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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Revelation

Introduction to Revelation

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Revelation

Opening (1:1-20)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Worship in heaven (19:1-10)

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

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

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

Who wrote the Book of Revelation?

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

What is the Book of Revelation about?

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

How should the title of this book be translated?

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

What type of writing is the Book of Revelation?

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

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Are the events of Revelation past or future?

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

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

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

Are there any other books in the Bible like Revelation?

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

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

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

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

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

The scriptures use these words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating Revelation into English, the ULT uses the following principles:

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

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

Periods of time

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

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

For the following verses, some modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULT text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

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

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

(See: [Textual Variants](#))

Revelation 1

Revelation 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Outline of Chapter One of Revelation

I. The Introduction to Revelation

A. The Prologue (1:1-8)

The Preface (1:1-3)

The Address and the Doxology (1:4-6)

The Book's Theme (1:7-8)

II. John's Vision of Christ

B. John's Appointment to Write the Book of Revelation (1:9-20)

The Initial Appointment to Write (1:9-11)

The Source of the Appointment (1:12-16)

The Appointment Repeated and Elaborated (1:17-20)

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

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven churches

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

White

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

"Him who is, and who was, and who is to come"

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

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Blood

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

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“He is coming with the clouds”

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

“One like a son of man”

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

“The angels of the seven churches”

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

Revelation 1:1

This is} the revelation of Jesus Christ (ULT)
This book has the things that God presented to Jesus the Messiah (UST)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **revelation**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “What God disclosed to Jesus Christ” or “The matters that God revealed to Jesus Christ” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

This is} the revelation of Jesus Christ (ULT)
This book has the things that God presented to Jesus the Messiah (UST)

This phrase could mean: (1) this book is **revelation** that came to Jesus from God. Alternate translation: “revelation to Jesus Christ” (2) this book is **revelation** that came from Jesus to the author of the book, namely John. Alternate translation: “revelation from Jesus Christ” (See: [Possession](#))

his servants (ULT)
to his slaves (UST)

Here, **his servants** refers to people who believe in Jesus Christ and serve him as their Lord. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternative translation: “those who serve him” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

what must soon happen (ULT)
These things by necessity will occur shortly (UST)

Alternate translation: “the events that must happen soon”

he made it known (ULT)
Jesus explained these things (UST)

The pronoun **he** here refers to **Jesus Christ**. If this might confuse your readers, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Jesus communicated it” (See: [Pronouns — When to Use Them](#))

John (ULT)
John (UST)

John is the name of a man who was Jesus’ disciple and one of the original twelve apostles. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

to his servant John (ULT)
to me, his slave John (UST)

The Apostle **John** is referring to himself in the third person here. If this is confusing in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: “to me, John, his servant” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

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

UST

¹ This book has the things that God presented to Jesus the Messiah. God showed these things to him in order that he might reveal them to his slaves. These things by necessity will occur shortly. Jesus explained these things by sending his messenger to me, his slave John.

Revelation 1:2

who testified (ULT)

As a witness I, John, confirm (UST)

The subject of this sentence is the author John. If this might confuse your readers, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "John testified" (See: [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-pronoun]])

about the word of God (ULT)

the message of God (UST)

Here, John uses **word** figuratively to refer to the message that God said by using words. If this might confuse your readers, you could say the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the message that God spoke" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the testimony of Jesus Christ (ULT)

the personal attestation that Jesus the Messiah has revealed (UST)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **testimony**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "what Jesus Christ testified" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

the testimony of Jesus Christ (ULT)

the personal attestation that Jesus the Messiah has revealed (UST)

John is using the possessive form to describe the **testimony** that **Jesus Christ** has given about the personal revelation received directly from God and then given in prophecy by the book's author John. If this is not clear in your language, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "the testimony that Jesus Christ has given him" (See: [Possession](#))

ULT

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

UST

² As a witness I, John, confirm the message of God. I also verify the personal attestation that Jesus the Messiah has revealed, whatever I perceived.

Revelation 1:3

the one who reads (ULT)

who reads (UST)

Here, **the one who reads** does not refer to a specific person. It refers to anyone **who reads** the words of the prophecy aloud or in public. If your readers would misunderstand this, you could use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: “anyone who reads aloud” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

who keep what is written in it (ULT)

who continually considers...the words that are written in this prophecy (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “who keep what John has written in it” or “who obey what they read in it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

of this prophecy (ULT)

of this prophecy...of this prophecy (UST)

Here, **this prophecy** refers to this whole book that John is writing. If this might confuse your readers, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “of this book of prophecy”

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “who keep what John has written in it” or “who keep what they read in it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

for the time {is} near (ULT)

for the chosen moment is approaching quickly {when the events described in this prophecy will happen (UST)

Here, **the time** refers specifically to the appointed time when God will make the prophecies in this book come true. If this might confuse your readers, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the time when what is written in this book is near” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

for the time {is} near (ULT)

for the chosen moment is approaching quickly {when the events described in this prophecy will happen (UST)

Here, John speaks figuratively of **time** as if it could be **near** something. If this might confuse your readers, you could say the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the time will be soon” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

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

UST

³ How happy is the person who reads these words of this prophecy and any who hear these words of this prophecy. Happy is the one who continually considers the words that are written in this prophecy, for the chosen moment is approaching quickly {when the events described in this prophecy will happen}.

Revelation 1:4

John, to the seven churches that {are} in Asia (ULT)

I, John, am writing this letter to the seven assemblies of believers in the province of Asia (UST)

In this culture, letter writers would give their own names first, and they would refer to themselves in the third person. If that would be confusing in your language, you could use the first person. If your language has a particular way of introducing the author of a letter, you could also use that. Alternate translation: "I, John, am writing this letter" or "From John" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

**to the seven churches that {are} in Asia (ULT)
am writing this letter to the seven assemblies
of believers in the province of Asia (UST)**

In this culture, after giving their own names, letter writers would then say to whom they were writing, naming those people in the third person. If that would be confusing in your language, you could use the second person. Alternate translation: "to you who are members of the seven church that are in Asia" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

Grace to you and peace from the one who is, and who was, and who is coming (ULT)

May you have God's presence with you. May you experience peace from God. God is the one who has always existed. God surely exists also now. God will even exist here in the future forever (UST)

In this culture, letter writers would offer a good wish for the recipient before introducing the main business of the letter. Use a form in your language that makes it clear that this is a greeting and blessing. Alternate translation: "May the one who is, and who was, and who is coming give you grace and peace" (See: [Blessings](#))

Grace to you and peace from the one who is, and who was, and who is coming (ULT)

May you have God's presence with you. May you experience peace from God. God is the one who has always existed. God surely exists also now. God will even exist here in the future forever (UST)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the ideas of **grace** and **peace**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "May the one who is, and who was, and who is coming treat you kindly and give you peaceful relationships" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

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

UST

⁴ I, John, am writing this letter to the seven assemblies of believers in the province of Asia. May you have God's presence with you. May you experience peace from God. God is the one who has always existed. God surely exists also now. God will even exist here in the future forever. The seven spirits, which are before the throne of God, also wish that you have God's presence with you and that you experience peace from God.

the one who is (ULT)
is the one who...God surely exists also now (UST)

These three phrases all refer to God. If this might confuse your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the God who is, and who was, and who is coming” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

who is coming (ULT)
God will even exist here in the future forever (UST)

John uses **is coming** figuratively to say that God exists in the future. If this would confuse your readers, you could say the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “who will still exist in the future” (See: [\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#))

seven spirits (ULT)
The seven...spirits (UST)

The number **seven** is often used in the Bible as a symbol for completeness and perfection. Here, the **seven spirits** could refer to: (1) the Spirit of God, which is described with seven attributes in Isaiah 11:2. Alternate translation: “the sevenfold Holy Spirit” (2) seven individual spirits who serve God, which might be the “seven angels” in [8:2](#). Alternate translation: “the seven spirit beings” or “the seven angelic spirits” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

Revelation 1:5

and from Jesus Christ (ULT)
Jesus the Messiah also wishes that you have
God's presence with you and that you
experience peace from God (UST)

The first half of this verse continues the sentence from the previous verse [Revelation 1:4](#). If you make this a new sentence, then you will need to repeat some of the information from the previous verse. Alternate translation: "And may grace be to you and peace also from Jesus Christ"

This phrase **the faithful witness** is a title describing Jesus Christ. The expression is probably an allusion to Psalm 89, specifically to Psalm 89:37. Likewise, every title that is describing Jesus Christ in this verse alludes to a portion of Psalm 89, including: **the firstborn from the dead** and **the ruler of the kings of the earth**. All the titles in this verse describe Jesus Christ as the one who completes God's promises given to David in 2 Samuel 7 and then affirmed again within Psalm 89 later. Therefore, the translator can indicate the presence of an Old Testament quotation or allusion here. (See: [Quotations and Quote Margins](#))

the firstborn from the dead (ULT)
For he is the first one whom God raised from the dead (UST)

This phrase **the firstborn from the dead** is an idiom meaning "the first person to die and become alive again". The term **firstborn** commonly refers to the first child actually to be born to parents and, therefore, the primary recipient of the parents' inheritance. The idiomatic expression apparently alludes to Psalm 89:27. However, every title describing Jesus Christ in this verse alludes to portions of Psalm 89, including: **the faithful witness** and **the ruler of the kings of the earth**. If your readers would not understand the phrase **the firstborn from the dead**, you could use plain language. Alternate translation: "the first person to be raised from death" or "the first person to come back to life" (See: [Idiom](#))

from the dead (ULT)
the dead (UST)

The word **dead** is a singular noun that refers to a group of people. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: "from those who are dead" or "from those who have died" (See: [Collective Nouns](#))

and the ruler of the kings of the earth (ULT)
and he is the one who rules the kings of the earth (UST)

This phrase **the ruler of the kings of the earth** is a title of Jesus Christ that describes his future dominion over the earth. The expression **the ruler of the kings of the earth** alludes to Psalm 89:27. However, every title describing Jesus Christ in this verse alludes to portions of Psalm 89, including: **the faithful witness** and **the firstborn from the dead**. All the titles in this verse describe Jesus Christ as the one who completes God's promises given to David in 2 Samuel 7, which are then affirmed again in Psalm 89 later. Therefore, the translator can indicate the presence of an Old Testament quotation or allusion here. (See: [Quotations and Quote Margins](#))

ULT

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

UST

⁵ Jesus the Messiah also wishes that you have God's presence with you and that you experience peace from God. Jesus the Messiah has reliably told us the matters from God. For he is the first one whom God raised from the dead, and he is the one who rules the kings of the earth. He is the one who loves us and who erased the record of our sins. He released us by shedding his blood when he died on the cross.

To the one who loves us (ULT)
He is the one who loves us (UST)

The second half of this verse begins a doxology that continues onto the next verse 1:6. The doxology directly praises Jesus Christ personally. The doxology continues throughout the entirety of verse 1:6. If you make this a new sentence, then you will need to state some of the information from the following verse that will then be repeated in verse 1:6 once again. Alternate translation: "May Jesus Christ, who loves us, receive glory and power always"

has released us from our sins (ULT)
who erased the record of our sins. He released us (UST)

Here John uses **released** figuratively of forgiving people for their **sins**. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning in a non-figurative way. Alternative translation: "has forgiven us for our sins" (See: [Metaphor](#))

from our sins (ULT)
of our sins (UST)

John uses **sins** figuratively to refer to the punishment for **sins**. He means that Jesus causes people who believe in him to escape eternal punishment for their sins. If this would confuse your readers, you could say the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "has released us from the punishment for our sins" (See: [\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs- metonymy\]\]](#))

his blood (ULT)
his blood when he died on the cross (UST)

Here, **blood** figuratively represents the death of Christ on the cross. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a comparable word that stands for death or express the idea in non-figurative language. Alternate translation: "his death on the cross" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Revelation 1:6

and has made us a kingdom, priests (ULT)
Jesus is the one who has caused us to become
people over whose lives God rules. He has also
made us to be priests (UST)

Alternate translation: "He has separated us for his rule, he has made us priests...". The subject of the sentence, as well as of the contents of this entire verse, is Jesus Christ. Thus, the UST makes the subject of Jesus explicit throughout the entire verse. (See: [\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-pronoun\]\]](#))

a kingdom, priests (ULT)
to become people over whose lives God
rules...to be priests (UST)

Here, **a kingdom, priests** is a pair of nouns functioning as two metaphors for the service that believers give to God the Father. Believers in Jesus Christ serve God like citizens serve their ruling king. Likewise, believers in Jesus also benefit God like priests attended to God in the temple or the tabernacle of the Old Testament. (See: [Metaphor](#))

If your language does not use an abstract noun for these ideas, you could express the ideas behind the abstract nouns **kingdom, priests, glory**, and **power** in other ways. Alternate translation: "he has created us to aid him in his program and to be household custodians serving God, his Father. May Jesus have proper honor and recognized authority always" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

and...for his God...Father (ULT)
Jesus is the one who has caused...He has also made...who serve God...the
father of Jesus (UST)

Here, **God** and **Father** refers to two persons of the Godhead, who exists in essence as a trinity of individual persons. The name **Father** is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. Alternate translation: "for God, his Father" (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

to him {be} the glory and the power (ULT)
May Jesus receive glory and power (UST)

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

the power (ULT)
glory and power (UST)

Here, **the power** probably refers to Jesus Christ's authority as king. Alternate translation: "the dominion"

ULT

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

UST

⁶ Jesus is the one who has caused us to become people over whose lives God rules. He has also made us to be priests who serve God, who is the father of Jesus. May Jesus receive glory and power throughout eternity. So be it!

Revelation 1:7

General Information:

In verse 7, John is quoting from Daniel and Zechariah. For how to translate quotations of other scripture contents, read this following link. (See: [Quotations and Quote Margins](#))

Behold (ULT)

Pay attention (UST)

Here, **Behold** is a word that focuses the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. The word literally means “look” or “see”. However, in this case, the expression denotes the act of seeing figuratively by means of giving notice and attention. Alternate translation: “Listen carefully!” (See: [Metaphor](#))

he is coming with the clouds (ULT)

Jesus is coming in the clouds (UST)

Alternate translation: “He approaches on the clouds.” The subject of the clause is Jesus Christ. Jesus will come to the earth from above, or from the sky above, as seen originally in Daniel 7:14 and Daniel 7:27. Thus, the UST makes the subject of Jesus Christ explicit here. (See: [\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-pronoun\]\]](#))

every eye (ULT)

Everyone (UST)

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

even those who pierced him (ULT)

including those who killed him by nailing him to a cross (UST)

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

even those who pierced him (ULT)

including those who killed him by nailing him to a cross (UST)

Here, **even those who pierced him** assumes the prior action verb of every eye seeing Jesus Christ come with the clouds. However, the writer leaves out the repetition of the action verb of seeing here, although the act of seeing is assumed. This is type of omission is known as ellipsis. The translator may wish to state explicitly the action of seeing once again here in this context. (See: [Ellipsis](#))

all the tribes of the earth (ULT)

Every people group in the world (UST)

The phrase **all the tribes of the earth** describes all types of the earth’s peoples by the category of every single **tribe**. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: “every ethnicity of the earth” or “every racial type of the earth” (See: [Collective Nouns](#))

ULT

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

UST

⁷ Pay attention! Jesus is coming in the clouds. Everyone will see him, including those who killed him by nailing him to a cross. Every people group in the world will grieve when they see him coming. It will be like this for sure! So be it!

Yes, Amen (ULT)

It will be like this for sure! So be it (UST)

Here, the phrase **Yes, Amen** represents a stronger or more assertive form of simply the word **Amen**. The word **Yes** affirms, emphasizes, and strengthens the following word **Amen**. Alternate translations: "Certainly it shall be thus!" or "Yes indeed, may this truly be so!"

Revelation 1:8

the alpha and the omega (ULT)

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

the alpha and the omega (ULT)

Here, **the alpha and the omega** refers by merism to the eternal nature of God the Father or that of Jesus Christ. A merism gives a sense of a totality by a description that references two extreme parts of a concept's whole. In this case, the parts at the extremities of the concept's whole are the first (**alpha**) and last (**omega**) letters of the Greek alphabet. The Greek alphabet is a type of metaphor for eternity, which has a beginning and an end normally in time, although here the idea is that of the eternal existence of God. (See: [Merism](#))

the alpha and the omega," says the Lord (ULT)

"I am the alpha and the omega," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty" (1:8). Some versions add the phrase "the Beginning and the End" (See: [Textual Variants](#))

who is coming (ULT)

I am the one who will exist here forever (UST)

Here, the phrase **who is coming** figuratively signifies that God exists in the future. If this would confuse your readers, you could say the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "who will still exist in the future" (See: [Metaphor](#))

says the Lord God (ULT)

The Lord God says (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁸ The Lord God says: "I am the first letter A, the one who began all things. I am the last letter Z, the one who will cause all things to come to an end. I am the one who exists now. I am the one who has always existed. I am the one who will exist here forever. I am the One who rules over everything and everyone."

Revelation 1:9

I, John—your brother and a fellow partaker in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance {that are} in Jesus (ULT)

I am your partnering brother John. I also share with you the distress and endurance necessary to all who are members of Jesus' rule (UST)

The Apostle **John** refers to himself in the third person here in this verse. If this is confusing in your language, you could translate this in the first person primarily or predominantly. Alternate translation: "I ... am experiencing affliction with you ..." (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

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

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

your (ULT)

your (UST)

Here, **your** refers to the believers assembled among the seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation (i.e. chapters one, two, and three). The seven assemblies of believers mentioned in Revelation were in the modern area of southwestern Turkey today. (See: [Forms of You](#))

kingdom (ULT)

rule (UST)

Here, **kingdom** expresses the idea that Christ rules and will rule over the lives of believers. One might translate **kingdom** with the idea behind the abstract noun by some phrase that uses the verb "rule." (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

because of the word of God (ULT)

because I kept telling people about God's message (UST)

Here, **the word of God** refers to both the preaching of the gospel as well as the proclamation of this book of Revelation's prophecy by the author John through the direct attestation of Jesus Christ personally to him. John uses **word** figuratively to refer to the message that God said by using words. If this might confuse your readers, you could say the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "because I communicated to others the message that God spoke" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

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

UST

⁹ I am your partnering brother John. I also share with you the distress and endurance necessary to all who are members of Jesus' rule. I was on the Island of Patmos because I kept telling people about God's message that Jesus personally revealed to me.

the testimony of Jesus (ULT)
that Jesus personally revealed to me (UST)

John is using the possessive form to describe the **testimony** that **Jesus** has given about the personal revelation received directly from God and then given in prophecy by the book's author John. If this is not clear in your language, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "the testimony that Jesus has given me" (See: [Possession](#))

Revelation 1:10

I was in the Spirit (ULT) **God awakened my spirit ecstatically to perceive revelation (UST)**

Here, **in the Spirit** might signify the state of being influenced by God's Spirit. However, on the other hand, **in the spirit** might be an idiomatic expression which employs the word **spirit** as a general reference to the human spirit. Therefore, this phrase **in the Spirit** could mean: (1) God's Holy Spirit (i.e. God himself) took control of John so as to somehow influence John to receive divine revelation, or (2) God caused John to be in a spiritual state so that he could perceive revelation. Alternate translation: "I was influenced by the Spirit of God" or "God's Spirit took control of me" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

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

UST

¹⁰ On Sunday, the day that believers gather to worship, God awakened my spirit ecstatically to perceive revelation. Then I heard behind me someone speaking. His voice was loud like the sound of a trumpet being blown.

the Lord's day (ULT) **Sunday, the day that believers gather to worship (UST)**

Here, **the Lord's day** refers specifically to Sunday, which was the weekday for the public gathering of Christian believers for corporate worship during this time of John's writing the book of Revelation. Some argue that the phrase **the Lord's day** refers to a future day that is depicted in the book of Revelation. However, although John was inspired in an ecstatic state, he was not transported physically through time into a future eschatological time which is depicted in the book of Revelation. Rather, God merely gave John a vision of the future time depicted in the book of Revelation.

a loud voice like a trumpet (ULT) **someone speaking. His voice was loud like the sound of a trumpet being blown (UST)**

The **voice** was very **loud** so that the noise sounded **like a trumpet**. Alternate translation: "a voice as loud as a trumpet being blown" (See: [Simile](#))

a loud voice (ULT) **someone speaking. His voice was loud like the sound of a trumpet being blown (UST)**

Here, **a loud voice** figuratively refers to the person speaking the **voice**, which is later revealed in the context to be the divine voice of Jesus Christ. This figure of speech is what is known as a metonymy of effect in that the person who speaks and utters a voice is represented by his **voice**. Alternate translation: "a great sound of one speaking" (See: [Metonymy](#))

a trumpet (ULT) **was loud like...of a trumpet being blown (UST)**

A **trumpet** is a wind instrument for producing music or for calling people to gather together for an announcement or meeting. In the Old Testament, a **trumpet** was a ram's horn, but in the New Testament time period the wind instrument evolved into a metallic form for the trumpet, just like it exists now in modern times. The translator must decide, if translating in a culture that has no trumpets, whether there exists some other equivalent wind instrument or simply some other means of gathering people for a public gathering.

Revelation 1:11

saying (ULT)

The voice said to me (UST)

Here, **saying** refers to the **voice** of the previous verse 1:10, although the **voice** is only implied and not stated explicitly. If this might confuse your readers, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "it said to me" (See: [Pronouns — When to Use Them](#))

a scroll (ULT)

a scroll (UST)

Here, **a scroll** refers to a roll made up of sliced fibers from the papyrus plant. Papyrus was actually less expensive in comparison to parchment, which was made of animal skins.

Smyrna...Pergamum...Thyatira...Sardis...

Philadelphia...Laodicea (ULT)

Smyrna...Pergamum...Thyatira...Sardis...Philadelphia...and Laodicea (UST)

These are names of cities in the region of western Asia Minor that are in the modern area of southwestern Turkey today. The logic of the order seems to begin with Ephesus, the most important city at the time and then proceed to move clockwise until it reaches the city that is the furthest south at Laodicea. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

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

UST

¹¹ The voice said to me: "Write on a scroll what you see, and send it to the seven assemblies of believers. Send it to the believers in the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

Revelation 1:12

the voice that (ULT) who was talking to me (UST)

The **voice** refers to the person speaking. The person who utters the voice is subsequently said to be Jesus Christ himself. The voice represents the person who speaks the voice in a figure of speech known as metonymy. Alternate translation: “who” (See: [Metonymy](#))

seven golden lampstands (ULT) seven golden lamp holders (UST)

Here, **seven golden lampstands** refers to seven golden lamp holders that are place holding stands for portable oil lamps. These seven lamp holders are made of gold or, at the very least, were plated with gold. Apparently these lamp holders represent the seven assemblies of believers in the seven cities mentioned in the previous verse of Revelation 1:11. The number **seven** is often used in the Bible as a symbol for completeness and perfection, although the context would simply suggest that the number is required by the amount of the churches addressed in Revelation chapters two and three. Alternate translation: “seven golden portable oil lamp-holding stands” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

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

UST

¹² When I heard this voice, I turned my head to see who was talking to me. Then I perceived seven golden lamp holders.

