G43950, G43960, G43970, G43980, G55780

(Go back to: [Introduction to Habakkuk](#); [Habakkuk 1:1](#); [3:1](#))

prosper, prosperity, prosperous

Definition:

The term “prosper” generally refers to living well, whether it be physically, morally, emotionally, etc. This term often expresses the idea of being wealthy or successful in life.

- The term “prosperous” often refers to success in owning money and property or in producing everything needed for people to live well.
- In the Bible, the term “prosperous” also includes good health and being blessed with children.
- A “prosperous” city or country is one that has many people, good production of food, and businesses that bring in plenty of money.
- The Bible teaches that a person will prosper spiritually when he obeys God’s teachings. He will also experience the blessings of joy and peace. God does not always give people a lot of material wealth, but he will always prosper them spiritually as they follow his ways.
- Depending on the context, the term “prosper” could also be translated as “succeed spiritually” or “be blessed by God” or “experience good things” or “live well.”
- The term “prosperous” could also be translated as “successful” or “wealthy” or “spiritually fruitful.”
- “Prosperity” could also be translated as “well-being” or “wealth” or “success” or “abundant blessings.”

(See also: bless, good, fruit, [spirit](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 29:22-23
- Deuteronomy 23:6
- Job 36:11
- Leviticus 25:26-28
- Psalms 1:3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1129, H1767, H1878, H1879, H2428, H2896, H2898, H3027, H3190, H3444, H3498, H3787, H4195, H5381, H6500, H6509, H6555, H6743, H6744, H7230, H7487, H7919, H7951, H7961, H7963, H7965

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 3:19](#))

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: [Habakkuk 2:19](#))

rest, rested, restless

Definition:

The term “rest” generally means to stop working in order to relax or regain strength. However, the term can refer to various kinds of rest besides only rest from working. For example, a person might rest from fighting, rest from speaking, or rest from moving, etc.

- An object can be said to be “resting” somewhere, which means it is “standing” or “sitting” there.
- Something that “comes to rest” somewhere has “stopped” there.
- When a person or animals rest, they are sitting or lying down in order to refresh themselves.
- God commanded the Israelites to rest on the seventh day of the week. This day of not working was called the “Sabbath” day.
- To rest an object on something means to “place” or “put” it there.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, to “rest (oneself)” could also be translated as to “stop working” or to “refresh himself” or to “stop carrying burdens.”
- To “rest” an object on something could be translated as to “place” or “put” or “set” that object on something.
- When Jesus said, “I will give you rest,” this could also be translated as “I will cause you to stop carrying your burden” or “I will help you be at peace” or “I will empower you to relax and trust in me.”
- God said, “they will not enter my rest,” and this statement could be translated as “they will not experience my blessings of rest” or “they will not experience the joy and peace that comes from trusting in me.”
- The term “the rest” could be translated as “those that remain” or “all the other people” or “everything that is left.”

(See also: remnant, Sabbath)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 6:41
- Genesis 2:3
- Jeremiah 6:16-19
- Matthew 11:29
- Revelation 14:11

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0014, H1824, H1826, H2308, H3498, H3499, H4494, H4496, H4771, H5117, H5118, H5183, H5564, H6314, H7258, H7280, H7599, H7604, H7605, H7606, H7611, H7673, H7677, H7901, H7931, H7954, H8058, H8172, H8252, H8300, G03720, G03730, G04250, G15150, G18790, G19540, G19810, G22700, G26630, G26640, G26810, G28380, G30620, G45200

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 3:16](#))

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: [Habakkuk 2:1](#))

righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness

Definition:

The term “righteousness” refers to God’s absolute goodness, justice, faithfulness, and love. Having these qualities makes God “righteous.” Because God is righteous, he must condemn sin.

- These terms are also often used to describe a person who obeys God and is morally good. However, because all people have sinned, no one except God is completely righteous.
- Examples of people the Bible who were called “righteous” include Noah, Job, Abraham, Zachariah, and Elisabeth.
- When people trust in Jesus to save them, God cleanses them from their sins and declares them to be righteous because of Jesus’ righteousness.

The term “unrighteous” means to be sinful and morally corrupt. “Unrighteousness” refers to sin or the condition of being sinful.

- These terms especially refer to living in a way that disobeys God’s teachings and commands.
- Unrighteous people are immoral in their thoughts and actions.
- Sometimes “the unrighteous” refers specifically to people who do not believe in Jesus.