Revelation 1:13

there was one} like a son of man (ULT)
there was someone who looked like a human
in his form (UST)

The expression **like a son of man** describes a human figure, someone who looks human. The figure of speech is that of a comparison by a simile. Alternate translation: “a being that looked like a man” or “a figure that resembled a human being” (See: [Simile](#))

there was one} like a son of man (ULT)
there was someone who looked like a human
in his form (UST)

Here, **like a son of man** is a phrase that recalls the same Aramaic phrase in Daniel 7, specifically within Daniel 7:13. Jesus, assuming the reference in Daniel 7, takes the phrase **a son of man** as a personal title so as then to be translated often as “the Son of Man” in the gospel references. Therefore, the translator can indicate the presence of an Old Testament quotation or allusion here. (See: [Quotations and Quote Margins](#))

a golden sash (ULT)
a golden strap (UST)

A **sash** was a strip of cloth worn around the chest. This one may have been woven from golden threads. Clearly **sash** is not a belt that is worn around the waist specifically. Alternate translation: “strap” or “band”

ULT

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

UST

¹³ In the midst of the lamp holders, there was someone who looked like a human in his form. He wore a robe that reached down to his feet. He also fastened a golden strap across his chest.

Revelation 1:14

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

Here, **wool** and **snow** are examples of things that are very **white**. The double comparison between hair of the head with both **wool** and **snow** represents the figure of speech known as a simile. Although the phrase **his head and hair** literally refers to both the head and hair, the idea must be to the hair being white on the head, which is then compared in a simile's manner of comparison to both **wool** and **snow**. (See: [Simile](#))

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

pale...was like a gleaming white wool or like white snow (UST)

The repetition of **white as** emphasizes that they were very white. The doubling of **white* indicates a figure of speech known as a doublet. A doublet provides emphasis by means of repetition. (See: [Doublet](#))

wool (ULT)

wool (UST)

The word **wool** refers to the hair of a sheep or goat. In this simile comparison, the **wool** is considered to be very white.

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

His...eyes...were bright like a flame of fire (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁴ The pale hair on his head was like a gleaming white wool or like white snow. His eyes were bright like a flame of fire.

Revelation 1:15

his feet {were} like polished bronze (ULT)

Here, **like polished bronze** describes the appearance of the figure's feet in a manner of comparison known as simile. Objects made of **bronze** are **polished** to make them shine and reflect light. Alternate translation: "his feet were very shiny like polished bronze" or "his feet were reflecting light like polished bronze" (See: [Simile](#))

were} like polished bronze, as having been refined in a furnace (ULT) shone like bronze that has been refined in a furnace (UST)

The **bronze** would be **refined** first by melting it in a **furnace**, and then polished. Here, **furnace** refers to a strong container for holding a very hot fire. People would put metal in it, and the hot fire would melt away any impurities that were in the metal. A translation should not imply that the bronze was first polished and then refined in a furnace, thereby reversing the actual order of events. Alternate translation: "like bronze that has been purified in a hot furnace and then polished" (See: [Order of Events](#))

his voice as the sound of many rushing waters (ULT) his voice resonated like the noise of a great river of rushing water (UST)

The **sound** of **his voice** was very loud, like the sound of a large and fast flowing river or of a large waterfall with loud waves of constant water flow. This figurative expression is a comparison by a simile. The idea is simply of a great noise caused by a large volume of water, so that something like a river or waterfall could describe the notion for comparison of the voice's great force. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

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

UST

¹⁵ His feet shone like bronze that has been refined in a furnace. When he spoke, his voice resonated like the noise of a great river of rushing water.

Revelation 1:16

and having (ULT)

The one who looked like a human was holding (UST)

Here, the subject of **and having** should be assumed from earlier in verse 1:13 rendered one **like a son of man**. If this might confuse your readers, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "he was holding" (See: [Pronouns — When to Use Them](#))

and having seven stars in his right hand (ULT)

The one who looked like a human was holding seven stars in his right hand (UST)

The number **seven** is often used in the Bible as a symbol for completeness and perfection, although the context would simply suggest that the number is required by the amount of the churches addressed in Revelation chapters two and three. Hence, the **seven stars** refer to **the angels of the seven churches** as stated explicitly in 1:20. The symbolism of Jesus Christ holding stars could have two possible connotations, namely: (1) Christ having absolute authority over the stars in the heavens as a divine person, or (2) Christ keeping the churches symbolized in the stars secure and safe from death or evil so as to have eternal life as described in John 10:28. The translator does not need to specify one interpretation over the other one. Alternate translation: "and keeping seven stars in his right hand" (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

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

Here, the **sword** refers to a sword that is sharpened on both edges so that it can cut in both directions on both sides. Only the blade of the sword protruded from Christ's mouth since the imagery is most likely a metaphor for the spoken word as being figuratively sharp and able to pierce things. The symbolism was probably inspired by the fact that Roman **double-edged** swords were shaped like human tongues in their forms. Thus, **double-edged** swords in the shape of human tongues apparently signify spoken words coming from the human mouth. The translator may wish to indicate this imagery in his translation of the symbolism. Alternate translation: "a sharp, double-edged sword was protruding from his mouth"

shining as the sun at its strength (ULT)

shone as bright as the sun during the middle of the day (UST)

Here, the simile in the phrase **shining as the sun at its strength** expresses a very bright appearance. Thus, the face of Jesus Christ appeared very bright in a similar manner to the way that the sun shines in its full force during the middle of the day. Alternate translation: "shining as bright as the noonday sun" or "shining as bright as the mid-day sun" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

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

UST

¹⁶ The one who looked like a human was holding seven stars in his right hand. A sword with two sharp edges was extending from his mouth. His face shone as bright as the sun during the middle of the day.

Revelation 1:17

I fell at his feet as a dead man (ULT) I fell down at his feet as though I were a corpse (UST)

John lay down facing the ground in a common gesture that expresses a deferential respect for a person before whom one bows down before. This symbolic action or cultural gesture of obeisance signifies great respect, reverential awe, and maybe even some fear at the person who receives the symbolic gesture of the bow. John was probably very frightened and was showing Jesus great respect by the customary act of a dramatic bow before the presence of Jesus. If the translator has a similar symbolic action or cultural gesture to indicate obeisance in the culture of the target language, then perhaps the similar cultural action should be incorporated in the translation. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

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

UST

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell down at his feet as though I were a corpse. Then Jesus put his right hand on me and said to me, "Do not be afraid! I am the First One who began all things. I am also the Last One who will cause all things to end.

and he placed his right hand on me (ULT) Then Jesus put his right hand on me (UST)

Here, the subject of **and he placed his right hand on me** should be assumed from earlier in the context at verse [1:13](#). Verse [1:13](#) mentions one **like a son of man** as a description of Jesus Christ. If this might confuse your readers, you could explicitly state the subject as Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus placed his right hand on me" (See: [Pronouns — When to Use Them](#))

and he placed his right hand on me (ULT) Then Jesus put his right hand on me (UST)

Here, the phrase **and he placed his right hand on me** signifies a cultural gesture or symbolic action that expresses comfort and assurance for the person who is in need of encouragement at the moment of fear. The symbolic action has the accompanying verbal expression of **Do not be afraid** so as to illustrate the significance and symbolism of the cultural gesture. Alternate translation: "and he touched me with his right hand" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

I am the first and the last (ULT) I am the First One who began all things. I am also the Last One who will cause all things to end (UST)

Here, **the first and the last** refers to the eternal nature of Jesus in a figure of expression known as a merism. This is to say, Jesus Christ exists in nature eternally in that he existed before anything else and he will continue to exist after everything else is gone. A merism gives a sense of a totality by a description that references two extreme parts of the entirety of a concept. In this case, the parts at the extremities of the entirety of the concept are the ordinals **first** and **last**. However, in the prior verse of [1:8](#), the metaphor for eternity was described in terms of the Greek alphabet. In other words, the parts at the extremities of the entirety of the concept are the first (**alpha**) and last (**omega**) letters of the Greek alphabet. Yet, in this context here, the parts at the extremities are simply the ordinal numbers **first** and **last**. The translator may wish to find an equivalent phrase to express a merism in the culture of his target language. (See: [Merism](#))

Revelation 1:18

Here, the phrase **the one who lives** is a common description of God in both the Old and New Testaments. Essentially this common divine title is a phrase which communicates the notion that God has immortal life in his essential nature. In contrast to God, who lives in immortal essence and in his very being as the living God, mortal humans die because of their sinful nature. The translator may wish to find an equivalent description of God to express his immortal or eternal life as part of his essence or being. Alternate translation: “the living one” or “the one who gives life”

but behold (ULT)

Here, **Behold** is a word that focuses the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. The word literally means “look” or “see”. However, in this case, the expression denotes the act of seeing figuratively by means of giving notice and attention. Alternate translation: “Listen carefully!” (See: [Metaphor](#))

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

I have...power over death itself and I control the place of the dead (UST)

Here, the phrase **I have the keys of death and of Hades** indicates a common metaphorical expression that symbolizes authority or power with the imagery of **keys**. This is to say, the idea of having the power over something is spoken of as having **the keys** to it. Alternate translation: “I have the power over death and over Hades” (See: [Metaphor](#))

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

I have...power over death itself and I control the place of the dead (UST)

The implied information is that he can give life to those who have died and let them out of **Hades**. As stated in the previous note, **keys** are a symbol of power or authority over something, since keys represent the ability to control a door, whether to open it or to lock it. The translator may wish to make the symbolic and cultural implications of having **keys** explicit by indicating the power or authority of controlling such items. Alternate translation: “I have the power to give life to people who have died and to let them out of Hades” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

of death and of Hades (ULT)

death itself and I control the place of the dead (UST)

Here, **Hades** in the phrase **of death and of Hades** denotes the world of the dead and is commonly transliterated directly from the Greek language and its cultural mythology, as here in the ULT translation. The word **Hades** signifies the place or location where deceased individuals go after their death within the cultural world of Greek mythology. The distinction between death and **Hades** is not great, but there is a slight difference. Death indicates the state of being dead. However, **Hades** represents the place of death. Thus, the translator might indicate the slight differences between the two words in this verse here when translating the expression. Alternate translation: “of death’s state and of death’s location” (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))

ULT

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

UST

¹⁸ I am the God who inherently lives. Although I was once dead, observe how I am now alive forever. I have power over death itself and I control the place of the dead.

Revelation 1:19

**what you have seen and what is and what is about to happen after these things (ULT)
what you saw just now. Also write down the matters which are happening now as well as those things that will happen in the future (UST)**

Here, the entire clause **what you have seen and what is and what is about to happen after these things** represents the three-part division of the entire Book of Revelation. This three-part division of the Book of Revelation is an example of the figure of speech known as a litany. A litany expresses a comprehensive notion so as to be inclusive of all without exceptions. In other words, The command to John requires that John write everything down in the book with no exceptions from what he is required to include in his work of composition. The translator may wish to indicate the use of this verse here as a natural three-part division of the book of Revelation. Alternatively, the translator may wish to reflect this actual reality in the translation of the three different clauses with their different tenses of verbs. Alternate translation: “that which you are seeing, that which exists now, and that which will happen afterwards” (See: [Litany](#))

ULT

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

UST

¹⁹ Thus, write down what you saw just now. Also write down the matters which are happening now as well as those things that will happen in the future.

Revelation 1:20

The mystery of the seven stars (ULT) The symbolic meaning of the seven stars...is this (UST)

Here, **the mystery** means “the secret meaning” or “the symbolic meaning” in the sense of the inner meaning of a symbolic vision. The word **mystery** represents a matter that is hidden or secret. The notion of a **mystery** also implies that there exists a symbolic meaning that the Holy Spirit can allow one to understand and interpret correctly. The translator may wish to convey some of the nuances explained in this note that are inherent in the notion of the word **mystery**. Alternate translation: “the secret meaning of the seven stars”

of the seven stars (ULT) of the seven stars (UST)

These **stars** are symbols that represent the **seven** angels of the **seven** churches or assemblies of believers. The number **seven** is often used in the Bible as a symbol for completeness and perfection. However, here the number **seven** simply refers to the number of churches addressed in chapters two and three of the Book of Revelation. Alternate translation: “the seven celestial bodies” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

lampstands (ULT) lamp holders (UST)

These **lampstands** are symbols that represent the seven churches or assemblies of believers mentioned in chapters two and three of the book of Revelation. Note the previous translation of this imagery in verse [Revelation 1:12](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

the seven...the angels of...churches (ULT) of the seven...angels...assemblies of believers (UST)

Here, the phrase **the angels of the seven churches** could refer to: (1) heavenly angels who protect the seven churches. Alternatively, **the angels of the seven churches** are (2) human messengers who are sent to the seven churches. If **the angels** are human messengers, then, they could either be leaders of the seven churches or they could be the actual messengers who went from John bearing the Book of Revelation to the seven churches mentioned in verse [Revelation 1:11](#). The translator should keep the apparent ambiguity of the symbolism and not try to specify either option of interpretation over the other.

the seven...of...churches (ULT) of the seven...assemblies of believers (UST)

Here, the **seven churches** refers to seven assemblies of believers which actually existed in southwestern Asia Minor when John wrote the Book of Revelation. Note the translation of these **seven churches** in verse [Revelation 1:11](#).

ULT

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

UST

²⁰ The symbolic meaning of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lamp holders is this: The seven stars represent angels among the seven assemblies of believers. The seven lamp holders signify the seven assemblies of believers.

Revelation 2

Revelation 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Outline of Chapters Two and Three of Revelation

I. The Current Condition of the Churches (2:1-3:22)

A. The Letter to Ephesus (2:1-7)

B. The Letter to Smyrna (2:8-11)

C. The Letter to Pergamum (2:12-17)

D. The Letter to Thyatira (2:18-29)

E. The Letter to Sardis (3:1-6)

F. The Letter to Philadelphia (3:7-13)

G. The Letter to Laodicea (3:14-22)

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

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Poverty and wealth

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

“The devil is about to”

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

Balaam, Balak, and Jezebel

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

Important figures of speech in this chapter

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

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

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“The angel of the church”

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

“The words of the one who”

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

Revelation 2:1

To the angel (ULT) to the angel (UST)

Here, **angel** could refer to: (1) a heavenly angel which protects the church at Ephesus. Alternatively, this **angel** is (2) a human messenger which is sent to the seven churches. If **the angel** is a human messenger, then it could refer to a leader of the church at Ephesus or, perhaps, to the actual messenger who went from John bearing the Book of Revelation to the church at Ephesus. Note that verse [Revelation 1:11](#) would suggest the need for messengers to be sent to each of the seven churches in their seven cities. The translator should keep the apparent ambiguity of the symbolism and not try to specify either option of interpretation over the other. Note the translation of **angel** in [Revelation 1:20](#).

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write (ULT)

Write...to the angel of the assembly of believers in the city of Ephesus (UST)

This is the beginning of Jesus Christ's message to the angel of the church in Ephesus. Ephesus is the name of one of the **seven churches**, or seven assemblies of believers, which existed in southwestern Asia Minor when John wrote the Book of Revelation. Note the translation of the **seven churches** in verse [Revelation 1:11](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

The one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands (ULT)

Here, the implied subject of the two clauses is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the assumed subject from the context established in the previous chapter one. If this might confuse your readers, you could say the intended reference to Jesus Christ explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus Christ, the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands" (See: [Pronouns — When to Use Them](#))

stars (ULT)

stars (UST)

These **stars** are symbols. The **stars** represent the seven angels of the seven churches. Note the translations of **stars** in [Revelation 1:16](#) and [Revelation 1:20](#). The figure of speech is that of symbolic language which is common to the Book of Revelation. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

of the seven golden lampstands (ULT)

the seven golden lamp holders (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹ "Write this message to the angel of the assembly of believers in the city of Ephesus: The one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and who walks among the seven golden lamp holders says the following:

Revelation 2:2

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

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

your works and {your} hard labor and your patient endurance, and that you are not able to tolerate evil people, and you have tested those who call themselves apostles but are not, and you have found them {to be} false (ULT)

The second person pronouns and the second person individuals addressed throughout this verse are all singular in their number but plural in their references. In other words, all the second person references in the verbs and the pronouns, although singular in their literal sense, are plural in their implied references to the believers of the church at Ephesus. If the singular form of the second person address and the second person verbal references would not be natural in your language, then perhaps the translator could use the plural forms of the second person, or “you” (See: [Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups](#))

evil people (ULT) wicked people (UST)

Here, **evil people** translates directly an adjective in the Greek that signifies simply “wicked” or **evil**. Thus, the translator must supply a noun that the adjective is describing through an assumed implication. The natural assumption for the noun to be supplied would be human individuals who were people in the surrounding community of those being addressed here. Alternate translation: “wayward people” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

you have found them {to be} false (ULT) have discovered them to be lying (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

² I am aware of all that you have done. I am aware of how hard you have worked for me. I am aware of how you have patiently endured difficult times. I am also aware of the fact that you do not bear with wicked people and that you evaluate the people who claim to be Jesus Christ's delegated representatives. However, such people are not Jesus Christ's delegated representatives, just as you have discovered them to be lying.

Revelation 2:3

**because of my name (ULT)
for believing in me...You have continued to
keep my words through difficult
circumstances (UST)**

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

**have not grown weary (ULT)
You did...not...give up or stop, even though it
has been difficult for you (UST)**

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

ULT

³ and you have patient endurance and have suffered because of my name and have not grown weary.

UST

³ I am aware of how you have patiently endured when you suffered for believing in me. I am also aware of the fact that you have served me constantly even when people caused you to experience suffering. You have continued to keep my words through difficult circumstances. You did not give up or stop, even though it has been difficult for you.

Revelation 2:4

**I have against you that (ULT)
have done something wrong: You no longer
love each other and me as you did (UST)**

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

**you have left behind your first love (ULT)
no longer love each other and me...when you
first came to trust. You do not have the same
love for me now that you had at first (UST)**

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

ULT

⁴ But I have against you that you have left behind your first love.

UST

⁴ Nevertheless, you have done something wrong: You no longer love each other and me as you did when you first came to trust. You do not have the same love for me now that you had at first.

Revelation 2:5

from where you have fallen (ULT)
So, I tell you to remember how you used to love me...so (UST)

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

But if not (ULT)
If...not (UST)

Alternate translation: “If you do not repent”

I will remove your lampstand (ULT)
the...remove your lamp (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁵ So, I tell you to remember how you used to love me. Love me again like you did at the first. If you do not, I will come to you and remove your lamp so you will no longer be my people together.

Revelation 2:6

of the Nicolaitans (ULT)

Those Nicolaitans, the people who say you can worship idols and act immorally (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁶ But you do one thing very well: Those Nicolaitans, the people who say you can worship idols and act immorally—you hate what they do, just as I hate it.

Revelation 2:7

Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT) Everyone who wants to understand my message must listen carefully (UST)

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

Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT) Everyone who wants to understand my message must listen carefully (UST)

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

To the one who conquers (ULT) are victorious (UST)

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

To the one...the...paradise...of God (ULT) are victorious...the...God's...garden (UST)

This is a symbol for heaven. Alternate translation: "God's garden"

ULT

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

UST

⁷ Everyone who wants to understand my message must listen carefully to the message that God's Spirit is saying to the groups of believers assembled together. The message is this: I will allow those who are victorious to eat fruit from the tree that gives eternal life, the tree that is in God's garden."

Revelation 2:8

General Information:

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

to the angel (ULT)

to the...angel (UST)

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

Smyrna (ULT)

the city of Smyrna (UST)

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

The first and the last (ULT)

I am the first, the one who began all things and I am the last, who causes all things to end (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

8 "Write this message to the angel of the group of believers in the city of Smyrna: 'I am saying these things to you. I am the first, the one who began all things and I am the last, who causes all things to end. I am the one who died and became alive again.

Revelation 2:9

**I know your affliction and {your} poverty (ULT)
I know about how you have suffered. I know
about how you are poor and lack many things
that you need (UST)**

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

**the slander of those who say they themselves
are Jews (ULT)
that can never be taken from you). You know
what it is like to have people curse you and
say terrible things about you because you
follow the Messiah. Those Jews (who are not
real Jews) who curse you and (UST)**

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

**and...they are not (ULT)
I know...say terrible things about you, they (UST)**

Alternate translation: "but they are not real Jews"

**a synagogue of Satan (ULT)
are members of the gathering of Satan, and not the gathering of God's
people (UST)**

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

ULT

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

UST

⁹ I know about how you have suffered. I know about how you are poor and lack many things that you need (but you are really rich in the things that are eternal and that can never be taken from you). You know what it is like to have people curse you and say terrible things about you because you follow the Messiah. Those Jews (who are not real Jews) who curse you and say terrible things about you, they are members of the gathering of Satan, and not the gathering of God's people.

Revelation 2:10

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

The truth is that the devil is about to put some of you in prison, to put you in a difficult place (UST)

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

Become faithful until death (ULT)
Continue to trust in me, even if they kill you because you trust in me (UST)

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

the crown of life (ULT)
a wreath...that will be a sign that you have eternal life and that you have overcome (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁰ Do not be afraid of any of the things that you are about to suffer. The truth is that the devil is about to put some of you in prison, to put you in a difficult place where you are being tested to see what kind of faith you have. For a short period of time you will suffer. Continue to trust in me, even if they kill you because you trust in me. and I will put a wreath on your head that will be a sign that you have eternal life and that you have overcome.

Revelation 2:11

Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Listen carefully (UST)

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

Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Listen carefully (UST)

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

The one who conquers (ULT)

All who conquer (UST)

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

will not be hurt by the second death

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

ULT

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

UST

11 Listen carefully to the message that God’s Spirit speaks to the groups of believers assembled together. All who conquer will never die a second time.”

Revelation 2:12

General Information:

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

to the angel (ULT)

to the...angel (UST)

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

Pergamum (ULT)

city of Pergamum (UST)

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

the sword with two sharp edges

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

ULT

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

UST

¹² "Write this message to the angel of the group of believers in the city of Pergamum: 'I am saying these things to you. I am the one who has the sword with two sharp edges.

Revelation 2:13

the throne of Satan {is (ULT)

It is where Satan controls people. I know (UST)

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

you hold tightly to my name (ULT)

you firmly...you (UST)

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

you hold tightly to my name (ULT)

you firmly...you (UST)

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

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

firmly...believe in me. You did not deny that...you (UST)

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

of Antipas (ULT)

Antipas (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹³ I know where you live: It is where Satan controls people. I know that you firmly believe in me. You did not deny that you believe/trust in me, not even in the time when Antipas, who faithfully told people about me, was alive. People killed him in your city, a city where people habitually obey Satan.

Revelation 2:14

**But I have a few things against you (ULT)
But, even so, I see some matters...hurting
your testimony and weakening your
obedience. You (UST)**

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

**some who hold tightly to the teaching of
Balaam, who (ULT)
permit some of your...members to teach
things like Balaam taught long ago. He taught
(UST)**

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

**Balak (ULT)
Balak to eat food that had been offered (UST)**

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

**who taught Balak to throw a stumbling block before the sons of Israel (ULT)
long ago. He taught Balak to eat food that had been offered to idols and that
sexual immorality was permitted among God's people (UST)**

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

**to be sexually immoral (ULT)
to idols and that sexual immorality was permitted among God's people (UST)**

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁴ But, even so, I see some matters that are hurting your testimony and weakening your obedience. You permit some of your members to teach things like Balaam taught long ago. He taught Balak to eat food that had been offered to idols and that sexual immorality was permitted among God's people.

Revelation 2:15

of the Nicolaitans (ULT)

Nicolaitans (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁵ In that way, you are also permitting some of your members to practice what the Nicolaitans teach, that sexual immorality is permitted, which, of course, it is not permitted.

Revelation 2:16

But if {you do} not (ULT) or (UST)

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

will wage war against them (ULT) I will make war against them (UST)

Alternate translation: "fight against them"

with the sword of my mouth (ULT) with the sword in my mouth, the word of God (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁶ Stop doing this and change your direction, or I will come to you suddenly and I will make war against them with the sword in my mouth, the word of God.

Revelation 2:17

Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Listen carefully...the (UST)

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

Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)

Listen carefully...the (UST)

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

To the one who conquers (ULT)

To him who conquers (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁷ Listen carefully to the message that God's Spirit speaks to the groups of believers. To him who conquers, I will give the hidden manna, that will feed and strengthen you and I will also give him a white stone, on which I will engrave a new name for him, and the name I give him only he will know."

Revelation 2:18

General Information:

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

to the angel (ULT)

to the...angel (UST)

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

Thyatira (ULT)

the city of Thyatira (UST)

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

The Son of God (ULT)

I, the Son of God (UST)

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

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

whose eyes shine like a flame of fire (UST)

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

his feet like polished bronze (ULT)

whose feet shine like gleaming bronze, am saying these things to you (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

18 "Write this message to the angel of the group of believers assembled together in the city of Thyatira: 'I, the Son of God, whose eyes shine like a flame of fire and whose feet shine like gleaming bronze, am saying these things to you.

Revelation 2:19

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

I know that...you love me...and...each other... and that you trust in me. I know that you serve others and that you steadfastly endure a lot of difficulties (UST)

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

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

I know that...you love me...and...each other... and that you trust in me. I know that you serve others and that you steadfastly endure a lot of difficulties (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁹ I know all the good things that you do. I know that you love me and each other, and that you trust in me. I know that you serve others and that you steadfastly endure a lot of difficulties. I know that you are doing these things more now than you did in the past.

Revelation 2:20

But I have this against you (ULT) Nevertheless, you have done something wrong (UST)

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

the woman Jezebel (ULT) woman...who is like that wicked Queen Jezebel (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

²⁰ Nevertheless, you have done something wrong: You tolerate that woman among your people who is like that wicked Queen Jezebel who lived long ago. She says that she is a prophetess. However, by what she teaches, she is deceiving my servants. She is urging them to commit sexual immorality and to eat food that they have offered to idols.

Revelation 2:21

I gave her time so that she might repent (ULT) **I gave her time to turn away (UST)**

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

ULT

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

UST

²¹ Although I gave her time to turn away from her sexual immorality and pagan practices, she did not want to stop.

Revelation 2:22

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

I will cause her to become very ill...to suffer greatly (UST)

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

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

those who act immorally as she does to suffer greatly (UST)

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

unless they repent of her deeds (ULT)

if they do not stop doing what she does (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

²² As a result, I will cause her to become very ill. I will also cause those who act immorally as she does to suffer greatly, if they do not stop doing what she does.

Revelation 2:23

I will strike her children dead (ULT)
Some have become...like her...children by accepting what she teaches...I will certainly kill them (UST)

Alternate translation: "I will kill her children"

her children (ULT)
Some have become...like her...children by accepting what she teaches (UST)

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

kidneys and hearts (ULT)
what everyone thinks and desires (UST)

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

I will give to each one of you (ULT)
I will reward...each of you (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

²³ Some have become like her children by accepting what she teaches, and I will certainly kill them. Then all the groups of believers will learn that I am the one who finds out what everyone thinks and desires. I will reward each of you according to what you have done.

Revelation 2:24

to as many as do not hold this teaching (ULT)
It is good that you do not accept these wrong things. It is good that you...those (UST)

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

do not hold this teaching (ULT)
It is good that you do not accept these wrong things...those (UST)

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

deep things (ULT)
secret practices (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

²⁴ But I have something good to say about the rest of you believers in the city of Thyatira. It is good that you do not accept these wrong things. It is good that you reject what those teachers call their “secret practices” that Satan taught them. I will not burden you with any other commands.

Revelation 2:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ However, hold on tightly to what you have until I come.

UST

²⁵ Just keep believing firmly in me and obey me until I come.

Revelation 2:26

the one who conquers (ULT) who conquer Satan (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

²⁶ As for those who conquer Satan and who keep on doing what I command until they die, I will give them my authority over all people.

Revelation 2:27

He will rule ... break them into pieces

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

he will shepherd them with a rod of iron (ULT) They will control...them as if they were striking them with an iron rod (UST)

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

as jars of clay are broken into pieces (ULT) They will destroy evildoers just as people shatter clay pots (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

27 They will control them as if they were striking them with an iron rod. They will destroy evildoers just as people shatter clay pots.

Revelation 2:28

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

I do all of this with the authority my Father gave me (UST)

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

my Father (ULT)

my Father (UST)

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

and I will give him (ULT)

and I will give...to those who rule with me so that we may have great joy in our victory (UST)

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

the morning star (ULT)

the morning star (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

²⁸ I do all of this with the authority my Father gave me, and I will give the morning star to those who rule with me so that we may have great joy in our victory.

Revelation 2:29

**Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)
Everyone who wants to understand must
listen carefully to (UST)**

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

**Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT)
Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully to (UST)**

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

ULT

²⁹ Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches.””

UST

²⁹ Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully to the message that God’s Spirit is saying to the groups of believers assembled together.”

Revelation 3

Revelation 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Outline of Chapters Two and Three of Revelation

I. The Current Condition of the Churches (2:1-3:22)

A. The Letter to Ephesus (2:1-7)

B. The Letter to Smyrna (2:8-11)

C. The Letter to Pergamum (2:12-17)

D. The Letter to Thyatira (2:18-29)

E. The Letter to Sardis (3:1-6)

F. The Letter to Philadelphia (3:7-13)

G. The Letter to Laodicea (3:14-22)

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

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verse 7.

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven spirits of God

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

Seven stars

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

Important metaphors in this chapter

Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking

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

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

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

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“The angel of the church”

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

“The words of the one who”

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

Revelation 3:1

General Information:

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

to the angel (ULT)

to the...angel (UST)

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

Sardis (ULT)

the city of Sardis (UST)

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

The one who holds the seven spirits (ULT)

I am the one who has the seven spirits (UST)

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

the seven stars (ULT)

the seven stars (UST)

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

you are alive, but you are dead (ULT)

alive, but you are dead (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹ "Write this message to the angel of the group of believers assembled in the city of Sardis. 'I am saying these things to you. I am the one who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know everything that you have done. You appear to be alive, but you are dead."

Revelation 3:2

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

Be alert! Become aware of your spiritual need as though you were awaking from sleep, and strengthen yourself spiritually, because you are so useless...you are like someone who is about to die (UST)

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

Wake up (ULT)

Be alert! Become aware of your spiritual need as though you were awaking (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

² Be alert! Become aware of your spiritual need as though you were awaking from sleep, and strengthen yourself spiritually, because you are so useless that you are like someone who is about to die. You must do this because I know that my God considers that nothing that you do is satisfactory.

Revelation 3:3

what you have received and heard (ULT) God's message and the truth that you accepted when you heard it (UST)

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

if...you do not wake up (ULT) If you do not do this...I will come to you when you are not expecting me (UST)

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

I will come as a thief (ULT) as a thief comes (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

³ So then, keep remembering God's message and the truth that you accepted when you heard it. Always obey it and turn away from your sinful behavior. If you do not do this, I will come to you when you are not expecting me, as a thief comes. You will never know at what time I will come to judge you.

Revelation 3:4

a few names (ULT)

a few believers there (UST)

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

have not stained their clothes (ULT)

have not been doing what is wrong. It is as though they have not dirtied their garments. As a result, because they are worthy to live... they (UST)

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

they will walk with me (ULT)

with me...will live (UST)

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

in white (ULT)

will be...dressed in pure white clothing (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁴ Nevertheless, you have a few believers there in the city of Sardis who have not been doing what is wrong. It is as though they have not dirtied their garments. As a result, because they are worthy to live with me, they will live with me and will be pure in every way, like people who are dressed in pure white clothing.

Revelation 3:5

The one who conquers (ULT) Those who conquer Satan (UST)

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

will be clothed in this manner in white garments (ULT) I will dress in these same white garments (UST)

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

I will confess his name (ULT) will acknowledge...that they belong to me (UST)

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

before my Father (ULT) in the...my Father (UST)

Alternate translation: “in the presence of my Father”

my Father (ULT) the...my Father (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁵ Those who conquer Satan I will dress in these same white garments. I will never erase their names from the Book of Life that contains the names of the people who have eternal life. Instead, I will acknowledge in the presence of my Father and his angels that they belong to me.

Revelation 3:6

Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT) Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully (UST)

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

Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT) Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully (UST)

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

ULT

⁶ Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches.””

UST

⁶ Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully to the message that God’s Spirit is saying to the groups of believers assembled together.”

Revelation 3:7

General Information:

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

to the angel (ULT)

to the...angel (UST)

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

Philadelphia (ULT)

the city of Philadelphia (UST)

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

the key of David (ULT)

Just as King David...to enter the ancient city of Jerusalem, so I have the authority to allow people (UST)

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

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

to the...I am the One who is...opens doors...no one can close them (UST)

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

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

to the...no one...closes doors...can open them (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁷ "Write this message to the angel of the group of believers assembled in the city of Philadelphia: 'I am saying these things to you. I am the One who is holy, the True One. Just as King David had authority to allow people to enter the ancient city of Jerusalem, so I have the authority to allow people to enter my kingdom. I am the one who opens doors so that no one can close them and the one who closes doors so that no one can open them.

Revelation 3:8

your...I have put before...an open door (ULT)
you...I have opened a door for you (UST)

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

you have kept my word (ULT)
you have obeyed what I say (UST)

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

my name (ULT)
that you believe in me (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁸ I know everything you have done. Be aware that I have opened a door for you that no one can close. I know that although you have little power, you have obeyed what I say, and you have not denied that you believe in me.

Revelation 3:9

synagogue of Satan (ULT) meet together with those who follow Satan (UST)

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

bow down (ULT) to bow down humbly (UST)

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

before your feet (ULT) at your feet (UST)

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

they might realize (ULT) to acknowledge (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁹ Be careful! I am aware that some of your people meet together with those who follow Satan. They claim to be Jews, but I know that they are not true Jews. They are lying. I will cause them to come to you and to bow down humbly at your feet and to acknowledge that I love you.

Revelation 3:10

**of...steadfastness, I will also keep you from...
hour of testing (ULT)
to endure suffering patiently, I will keep you
safe from...those who will try to make you
disobey me (UST)**

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

**hour of testing (ULT)
those who will try to make you disobey me
(UST)**

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

**that is about to come (ULT)
those who will try to make you disobey me...They will soon (UST)**

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁰ Because you have obeyed me when I commanded you to endure suffering patiently, I will keep you safe from those who will try to make you disobey me. They will soon do this to everyone in the entire world.

Revelation 3:11

I am coming quickly (ULT)

I am coming soon (UST)

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

Hold fast to what you have (ULT)

So continue to do what I have told you (UST)

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

crown (ULT)

your reward that God has reserved (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹¹ I am coming soon. So continue to do what I have told you, in order that no one may cause you to lose your reward that God has reserved for you.

Revelation 3:12

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

I will make those who conquer Satan secure. They will be firm like the pillars in the temple of my God (UST)

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

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

I will make...secure. They will be firm like the pillars in the temple of my God (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹² I will make those who conquer Satan secure. They will be firm like the pillars in the temple of my God, and they will remain there forever. I will mark them with the name of my God, showing that they belong to him. I will also mark them with the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, the city that will descend out of heaven from my God. I will also mark them with my new name, showing that they belong to me.

Revelation 3:13

Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT) Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully (UST)

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

Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT) Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully (UST)

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

ULT

¹³ Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches.””

UST

¹³ Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully to the message that God’s Spirit is saying to the groups of believers assembled together.”

Revelation 3:14

General Information:

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

to the angel (ULT)

to the...angel (UST)

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

Laodicea (ULT)

city of Laodicea (UST)

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

The Amen (ULT)

I am saying these things to you. I am the one who guarantees all of God's promises (UST)

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

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

of...the...I am the ruler over...all...of God's...creation (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

14 "Write this message to the angel of the group of believers assembled in the city of Laodicea: 'I am saying these things to you. I am the one who guarantees all of God's promises. I am the one who testifies about God reliably and accurately. I am the ruler over all of God's creation.

Revelation 3:15

**you are neither cold nor hot (ULT)
you do not love me much. You are like water
that is neither cold nor hot (UST)**

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁵ I know everything that you have done: You do not deny that you trust in me, but you do not love me much. You are like water that is neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot!

Revelation 3:16

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

**I am about to reject you, as if I were spitting...
water out of my mouth (UST)**

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁶ Because you are neither enthusiastic about me nor concerned about your lack of spiritual growth, I am about to reject you, as if I were spitting lukewarm water out of my mouth.

Revelation 3:17

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

you are lacking in many ways. You are like people who are very wretched and pitiful, poor, blind, and naked (UST)

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

ULT

¹⁷ For you say, 'I am rich and have become wealthy and have need of nothing,' and yet you do not know that you are miserable and pitiable and poor and blind and naked.

UST

¹⁷ You are saying, 'I am rich and have acquired a lot of wealth. I lack nothing!' But you do not realize that you are lacking in many ways. You are like people who are very wretched and pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.

Revelation 3:18

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

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

ULT

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

UST

18 I advise you to obtain from me all that you need, as though you were buying from me pure gold so that you may be truly rich. Let me make you righteous, as though you were buying from me white garments so that you might wear clothes instead of being naked and ashamed. Let me help you to understand the truth, as though you were buying from me eye salve to put on sick eyes.

Revelation 3:19

**be earnest...and...repent (ULT)
with all your heart...and...turn away...from
your sinful behavior (UST)**

Alternate translation: "be serious and repent"

ULT

¹⁹ I rebuke and discipline as many as I love. Therefore, be earnest and repent.

UST

¹⁹ Since I rebuke and correct all those whom I love, turn away with all your heart from your sinful behavior.

Revelation 3:20

I stand at the door and knock (ULT)
I am calling each one, and I am standing and waiting at your door and knocking on the door (UST)

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

knock (ULT)
knocking on the door (UST)

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

might hear my voice (ULT)
hear my voice (UST)

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

I will indeed enter into him (ULT)
I will come in (UST)

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

and will eat with him (ULT)
and we will eat...as friends (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

²⁰ I am here! I am calling each one, and I am standing and waiting at your door and knocking on the door. If you hear my voice and you open the door, I will come in and we will eat together as friends.

Revelation 3:21

Connecting Statement:

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

The one who conquers (ULT) who conquers Satan (UST)

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

to sit down with me on my throne (ULT) to sit and rule with me on my throne (UST)

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

my Father (ULT) my Father (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

²¹ I will permit everyone who conquers Satan to sit and rule with me on my throne, just as I conquered Satan and now sit and rule with my Father on his throne.

Revelation 3:22

Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT) Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully (UST)

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

Let the one who has an ear hear (ULT) Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully (UST)

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

ULT

²² Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches.””

UST

²² Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully to the message that God’s Spirit is saying to the groups of believers assembled together.”

Revelation 4

Revelation 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Jasper, carnelian, and emerald

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

Twenty-four elders

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

Seven spirits of God

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

Giving glory to God

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

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Difficult images

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

Revelation 4:1

General Information:

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

After these things (ULT)

After these things (UST)

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

an open door in heaven (ULT)

that there was a door open in heaven (UST)

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

speaking to me like a trumpet (ULT)

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

a trumpet (ULT)

a loud trumpet (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹ After these things I, John, saw in the vision that there was a door open in heaven. The one whose voice was like a loud trumpet, the one who had spoken to me previously, said to me, "Come up here! I will show you events that must happen later."

Revelation 4:2

I was in the Spirit (ULT) God's Spirit began revealing things to me (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

² Immediately God's Spirit began revealing things to me. He showed me a throne in heaven, and on the throne a ruler was sitting.

Revelation 4:3

a jasper stone and carnelian (ULT) **a crystalline jasper jewel and like a red** **carnelian jewel (UST)**

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

an emerald (ULT) **a brilliant green emerald jewel (UST)**

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

ULT

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

UST

³ The ruler on the throne shone like a crystalline jasper jewel and like a red carnelian jewel. Around the throne was a rainbow that shone like a brilliant green emerald jewel.

Revelation 4:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

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

UST

⁴ Around the throne there were twenty-four other thrones. On these thrones twenty-four elders were sitting. They were wearing pure white garments and had golden crowns on their heads.

Revelation 4:5

flashes of lightning (ULT)

flashes of light (UST)

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

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

Out of...loud voices...thunder (UST)

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

the seven spirits of God (ULT)

the seven spirits of God (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁵ Out of the throne came flashes of light and loud voices and thunder. In front of the throne were seven burning torches. These are the seven spirits of God.

Revelation 4:6

a glass sea (ULT)

a sea made of glass (UST)

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

like crystal (ULT)

It was clear, like crystal (UST)

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

In the middle of the throne and around the throne

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

were} four living creatures (ULT)

four...there was a living creature (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁶ In front of the throne there was also what looked like a sea made of glass. It was clear, like crystal. On each of the four sides of the throne there was a living creature. Each one was covered with eyes in front and behind.

Revelation 4:7

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

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

living creature (ULT)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁷⁻⁸ The first living creature was like a lion. The second living creature was like an ox. The third living creature had a face like a man's face. The fourth living creature was like an eagle that was flying. Each of the four living creatures had six wings. These wings were covered with eyes both top and bottom. Day and night they constantly say: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, who rules over all. He is the one who has always existed, who exists now, and who will always exist.”

Revelation 4:8

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

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

who is coming (ULT)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁷⁻⁸ The first living creature was like a lion. The second living creature was like an ox. The third living creature had a face like a man's face. The fourth living creature was like an eagle that was flying. Each of the four living creatures had six wings. These wings were covered with eyes both top and bottom. Day and night they constantly say: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, who rules over all. He is the one who has always existed, who exists now, and who will always exist."

Revelation 4:9

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

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

forever {and} ever (ULT)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁹⁻¹⁰ The living creatures praise, honor, and thank the one who sits on the throne, the one who lives forever. Whenever they do that, the twenty-four elders lie down on the ground before the one who sits on the throne. They worship him, the one who lives forever and ever. They lay their crowns in front of the throne and say:

Revelation 4:10

will fall down (ULT)

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

they will lay their crowns before the throne (ULT)

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

they will lay (ULT)

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

ULT

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

UST

9-10 The living creatures praise, honor, and thank the one who sits on the throne, the one who lives forever. Whenever they do that, the twenty-four elders lie down on the ground before the one who sits on the throne. They worship him, the one who lives forever and ever. They lay their crowns in front of the throne and say:

Revelation 4:11

our Lord and our God

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

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

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

ULT

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

UST

11 "Our Lord and God, You deserve for all beings to praise you because you are glorious, honorable, and all-powerful. You alone created everything, And because you intended that they should exist, you created them; as a result, they exist."

Revelation 5

Revelation 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Sealed scroll

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

Twenty-four elders

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

Christian prayers

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

Seven spirits of God

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

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

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

Revelation 5:1

Connecting Statement:

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

And I saw (ULT)

I saw that there was a scroll (UST)

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

the one who was seated on the throne

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

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

I saw that there was a scroll...The scroll was written on its outside...on its inside (UST)

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

having been sealed with seven seals (ULT)

It was sealed with seven seals (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹ I saw that there was a scroll in the right hand of the one who was sitting on the throne. The scroll was written on its outside as well as on its inside. It was sealed with seven seals.

Revelation 5:2

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

The person who is worthy to break the seals of the scroll and then to open it should come and do it (UST)

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

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

The person who is worthy to break the seals of the scroll and then to open it should come and do it (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

² I saw a strong angel who was announcing in a loud voice, "The person who is worthy to break the seals of the scroll and then to open it should come and do it!"

Revelation 5:3

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

**no created being in heaven...on the earth, or
under it...was able (UST)**

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

ULT

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

UST

³ But no created being in heaven, on the earth, or under it was able to open the scroll and see what was written on it.

Revelation 5:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

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

UST

⁴ I wept loudly because there was no one worthy to do that.

Revelation 5:5

Behold (ULT)

Look (UST)

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

The Lion of the tribe of Judah

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

the Lion (ULT)

the...who is called...Lion (UST)

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

the Root of David (ULT)

who is the descendant and heir of King David (UST)

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

the Root of David (ULT)

who is the descendant and heir of King David (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁵ But one of the elders said to me, "Do not cry any longer! Look, the one who is called the Lion from the tribe of Judah, who is the descendant and heir of King David, has overcome Satan! As a result, he is worthy to break the seven seals on the scroll and to open it!"