The terms “upright” and “uprightness” refer to acting in a way that follows God’s laws.

- The meaning of these words includes the idea of standing up straight and looking directly ahead.
- A person who is “upright” is someone who obeys God’s rules and does not do things that are against his will.
- Terms such as “integrity” and “righteous” have similar meanings and are sometimes used in parallelism constructions, such as “integrity and uprightness.” (See: [parallelism](#))

Translation Suggestions:

- When it describes God, the term “righteous” could be translated as “perfectly good and just” or “always acting rightly.”
- God’s “righteousness” could also be translated as “perfect faithfulness and goodness.”
- When it describes people who are obedient to God, the term “righteous” could also be translated as “morally good” or “just” or “living a God-pleasing life.”
- The phrase “the righteous” could also be translated as “righteous people” or “God-fearing people.”
- Depending on the context, “righteousness” could also be translated with a word or phrase that means “goodness” or “being perfect before God” or “acting in a right way by obeying God” or “doing perfectly good.”
- The term “unrighteous” could simply be translated as “not righteous.”
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this could include “wicked” or “immoral” or “people who rebel against God” or “sinful.”
- The phrase “the unrighteous” could be translated as “unrighteous people.”
- The term “unrighteousness” could be translated as “sin” or “evil thoughts and actions” or “wickedness.”
- If possible, it is best to translate this in a way that shows its relationship to “righteous, righteousness.”
- Ways to translate “upright” could include “acting rightly” or “one who acts rightly” or “following God’s laws” or “obedient to God” or “behaving in a way that is right.”
- The term “uprightness” could be translated as “moral purity” or “good moral conduct” or “rightness.”
- The phrase “the upright” could be translated as “people who are upright” or “upright people.”

(See also: [evil](#), [faithful](#), good, [holy](#), integrity, [just](#), law, [law](#), obey, pure, [righteous](#), [sin](#), unlawful)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 19:16
- Job 1:8
- Psalms 37:30
- Psalms 49:14
- Psalms 107:42
- Ecclesiastes 12:10-11
- Isaiah 48:1-2
- Ezekiel 33:13
- Malachi 2:6
- Matthew 6:1
- Acts 3:13-14
- Romans 1:29-31
- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- Galatians 3:7
- Colossians 3:25
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 1 Peter 3:18-20
- 1 John 1:9
- 1 John 5:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a **righteous** man, living among wicked people.
- **4:8** God declared that Abram was **righteous** because he believed in God's promise.
- **17:2** David was a humble and **righteous** man who trusted and obeyed God.
- **23:1** Joseph, the man Mary was engaged to, was a **righteous** man.
- **50:10** Then the **righteous** ones will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God their Father.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H1368, H2555, H3072, H3474, H3476, H3477, H3483, H4334, H4339, H4749, H5228, H5229, H5324, H5765, H5766, H5767, H5977, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6665, H6666, H6968, H8535, H8537, H8549, H8552, G00930, G00940, G04580, G13410, G13420, G13430, G13440, G13450, G13460, G21180, G37160, G37170

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:13](#); [Notes](#))

sacrifice, sacrifices, offering

Definition:

In the Bible, the terms “sacrifice” and “offering” refer to special gifts given to God as an act of worshiping him. People also offered sacrifices to false gods.

sacrifice

- Sacrifices to God often involved the killing of an animal.
- Only the sacrifice of Jesus, God’s perfect sinless Son, can completely cleanse people from sin; animal sacrifices could never do that.

offering

- The word “offering” generally refers to anything that is offered or given. The term “sacrifice” refers to something that is given or done at great cost to the giver.
- Offerings to God were specific things that he commanded the Israelites to give in order to express devotion and obedience to him.
- The names of the different offerings, such as “burnt offering” and “peace offering,” indicated what kind of offering was being given.

Translation Suggestions

- The term “offering” could also be translated as “a gift to God” or “something given to God” or “something valuable that is presented to God.”
- Depending on the context, the term “sacrifice” could also be translated as “something valuable given in worship” or “a special animal killed and presented to God.”
- The action to “sacrifice” could be translated as to “give up something valuable” or to “kill an animal and give it to God.”
- Another way to translate “present yourself as a living sacrifice” could be “as you live your life, offer yourself to God as completely as an animal is offered on an altar.”