Revelation 5:6

General Information:

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

a Lamb (ULT)

a Lamb (UST)

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

the seven spirits of God (ULT)

the seven spirits of God that God (UST)

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

sent out into all the earth (ULT)

sends out over all the earth (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can translate it with an active verb. Alternate translation: "which God sent out over all the earth" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

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

UST

⁶ Then I saw a Lamb standing there in the midst of the four living creatures and the elders around the throne. Although he was alive, he had marks that showed that someone had killed him. He had seven horns, and he had seven eyes that are the seven spirits of God that God sends out over all the earth.

Revelation 5:7

he came (ULT)

The Lamb came (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁷ The Lamb came and took the scroll
from the right hand of the one sitting
on the throne.

Revelation 5:8

the Lamb (ULT)

him (UST)

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

fell down (ULT)

prostrated themselves (UST)

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

each one (ULT)

They each (UST)

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

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

golden bowls full of incense that represents the prayers of God’s people (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁸ When he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders prostrated themselves before him. They each had a harp, and they had golden bowls full of incense that represents the prayers of God’s people.

Revelation 5:9

because you were slaughtered (ULT) because you were killed (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “for they slaughtered you” or “for people killed you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

you were slaughtered (ULT) you were killed (UST)

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

with your blood (ULT) with your blood when you died (UST)

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

you purchased people for God (ULT) redeemed people for God (UST)

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

from every tribe, language, people, and nation

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

ULT

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

UST

⁹ The living creatures and the elders sang a new song. They sang: “You are worthy to receive the scroll and to open its seals because you were killed, and because you redeemed people for God from every tribe, language, people, and people group with your blood when you died.

Revelation 5:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

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

UST

10 You have caused them to become a people over whom our God rules and to become priests who serve him; they will rule on the earth.”

Revelation 5:11

myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands (ULT)
millions...a crowd...them (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹¹ As I continued to look, I heard the voices of many angels around the throne and around the living creatures and the elders. There were millions of them, a crowd so large that no one could count them.

Revelation 5:12

Worthy is the Lamb who has been slaughtered

Alternate translation: “wdwdThe Lamb who has been slaughtered is worthy”

to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise (ULT) should praise his power, wealth, wisdom, and strength. It is right that all created things should honor him and praise him (UST)

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

to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise (ULT) should praise his power, wealth, wisdom, and strength. It is right that all created things should honor him and praise him (UST)

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

ULT

¹² saying in a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who has been slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise.”

UST

¹² They were singing in a loud voice: “The Lamb whom they killed— it is right that we should praise his power, wealth, wisdom, and strength. It is right that all created things should honor him and praise him!”

Revelation 5:13

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

in...heaven and on the earth and under the earth (UST)

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

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

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

ULT

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

UST

¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea say, "We must forever praise, honor, and glorify the one who sits on the throne and the lamb. May they reign with complete power forever!"

Revelation 5:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped. ^[1]

UST

14 The four living creatures said, "May it be so!" Then the elders prostrated themselves on the ground and worshiped God and the lamb.

Revelation 6

Revelation 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven Seals

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

The Four Horsemen

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

Important figures of speech in this chapter

The Lamb

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

Similes

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

Revelation 6:1

Connecting Statement:

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

Come (ULT)

Come (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹ I saw the Lamb open the first of the seven seals of the scroll. Then one of the four living creatures said in a voice as loud as thunder, "Come!"

Revelation 6:2

to him was given a crown (ULT)
God gave him a wreath of leaves to wear on his head to show that he was (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “he received a crown” or “God gave him a crown” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

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

UST

² and a white horse appeared. There was someone riding it, and he had a bow and arrows. God gave him a wreath of leaves to wear on his head to show that he was to conquer evil. He went out to continue to do battle and to win.

Revelation 6:3

the second seal (ULT)

the...the second seal (UST)

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

the second living creature (ULT)

the second living creature (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

³ Then the one looking like a Lamb opened the second seal, and I heard the second living creature say, “Come!”

Revelation 6:4

came out...fiery red (ULT)

appeared...red (UST)

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

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

There was...someone riding it...God had given him...power (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God gave permission to its rider” or “its rider received permission” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to him was given a huge sword (ULT)

but instead...he carried a large sword (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “this rider received a huge sword” or “God gave this rider a huge sword” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

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

UST

⁴ When he said that, a red horse appeared. There was also someone riding it, and God had given him the power to cause people to no longer live peacefully, but instead to kill each other. For this purpose he carried a large sword.

Revelation 6:5

the third seal (ULT) the...the third seal (UST)

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

the third living creature (ULT) the third living creature (UST)

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

a pair of scales (ULT) a pair of balance scales (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁵ Then the Lamb opened the third seal, and I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” This time, I saw a black horse appear. There was someone riding it, and he had a pair of balance scales in his hand.

Revelation 6:6

**A choenix of wheat for one denarius (ULT)
one liter of wheat will cost so much that a
man must work a whole day to earn enough
money to (UST)**

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

**A choenix of wheat...three choenices of barley
(ULT)
one liter of wheat...three liters of barley (UST)**

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

**for one denarius (ULT)
will cost so much that a man must work a whole day to earn enough money
to (UST)**

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

But do not harm the oil and the wine

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

**the oil and the wine (ULT)
the...the...olive oil or wine (UST)**

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

ULT

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

UST

⁶ Then I heard a voice that sounded like it was coming from among the four living creatures. It said to the person on the horse, “Make it happen that one liter of wheat will cost so much that a man must work a whole day to earn enough money to buy it. Also make it happen that three liters of barley will sell for the same price. But do not reduce the supply of olive oil or wine.”

Revelation 6:7

the fourth seal (ULT)

the...the fourth seal (UST)

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

of the fourth living creature (ULT)

the fourth living creature (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁷ Then the Lamb opened the fourth seal, and I heard the fourth living creature say, “Come!”

Revelation 6:8

a pale horse (ULT)

a pale horse (UST)

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

one-fourth of the earth (ULT)

one-fourth of all people...earth (UST)

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

one-fourth of the earth (ULT)

one-fourth of all people...earth (UST)

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

the sword (ULT)

weapons (UST)

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

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

earth...with wild animals (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁸ This time I saw a pale horse appear. Someone was riding it; his name was “The one who causes people to die.” Someone else was following him; this person’s name was “The place where dead people go.” God gave these two persons power to kill one-fourth of all people on earth. They could kill them with weapons, or with famine, or with sickness, or with wild animals.

Revelation 6:9

the fifth seal (ULT)

the fifth seal (UST)

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

under the altar (ULT)

under the altar in heaven (UST)

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

of those who had been killed (ULT)

whom others had killed (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom others had killed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

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

and...because these servants had believed God’s message, the message to which God himself bore witness (UST)

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

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

and...because these servants had believed God’s message, the message to which God himself bore witness (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁹ Then the Lamb opened the fifth seal, and I saw under the altar in heaven the spirits of God’s servants whom others had killed because these servants had believed God’s message, the message to which God himself bore witness.

Revelation 6:10

avenge our blood (ULT) punish...who murdered us (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁰ They loudly asked God, "Sovereign Lord, you are holy and true. How long will it be before you condemn and punish the people on earth who murdered us?"

Revelation 6:11

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

They had to wait until the complete number of the Lord's other servants and followers would be killed (UST)

This implies that God had decided that a certain number of people should **be killed** by their enemies. If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "until people had killed the full number of their fellow servants and brothers that they were going to kill" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

their fellow servants and their brothers

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

**brothers (ULT)
and followers (UST)**

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

ULT

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

UST

¹¹ Then God gave to each of them a white robe, and he told them to be patient a little longer. They had to wait until the complete number of the Lord's other servants and followers would be killed.

Revelation 6:12

the sixth seal (ULT)

the...the sixth seal (UST)

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

black as sackcloth (ULT)

as black as cloth made of black (UST)

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

as blood (ULT)

red like blood (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹² Then I saw the Lamb open the sixth seal, and the earth shook violently. The sun became as black as cloth made of black wool. The whole moon became red like blood.

Revelation 6:13

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

just as immature figs fall when a fig tree shakes in a strong wind (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "just as a stormy wind shakes a fig tree and causes it to drop its unripe fruit" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

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

UST

¹³ Stars fell to the earth in great numbers, just as immature figs fall when a fig tree shakes in a strong wind.

Revelation 6:14

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

The...sky split open and rolled up on either side just as an old scroll rolls up when it is split in two (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

14 The sky split open and rolled up on either side just as an old scroll rolls up when it is split in two. Every mountain and island was shaken out of its place.

Revelation 6:15

the...generals (ULT)

including kings...generals (UST)

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

the caves (ULT)

caves (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁵ As a result, all the people on earth, including kings, high-ranking people, generals, rich people, powerful people, along with everybody else, both slave and free, hid in caves and between the mountain rocks.

Revelation 6:16

the face of the one (ULT)

the...will not be able to see us (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁶ They shouted to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us so that the one who sits on the throne will not be able to see us, and so that the Lamb will not be able to punish us!

Revelation 6:17

the great day of their wrath has come (ULT)
This is...the terrible day on which they will
punish us (UST)

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

has come (ULT)
This is (UST)

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

of...their...wrath (ULT)
on which they will punish us (UST)

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

who is able to stand (ULT)
No one...will be able to survive (UST)

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

who is able to stand (ULT)
No one...will be able to survive (UST)

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

ULT

¹⁷ because the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

UST

¹⁷ This is the terrible day on which they will punish us. No one will be able to survive!"

Revelation 7

Revelation 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

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

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

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verses 5-8 and 15-17.

Special concepts in this chapter

Worship

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

Important figures of speech in this chapter

The Lamb

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

Revelation 7:1

General Information:

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

four...the...corners of the earth (ULT)
four...the earth...One was standing at...the...north, one at the east, one at the south, and one at...west (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹ After this I saw four angels standing on the earth. One was standing at the north, one at the east, one at the south, and one at the west. They were keeping back the winds from blowing and destroying things on the earth, on the ocean, or even on any tree.

Revelation 7:2

the seal (ULT)

God's seal (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

² Then I saw another angel come up from the east. He was carrying God's seal. With this seal God, who is all-powerful, marks his own people to protect them. This angel called out with a loud voice to the four angels whom God had told to harm the earth and the ocean.

Revelation 7:3

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

we have marked the servants of our God on their foreheads (UST)

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

foreheads (ULT)

foreheads (UST)

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

ULT

³ saying, “Do not harm the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees until we might seal the servants of our God on their foreheads.”

UST

³ He said to them, “Do not harm the earth or the ocean or the trees until we have marked the servants of our God on their foreheads.”

Revelation 7:4

of those who had been sealed (ULT)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom God’s angel marked” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

144,000 (ULT)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁴ Then the angel and his fellow angels marked all God’s servants. I heard the number of people whom they marked. The number was 144,000. They were people from every tribe of Israel. They symbolized the complete number of people whom God would protect.

Revelation 7:5

12,000 (ULT)

twelve thousand people (UST)

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

ULT

⁵ 12,000 were sealed from the tribe of Judah, 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 from the tribe of Gad,

UST

⁵ The angels marked twelve thousand people from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand from the tribe of Reuben, twelve thousand from the tribe of Gad,

Revelation 7:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ 12,000 from the tribe of Asher, 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,

UST

⁶ twelve thousand from the tribe of Asher, twelve thousand from the tribe of Naphtali, and twelve thousand from the tribe of Manasseh.

Revelation 7:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon,
12,000 from the tribe of Levi, 12,000
from the tribe of Issachar,

UST

⁷ In addition, there were twelve
thousand from the tribe of Simeon,
twelve thousand from the tribe of Levi,
twelve thousand from the tribe of
Issachar,

Revelation 7:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

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

UST

⁸ twelve thousand from the tribe of Zebulun, twelve thousand from the tribe of Joseph, and twelve thousand from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed.

Revelation 7:9

General Information:

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

a huge multitude (ULT)

a huge crowd (UST)

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

white robes (ULT)

white robes (UST)

Here the color **white** represents purity.

ULT

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

UST

⁹ After these things happened, I saw a huge crowd. There were so many people that no one could count them. They were from every nation, every tribe, every people group, and every language. They were standing before the throne and before the lamb. They were wearing white robes and held palm branches to wave with their hands in order to celebrate.

Revelation 7:10

**Salvation {belongs} to our God (ULT)
Our God...have rescued us from Satan's power
(UST)**

Alternate translation: "Salvation comes from our God"

**Salvation {belongs} to our God, to the one
who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb
(ULT)
Our God, the one who sits on the throne, and
the Lamb have rescued us from Satan's power
(UST)**

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁰ They shouted loudly, "Our God, the one who sits on the throne, and the Lamb have rescued us from Satan's power!"

Revelation 7:11

the...four living creatures (ULT)

the...four living creatures (UST)

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

they fell...on their faces (ULT)

lay...with their faces to the ground (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

11 All the angels were standing around the throne, around the elders, and around the four living creatures. They all lay before the throne with their faces to the ground and worshiped God.

Revelation 7:12

Praise, glory ... be to our God

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

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

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

forever {and} ever (ULT)

forever (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹² They said, "Yes, it is so! We praise, thank, and honor you, our God, forever! We acknowledge that you are completely wise, the powerful one, who is able to do all things. Our God forever! It is so!"

Revelation 7:13

clothed with white robes

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

ULT

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

UST

¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, "These people who are wearing white robes, do you know who they are and from where they come?"

Revelation 7:14

have come out of the great tribulation

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

the great tribulation

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

they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (ULT)
The Lamb died for them...God has forgiven them for their sins. It is as if they have washed their robes in his blood and made them clean (UST)

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

the blood of the Lamb (ULT)
The Lamb died for them...his blood (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

14 I answered him, “Sir, I do not know. Surely you know who they are!” He said to me, “These are the people have come through the great tribulation. The Lamb died for them, and God has forgiven them for their sins. It is as if they have washed their robes in his blood and made them clean.

Revelation 7:15

they are...them (ULT)

they are...them (UST)

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

day and night (ULT)

day and night (UST)

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

will spread his tent over them (ULT)

will protect them (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁵ Because of this, they are in front of God's throne, and they worship him day and night in his temple. God, the one who sits on the throne, will protect them.

Revelation 7:16

They will not be hungry...them (ULT)
As a result, they will never...be hungry...They... will (UST)

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

and the sun will not beat down on them at all (ULT)
They...The sun...nor...will (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁶ As a result, they will never again be hungry. They will never again be thirsty. The sun will never again beat on them, nor will any heat scorch them.

Revelation 7:17

them...them (ULT)

them...them (UST)

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

the Lamb at the center of the throne

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

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

This is because the Lamb...will take care of them...as a shepherd takes care of his sheep (UST)

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

will guide them to springs of living water (ULT)

He will guide them to the source of eternal life, just as a shepherd leads his sheep to springs of water (UST)

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

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

God will cause them to no longer be sad...It will be as if he were wiping away...all tears from their eyes (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹⁷ This is because the Lamb who is at the throne will take care of them, just as a shepherd takes care of his sheep. He will guide them to the source of eternal life, just as a shepherd leads his sheep to springs of water. God will cause them to no longer be sad. It will be as if he were wiping away all tears from their eyes."

Revelation 8

Revelation 8 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven seals and seven trumpets

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

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Passive voice

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

Similes

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

Revelation 8:1

Connecting Statement:

The Lamb opens the seventh seal.

the seventh seal (ULT)

the seventh seal (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹ Then the Lamb opened the seventh seal, and there was no sound at all in heaven for a short time.

Revelation 8:2

seven trumpets were given to them (ULT)

He gave...each of them a trumpet (UST)

Each of the seven angels were given one trumpet. If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. This could mean: (1) God gave them seven trumpets. (2) the Lamb gave them seven trumpets. (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

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

UST

² I saw the seven angels who stand in front of God. He gave each of them a trumpet.

Revelation 8:3

he would offer it (ULT)

he might offer it (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

³ Another angel came and stood at the altar. He had a golden bowl for burning incense. God gave him a large quantity of incense in order that he might offer it, with the prayers of all God's people, on the gold altar that is in front of God's throne. Then he burned this incense on the altar.

Revelation 8:4

from the hand of the angel (ULT)

From the bowl in the angel's hand (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁴ From the bowl in the angel's hand, the smoke of the incense, along with the prayers of God's people, went up to God.

Revelation 8:5

filled it with the fire (ULT)

filled it with coals of fire (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

⁵ Then the angel took the golden bowl and filled it with coals of fire from the altar. He threw it all onto the earth. Thunder crashed and rumbled, lightning flashed, and the earth shook.

Revelation 8:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

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

UST

⁶ Then the seven angels, each of which had one of the seven trumpets, got ready to blow them.

Revelation 8:7

it was thrown onto the earth (ULT) poured down...onto the earth (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the angel threw the hail and fire mixed with blood down onto the earth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up (ULT) of everything on the surface of the land was burned up: one-third of the trees burned up, and one-third of all the green grass was burned up (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “it burned up a third of the earth, a third of the trees, and all the green grass” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

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

UST

⁷ The first angel blew his trumpet, and hail and fire mixed with blood poured down onto the earth. As a result, one-third of everything on the surface of the land was burned up: one-third of the trees burned up, and one-third of all the green grass was burned up.

Revelation 8:8

the second angel (ULT)

the second angel (UST)

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

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

something that was like a huge mountain burning with fire fell (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the angel threw something like a great mountain burning with fire” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

a third of the sea became blood (ULT)

one-third of the ocean became red like blood (UST)

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

became...blood (ULT)

became...red like blood (UST)

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

ULT

⁸ And the second angel sounded a trumpet, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood,

UST

⁸ Then the second angel blew his trumpet, and something that was like a huge mountain burning with fire fell into the ocean. As a result, one-third of the ocean became red like blood,

Revelation 8:9

the living creatures in the sea

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

ULT

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

UST

⁹ one-third of the living creatures in the ocean died, and one-third of the ships in the ocean were destroyed.

Revelation 8:10

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

a huge star, which was burning like a torch, fell from the sky (UST)

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

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

a torch (ULT)

a torch (UST)

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

ULT

¹⁰ And the third angel sounded a trumpet, and a huge star fell from the sky, blazing as a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.

UST

¹⁰ Then the third angel blew his trumpet, and a huge star, which was burning like a torch, fell from the sky into one-third of the rivers and into one-third of the springs of water.

Revelation 8:11

the name of the star is called Wormwood (ULT)

The...name of the star is Bitterness (UST)

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

became...wormwood (ULT)

became...bitter (UST)

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

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

the water...of the...died from drinking...because it had become bitter (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹¹ The name of the star is Bitterness. As a result, the water in one-third of the rivers and springs became bitter. Many people died from drinking the water because it had become bitter.

Revelation 8:12

a third of the sun was struck (ULT) God struck the sun, the...one-third of (UST)

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

a third of the sun was struck (ULT) God struck the sun, the...one-third of (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “a third of the sun changed” or “God changed a third of the sun” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

a third...of them turned dark (ULT) the...lost their light for...one-third...time. The sun did not shine (UST)

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

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

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

ULT

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

UST

¹² Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet, and God struck the sun, the moon, and the stars so that they lost their light for one-third of the time. The sun did not shine during one-third of the day, and the moon and stars did not shine during one-third of the night.

Revelation 8:13

**from the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound {their} trumpets (ULT)
when the three remaining angels blow their trumpets! They are about to blow them (UST)**

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

ULT

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

UST

¹³ As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying high in the sky shouting in a loud voice, “Terrible things will happen to the people who live on the earth when the three remaining angels blow their trumpets! They are about to blow them!”

Revelation 9

Revelation 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Woe

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Animal imagery

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

Bottomless pit

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

Abaddon and Apollyon

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

Repentance

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

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Simile

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

Revelation 9:1

Connecting Statement:

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

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

I saw a star that had fallen from the sky (UST)

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

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

the...the key...shaft that went down but had no ending (UST)

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

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

the...shaft that went down but had no ending (UST)

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

of the abyss (ULT)

but had no ending (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

¹ Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. God gave it the key to the shaft that went down but had no ending.

Revelation 9:2

as smoke of a huge furnace (ULT)

like smoke...a great burning furnace (UST)

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

were darkened (ULT)

prevented anyone from seeing (UST)

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

ULT

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

UST

² When he opened that shaft, smoke rose from it like smoke from a great burning furnace. The smoke prevented anyone from seeing the light of the sun and the sky.

Revelation 9:3

locusts (ULT)

Locusts (UST)

The **locusts** are insects that fly together in large groups. People fear them because they can eat up all the leaves in gardens and on trees. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

power was given to them as scorpions have

power (ULT)

God gave...them power to sting people as scorpions (UST)

These **scorpions** have the ability to sting and poison people. Alternate translation: "they have the ability to sting people as scorpions do" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

scorpions (ULT)

scorpions (UST)

A scorpion is a small insect with a poisonous stinger on its tail. Its sting is extremely painful and the pain lasts a long time. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

³ And out from the smoke locusts came on the earth, and power was given to them as scorpions have power on the earth.

UST

³ Locusts also came out of the smoke onto the earth. God gave them power to sting people as scorpions sting people.

Revelation 9:4

They were told not to damage the grass on the earth or any green plant or tree

Ordinary locusts were a terrible threat to people because when they swarm, they can eat up all the grass and all the leaves on plants and trees. These locusts were told not to do this.

but only the men (ULT) God said that they should harm only...people (UST)

The phrase “to damage” or “to harm” is understood. Alternate translation: “but only to harm the men” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

the seal of God (ULT) the mark on...to show that they belonged...God (UST)

Here, **seal** refers to a tool that is used to press a mark onto a wax seal. In this case the tool would be used to put a mark on God’s people. See how you translated “seal” in [Revelation 7:3](#). Alternate translation: “the marker of God” or “stamp of God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

foreheads (ULT) foreheads (UST)

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

ULT

⁴ And it was told to them that they should not damage the grass on the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only the men who did not have the seal of God on {their} foreheads.

UST

⁴ God told the locusts that they should not harm the grass of the earth or any plants or any tree. God said that they should harm only those people who did not have the mark on their foreheads to show that they belonged to God.

Revelation 9:5

it was given to them (ULT)
God did...allow...the locusts (UST)

Here, **them** refers to the locusts. ([Revelation 9:3](#))

them (ULT)
those people (UST)

Here, **them** refers to the people whom the locusts were stinging.

they will be tormented for five months (ULT)
the locusts kept torturing people for five months (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand this passive phrase **will be tormented**, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “the locusts will torment the people for five months” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

they will be tormented (ULT)
the locusts kept torturing people (UST)

Alternate translation: “will suffer terrible pain”

torment...of a scorpion (ULT)
pain...people felt was...a scorpion causes (UST)

A **scorpion** is a small insect with a poisonous stinger at the end of its long tail. The sting can cause severe pain or even death.

ULT

⁵ And it was given to them that they should not kill them, but that they will be tormented for five months, and their torment {will be} as the torment of a scorpion when it would strike a man.

UST

⁵ God did not allow the locusts to kill those people. Instead, the locusts kept torturing people for five months. The pain those people felt was like the pain that a scorpion causes when it stings someone.

Revelation 9:6

men will seek death but will certainly not find it (ULT)

people, the pain will be so bad that people will want to find a way to die, but they will not find any way (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **death**, you can express it with a verb. Alternate translation: “people will try to find a way to die, but will not find it” or “people will try to kill themselves, but will not find a way to die” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

death flees from them (ULT)
they will not be able to die (UST)

John speaks of **death** as if it were a person or animal that could run away. Alternate translation: “they will not be able to die” or “they will not die” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

⁶ And in those days, men will seek death but will certainly not find it, and they will greatly desire to die, but death flees from them.

UST

⁶ During the time when the locusts torture rebellious people, the pain will be so bad that people will want to find a way to die, but they will not find any way. They will long to die, but they will not be able to die.

Revelation 9:7

General Information:

These locusts did not look like ordinary locusts. John describes them by telling how parts of them looked like other things.

ULT

⁷ And the appearance of the locusts {was} like horses prepared for war. And on their heads {were something} like crowns like gold, and their faces {were} like faces of men.

UST

⁷ The locusts looked like horses that are ready for battle. They had on their heads what looked like golden crowns. Their faces were like the faces of people.

Revelation 9:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ And they had hair like hair of women, and their teeth were as of lions.

UST

⁸ They had long hair like women's long hair. Their teeth were as strong as lions' teeth.

Revelation 9:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ And they had breastplates like iron breastplates, and the sound of their wings {was} like the sound of chariots—of many horses running into battle.

UST

⁹ They wore breastplates made of metal. When they were flying, their wings made a noise like the roar of many horses pulling chariots as they are rushing into battle.

Revelation 9:10

they have tails (ULT)

They had...tails (UST)

Here, **they** refers to the locusts.

with stingers like scorpions (ULT)
like tails of scorpions. With these tails they
could sting people (UST)

A scorpion is a small insect with a poisonous stinger at the end of its long tail. The sting can cause severe pain or even death. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 9:6](#). Alternate translation:

“with stingers like scorpion stingers” or “with stingers that could cause terrible pain as scorpion stingers can” (See: [Simile](#))

in their tails they had power to harm people for five months

This could mean: (1) they had power for five months to harm people. (2) they could sting people and the people would be in pain for five months.

ULT

¹⁰ And they have tails with stingers like scorpions, and in their tails, their power to harm men for five months.

UST

¹⁰ They had tails like tails of scorpions. With these tails they could sting people. Their power to harm people during those five months was in their tails.

Revelation 9:11

of the abyss (ULT) of the shaft that went down but had no ending (UST)

The **abyss** is an extremely deep narrow hole. This could mean: (1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever. (2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in [Revelation 9:1](#).

is} Abaddon...Apollyon (ULT) is Abaddon...Apollyon (UST)

Both **Abaddon** and **Apollyon** mean "Destroyer." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹¹ They have {as} king over them the angel of the abyss. His name in Hebrew {is} Abaddon, and in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

UST

¹¹ The king who ruled over them was the angel of the shaft that went down but had no ending. His name in the Hebrew language is Abaddon. In the Greek language it is Apollyon. Both of these names mean "Destroyer."

Revelation 9:12

two woes are still coming (ULT)
two more terrible events are still to come (UST)

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

ULT

¹² The first woe has passed. Behold, two woes are still coming after these things.

UST

¹² That ended the first terrible event. But be aware that two more terrible events are still to come.

Revelation 9:13

Connecting Statement:

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

I heard a voice from (ULT)

I heard a voice from (UST)

The **voice** refers to the one who was speaking. John does not say who the speaker was, but it may have been God. Alternate translation: "I heard someone speaking" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

horns of the golden altar

These are horn-shaped extensions at each of the four corners of the top of the **altar**.

ULT

¹³ And the sixth angel sounded a trumpet, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar that {is} before God,

UST

¹³ Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four corners of the golden altar that is in God's presence.

Revelation 9:14

saying (ULT)

The voice was saying (UST)

This one who is speaking is the voice in verse 13. Alternate translation: “the voice said” or “the speaker said” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

the four angels who have been bound (ULT)

the four angels whom I have bound (UST)

The text does not say who has **bound** the **angels**, but it implies that God told someone to bind them. If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the four angels whom God has commanded them to bind” or “the four angels whom God has commanded someone to bind” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who has the trumpet, “Release the four angels who have been bound at the great Euphrates River.”

UST

¹⁴ The voice was saying to the sixth angel, the one who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels whom I have bound at the great river Euphrates.”

Revelation 9:15

the four angels who had been prepared for that hour and day and month and year were released (ULT)

Then...those four angels...went free...those who had waited for that exact hour of that day, month, and year (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the angel released the four angels who had been prepared for that hour and day and month and year” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

**the four angels who had been prepared (ULT)
those four angels...those who had waited (UST)**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the four angels whom God had prepared” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

**for that hour and day and month and year (ULT)
for that exact hour of that day, month, and year (UST)**

These words are used to show that there is a specific, chosen time and not just any time. Alternate translation: “for that exact time” (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁵ And the four angels who had been prepared for that hour and day and month and year were released so that they might kill a third of mankind.

UST

¹⁵ Then those four angels went free, those who had waited for that exact hour of that day, month, and year. They went free in order that they might enable their soldiers to kill one-third of the people.

Revelation 9:16

General Information:

Suddenly, a huge number of soldiers on horseback appear in John's vision. John is no longer speaking about the four angels mentioned in the previous verse.

was} two myriads of myriads (ULT) **two hundred million (UST)**

Some ways to express **two myriads** are: "two hundred million" or "two hundred thousand thousand" or "twenty thousand times ten thousand." If your language does not have a specific number for this, you could also see how you translated a similar large number in [Revelation 5:11](#). (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

16 And the number of the soldiers on horseback {was} two myriads of myriads; I heard their number.

UST

16 The number of those soldiers riding on horses was two hundred million. I heard someone say how many there were.

Revelation 9:17

that were} fiery red (ULT)

that were red like fire (UST)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 6:3](#). Alternate translation: “red like fire” or “bright red”

sulfurous yellow (ULT)

yellow like sulfur (UST)

Alternate translation: “yellow like sulfur” or “bright yellow like sulfur”

ULT

¹⁷ And this is how I saw the horses in {my} vision and those who rode on them—having breastplates {that were} fiery red and dark blue and sulfurous yellow. And the heads of the horses {were} as heads of lions, and from their mouths came fire and smoke and sulfur.

UST

¹⁷ In the vision I saw what the horses and the soldiers who rode them looked like. The soldiers wore breastplates that were red like fire, dusky blue like smoke, and yellow like sulfur. The heads of the horses were like the heads of lions. From their mouths came fire, smoke, and fumes of burning sulfur.

Revelation 9:18

A third of mankind (ULT) one-third of the people (UST)

See how you translated “A third” in [Revelation 8:7](#). Alternate translation: “One third of the people” (See: [Fractions](#))

ULT

¹⁸ A third of mankind were killed by these three plagues: by the fire and the smoke and the sulfur that came out from their mouths.

UST

¹⁸ Those three things—the fire, the smoke, and the burning sulfur from the horses’ mouths—killed one-third of the people.

Revelation 9:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁹ For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails—for their tails {are} like snakes having heads, and with them they injure people.

UST

¹⁹ The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails. Their tails had heads like snakes by which they harmed people.

Revelation 9:20

**those who were not killed by these plagues
(ULT)**

**those who were not killed by the plagues of
fire and smoke and burning sulfur...They (UST)**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom the plagues had not killed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

**that are neither able to see nor to hear nor to
walk (ULT)**

**them, even though they were idols that could
not see, hear, or walk (UST)**

This phrase reminds us that idols are not alive and do not deserve to be worshiped. But the people did not stop worshiping them. Alternate translation: “even though these idols cannot see, hear, or walk” (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

ULT

²⁰ And the rest of mankind, those who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so that they will not worship the demons and the idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, that are neither able to see nor to hear nor to walk.

UST

²⁰ But the rest of the people, those who were not killed by the plagues of fire and smoke and burning sulfur, did not turn from the sinful things they were doing. They did not stop worshiping demons or the idols that they themselves had made of gold, of silver, of bronze, of stone, and of wood. The people did not stop worshiping them, even though they were idols that could not see, hear, or walk.

Revelation 9:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ And they did not repent of their murders, nor of their sorcery nor of their sexual immorality nor of their thefts.

UST

²¹ They did not stop murdering people, or practicing sorcery, or acting in sexually immoral ways, or stealing things.

Revelation 10

Revelation 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven thunders

John here describes the seven thunders as making sounds that he could understand as words. However, translators should use their normal word for “thunder” when translating these verses. (See: [Personification](#) and [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

“The mystery of God”

This refers to some aspect of the hidden plan of God. It is not necessary to know what this mystery is to translate it. (See: [reveal](#), [revealed](#), [revelation](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Simile

John uses similes to help him describe the face, legs, and voice of the mighty angel. Translators should understand other objects in this chapter, such as the rainbow and the cloud, with their normal meanings. (See: [Simile](#))

Revelation 10:1

General Information:

John begins to describe a vision of a mighty angel holding a scroll. In John's vision he is viewing what is happening from earth. This takes place between the blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpets.

having been clothed in a cloud (ULT)

A cloud surrounded him (UST)

John speaks of the angel as if he were wearing **a cloud** as his clothing. This expression may be understood as metaphor. However, because very unusual things were often seen in visions, it might be understood as a literally true statement in its context. (See: [Metaphor](#))

his face like the sun (ULT)

His...face...shone like the sun (UST)

John compares the brightness of **his face** with the brightness of **the sun**. Alternate translation: "his face was bright like the sun" (See: [Simile](#))

his feet like pillars of fire (ULT)

His...legs...looked like columns of fire (UST)

Here, **feet** refers to the legs. Alternate translation: "his legs were like pillars of fire" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹ And I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, having been clothed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head and his face like the sun and his feet like pillars of fire,

UST

¹ In the vision I saw another mighty angel come down out of heaven. A cloud surrounded him. There was a rainbow over his head. His face shone like the sun. His legs looked like columns of fire.

Revelation 10:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² and having in his hand a little scroll, which had been opened. And he put his right foot on the sea and {his} left on the land,

UST

² He had in his hand a small scroll that was open. He set his right foot on the ocean and his left foot on the land.

Revelation 10:3

and he shouted (ULT)

He shouted something (UST)

Alternate translation: "then the angel shouted"

the seven thunders spoke out (ULT)

he shouted...it thundered seven times (UST)

The **seven thunders** are described as if they were people who could speak. Alternate translation: "the seven thunders made a loud noise" or "the thunder sounded very loudly seven times"

seven thunders (ULT)

it thundered...seven times (UST)

This may refer to thunder occurring **seven** times, yet being spoken of as if it were **seven** different **thunders**.

ULT

³ and he shouted in a loud voice like a roaring lion. And when he shouted, the seven thunders spoke out with {their} own voices.

UST

³ He shouted something with a loud voice, a voice like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, it thundered seven times; in the thunder were words that I could understand.

Revelation 10:4

but I heard a voice from heaven (ULT) write...a voice from heaven (UST)

Here, **voice** refers to words spoken by someone other than the angel. Alternate translation: “but I heard someone speaking from heaven” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁴ And when the seven thunders spoke out, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Seal up what the seven thunders said, and do not write it down.”

UST

⁴ I was about to write the words of the seven thunders, but a voice from heaven said to me, “Keep secret what the thunders said! Do not write it down!”

Revelation 10:5

raised his right hand to heaven (ULT)

raised his right hand toward heaven (UST)

He **raised his right hand to heaven** to show that he was swearing by God. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁵ And the angel that I saw standing on the sea and on the earth raised his right hand to heaven

UST

⁵ Then the angel whom I had seen standing on the ocean and the land raised his right hand toward heaven,

Revelation 10:6

swore by the one who lives forever {and} ever (ULT)

he asked the one who lives forever (UST)

Alternate translation: “and he asked that what he was going to say would be confirmed by the one who lives forever and ever”

by the one who lives forever {and} ever (ULT)
the one who lives forever (UST)

Here, **the one who lives forever and ever** refers to God.

There will no longer be a delay (ULT)
God would no longer delay in doing what he had planned to do (UST)

Alternate translation: “There will be no more waiting” or “God will not delay”

ULT

⁶ and swore by the one who lives forever {and} ever, who created heaven and the things in it and the earth and the things in it and the sea and the things in it, “There will no longer be a delay.

UST

⁶ and he asked the one who lives forever—the one who created heaven and everything that is in it, who created the earth and everything that is on it, and who created the ocean and everything that is in it—to say that what he was going to say was true. The angel said that God would no longer delay in doing what he had planned to do.

Revelation 10:7

the mystery of God will be accomplished (ULT) God's secret plan...would be finished (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God will accomplish his mystery" or "God will complete his secret plan" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound a trumpet, then the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he proclaimed the good news to {his} own servants the prophets."

UST

⁷ He said that when the time came for the seventh angel to blow his trumpet, God's secret plan would be finished, just as he had said long ago to his servants, the prophets.

Revelation 10:8

Connecting Statement:

John hears the voice from heaven, which he had heard in [Revelation 10:4](#), speak to him again.

the voice that I heard from heaven (ULT) **The...one whom I had heard speak from heaven (UST)**

Here, **voice** refers to the speaker. Alternate translation: “the one I heard speak from heaven” or “the one who had spoken to me from heaven” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

I heard (ULT) **had heard (UST)**

John heard.

ULT

⁸ And the voice that I heard from heaven is speaking to me again, and saying: “Go, take the scroll that has been opened in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.”

UST

⁸ The one whom I had heard speak from heaven spoke to me again. He said, “Go and take the open scroll from the hand of the angel who is standing on the ocean and on the land.”

Revelation 10:9

me...he says (ULT)

me...He said (UST)

Alternate translation: "the angel said to me"

it will make your stomach bitter (ULT)

In your...it will...stomach bitter (UST)

This refers to a bad taste from the **stomach** after eating something that is not good. Alternate translation: "it will make your stomach sour"

ULT

⁹ And I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little scroll. And he says to me, "Take and eat it, and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

UST

⁹ So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. In your mouth it will taste sweet like honey, but it will make your stomach bitter."

Revelation 10:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁰ And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it, and it was as sweet {as} honey in my mouth, but after I ate it, my stomach became bitter.

UST

¹⁰ I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. In my mouth it tasted sweet like honey, but then it made my stomach bitter.

Revelation 10:11

tongues (ULT) speakers of many languages (UST)

Here, **tongues** refers to the people who speak the languages.
Alternate translation: “many language communities” or “many groups of people who speak their own languages” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 And they said to me, “It is necessary for you to prophesy again about many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.”

UST

11 Then someone said to me, “You must speak God’s messages again about many nations, people groups, speakers of many languages, and many kings.”

Revelation 11

Revelation 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verses 15 and 17-18.

Woe

John describes several “woes” in the book of Revelation. This chapter describes a second and third “woe” announced at the end of Chapter 8.

Special concepts in this chapter

Gentiles

The word “Gentiles” here refers to ungodly people groups and not Gentile Christians. (See: [godly](#), [godliness](#), [ungodly](#), [godless](#), [ungodliness](#), [godlessness](#))

Two witnesses

Scholars have suggested many different ideas about these two witnesses. Translators do not need to understand this passage to accurately translate it. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Bottomless pit

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

Revelation 11:1

General Information:

John begins to describe a vision about receiving a measuring rod and two witnesses that God appointed. This vision also takes place between the blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpets.

a reed like a measuring rod was given to me

(ULT)

gave to me a reed similar to a measuring stick

(UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone gave me a reed like a measuring rod" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

was given to me...someone} said (ULT)

gave to me...said to me (UST)

Here, **me** refers to John.

those who worship in it (ULT)

and count the people who...are worshiping there (UST)

Alternate translation: "count those who worship in the temple"

ULT

¹ And a reed like a measuring rod was given to me, {someone} said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it."

UST

¹ Then an angel gave to me a reed similar to a measuring stick. God said to me, "Go to the temple, measure it and the altar in it, and count the people who are worshiping there."

Revelation 11:2

they will trample (ULT)

As a result, they will trample (UST)

To **trample** to treat something as worthless by walking on it.

ULT

² But leave out the courtyard that is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles, and they will trample the holy city for 42 months.

UST

² But do not measure the courtyard outside of the temple building because I have given it to the non-Jewish people groups. As a result, they will trample the city of Jerusalem for forty-two months.

Revelation 11:3

clothed in sackcloth (ULT)

You can make it explicit why they will wear **sackcloth**. Alternate translation: “wearing rough mourning clothes” or “wearing scratchy clothes to show that they are very sad” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³ And I will grant to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1, 260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”

UST

³ I will send two witnesses to announce what I reveal to them for 1, 260 days. They will show they are sad about the people’s sin by wearing rough clothes made from goat’s hair.”

Revelation 11:4

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth (ULT)

Those witnesses are the ones that are represented by the two olive trees and the two lampstands that are in the presence of the Lord, who rules the earth (UST)

The **two olive trees** and the **two lampstands** symbolize these people, but they are not literally the people. Alternate translation: “The two olive trees and the two lampstands that have stood before the Lord of the earth represent these witnesses” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

**the two olive trees and the two lampstands that (ULT)
the ones that are represented by the two olive trees and the two lampstands that are in the (UST)**

John expects his readers to know about the **two olive trees and the two lampstands** because many years earlier another prophet had written about them. Alternate translation: “the two olive trees and the two lampstands, told about in scripture, that” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

UST

⁴ Those witnesses are the ones that are represented by the two olive trees and the two lampstands that are in the presence of the Lord, who rules the earth.

Revelation 11:5

fire comes out of their mouth and devours their enemies

Because this is about future events, you can state this in the future tense. Alternate translation: “fire will come out of their mouth and devour their enemies”

fire...devours their enemies (ULT)

fire...and destroys them (UST)

Here, **fire** burning and killing people is spoken of as if it were an animal that could eat them up. Alternate translation: “fire ... will destroy their enemies” or “fire ... will completely burn up their enemies” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ And if anyone wishes to harm them, fire comes out from their mouth and devours their enemies, and if anyone might wish to harm them, he must be killed in this way.

UST

⁵ If anyone tries to harm those witnesses, fire comes from the witnesses' mouths and destroys them. If people want to harm them, the two witnesses certainly kill them in the same way.

Revelation 11:6

to close up the sky so that no rain might fall (ULT)

the sky in order to keep rain from falling (UST)

John speaks of **the sky** as if it had a door that someone can open to let **rain fall** or close to stop the rain. Alternate translation: “to keep rain from falling from the sky” (See: [Metaphor](#))

to turn (ULT)

to cause...will...have authority (UST)

Alternate translation: “to change”

to strike the earth with every plague (ULT)
send down to the earth all kinds of plagues (UST)

John speaks of the plagues as if they were a stick that someone could hit the earth with. Alternate translation: “to cause all kinds of trouble to occur on earth” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ They have authority to close up the sky so that no rain might fall {during} the days of their prophesy, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every plague whenever they would desire.

UST

⁶ Those witnesses will have authority over the sky in order to keep rain from falling during the time that they are announcing what God reveals to them. They also will have authority to cause water everywhere to become blood; they will also have authority to send down to the earth all kinds of plagues. They will do this as often as they wish.

Revelation 11:7

abyss (ULT)

shaft that went down but had no ending (UST)

The **abyss** is an extremely deep narrow hole. This could mean: (1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever. (2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in [Revelation 9:1](#).

ULT

⁷ And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the abyss will make war against them, and he will conquer them and kill them.

UST

⁷ When they have finished announcing to people the message from God, the beast that comes up from the shaft that went down but had no ending will attack them, overcome them, and kill them.

Revelation 11:8

their corpses (ULT)

The...dead bodies of the two witnesses (UST)

Here, **their corpses** refers to the bodies of the two witnesses.

in the street of the great city

The city had more than one **street**. This was a public place where people could see them. Alternate translation: “in one of the streets of the great city” or “in the main street of the great city”

their...Lord (ULT)

of the two witnesses...Lord (UST)

They served the **Lord**, and like him, would die in that city.

ULT

⁸ And their corpses {will be} in the street of the great city (which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt) where also their Lord was crucified.

UST

⁸ The dead bodies of the two witnesses will lie in the street of the great city where their Lord was crucified, the city that is symbolically called Sodom or Egypt because its people are very evil like the people who lived in Sodom and Egypt.

Revelation 11:9

for three and a half days (ULT)

for three and a half days (UST)

Alternate translation: "three full days and one half day" or "3.5 days" or "3-1/2 days" (See: [Numbers](#))

their...they do not permit...corpses to be placed in a tomb (ULT)

their...they will not allow anyone to bury... bodies (UST)

They will leave their bodies in the street as a sign of disrespect.

ULT

⁹ And for three and a half days {some} from {every} people and tribe and tongue and nation look at their corpses, and they do not permit their corpses to be placed in a tomb.

UST

⁹ Individuals of many people groups, tribes, language groups, and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days. But they will not allow anyone to bury their bodies.

Revelation 11:10

And...rejoice over them...celebrate (ULT)
When...see that the witnesses are dead, they
will rejoice...celebrate (UST)

Alternate translation: "will rejoice and celebrate that the two witnesses have died"

send gifts to one another (ULT)
They will send...gifts...to each other (UST)

Sending **gifts to one another** shows how happy the people were.
 (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

**those...on the earth...because these two...
 prophets...tormented those who live (ULT)**
**the...on the earth...because these...two...prophets had sent plagues that
 tormented them (UST)**

This is the reason that the people will be so happy that the witnesses have died.

ULT

¹⁰ And those who live on the earth rejoice over them and celebrate and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who live on the earth.

UST

¹⁰ When the people who live on the earth see that the witnesses are dead, they will rejoice and celebrate. They will send gifts to each other because these two prophets had sent plagues that tormented them.