(See also: altar, burnt offering, drink offering, false god, fellowship offering, freewill offering, peace offering, priest, sin offering, worship)

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:6
- Acts 7:42
- Acts 21:25
- Genesis 4:3-5
- James 2:21-24
- Mark 1:43-44
- Mark 14:12
- Matthew 5:23

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:14** After Noah got off the boat, he built an altar and **sacrificed** some of each kind of animal which could be used for a **sacrifice**. God was happy with the **sacrifice** and blessed Noah and his family.
- **5:6** "Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a **sacrifice** to me." Again Abraham obeyed God and prepared to **sacrifice** his son.
- **5:9** God had provided the ram to be the **sacrifice** instead of Isaac.
- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed God's law could bring an animal to the Tent of Meeting as a **sacrifice** to God. A priest would kill the animal and burn it on the altar. The blood of the animal that was **sacrificed** covered the person's sin and made that person clean in God's sight.
- **17:6** David wanted to build a temple where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him **sacrifices**.
- **48:6** Jesus is the Great High Priest. Unlike other priests, he offered himself as the only **sacrifice** that could to take away the sin of all the people in the world.
- **48:8** But God provided Jesus, the Lamb of God, as a **sacrifice** to die in our place.
- **49:11** Because Jesus **sacrificed** himself, God can forgive any sin, even terrible sins.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0801, H0817, H0819, H1685, H1890, H1974, H2076, H2077, H2281, H2282, H2398, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2409, H3632, H4394, H4503, H4504, H5066, H5068, H5071, H5257, H5258, H5261, H5262, H5927, H5928, H5930, H6453, H6944, H6999, H7133, H7311, H8002, H8426, H8548, H8573, H8641, G02660, G03340, G10490, G14350, G14940, G23780, G23800, G36460, G43760, G54850

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:16](#))

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: [Habakkuk 2:19](#))

sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

The term “sin” refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God’s will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people don’t know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God’s will are called “sinful.”
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a “sinful nature,” a nature that that controls them and causes them to sin.
- A “sinner” is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word “sinners” was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who didn’t keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term “sinner” was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- To “sin” could also be translated as to “disobey God” or to “do wrong.”
- Depending on the context “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebellious against God.”
- Depending on the context the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people don’t see or know about.
- The term “sin” should be general, and different from the terms for “wickedness” and “evil.”

(See also: disobey, [evil](#), flesh, tax collector)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3
- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31

- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, "I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children."
- **13:12** God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- **20:1** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- **21:13** The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no **sin**. He would die to receive the punishment for other people's **sin**.
- **35:1** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinner**s who had gathered to hear him.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**."
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**."
- **48:8** We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- **49:17** Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 2:10](#))

spirit, wind, breath

Definition:

The term "spirit" refers to the non-physical part of a person which cannot be seen. In biblical times, the concept of a person's spirit was closely related to the concept of a person's breath. The term can also refer to wind, that is, the movement of air in the natural world.

- The term "spirit" can refer to a being that does not have a physical body, such as an evil spirit.
- In general, the term "spiritual" describes things in the non-physical world.
- The term "spirit of" can also mean "having the characteristics of," such as in "spirit of wisdom" or "in the spirit of Elijah." Sometimes the Bible applies this term in the context of a person's attitude or emotional state, such as "spirit of fear" and "spirit of jealousy."
- Jesus said that God is a spirit.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, some ways to translate "spirit" might include "non-physical being" or "inside part" or "inner being."
- In some contexts, the term "spirit" could be translated as "evil spirit" or "evil spirit being."
- Sometimes the term "spirit" is used to express the feelings of a person, as in "my spirit was grieved in my inmost being." This could also be translated as "I felt grieved in my spirit" or "I felt deeply grieved."
- The phrase "spirit of" could be translated as "character of" or "influence of" or "attitude of" or "thinking (that is) characterized by."
- Depending on the context, "spiritual" could be translated as "non-physical" or "from the Holy Spirit" or "God's" or "part of the non-physical world."
- The phrase "spiritual maturity" could be translated as "godly behavior that shows obedience to the Holy Spirit."
- The term "spiritual gift" could be translated as "special ability that the Holy Spirit gives."
- Sometimes this term can be translated as "wind" when referring to the simple movement of air or "breath" when referring to air movement caused by living beings.