Revelation 11:11

three and a half days (ULT)

three and a half days (UST)

Alternate translation: “three full days and one half day” or “3.5 days” or “3-1/2 days.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 11:9](#). (See: [Numbers](#))

a breath of life from God entered into them

(ULT)

God will cause them to breathe again...live

(UST)

The ability to breathe is spoken of as if it were something that can go into people. Alternate translation: “God will cause the two witnesses to breathe again and live” (See: [Metaphor](#))

great fear fell on those seeing them (ULT)

the people who see them will be terrified (UST)

Here, **fear** is spoken of as if it were a object that can fall on people. Alternate translation: “those who see them will be extremely afraid” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 But after three and a half days, a breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those seeing them.

UST

11 But after three and a half days, God will cause them to breathe again and live. They will stand up, and the people who see them will be terrified.

Revelation 11:12

And they heard (ULT)

The two witnesses will hear (UST)

Here, **they heard** could mean: (1) the two witnesses will hear. (2) the people will hear what is said to the two witnesses.

a loud voice from heaven (ULT)

a loud voice from heaven (UST)

Here, **a loud voice** refers to the one who speaks. Alternate translation: "someone speak loudly to them from heaven and" (See: [Metonymy](#))

saying to them (ULT)

saying to them (UST)

Alternate translation: "saying to the two witnesses"

ULT

¹² And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up into heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.

UST

¹² The two witnesses will hear a loud voice from heaven saying to them: "Come up here!" Then they will go up into heaven in a cloud. Their enemies will watch them go up.

Revelation 11:13

the survivors (ULT)

The rest of the (UST)

Alternate translation: "those who do not die" or "those who are still living"

the...gave glory to...God of heaven (ULT)
people will die...God who rules in heaven...is awesome (UST)

Alternate translation: "said that the God of heaven is glorious"

ULT

¹³ And at that hour a great earthquake happened, and a tenth part of the city collapsed. And in the earthquake, the names of 7,000 men were killed, and the survivors became terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

UST

¹³ At that same time there will be a great earthquake, as a result of which a tenth of the buildings in the city will collapse, and seven thousand people will die. The rest of the people will be afraid and will acknowledge that the God who rules in heaven is awesome.

Revelation 11:14

The second woe is past

See how you translated “The first woe is past” in [Revelation 9:12](#).
Alternate translation: “The second terrible event is over”

the third woe is coming quickly (ULT) Be aware that...the third terrible event will happen soon after (UST)

Existing in the future is spoken of as **coming**. Alternate translation:
“The third woe will happen soon” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁴ The second woe has passed. Behold,
the third woe is coming quickly.

UST

¹⁴ That will be the second terrible event.
Be aware that the third terrible event
will happen soon after.

Revelation 11:15

Connecting Statement:

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

the seventh angel (ULT) the seventh angel (UST)

This is the last of the seven angels. See how you translated **seventh** in [Revelation 8:1](#). The word **seventh** is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “the final angel” or “angel number seven” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

loud voices spoke in heaven, saying (ULT) Voices...in heaven shouted loudly (UST)

The phrase **loud voices** represents speakers who spoke loudly. Alternate translation: “speakers in heaven spoke loudly and said”

The kingdom of the world has become {the kingdom} of our Lord and of his Christ (ULT) Our Lord God and the Messiah whom he has appointed can now govern all the people in the world...they (UST)

Here, **kingdom** refers to the authority to rule **the world**. Alternate translation: “The authority to rule the world has become the authority that belongs to our Lord and his Christ” (See: [Metonymy](#))

of the world (ULT) the people in the world (UST)

Here, **the world** refers to every person in **the world**. Alternate translation: “everyone in the world” (See: [Metonymy](#))

The kingdom of the world has become {the kingdom} of our Lord and of his Christ (ULT) Our Lord God and the Messiah whom he has appointed can now govern all the people in the world...they (UST)

Alternate translation: “Our Lord and his Christ are now the rulers of the world”

ULT

15 And the seventh angel sounded a trumpet, and loud voices spoke in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become {the kingdom} of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever {and} ever.”

UST

15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet. Voices in heaven shouted loudly, “Our Lord God and the Messiah whom he has appointed can now govern all the people in the world, and they will continue to rule those people forever!”

Revelation 11:16

fell upon their faces (ULT)

bowed down their faces to the ground (UST)

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

ULT

¹⁶ And the 24 elders, who sit on their thrones in the presence of God, fell upon their faces and worshiped God,

UST

¹⁶ The twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones in God’s presence, bowed down their faces to the ground and worshiped him.

Revelation 11:17

to you, O Lord God Almighty, the one who is, and who was (ULT)

Lord God, you are the one who rules over everything! You are the one who exists now! You are the one who has always existed...you (UST)

You can state these phrases as sentences. Alternate translation: “you, Lord God, the ruler over all. You are the one who is, and you are the one who was” (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

God...who is (ULT)

God...the one who exists now (UST)

Alternate translation: “the one who exists” or “the one who lives”

God...was (ULT)

God...who has always existed (UST)

Alternate translation: “who has always existed” or “who has always lived”

you have taken your great power (ULT)

have defeated with your power everyone who has rebelled against you (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand this phrase, you can state explicitly what God did with his **great power**.

Alternate translation: “you have defeated with your power everyone who has rebelled against you” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁷ saying, “We give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty, the one who is, and who was, and because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. ^[1]”

UST

¹⁷ They said: “Lord God, you are the one who rules over everything! You are the one who exists now! You are the one who has always existed! We thank you that you have defeated with your power everyone who has rebelled against you, and you now rule over all the people in the world.”

Revelation 11:18

General Information:

The words **you** and **your** refer to God.

your wrath has come (ULT)
you have become very angry with them. You (UST)

Existing in the present is spoken of as having **come**. Alternate translation: "you are ready to show your anger" (See: [Metaphor](#))

for the dead to be judged (ULT)
for you to judge all those who have died (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "for God to judge the dead" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

for the dead (ULT)
all those who have died (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand the nominal adjective **dead**, you can state it as a verb or adjective. Alternate translation: "for those who have died" or "for the dead people" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

to those who fear your name (ULT)
all...who...all those who honor you (UST)

Here, **name** is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "to those who fear you" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

18 And the nations were enraged, but your wrath has come, and the time for the dead to be judged, and to give the reward to your servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who are destroying the earth."

UST

18 The unbelieving people of the nations were angrily raging at you. As a result you have become very angry with them. You have decided that this is the right time for you to judge all those who have died. The time has come for you to reward all your servants who were the prophets and the others who believe in you, and all those who honor you, and this includes those who are small and those who are great. It is time for you to destroy the people who destroy the earth."

Revelation 11:19

And the temple of God that {is} in heaven was opened (ULT)

Then God opened his temple in heaven (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "Then someone opened God's temple in heaven" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the ark of the covenant of the Lord was seen in his temple (ULT)

I saw in it the sacred chest, containing God's promise (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "I saw the ark of his covenant in his temple" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

flashes of lightning (ULT)

Lightning was flashing (UST)

Use your language's way of describing what **lightning** looks like each time it appears. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:5](#).

And...loud sounds...crashes of thunder (ULT)

Then...thundering...and rumbling (UST)

Here, **loud sounds and crashes of thunder** refers to the loud noises that thunder makes. Use your language's way of describing the sound of thunder. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:5](#).

ULT

¹⁹ And the temple of God that {is} in heaven was opened and the ark of the covenant of the Lord was seen in his temple. And there were flashes of lightning and loud sounds and crashes of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

UST

¹⁹ Then God opened his temple in heaven, and I saw in it the sacred chest, containing God's promise. Lightning was flashing; it was thundering and rumbling; the earth shook, and large hailstones fell from the sky.

Revelation 12

Revelation 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verses 10-12.

Special concepts in this chapter

Serpent

The Book of Revelation uses imagery from the Old Testament. For example, John refers to Satan as the serpent. This image comes from the account of the Garden of Eden when Satan tempted Eve. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“A great sign was seen in heaven”

By using the passive voice here, John does not say who saw this great sign in heaven. The translation may be difficult when the subject is unclear, if your language does not have a passive voice. Many English translations use the past tense here and say “A great sign appeared in heaven.” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

Revelation 12:1

General Information:

John begins to describe a woman who appears in his vision.

a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet (ULT)

It was a woman, whose clothing was the sun. The moon was under her feet (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "a woman who was wearing the sun and had the moon under her feet" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹ And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and a crown of 12 stars on her head,

UST

¹ Then something very important appeared in the sky. It was a woman, whose clothing was the sun. The moon was under her feet. On her head was a wreath of victory that was made of twelve stars.

Revelation 12:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² and having in the womb, and she cries out in birth pains and is struggling to give birth.

UST

² She was about to deliver a child, and she cried out because she was suffering pain.

Revelation 12:3

Connecting Statement:

John describes a dragon that appears in his vision.

a...dragon (ULT) dragon (UST)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a huge red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.

UST

³ Something else very unusual appeared in the sky. It was a huge red dragon. It had seven heads and ten horns. On each of its heads was a royal crown.

Revelation 12:4

a third (ULT)

a third (UST)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 8:7](#). Alternate translation: "one third" (See: [Fractions](#))

ULT

⁴ And his tail sweeps away a third of the stars in heaven and hurled them down to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she would give birth, he might devour her child.

UST

⁴ The dragon's tail dragged a third of the stars from the sky and threw them to the earth. The dragon set himself in front of the woman who was about to give birth in order that he might eat her child as soon as it was born.

Revelation 12:5

to rule all the nations with an iron rod (ULT)
rule all groups of people with complete
authority as if he were using an iron rod (UST)

Here, ruling harshly is spoken of as ruling **with an iron rod**. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 2:27](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

her child was snatched away to God (ULT)
God...snatched away...her child...to (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God quickly took her child to himself" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is going to rule all the nations with an iron rod. And her child was snatched away to God and to his throne,

UST

⁵ Then she gave birth to a son who is destined to rule all groups of people with complete authority as if he were using an iron rod. God snatched away her child and took him to his throne.

Revelation 12:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God there, so that they might provide for her there for 1, 260 days.

UST

⁶ But the woman fled into the wilderness. She has a place there that God has prepared for her in order that he may take care of her for 1, 260 days.

Revelation 12:7

dragon (ULT)

dragon (UST)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as “the devil or Satan.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

⁷ And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought back.

UST

⁷ Then there was a battle in heaven. Michael and the angels that he commanded fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back against Michael and his angels.

Revelation 12:8

nor was a place found for them any longer in heaven (ULT)

nor did God allow the dragon and his angels to stay in heaven any longer (UST)

Alternate translation: "so the dragon and his angels could no longer stay in heaven"

ULT

⁸ But he was not strong enough, nor was a place found for them any longer in heaven.

UST

⁸ But the dragon did not win the battle; nor did God allow the dragon and his angels to stay in heaven any longer.

Revelation 12:9

the great dragon...the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him (ULT)

the huge dragon...The dragon is the ancient serpent, the one whose names are the Devil and Satan. He is the one who deceives people all over the earth. He was thrown to the earth along with all his angels (UST)

You can give the information about the serpent in a separate sentence after the statement that it was thrown down to the earth. Alternate translation: “the great dragon was thrown down to earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. He is the old serpent who deceives the world and is called the devil or Satan” (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

the great dragon was thrown down—the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him (ULT)
threw the huge dragon out of heaven. The dragon is the ancient serpent, the one whose names are the Devil and Satan. He is the one who deceives people all over the earth. He was thrown to the earth along with all his angels (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God threw the great dragon—the ancient serpent, who people also call the devil and Satan—and his angels out of heaven and sent them to the earth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down—the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

UST

⁹ Instead, God threw the huge dragon out of heaven. The dragon is the ancient serpent, the one whose names are the Devil and Satan. He is the one who deceives people all over the earth. He was thrown to the earth along with all his angels.

Revelation 12:10

I heard (ULT)**I heard (UST)**

The word **I** refers to John.

I heard a loud voice in heaven (ULT)**I heard someone in heaven...loudly (UST)**

Here, the **voice** refers to someone who speaks. Alternate translation: "I heard someone saying loudly from heaven" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ (ULT)**Now our God has saved his people by his power, and he rules all people! Now the Messiah has begun to rule...and (UST)**

God saving people by his power is spoken of as if his **salvation** and **power** were things that **have come**. God's ruling and Christ's authority are also spoken of as if they have come. Alternate translation: "Now God has saved his people by his power, God rules as king, and his Christ has all authority" (See: [Metaphor](#))

have come (ULT)**has (UST)**

God is revealing these things because their time to occur has **come**. It is not that they did not exist before. Alternate translation: "have begun to really exist" or "have appeared" or "have become real"

our...the accuser of...brothers has been thrown down (ULT)**our God...power, and he rules...has thrown the accuser of...fellow believers out of heaven. He was the one who stood...and (UST)**

Here, **the accuser of our brothers** is the dragon that was thrown down in [Revelation 12:9](#).

of our brothers (ULT)**of our fellow believers (UST)**

Fellow believers are spoken of as if they were **brothers**. Alternate translation: "our fellow believers" (See: [Metaphor](#))

day and night (ULT)**day...night and (UST)**

These two parts of the day are used together to mean "all the time" or "without stopping" (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, the one who accused them before our God day and night."

UST

¹⁰ Then I heard someone in heaven shout loudly, "Now our God has saved his people by his power, and he rules all people! Now the Messiah has begun to rule! This is because God has thrown the accuser of our fellow believers out of heaven. He was the one who stood before God day and night and told him that they had done what is wrong."

Revelation 12:11

they conquered him (ULT)
Our fellow believers...overcame him (UST)

Alternate translation: "they conquered the accuser"

through the blood of the Lamb (ULT)
because the Lamb had shed his blood and died for them (UST)

Here, **the blood** refers to the death of the Lamb. Alternate translation: "because the Lamb had shed his blood and died for them" (See: [Metonymy](#))

by the word of their testimony (ULT)
because they spoke the truth about him to other people. They (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **testimony**, you can express it with the verb "testify" and you can state who they testified. Alternate translation: "by what they said when they testified" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

by the word of their testimony (ULT)
because they spoke the truth about him to other people. They (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand this phrase, you can state explicitly what they testified. Alternate translation: "by what they said when they testified to others about Jesus" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

even to death (ULT)
but were willing to let people kill...for speaking the truth about him (UST)

The believers told the truth about Jesus, even though they knew that their enemies might try to kill them because of it. Alternate translation: "but they kept testifying even though they knew that they might die for it"

ULT

¹¹ And they conquered him through the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives even to death.

UST

¹¹ Our fellow believers overcame him because the Lamb had shed his blood and died for them and because they spoke the truth about him to other people. They did not seek to remain alive, but were willing to let people kill them for speaking the truth about him.

Revelation 12:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and those who reside in them! Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil has gone down to you, having terrible anger because he knows he has {only} a little time!”

UST

¹² So everyone in heaven should rejoice. But terrible things will happen to you people who live on the earth and on the ocean because the devil has come down to you. He is very angry because he knows that he has only a short time before God judges and punishes him.”

Revelation 12:13

the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth (ULT)

the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the dragon realized that God had thrown him out of heaven and sent him to earth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the dragon (ULT)

the dragon (UST)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as “the devil or Satan.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

¹³ And when the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.

UST

¹³ When the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to a son.

Revelation 12:14

**of a...eagle...of...serpent (ULT)
like the wings of a...The serpent, that is, the
dragon, was not able to reach her there (UST)**

Here, **the serpent** is another way of referring to the dragon.

ULT

¹⁴ But two wings of a great eagle were given to the woman so that she might flee to the wilderness to her place, where she is taken care of there for a time and times and half a time—away from the face of the serpent.

UST

¹⁴ But God gave to the woman two wings like the wings of a very large eagle in order that she might fly into the wilderness. There is a place there that God had prepared for her. There God took care of her for three and one-half years. The serpent, that is, the dragon, was not able to reach her there.

Revelation 12:15

serpent (ULT)

serpent (UST)

Here, **the serpent** is the same being as the dragon mentioned earlier in [Revelation 12:9](#).

like a river (ULT)

like a river (UST)

The water flowed from his mouth **like a river** flows. Alternate translation: "in large volume" (See: [Simile](#))

he might cause her to be swept away by a flood (ULT)

sweep her away with the water (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "he might sweep her away with a flood" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁵ And the serpent poured water like a river out from his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away by a flood.

UST

¹⁵ Then the serpent poured water like a river from his mouth toward the woman in order to sweep her away with the water.

Revelation 12:16

the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon poured out from his mouth (ULT)

by opening up...and swallowing the river that the dragon poured out from his mouth (UST)

Here, **the earth** is spoken of as if it were a living thing, and a hole in the earth is spoken of as if it were a **mouth** that could drink up the water. Alternate translation: "a hole in the ground opened up and the river from the dragon went down into the hole" (See: [Personification](#))

dragon (ULT)

dragon (UST)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon poured out from his mouth.

UST

¹⁶ But the ground helped the woman by opening up and swallowing the river that the dragon poured out from his mouth.

Revelation 12:17

who hold to the testimony of Jesus (ULT) who speak the truth about Jesus (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **testimony**, you can express it as a verb. Alternate translation: “who continue to testify about Jesus” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹⁷ And the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war with the rest of her seed, those who keep the commandments of God and who hold to the testimony of Jesus.

UST

¹⁷ Then the dragon was very angry with the woman, so he went away to fight against the rest of her descendants. They are the people who obey God's commandments and who speak the truth about Jesus.

Revelation 13

Revelation 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the words of verse 10, which are from the Old Testament.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Similes

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

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Unknown animals

John uses different animals to try to describe what he saw. Some of these animals may not be known in the target language. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

Revelation 13:1

General Information:

John begins to describe a beast who appears in his vision. Here, **I** refers to John.

ULT

1 And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on its horns {were} ten crowns, and on its heads {was} a blasphemous name. ^[1]

UST

1 Then I saw a beast come up out of the ocean. It had ten horns and seven heads. On each of its horns there was a royal crown. On each of its heads there was a name that insulted God.

Revelation 13:2

dragon (ULT)

dragon (UST)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified as “the devil or Satan.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

its...the dragon gave...power to it (ULT)

its feet were like...The dragon...He gave...him the authority (UST)

The **dragon** made the beast as powerful as he was. He did not lose **his power**, however, by giving it to the beast.

his power ... his throne, and his great authority to rule

The words **power**, **throne**, and **authority** are three ways of referring to the dragon’s authority, and together they emphasize that the authority was great.

his throne (ULT)

made the beast...very powerful...to rule over people (UST)

Here, **throne** refers to the dragon’s authority to rule as king. Alternate translation: “his royal authority” or “his authority to rule as king” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, and its feet {were} like a bear’s, and its mouth {was} like a lion’s mouth, and the dragon gave his power to it, and his throne and his great authority.

UST

² This beast was like a leopard. But its feet were like the feet of a bear, and its mouth was like the mouth of a lion. The dragon made the beast very powerful. He gave him the authority to rule over people as king.

Revelation 13:3

but its fatal wound was healed (ULT)

But its wound had healed (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “but its fatal wound healed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

fatal wound (ULT)

wound (UST)

This is an injury that is serious enough to cause a person to die. Alternate translation: “deadly wound”

the whole earth (ULT)

all the people of the earth (UST)

Here, **the whole earth** refers to all the people who live anywhere on it. Alternate translation: “all the people on the earth” (See: [Metonymy](#))

fatal...and followed} after...beast (ULT)

wound...beast...followed it (UST)

Alternate translation: “obeyed the beast”

ULT

³ And one of its heads {was} like it had been killed, but its fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth marveled {and followed} after the beast,

UST

³ One of the heads of the beast looked as if someone had wounded it so that it died. But its wound had healed. As a result, all the people of the earth marveled at the beast and followed it.

Revelation 13:4

dragon (ULT)

dragon (UST)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified as “the devil or Satan.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

the...he gave {his} authority to...beast (ULT)

the...he had given...beast authority to rule over them (UST)

Alternate translation: “he had caused the beast to have as much authority as he had”

Who {is} like the beast, and who is able to fight against it (ULT)

and...No one is as powerful as the beast! Who could ever fight against it (UST)

This question shows how amazed they were about the beast. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can translate it as a statement. Alternate translation: “No one is as powerful as the beast or able to fight against it and win!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave {his} authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who {is} like the beast, and who is able to fight against it?”

UST

⁴ They also worshiped the dragon because he had given the beast authority to rule over them. They also worshiped the beast and said, “No one is as powerful as the beast! Who could ever fight against it?”

Revelation 13:5

to it was given...was given to it (ULT)
God allowed...the beast...God...allowed it (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God gave the beast" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to it was given a mouth speaking (ULT)
God allowed...the beast to speak (UST)

Being **given a mouth** refers to being allowed to speak. Alternate translation: "the beast was allowed to speak" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ And to it was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and authority was given to it to act for 42 months.

UST

⁵ God allowed the beast to speak proudly and to insult him. God also allowed it to rule the people for forty-two months.

Revelation 13:6

**for blasphemies against God (ULT)
it insulted God (UST)**

Alternate translation: “to say disrespectful things about God”

**blaspheming his name, the place where he
lives, and those who live in heaven**

These phrases tell how the beast spoke blasphemies against God.

ULT

⁶ And it opened its mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle—those who dwell in heaven.

UST

⁶ When it spoke, it insulted God, his name, the place where he lives, and all who live in heaven.

Revelation 13:7

authority was given to it (ULT)

It...had...authority to rule (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God gave authority to the beast" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

every tribe, people, language, and nation

This means that people from every ethnic group are included. See how you translated a similar list in [Revelation 5:9](#).

ULT

⁷ And to it was granted to make war with the saints and to conquer them, and authority was given to it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.

UST

⁷ God also allowed the beast to fight against his people and conquer them. It had authority to rule over every tribe, over every nation, over the speakers of every language, and over every people group.

Revelation 13:8

will worship it (ULT)

will worship...it (UST)

Alternate translation: “will worship the beast”

everyone whose name has not been written in the Book of Life (ULT)

Those who worship it are the ones whose names are not written in the Book of Life (UST)

This phrase clarifies who on the earth will worship the beast. If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “everyone whose names the Lamb did not write in the Book of Life” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

from the foundation of the world (ULT)

before the creation of the world (UST)

Alternate translation: “when God created the world”

of the Lamb (ULT)

That was the book that was written...and it belongs to the Lamb (UST)

A lamb is a young sheep. Here is it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

who was slaughtered (ULT)

who was killed (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “whom the people slaughtered” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ And all those who live on the earth will worship it—everyone whose name has not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb who was slaughtered from the foundation of the world.

UST

⁸ All the people living on earth will worship it. Those who worship it are the ones whose names are not written in the Book of Life. That was the book that was written before the creation of the world, and it belongs to the Lamb who was killed.

Revelation 13:9

General Information:

These verses are a break from John's account of his vision. Here he give a warning to the people reading his account.

**If anyone has an ear, let him hear (ULT)
Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully to this message from God (UST)**

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

**If anyone has an ear, let him hear (ULT)
Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully to this message from God (UST)**

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

ULT

⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

UST

⁹ Everyone who wants to understand must listen carefully to this message from God.

Revelation 13:10

If anyone {is} for captivity (ULT)
If God has decided that some people will be captured by their enemies (UST)

This expression means that someone has decided who should be taken. If your readers would misunderstand this phrase, you may state explicitly who decided it. Alternate translation: "If God has decided that someone should be taken captive" or "If it is God's will that someone should be taken into captivity" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

If anyone {is} for captivity (ULT)
If God has decided that some people will be captured by their enemies (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **captivity**, you can express it with the verb "capture." Alternate translation: "If it is God's will for a certain person to captured" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

If anyone {is} for captivity (ULT)
If God has decided that some people will be captured by their enemies (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "If it is God's will for the enemy to capture a certain person" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

if anyone will be killed with the sword (ULT)
If God has decided that some people will die in war (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "If it is God's will for the enemy to kill a certain person with a sword" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

with the sword (ULT)
in war (UST)

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

he must...be killed (ULT)
they will...die (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "the enemy will kill him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Here is a call for the patient endurance and faith of the saints

Alternate translation: "God's holy people must endure patiently and be faithful"

ULT

¹⁰ If anyone {is} for captivity, {to captivity} he goes; if anyone will be killed with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.

UST

¹⁰ If God has decided that some people will be captured by their enemies, they will be captured. If God has decided that some people will die in war, they will die in war. So God's people must endure suffering and be faithful to him.

Revelation 13:11

Connecting Statement:

John begins to describe another beast who appears in his vision.

it was speaking like a dragon (ULT)
it spoke harshly as a dragon does (UST)

Harsh speech is spoken of as if it were the roar of **a dragon**.
Alternate translation: "it spoke harshly like a dragon speaks" (See: [Simile](#))

a dragon (ULT)
a dragon does (UST)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

11 And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and it had two horns like a lamb, and it was speaking like a dragon.

UST

11 Then I saw another beast come up from the earth. It had two small horns on its head as a sheep has. But it spoke harshly as a dragon does.

Revelation 13:12

And...the...earth...those who live on it (ULT)
**It rules people with power...the people who...
 live on...earth (UST)**

Alternate translation: “everyone on the earth”

the one whose lethal wound had been healed (ULT)
**that is, the beast that almost died but whose
 wound was healed (UST)**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the one who had a lethal wound that healed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the...lethal...wound (ULT)
to do what the...that almost died...wound (UST)

This was an injury that was serious enough that it could have made him die. Alternate translation: “deadly wound”

ULT

¹² And it exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and it makes it so that the earth and those who live on it will worship the first beast—the one whose lethal wound had been healed.

UST

¹² It rules people with power in order to do what the first beast wants. It forces the people who live on the earth to worship the first beast, that is, the beast that almost died but whose wound was healed.

Revelation 13:13

it does (ULT)

did (UST)

Alternate translation: "the beast from the earth performed"

ULT

¹³ And it does great signs, so that he might even cause fire to come down to the earth from heaven in front of mankind.

UST

¹³ The second beast also did awesome miracles, even causing fire from the sky to fall to earth while people watched.

Revelation 13:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁴ And it deceives those who live on the earth through the signs that it has been granted to do in the presence of the beast, telling those who live on the earth to make an image to the beast that has the wound of the sword, but lived.

UST

¹⁴ He did these miracles on behalf of the first beast. By doing that, he deceived the people on the earth so that they thought they should worship the first beast. But this happened only because God allowed it to happen. The second beast told the people living on earth to make an idol to represent the first beast, the one that was alive, even though someone had killed him with a sword.

Revelation 13:15

it was granted to him (ULT) God allowed...the (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God permitted the beast from the earth" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to give breath to the image of the beast (ULT) second beast to breathe life into...the idol (UST)

Here, **breath** represents life. Alternate translation: "to give life to the beast's image" (See: [Metonymy](#))

to the image of the beast (ULT) second beast...the idol (UST)

This is **the image** of the first **beast** that had been mentioned.

might cause whoever would not worship the image of the beast to be killed (ULT) commanded that whoever refused to worship the idol should be killed (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "might put to death anyone who refused to worship the first beast" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁵ And it was granted to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak, and might cause whoever would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

UST

¹⁵ God allowed the second beast to breathe life into that idol in order that the idol might speak. And the beast commanded that whoever refused to worship the idol should be killed.

Revelation 13:16

**And it caused everyone (ULT)
The second beast also required that...
Everyone (UST)**

Alternate translation: "And the beast from the earth also forced everyone"

ULT

¹⁶ And it caused everyone, the small and the great and the rich and the poor and the free and the slave, so that they might give to them a mark on their right hand or on their forehead,

UST

¹⁶ The second beast also required that people should write the first beast's name on the right hand or on the forehead of everyone, whether these were important people or unimportant people, rich or poor, free or slave. Everyone!

Revelation 13:17

no one was able to buy or to sell except the one who has the mark—the name of the beast (ULT)

people could not buy anything or sell anything if they did not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast (UST)

The implicit information is that the beast from the earth commanded these things. If your readers would misunderstand this phrase, you can state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “he commanded that people could buy or sell things only if they had the mark of the beast” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the mark of the name of the beast

The **mark** indicated that the person who received it worshiped **the beast**.

ULT

¹⁷ and so that no one was able to buy or to sell except the one who has the mark—the name of the beast, or the number of its name.

UST

¹⁷ The second beast required this so that people could not buy anything or sell anything if they did not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number representing its name.

Revelation 13:18

General Information:

This verse is a break from John's account of his vision. Here he gives another warning to the people reading his account.

Here is wisdom (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Wisdom is needed" or "You need to be wise about this"

The one who has understanding, let him calculate (ULT)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **insight**, you can express it with the verb "understand." Alternate translation: "If anyone is able to understand things" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

let him calculate the number of the beast (ULT)

Alternate translation: "he should discern what the number of the beast means" or "he should figure out what the number of the beast means"

the number...is...of a man (ULT)

The **number** could represent: (1) one person. (2) all of humanity.

ULT

18 Here is wisdom: The one who has understanding, let him calculate the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man, and its number is 666.

UST

18 You must think wisely to understand the meaning of the mark. Anyone who thinks wisely should understand that the number represents mankind. It is 666.

Revelation 14

Revelation 14 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Harvest

Harvest is when people go out to gather ripe food from plants. Jesus used this as a metaphor to teach his followers that they need to go and tell other people about him so those people can be part of God's kingdom. This chapter uses the metaphor of two harvests. Jesus gathers in his people from the whole earth. Then an angel gathers in wicked people whom God will punish. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [faith](#))

Revelation 14:1

General Information:

The word **I** refers to John.

Connecting Statement:

John begins to describe the next part of his vision. There are 144,000 believers standing before the Lamb.

the Lamb (ULT)

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

were} 144,000 (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 7:4](#). Alternate translation: “one hundred forty-four thousand” (See: [Numbers](#))

having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads (ULT)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “on whose foreheads the Lamb and his Father had written their names” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

of his Father (ULT)

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

ULT

¹ And I looked and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him {were} 144,000 having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads.

UST

¹ But then I saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. With him were 144,000 people. He had written his name and his Father's name on their foreheads.

Revelation 14:2

a voice from heaven (ULT)

a sound from heaven (UST)

Alternate translation: "a sound from heaven"

ULT

² And I heard a voice from heaven as a roar of many waters and as the sound of loud thunder, and the voice I heard was like harpists playing on their harps.

UST

² I heard a sound from heaven, which was as loud as the sound of a huge waterfall or mighty thunder. It also sounded like many people playing on harps.

Revelation 14:3

they sing a new song (ULT)

This phrase explains what the sound was that John heard in verse 2. Alternate translation: “that sound was a new song that they sang” or “the sound was the 144,000 people singing a new song”

the four living creatures (ULT)

See how you translated “living creature” in [Revelation 4:6](#)

the...elders (ULT)

Here, **the elders** refers to the twenty-four elders around the throne. See how you translated “elders” in [Revelation 4:4](#).

144,000 (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 7:4](#). Alternate translation: “one hundred forty-four thousand” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³ And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no one was able to learn the song except the 144,000 who had been bought from the earth.

UST

³ The 144,000 people were singing a new song while they stood in front of the throne, in front of the four living creatures, and in front of the elders. Only the 144,000 people, the ones whom the Lamb had redeemed from among the people on the earth, could learn that song. No one else could learn that song.

Revelation 14:4

have not defiled themselves with women (ULT)

This could mean: (1) they have never had immoral sexual relations with a woman. (2) they have never had sexual relations with a woman. Defiling oneself with women may be a symbol of worshipping idols.

virgins (ULT)

This could mean: (1) they did not have sexual relations with a woman who was not their wife. (2) they are virgins.

the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes (ULT)

Doing what the Lamb does is spoken of as following him. Alternate translation: "they do whatever the Lamb does" or "they obey the Lamb" (See: [Metaphor](#))

have been redeemed from among mankind as firstfruits (ULT)

Here, **firstfruits** is a metaphor for the first offering to be made to God in celebration of harvest. Alternate translation: "have been purchased out of the midst of the rest of mankind as a special celebration of salvation" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ These are the ones that have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from among mankind as firstfruits for God and for the Lamb,

UST

⁴ Those 144,000 are the people who are spiritually pure, like virgins are morally pure. They have not made themselves impure by worshipping any false god. They are the ones who accompany Jesus, the one who is like a lamb, wherever he goes. They represent all those whom he has redeemed for God from among the people of earth, in order that he might offer them to God and to the lamb.

Revelation 14:5

no lie was found in their mouth (ULT)
never lied when they spoke (UST)

Here, **their mouth** refers to “what they said.” Alternate translation: “they never lied when they spoke” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ and no lie was found in their mouth, for they are blameless. ^[1]

UST

⁵ These people never lied when they spoke, and they never acted immorally.

Revelation 14:6

Connecting Statement:

John begins to describe the next part of his vision. This is the first of three angels who proclaim judgment on the earth.

every nation, tribe, language, and people

This means that people from every ethnic group are included. See how you translated a similar list in [Revelation 5:9](#).

ULT

⁶ And I saw another angel flying in midair, having the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—even to every nation and tribe and tongue and people—

UST

⁶ Then I saw another angel flying between the sky and heaven. He was bringing God's eternal good news to earth in order that he might proclaim it to people who live on the earth. He will proclaim it to every nation, to every tribe, to speakers of every language, and to every people group.

Revelation 14:7

the hour of his judgment has come (ULT) it is now time for him to judge everyone (UST)

Here, **the hour** represents the time that has been chosen for something, and the hour having **come** is a metaphor for now being the chosen time. Alternate translation: "now is the time that God has chosen for judgment" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the hour of his judgment has come (ULT) it is now time for him to judge everyone (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **judgment**, you can express it with a verb. Alternate translation: "it is now the time for God to judge people" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁷ saying in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. And worship the one who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and the springs of water."

UST

⁷ He said in a loud voice, "Honor God and praise him because it is now time for him to judge everyone! Worship him because he is the one who created the heaven, the earth, the ocean, and the springs of water."

Revelation 14:8

Fallen, fallen {is} Babylon the great (ULT)
The very evil city of Babylon is now completely destroyed (UST)

The angel speaks of **Babylon** having been destroyed as if it had **fallen**. Alternate translation: "Babylon the great has been destroyed" (See: [Metaphor](#))

is} Babylon the great (ULT)
The very evil city of Babylon (UST)

This was probably a symbol for the city of Rome, which was large, wealthy, and sinful. Alternate translation: "Babylon the large city" or "the important city of Babylon" (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

who...caused all the nations to drink (ULT)
Babylon...all the nations...to drink (UST)

Babylon is spoken of as if it were a person, instead of a city filled with people. (See: [Metonymy](#))

who caused all the nations to drink from the wine of her immoral passion (ULT)
Babylon made people of all the nations engage with her in the passion of sexual immorality. Babylon is like someone who gives another person too much wine to drink (UST)

Here, **to drink from the wine** is a symbol for participating in her sexually **immoral passion**. Alternate translation: "to be sexually immoral like her" or "to get drunk like her in sexual sin" (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

of her immoral passion (ULT)
made people...engage with her in the passion of sexual immorality (UST)

Babylon is spoken of as if it were a prostitute who has caused other people to sin along with her. (See: [Personification](#))

of her immoral passion (ULT)
made people...engage with her in the passion of sexual immorality (UST)

Here, **immoral passion** may well have a double meaning: literal sexual immorality and also the worship of false gods. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ And another {angel}—a second—followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen {is} Babylon the great, who caused all the nations to drink from the wine of her immoral passion."

UST

⁸ Another angel, a second one, came after him saying, "The very evil city of Babylon is now completely destroyed! Babylon made people of all the nations engage with her in the passion of sexual immorality. Babylon is like someone who gives another person too much wine to drink!"

Revelation 14:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ And another angel—a third—followed them, saying in a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,

UST

⁹ Another angel, a third one, came afterward, saying in a loud voice, “If people worship the beast and its image or allow its mark to be put on their foreheads or on their hands,

Revelation 14:10

he will also drink from the wine of the wrath of God (ULT)

God will be angry with them and his anger will be like strong wine that he will make them drink (UST)

Here, **to drink from the wine of the wrath of God** is a symbol for being punished by God. Alternate translation: “will also drink some of the wine that represents God’s wrath” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

that has been poured undiluted (ULT)
his anger (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “that God has poured full strength” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

that has been poured undiluted (ULT)
his anger (UST)

This means that the wine has no water mixed into it. It is strong, and a person who drinks much of it will get very drunk. As a symbol, it means that God will be extremely angry, not just a little angry. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

the cup of his anger (ULT)
his anger...He (UST)

This symbolic **cup** holds the wine that represents God’s **anger**. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

¹⁰ he will also drink from the wine of the wrath of God that has been poured undiluted into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur before the holy angels and before the Lamb.

UST

¹⁰ God will be angry with them and his anger will be like strong wine that he will make them drink. He will torment them in burning sulfur in the presence of his holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

Revelation 14:11

the smoke of their torment (ULT)

The...smoke from the fire that torments them (UST)

The phrase **their torment** refers to the fire that torments them.
Alternate translation: “the smoke from the fire that torments them”
(See: [Metonymy](#))

they have no rest (ULT)

torment them continually (UST)

Alternate translation: “they have no relief” or “the torment does not stop”

ULT

¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever {and} ever, and they have no rest day and night—the ones who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

UST

¹¹ The smoke from the fire that torments them will rise forever. God will torment them continually, day and night. This is what will happen to the people who worship the beast and its image or who allow its name to be written on them.”

Revelation 14:12

**Here is the endurance of the saints (ULT)
So God's people, those who obey what (UST)**

See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 13:10](#).

ULT

¹² Here is the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

UST

¹² So God's people, those who obey what God commands and who trust in Jesus, must faithfully continue obeying and trusting him.

Revelation 14:13

the dead who die

Alternate translation: "those who die"

the...who die...in the Lord (ULT) are those who...in union with the Lord...after they die (UST)

This may refer to believers who are killed by their enemies. Alternate translation: "who are united to the Lord and die" or "who die because they are united to the Lord"

deeds...their...deeds...follow with them (ULT) Instead...they...everyone will know the good things that they (UST)

These **deeds** are spoken of as if they were alive and able to **follow** those who did them. This could mean: (1) others will know the good deeds these people have done. (2) God will reward them for their deeds. (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write: Blessed {are} the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

UST

13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: How fortunate from now on are those who die in union with the Lord." God's Spirit says, "Yes, after they die, they will no longer have to endure suffering. Instead, they will rest, and everyone will know the good things that they have done."

Revelation 14:14

Connecting Statement:

John begins to describe the next part of his vision. This part is about the Son of Man harvesting the earth. Harvesting the grain is a symbol of God's judging people. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

was one} like a son of man (ULT) **who looked like the Son of Man (UST)**

Here, the expression **a son of man** describes a human figure, someone who looks human. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:13](#). (See: [Simile](#))

a sharp sickle (ULT) **a sharp sickle (UST)**

A **sickle** is a tool with a curved blade used for cutting grass, grain, and vines (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

14 And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud {was one} like a son of man, having a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

UST

14 Then I saw another surprising thing. It was a white cloud, and on the cloud someone was sitting who looked like the Son of Man. He was wearing a golden crown on his head. In his hand he held a sharp sickle.

Revelation 14:15

came out of the temple (ULT)
came out of the temple in heaven (UST)

Alternate translation: "came out of the heavenly temple"

the time to reap has come (ULT)
time...has come...reap the grain (UST)

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

ULT

¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, crying out in a loud voice to the one sitting on the cloud: "Send out your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, since the harvest of the earth has ripened."

UST

¹⁵ Still another angel came out of the temple in heaven. In a loud voice, he said to the one who was sitting on the cloud, "The time has come to reap the grain on the earth, so with your sickle reap the grain because the grain is ripe."

Revelation 14:16

the earth was harvested (ULT)

he harvested the earth (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "he harvested the earth" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁶ And the one who was sitting on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

UST

¹⁶ Then the one who was sitting on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and he harvested the earth.

Revelation 14:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And another angel came out from the temple that {is} in heaven, he himself also having a sharp sickle.

UST

17 Another angel came out of the sanctuary in heaven. He also held a sharp sickle.

Revelation 14:18

**the one who had authority over...fire...the
(ULT)**

**the...came...He is the one who takes care of...
fire of the altar (UST)**

Here, **authority over** refers to responsibility to tend **the fire**.

ULT

¹⁸ And another angel, the one who had authority over the fire, {came} from the altar, and he shouted in a loud voice to the one who has the sharp sickle, saying, "Send out your sharp sickle and gather in the clusters of grapes of the vines of the earth, since their grapes have ripened."

UST

¹⁸ From the altar came still another angel. He is the one who takes care of the fire of the altar. He said in a loud voice to the angel who held the sickle, "With your sickle cut off the clusters of grapes in the vineyards on the earth! Then gather the clusters of grapes together because its grapes are ripe!"

Revelation 14:19

the great wine vat of God's wrath

Alternate translation: "the large wine vat where God will show his wrath"

ULT

19 And the angel swung his sickle to the earth and harvested the grapevine of the earth, and he threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

UST

19 So the angel swung his sickle on the earth. Then he threw the grapes into the huge place where God will angrily punish.

Revelation 14:20**winepress (ULT)****winepress (UST)**

This is “the great winepress” of [Revelation 14:19](#).

up to the height of a horse’s bridle

Alternate translation: “as high as the bridle in a horse’s mouth”

the bridles (ULT)**the bridles (UST)**

A **bridle** is device made of leather straps that goes around a horse’s head and is used for directing the horse.

1, 600 stadia (ULT)**three hundred kilometers (UST)**

Alternate translation: “one thousand six hundred stadia” or “sixteen hundred stadia” (See: [Numbers](#))

1, 600 stadia (ULT)**three hundred kilometers (UST)**

A “stadium” is 185 meters. The plural form of “stadium” is **stadia**. In modern measures this would be about “300 kilometers” or “200 miles.” (See: [Biblical Distance](#))

ULT

²⁰ And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood poured out from the winepress up to the bridles of the horses, for 1, 600 stadia.

UST

²⁰ God trampled the grapes in the winepress outside the city, and blood came out! The blood flowed in a stream so deep that it reached up to the bridles of the horses and extended for three hundred kilometers.

Revelation 15

Revelation 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, John describes events and pictures that occur in heaven.

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verses 3-4.

Special concepts in this chapter

“Victorious over the beast”

These people are spiritually victorious. While most spiritual battles cannot be seen, the Book of Revelation pictures spiritual battles as openly occurring. (See: [spirit](#), [wind](#), [breath](#) and [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

“The temple having the tent of witness, was open in heaven”

Scripture elsewhere indicates the earthly temple copied God’s perfect dwelling place in heaven. Here John seems to refer to God’s heavenly dwelling place or temple. (See: [heaven](#), [sky](#), [heavens](#), [heavenly](#) and [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

Songs

The Book of Revelation often describes heaven as a place where people sing. They worship God with songs. This illustrates that heaven is a place where God is always worshiped.

Revelation 15:1

General Information:

This verse is a summary of what will happen in 15:6-16:21.

great and marvelous (ULT) **They were huge and amazing (UST)**

The words **great** and **marvelous** have similar meanings and are used for emphasis. Alternate translation: "something that greatly amazed me" (See: [Doublet](#))

seven angels with seven plagues

Alternate translation: "seven angels who had authority to send seven plagues on the earth"

the final {ones} (ULT) **This is the last time (UST)**

Alternate translation: "and after them, there will not be any more plagues"

because with them the wrath of God will be completed (ULT) **in...that God will punish people this way, for it will fully show how angry he is (UST)**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "for these plagues will complete the wrath of God" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

because with them the wrath of God will be completed (ULT) **in...that God will punish people this way, for it will fully show how angry he is (UST)**

This could mean: (1) these plagues will show all of God's anger. (2) after these plagues, God will no longer be angry.

ULT

¹ And I saw another great and marvelous sign in heaven: seven angels having seven plagues—the final {ones}, because with them the wrath of God will be completed.

UST

¹ Something else very unusual appeared in the sky. I saw seven angels. They were huge and amazing. It was their duty to punish rebellious people in seven different ways. This is the last time that God will punish people this way, for it will fully show how angry he is.

Revelation 15:2

General Information:

Here John begins to describe his vision of the people who had been victorious over the beast and who are praising God.

a sea of glass (ULT) **an ocean that looked as though it was made of glass (UST)**

You can state explicitly how it was like **glass** or **a sea**. This could mean: (1) a sea is spoken of as if it were glass. Alternate translation: “a sea that was as smooth as glass” (2) glass if spoken of as if it were a sea. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:6](#). Alternate translation: “glass that was spread out like a sea” (See: [Metaphor](#))

those who are victorious over the beast and over his image (ULT) **the people who had overcome the beast by not worshiping it or its image (UST)**

You can state explicitly how they were **victorious**. Alternate translation: “who had been victorious over the beast and his image by not worshiping them” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

over the number of his name (ULT) **with the number that represents the beast’s name (UST)**

You can state explicitly how they were victorious over **the number**. Alternate translation: “over the number representing his name by not being marked with that number” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the number representing his name

This refers to **the number** described in [Revelation 13:18](#).