(See also: soul, Holy Spirit, demon, breath)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:5
- 1 John 4:3
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- Acts 5:9
- Colossians 1:9
- Ephesians 4:23
- Genesis 7:21-22
- Genesis 8:1
- Isaiah 4:4
- Mark 1:23-26
- Matthew 26:41
- Philippians 1:27

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:3** Three days later, after the people had prepared themselves **spiritually**, God came down on top of Mount Sinai with thunder, lightning, smoke, and a loud trumpet blast.
- **40:7** Then Jesus cried out, "It is finished! Father, I give my **spirit** into your hands." Then he bowed his head and gave up his **spirit**.
- **45:5** As Stephen was dying, he cried out, "Jesus, receive my **spirit**."
- **48:7** All the people groups are blessed through him, because everyone who believes in Jesus is saved from sin, and becomes a **spiritual** descendant of Abraham.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0178, H1172, H5397, H7307, H7308, G41510, G41520, G41530, G53260, G54270

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:11](#); [2:19](#))

strength, strengthen, strong

Facts:

The term “strength” refers to physical, emotional, or spiritual power. To “strengthen” someone or something means to make that person or object stronger.

- “Strength” can also refer to the power to withstand some kind of opposing force.
- A person has “strength of will” if he is able to avoid sinning when tempted.
- One writer of the Psalms called Yahweh his “strength” because God helped him to be strong.
- If a physical structure like a wall or building is being “strengthened,” people are rebuilding the structure, reinforcing it with more stones or brick so that it can withstand an attack.

Translation Suggestions

- In general, the term “strengthen” can be translated as “cause to be strong” or “make more powerful.”
- In a spiritual sense, the phrase “strengthen your brothers” could also be translated as “encourage your brothers” or “help your brothers to persevere.”
- The following examples show the meaning of these terms, and therefore how they can be translated, when they are included in longer expressions.
 - “puts strength on me like a belt” means “causes me to be completely strong, like a belt that completely surrounds my waist.”
 - “in quietness and trust will be your strength” means “acting calmly and trusting in God will make you spiritually strong.”
 - “will renew their strength” means “will become stronger again.”
 - “by my strength and by my wisdom I acted” means “I have done all this because I am so strong and wise.”
 - “strengthen the wall” means “reinforce the wall” or “rebuild the wall.”
 - “I will strengthen you” means “I will cause you to be strong”
 - “in Yahweh alone are salvation and strength” means “Yahweh is the only one who saves us and strengthens us.”
 - “the rock of your strength” means “the faithful one who makes you strong”
 - “with the saving strength of his right hand” means “he strongly rescues you from trouble like someone who holds you safely with his strong hand.”
 - “of little strength” means “not very strong” or “weak.”
 - “with all my strength” means “using my best efforts” or “strongly and completely.”

(See also: [faithful](#), persevere, right hand, save)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 18:19-21
- 2 Peter 2:11
- Luke 10:27
- Psalm 21:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0193, H0202, H0353, H0360, H0386, H0410, H0553, H0556, H1369, H1396, H2220, H2388, H2391, H2392, H2393, H2428, H3027, H3028, H3559, H3581, H3811, H3955, H4581, H5326, H5331, H5582, H5797, H5807, H5810, H5934, H5975, H6106, H6109, H6697, H6965, H7292, H7307, H8003, H8443, H8632, H8633,

G04610, G09500, G14110, G14120, G17430, G17650, G18400, G19910, G24790, G24800, G29010, G29040,
G36190, G37560, G45990, G47320, G47330, G47410

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:11](#))

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: [Habakkuk 1:6](#))

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: [Habakkuk 2:11](#))

tongue, language

Definition:

The term “tongue” refers to the organ inside a person’s mouth that is used to speak. The term is often used figuratively to mean “language” or “speaking.” There also several other figurative meanings as well.

- In the Bible, the most common figurative meaning for this term is “language” or “speech.”
- Sometimes “tongue” may refer to a human language spoken by a certain people group.
- Other times it refers to a supernatural language that the Holy Spirit gives believers in Christ as one of the “gifts of the Spirit.”
- In the book of Acts, the expression “tongues” of fire refers to “flames” of fire, presumably shaped like tongues.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, the term “tongue” can be translated as “language” or “supernatural language.” If it is not clear which one it is referring to, it is better to translate it as “language.”
- When referring to fire, this term could be translated as “flames.”
- The expression “my tongue rejoices” could be translated as “I rejoice and praise God” or “I am joyfully praising God.”
- The phrase, “tongue that lies” could be translated as “person who tell lies” or “people who lie.”
- Phrases such as “with their tongues” could be translated as “with what they say” or “by their words.”

(See also: [gift](#), [Holy Spirit](#), [joy](#), [praise](#), [rejoice](#), [spirit](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 12:10
- 1 John 3:18
- 2 Samuel 23:2
- Acts 2:26
- Ezekiel 36:3
- Philippians 2:11

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3956, G11000, G12580, G20840

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:13](#))

tremble, stagger, shake

Definition:

The term “tremble” means to quiver or to shake slightly and repeatedly, usually from fear or distress. The term can also be used figuratively, meaning “to be very afraid.”

- Sometimes when the ground shakes it is said to “tremble.” It can do this during an earthquake or in response to a very loud noise.
- The Bible says that in the presence of the Lord the earth will tremble. This could mean that the people of the earth will shake out of fear of God or that the earth itself will shake.
- This term could be translated as “be afraid” or “fear God” or “shake,” depending on the context.

(See also: [earth](#), [fear](#), [Lord](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 7:15
- 2 Samuel 22:44-46
- Acts 16:29-31
- Jeremiah 5:22
- Luke 8:47

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1674, H2111, H2112, H2151, H2342, H2648, H2729, H2730, H2731, H5128, H5568, H6342, H6426, H6427, H7264, H7268, H7269, H7322, H7460, H7461, H7481, H7493, H7578, H8078, H8653, G17900, G51410, G51560, G54250

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 2:7](#); [3:7](#); [3:16](#))

trouble, disturb, stir up, distress, hardship, calamity

Definition:

A “trouble” is an experience in life that is very difficult and distressing. To “trouble” someone means to “bother” that person or to cause him distress. To be “troubled” means to feel upset or distressed about something.

- Troubles can be physical, emotional, or spiritual things that hurt a person.
- In the Bible, often troubles are times of testing that God uses to help believers mature and grow in their faith.
- The Old Testament use of “trouble” also referred to judgment that came on people groups who were immoral and rejected God.

Translation Suggestions

- The term “trouble” or “troubles” could also be translated as “danger” or “painful things that happen” or “persecution” or “difficult experiences” or “distress.”
- The term “troubled” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “undergoing distress” or “feeling terrible distress” or “worried” or “anxious” or “distressed” or “terrified” or “disturbed.”
- “Don’t trouble her” could also be translated as “don’t bother her” or “don’t criticize her.”
- The phrase “day of trouble” or “times of trouble” could also be translated as “when you experience distress” or “when difficult things happen to you” or “when God causes distressing things to happen.”
- Ways to translate “make trouble” or “bring trouble” could include “cause distressing things to happen” or “cause difficulties” or “make them experience very difficult things.”

(See also: afflict, persecute)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 18:18-19
- 2 Chronicles 25:19
- Luke 24:38
- Matthew 24:6
- Matthew 26:36-38

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0205, H0926, H0927, H1204, H1607, H1644, H1804, H2000, H4103, H5916, H5999, H6031, H6040, H6470, H6696, H6862, H6869, H6887, H7264, H7267, H7451, H7489, H8513, G03870, G16130, G17760, G23460, G23470, G23500, G23600, G28730, G36360, G39260, G39300, G39860, G44230, G46600, G50150, G51820

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 3:16](#))

trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness

Definition:

To “trust” something or someone is to believe that the thing or person is true or dependable. That belief is also called “trust.” A “trustworthy” person is one you can trust to do and say what is right and true, and therefore one who has the quality of “trustworthiness.”

- Trust is closely related to faith. If we trust someone, we have faith in that person to do what they promised to do.
- Having trust in someone also means depending on that person.
- To “trust in” Jesus means to believe that he is God, to believe that he died on the cross to pay for our sins, and to rely on him to save us.
- A “trustworthy saying” refers to something that is said that can be counted on to be true.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “trust” could include “believe” or “have faith” or “have confidence” or “depend on.”
- The phrase “put your trust in” is very similar in meaning to “trust in.”
- The term “trustworthy” could be translated as “dependable” or “reliable” or “can always be trusted.”

(See also: believe, confidence, [faith](#), [faithful](#), true)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:22-24
- 1 Timothy 4:9
- Hosea 10:12-13
- Isaiah 31:1-2
- Nehemiah 13:13
- Psalm 31:5
- Titus 3:8

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they **trusted** in God and believed that Moses was a prophet of God.
- **14:15** Joshua was a good leader because he **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **17:2** David was a humble and righteous man who **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **34:6** Then Jesus told a story about people who **trusted** in their own good deeds and despised other people.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0539, H0982, H1556, H2620, H2622, H3176, H4009, H4268, H7365, G16790, G38720, G39820, G40060, G41000, G42760

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1 General Notes](#))

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: [Habakkuk 3:5](#); [3:11](#))

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: [Habakkuk 2:5](#))

work, works, deeds

Definition:

The term “work” refers generally either to the action of expending effort in order to accomplish something, or to the result of that action. The term “works” refers generally to actions as a whole (that is, things that have been done or that need to be done).

- In the Bible, these terms are commonly used both in reference to God and humans.
- When used in reference to God, the term “work” in the Bible often refers to God’s action of creating the universe or saving his people (either from enemies, from sin, or both).
- God’s works refer to all the things he does or has done, including creating the world, saving sinners, providing for the needs of all creation and keeping the entire universe in place.
- The works or deeds that a person does can be either good or evil.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “works” could be “deeds” or “actions” or “things that are done.”
- God’s “works” or “deeds” or the “work of his hands” could also be translated as “miracles” or “mighty acts” or “things that God does.”
- The expression “the work of God” could be translated as “the things that God is doing” or “the miracles God does” or “everything that God has accomplished.”
- The term “work” can just be the singular of “works” as in “every good work” or “every good deed.”
- When work is done for God or others, it can be translated as “service” or “ministry.”

(See also: fruit, Holy Spirit, miracle)

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:12
- Acts 2:8-11
- Daniel 4:37
- Exodus 34:10-11
- Galatians 2:15-16
- James 2:17
- Matthew 16:27-28
- Micah 2:7
- Romans 3:28
- Titus 3:4-5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4399, H4566, H4567, H4611, H4659, H5949, G20410

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:5](#); [3:2](#))

Yahweh

Facts:

The term “Yahweh” is God’s personal name in the Old Testament. The specific origin of this name is unknown, but it is probably derived from the Hebrew verb meaning, “to be.”

- Following tradition, many Bible versions use the term “LORD” or “the LORD” to represent “Yahweh.” This tradition resulted from the fact that historically, the Jewish people became afraid of mispronouncing Yahweh’s name and started saying “Lord” every time the term “Yahweh” appeared in the text. Modern Bibles write “LORD” with all capital letters to show respect for God’s personal name and to distinguish it from “Lord” which is a different Hebrew word.
- The ULT and UST texts always translate this term as, “Yahweh,” in agreement with the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.
- The term “Yahweh” never occurs in the original text of the New Testament; only the Greek term for “Lord” is used, even when quoting the Old Testament.
- In the Old Testament, when God spoke about himself, he would often use his name instead of a pronoun.

Translation Suggestions:

- “Yahweh” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “I am” or “living one” or “the one who is” or “he who is alive.”
- This term could also be written in a way that is similar to how “Yahweh” is spelled.
- Some church denominations prefer not to use the term “Yahweh” and instead use the traditional rendering, “LORD.” An important consideration is that this may be confusing when read aloud because it will sound the same as the title “Lord.” Some languages may have an affix or other grammatical marker that could be added to distinguish “LORD” as a name (Yahweh) from “Lord” as a title.
- It is best if possible to keep the name Yahweh where it literally occurs in the text, but some translations may decide to use only a pronoun in some places, to make the text more natural and clear.
- Introduce the quote with something like, “This is what Yahweh says.”

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [God](#), [Lord](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 21:20
- 1 Samuel 16:7
- Daniel 9:3
- Ezekiel 17:24
- Genesis 2:4
- Genesis 4:3-5
- Genesis 28:13
- Hosea 11:12
- Isaiah 10:4
- Isaiah 38:8
- Job 12:10
- Joshua 1:9
- Lamentations 1:5
- Leviticus 25:35
- Malachi 3:4
- Micah 2:5

- Micah 6:5
- Numbers 8:11
- Psalm 124:3
- Ruth 1:21
- Zechariah 14:5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:14** God said, "I AM WHO I AM. Tell them, 'I AM has sent me to you.' Also tell them, 'I am **Yahweh**, the God of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is my name forever.'"
- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, "I am **Yahweh**, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other gods."
- **13:5** "Do not make idols or worship them, for I, **Yahweh**, am a jealous God."
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of **Yahweh**, the true God.
- **19:10** Then Elijah prayed, "O **Yahweh**, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, show us today that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3050, H3068, H3069

(Go back to: [Habakkuk 1:2](#); [1:12](#); [2:2](#); [2:13](#); [2:14](#); [2:16](#); [2:20](#); [3:2](#); [3:8](#); [3:18](#))

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