ULT

² Then I saw {something} like a sea of glass having been mixed with fire. And those who are victorious over the beast and over his image and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.

UST

² I saw what looked like an ocean that looked as though it was made of glass and mixed with fire. I also saw the people who had overcome the beast by not worshiping it or its image, and by not allowing its servant to mark them with the number that represents the beast’s name. They were standing by the ocean (that was as clear as glass), and they were holding the harps that God gave them.

Revelation 15:3

they sing (ULT)

They were singing (UST)

Alternate translation: "those who had been victorious over the beast were singing"

ULT

³ And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous {are} your deeds, O Lord God Almighty. Righteous and true {are} your ways, O King of the Ages. ^[1]"

UST

³ They were singing a song like God's servant Moses sang long ago. They sang this to praise the Lamb in this way: "Lord God, who rules over everything, whatever you do is powerful and marvelous! You always act righteously and truthfully. You are king forever over all the groups of people!"

Revelation 15:4

**Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name, because {you} alone {are} holy (ULT)
O Lord, everyone will fear you and honor you because you alone are holy (UST)**

This question is used to show their amazement at how great and glorious the Lord is. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as an exclamation. Alternate translation: "Lord, everyone will fear you and glorify your name because you are holy!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

**glorify your name (ULT)
honor you (UST)**

The phrase **your name** refers to God. Alternate translation: "glorify you" (See: [Metonymy](#))

**your righteous deeds have been revealed (ULT)
you have shown that you have judged everyone in the right way (UST)**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "you have made everyone know about your righteous deeds" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name, because {you} alone {are} holy? For all the nations will come and worship before you, because your righteous deeds have been revealed."

UST

⁴ O Lord, everyone will fear you and honor you because you alone are holy. All kinds of people will come and bow down before you because you have shown that you have judged everyone in the right way."

Revelation 15:5

Connecting Statement:

The seven angels with the seven plagues come out of the most holy place. They were spoken of previously in [Revelation 15:1](#).

after these things (ULT)

After...this (UST)

Alternate translation: "after the people finished singing"

ULT

⁵ And after these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven had been opened.

UST

⁵ After this I saw that the temple in heaven was open, where the sacred tent was.

Revelation 15:6

the seven angels holding the seven plagues

These **seven angels** were seen as **holding seven plagues** because in [Revelation 17:7](#) they are given seven bowls full of the wrath of God.

linen (ULT)

linen (UST)

Linen is a fine, expensive cloth made from flax.

with golden sashes (ULT)

garments...gold (UST)

A sash is a decorative piece of cloth worn on the upper body.

ULT

⁶ And the seven angels holding the seven plagues came out from the temple, having been clothed with pure, bright linen and with golden sashes having been wrapped around {their} chests.

UST

⁶ The seven angels whose duty it was to punish rebellious people in seven different ways came out of the very holy place. The angels were dressed in clean, white linen garments; they wore gold bands around their chests.

Revelation 15:7

the four living creatures (ULT)

the four living creatures (UST)

See how you translated **living creatures** in [Revelation 4:6](#)

seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God (ULT)

a golden bowl filled with wine. The wine symbolized that God...was very angry with the people who had rebelled against him and was going to punish them (UST)

The word **wrath** here refers to punishment. Alternate translation: "seven gold bowls full of something that represents the wrath of God" (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

⁷ And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever {and} ever.

UST

⁷ One of the four living creatures gave each of the seven angels a golden bowl filled with wine. The wine symbolized that God, who lives forever, was very angry with the people who had rebelled against him and was going to punish them.

Revelation 15:8

until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed (ULT)

until the seven angels finished punishing the people of the earth in seven different ways (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “until the seven angels finished sending the seven plagues to the earth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one was able to enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

UST

⁸ The temple was filled with smoke that symbolized the presence of the glorious and all-powerful God. No one was able to enter the temple until the seven angels finished punishing the people of the earth in seven different ways.

Revelation 16

Revelation 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the vision of chapter 15. Together they give the seven plagues that complete the wrath of God. (See: [wrath, fury](#))

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verses 5-7.

Special concepts in this chapter

“I heard a loud voice call out of the temple”

This is the same temple that was mentioned in chapter 15.

Seven bowls of God’s wrath

This chapter reveals severe judgments. They are pictured as angels pouring out seven bowls of God’s wrath. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The tone of this chapter is meant to astonish the reader. Translations should not minimize the vivid language expressed in this chapter.

Armageddon

This is a Hebrew word. It is the name of a place. John used the sounds of the Hebrew word and wrote them with Greek letters. Translators are encouraged to transliterate it using the letters of the target language. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))

Revelation 16:1

Connecting Statement:

John continues to describe the part of the vision about the seven angels with the seven plagues. The seven plagues are the seven bowls of God's wrath.

I heard (ULT)

I heard someone (UST)

Here, I refers to John.

bowls of the wrath of God (ULT)

bowls...the wine in the seven bowls. This will make the people suffer because God is angry with them (UST)

See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 15:7](#). Alternate translation: "bowls full of something that represents God's wrath" (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

¹ And I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God onto the earth."

UST

¹ In the vision I heard someone in the temple speak in a loud voice to the angels who had the seven bowls. He said, "Go from here and pour out on the earth the wine in the seven bowls. This will make the people suffer because God is angry with them."

Revelation 16:2

poured out his bowl (ULT)

poured out...what was contained in his bowl (UST)

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. Alternate translation: “poured out God’s wrath from his bowl” (See: [Metonymy](#))

So...an ugly...painful sore (ULT)

So...horrible...painful sores (UST)

These could be infections from diseases or injuries that have not healed.

the mark of the beast (ULT)

the beast’s servants to write the beast’s name on them (UST)

The **mark of the beast** was an identifying mark that indicated that the person who received it worshiped the beast. See how you translated this in [Revelation 13:17](#).

ULT

² So the first {angel} went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and an ugly and painful sore happened on the men who have the mark of the beast and those who worship its image.

UST

² So the first angel went and poured out on the earth what was contained in his bowl. As a result, horrible and painful sores broke out on the people who had allowed the beast’s servants to write the beast’s name on them, those who had worshiped the beast’s image.

Revelation 16:3

poured out his bowl (ULT)

poured out...what was contained in his bowl.

When he poured out his bowl (UST)

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2](#). Alternate translation: “poured out God’s wrath from his bowl” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the sea (ULT)

the ocean (UST)

Here, **the sea** refers to all the salt water lakes and oceans. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

³ And the second {angel} poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood, as of a dead {person}, and every living thing in the sea died.

UST

³ Then the second angel poured out upon the ocean what was contained in his bowl. When he poured out his bowl, the water changed its appearance, and it turned into blood, but not living blood. It was like the blood of a dead man, and every creature that lived in the ocean died.

Revelation 16:4

poured out his bowl (ULT)
poured out upon the...what was contained in his bowl. When he poured out his bowl (UST)

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2](#). Alternate translation: “poured out God’s wrath from his bowl” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the rivers and the springs of water (ULT)
rivers...and water springs (UST)

This refers to all bodies of fresh **water**. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁴ And the third {angel} poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and it became blood.

UST

⁴ Then the third angel poured out upon the rivers and water springs what was contained in his bowl. When he poured out his bowl, the water in the rivers and springs turned into blood.

Revelation 16:5

the angel of the waters (ULT)
the angel who has power over the waters (UST)

This could refer to: (1) the third **angel** who was in charge of pouring out God's wrath on the rivers and springs of water. (2) another **angel** who was in charge of all the waters.

You are righteous (ULT)
O God...fair (UST)

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

the one who is and who was

See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 1:4](#). Alternate translation: "God who is and who was"

ULT

⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "You are righteous—the one who is and who was, the Holy One—because you have judged these things."
 [1]

UST

⁵ I heard the angel who has power over the waters say to God, "O God, you exist and have always existed. You are the holy one. You are a fair judge of people."

Revelation 16:6

**they poured out the blood of the saints and prophets (ULT)
murdered your holy people and the prophets...you are just in punishing them (UST)**

Here, **poured out the blood** means they killed them. Alternate translation: "they murdered God's holy people and the prophets" (See: [Metonymy](#))

**the blood...and...you have...given them...to drink (ULT)
murdered...and...by giving them...to drink (UST)**

God will make the evil people **drink** the waters that he turned to **blood**.

ULT

⁶ Because they poured out the blood of the saints and prophets, you have also given them blood to drink; it is what they deserve."

UST

⁶ The people who rebelled against you murdered your holy people and the prophets. So you are just in punishing them by giving them blood to drink. This is what they deserve."

Revelation 16:7

I heard the altar saying (ULT)

I heard someone at the altar answer (UST)

Here, **altar** here refers perhaps to someone at the altar. "I heard someone at the altar reply" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God Almighty, your judgments {are} true and righteous."

UST

⁷ Then I heard someone at the altar answer, "Yes, Lord God, you who rule over everything, you punish people rightly and justly."

Revelation 16:8

poured out his bowl (ULT)
out on the...what was contained in his bowl (UST)

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2](#). Alternate translation: “poured out God’s wrath from his bowl” (See: [Metonymy](#))

it was granted to it to scorch men (ULT)
He...was given permission...to make the sun so hot that it would scorch people (UST)

John speaks about the sun as if it were a person. (See: [Personification](#))

it was granted to it to scorch men (ULT)
He...was given permission...to make the sun so hot that it would scorch people (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “and caused the sun to severely burn the people” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ And the fourth {angel} poured out his bowl on the sun and it was granted to it to scorch men with fire.

UST

⁸ Then the fourth angel poured out on the sun what was contained in his bowl. He was given permission to make the sun so hot that it would scorch people with fire.

Revelation 16:9

men were scorched by the great heat (ULT)
the people were severely burned (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the extreme heat burned them badly” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

they blasphemed the name of God (ULT)
they said evil things about God (UST)

Here, **the name of God** represents God. Alternate translation: “they blasphemed God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the name of God who has the authority over these plagues (ULT)

God because he had the power to make them suffer in these ways (UST)

This phrase reminds readers of something they already know about **God**. It helps to explain why the people were blaspheming God. Alternate translation: “God because he has the power over these plagues” (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

the authority over these plagues (ULT)
the power to make them suffer in these ways (UST)

This refers to the power to inflict **these plague** on people, and the power to stop the plagues. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ And men were scorched by the great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has the authority over these plagues, but they did not repent to give him glory.

UST

⁹ So the people were severely burned, and they said evil things about God because he had the power to make them suffer in these ways. But they still refused to turn away from their evil behavior and refused to praise him.

Revelation 16:10

poured out his bowl (ULT)
poured out...what was contained in his bowl (UST)

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2](#). Alternate translation: “poured out God’s wrath from his bowl” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the throne of the beast (ULT)
the throne of the beast (UST)

The **throne of the beast** is where the beast reigns from. It may refer to the capital city of his kingdom. (See: [Metonymy](#))

its kingdom became darkened (ULT)
it...became...dark where the beast ruled (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the contents of the bowl made the kingdom of the beast dark” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

they chewed on (ULT)
So the beast and the people whom the beast ruled were biting their (UST)

Here, **they** refers to the people in the beast’s kingdom.

ULT

¹⁰ And the fifth {angel} poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom became darkened, and they chewed on their tongues because of the pain.

UST

¹⁰ When the fifth angel poured out on the throne of the beast what was contained in his bowl, it became dark where the beast ruled. So the beast and the people whom the beast ruled were biting their tongues because they were suffering intense pain.

Revelation 16:11

they blasphemed (ULT)

They insulted (UST)

Here, **they** refers to the people in the beast's kingdom.

ULT

11 And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pain and because of their sores, but they did not repent of their deeds.

UST

11 They insulted God who rules in heaven because their sores were so painful. But they refused to stop doing the evil things that they were doing.

Revelation 16:12

poured out his bowl (ULT) **poured out...what was contained in his bowl (UST)**

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2](#). Alternate translation: “poured out God’s wrath from his bowl” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the Euphrates, and its water was dried up (ULT) **Euphrates...The...water...the...river...dried up... it (UST)**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. You can also make it into two sentences. Alternate translation: “the Euphrates, and caused its water to dry up” or “the Euphrates. Its water dried up” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² And the sixth {angel} poured out his bowl into the great river, the Euphrates, and its water was dried up so that the way of the kings from the rising of the sun might be prepared.

UST

¹² Then the sixth angel poured out on the Euphrates River what was contained in his bowl. The water in the river dried up so that the rulers from the eastern countries could cross it with their armies.

Revelation 16:13

like frogs (ULT)

looked like frogs (UST)

A frog is a small animal that lives near water. Jews considered them unclean animals.

of the dragon (ULT)

of the dragon (UST)

A **dragon** is a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as “the devil or Satan.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3](#). (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

¹³ And I saw {coming} from the mouth of the dragon and from the mouth of the beast and from the mouth of the false prophet three unclean spirits like frogs,

UST

¹³ Then I saw evil spirits that looked like frogs. One came out of the mouth of the dragon, one from the mouth of the beast, and one from the mouth of the false prophet.

Revelation 16:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 for they are spirits of demons performing signs, who go out to the kings of the whole world to gather them together for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

UST

14 Those spirits were demons who were able to perform miracles. They went out to the rulers of the whole world in order to gather their armies. This is so that they will fight on the important day when Almighty God punishes his enemies.

Revelation 16:15

General Information:

Verse 15 is a break from the main story line of John's vision. These are words spoken by Jesus. The story line continues in verse 16.

Behold! I come as a thief! Blessed {is} the one who watches and keeps his garments, so that he might not walk around naked and they might see his shameful condition (ULT)
I heard the Lord Jesus say, "You must listen carefully to me: I am coming unexpectedly, like a thief. So I will be happy with those who stay alert and keep on living in the right way so that they will not be ashamed. They will be just like a person who keeps his clothes on so that he will not be ashamed in front of other people (UST)

This is in parentheses to show that it is not part of the story line in the vision. Rather, this is something that the Lord Jesus said. You can state explicitly that the Lord Jesus said this, as in the UST. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

I come as a thief (ULT)

I am coming unexpectedly, like a thief (UST)

Jesus will **come** at a time when people do not expect him, just as **a thief** comes when not expected. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 3:3](#). (See: [Simile](#))

keeps his garments (ULT)

keep on living in the right way...they will (UST)

Living the right way is spoken of as keeping one's clothes on. Alternate translation: "doing what is right, like keeping his clothes on" (See: [Metaphor](#))

keeps his garments (ULT)

keep on living in the right way...they will (UST)

Some versions translate this phrase as, "keeps his garments with him."

his...they might see...shameful condition (ULT)

they will...so that...will not be ashamed...in front of other people (UST)

Here the word **they** refers to other people.

ULT

15 ("Behold! I come as a thief! Blessed {is} the one who watches and keeps his garments, so that he might not walk around naked and they might see his shameful condition.")

UST

15 (I heard the Lord Jesus say, "You must listen carefully to me: I am coming unexpectedly, like a thief. So I will be happy with those who stay alert and keep on living in the right way so that they will not be ashamed. They will be just like a person who keeps his clothes on so that he will not be ashamed in front of other people.")

Revelation 16:16

they brought them together (ULT) gather the rulers (UST)

Alternate translation: “the spirits of the demons brought the kings and their armies together”

the place that is called (ULT) a place named (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the place that people call” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Armageddon (ULT) Armageddon (UST)

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

ULT

¹⁶ And they brought them together at the place that is called Armageddon in Hebrew.

UST

¹⁶ The evil spirits will gather the rulers at a place named in the Hebrew language Armageddon.

Revelation 16:17

Connecting Statement:

The seventh angel pours out the seventh bowl of God's wrath.

poured out his bowl (ULT) **poured out...what was contained in his bowl (UST)**

The word **bowl** refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2](#). Alternate translation: "poured out God's wrath from his bowl" (See: [Metonymy](#))

and a loud voice came out from the temple, from the throne (ULT)

As a result...with a loud voice from the throne in the very holy place (UST)

This means someone sitting on **the throne** or someone standing near the throne spoke loudly. It is unclear who is speaking. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

17 And the seventh {angel} poured out his bowl into the air and a loud voice came out from the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"

UST

17 Then the seventh angel poured out into the air what was contained in his bowl. As a result, someone said with a loud voice from the throne in the very holy place, "The time for God to punish rebellious people is finished."

Revelation 16:18

flashes of lightning (ULT)

lightning flashed (UST)

Use your language's way of describing what **lightning** looks like each time it appears. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:5](#).

And...sounds...crashes of thunder (ULT)

When the angel emptied his bowl...

rumblings...and thunder (UST)

These **sounds and crashes** are the loud noises that **thunder** makes. Use your language's way of describing the sound of thunder. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:5](#).

ULT

18 And there came about flashes of lightning and sounds and crashes of thunder, and a great earthquake happened—such as has not ever happened from {when} man had not {yet} been on the earth, so powerful {and} great {was} the earthquake.

UST

18 When the angel emptied his bowl, lightning flashed, there were rumblings and thunder, and the earth shook. It shook more violently than it had ever shaken since people first lived on earth.

Revelation 16:19

the great city became {split} into (ULT)
the very large city split into (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the earthquake split the great city into” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Babylon the Great was remembered before God (ULT)
God did not forget that...the people of Babylon...had sinned very much (UST)

This does not mean that God remembered something he had forgotten. Alternate translation: “then God remembered Babylon the Great” or “then God thought of Babylon the Great” or “then God started to pay attention to Babylon the Great” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to give to her the cup of the wine of the wrath of his fury (ULT)
So he made them drink a cup of the wine that made them suffer because he was angry with them (UST)

Here, **the wine** is a symbol of his **wrath**. Making people drink it is a symbol of punishing them. Alternate translation: “he made the people of that city drink the wine that represents his wrath” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

¹⁹ And the great city became {split} into three parts and the cities of the nations collapsed, and Babylon the Great was remembered before God to give to her the cup of the wine of the wrath of his fury.

UST

¹⁹ As a result, the very large city split into three parts. God also destroyed the cities in the other nations. God did not forget that the people of Babylon had sinned very much. So he made them drink a cup of the wine that made them suffer because he was angry with them.

Revelation 16:20

the mountains were not found (ULT) **the mountains became flat land (UST)**

The inability to see any **mountains** is metonymy expressing the idea that no mountains existed any longer. Alternate translation: “there were no longer any mountains” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁰ And every island fled, and the mountains were not found.

UST

²⁰ Also as a result of the earthquake, every island disappeared, and the mountains became flat land.

Revelation 16:21

a talent {in weight (ULT)} each weighing thirty-three kilograms (UST)

You may convert the **talent** to a modern measure. Alternate translation: "33 kilograms" (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

²¹ And great hailstones, about a talent {in weight}, come down from heaven upon men, and the men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because that plague is exceedingly great.

UST

²¹ Huge hailstones, each weighing thirty-three kilograms, fell from the sky onto the people. Then people blasphemed God because he had punished them in this terrible way, and because the hailstones were very large.

Revelation 17

Revelation 17 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins to describe how God will destroy Babylon.

Special concepts in this chapter

Prostitute

Scripture often pictures idolatrous Jews as adulterous people and sometimes as prostitutes. This is not the reference here. The translator should allow this illustration to be vague. (See: [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

Seven hills

This possibly refers to the city of Rome, which was known as the city on seven hills. However, the translator should not attempt to identify Rome in the translation.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

John uses many different metaphors in this chapter. He explains some of their meanings, but allows them to remain relatively unclear. The translator should attempt to do the same. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“The beast you saw existed, does not exist now, but is about to come up”

This and similar phrases in this chapter contrast the beast with Jesus. Jesus is called “the one who is, and who was, and who is to come” elsewhere in the Book of Revelation. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. This sentence in 17:11 is a paradox: “the beast ... is itself also an eighth king; but it is one of those seven kings.” The translator should not attempt to resolve this paradox. It should remain a mystery. ([Revelation 17:11](#))

Revelation 17:1

General Information:

John begins to describe the part of his vision about the great prostitute.

the judgment of the great prostitute (ULT) how God will punish the prostitute, the woman who represents (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun “judgment”, you can express it with a verb. Alternate translation: “how God will judge the great prostitute” or “how God will condemn the great prostitute”(See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

of the great prostitute (ULT) the prostitute, the woman who represents (UST)

Here, **the great prostitute** represents a certain sinful city. Alternate translation: “the prostitute that everyone knows about” or “a certain sinful city” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

on many waters (ULT) in which there are many canals of water (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a more specific word for the kind of water. Alternate translation: “on many rivers” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹ And one of the seven angels who has the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters,

UST

¹ One of the seven angels, who had one of the seven bowls, came to me and said, “Come with me and I will show you how God will punish the prostitute, the woman who represents the city in which there are many canals of water.

Revelation 17:2

**those living on the earth became drunk from the wine of her sexual immorality (ULT)
people on the earth acted immorally...drunk on wine that she gave them (UST)**

Here to be **drunk from the wine of her sexual immorality** represents fully giving themselves over to doing sexually immoral acts. Alternate translation: "the people of the earth fully engaged in every kind of sexual immorality" (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

**the wine of her sexual immorality (ULT)
acted immorally...wine...she gave them (UST)**

Here, **the wine** represents **sexual immorality**. Alternate translation: "her wine, that is, they were sexually immoral" (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

**of her sexual immorality (ULT)
acted immorally...she gave them (UST)**

This may well have a double meaning: **sexual immorality** among people and also the worship of false gods. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² with whom the kings of the earth committed sexual immorality and those living on the earth became drunk from the wine of her sexual immorality."

UST

² The kings of the earth have acted immorally and idolatrously with her. The people on the earth acted immorally in the same way. It was as if they had gotten drunk on wine that she gave them."

Revelation 17:3

he carried me away in the Spirit to a wilderness (ULT)

God's Spirit took control of me, and the angel carried me away to a desolate area (UST)

The setting changes from John being in heaven to being in a **wilderness**. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

³ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast being full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

UST

³ Then God's Spirit took control of me, and the angel carried me away to a desolate area. There I saw a woman who was sitting on a red beast. The beast had written names all over itself. They were names that insulted God. The beast had seven heads and ten horns.

Revelation 17:4

pearls (ULT)

pearls (UST)

A pearl is a beautiful and valuable white bead that is formed inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean.

(See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

⁴ And the woman was dressed in purple and scarlet and had been adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of detestable things and the impurities of her sexual immorality,

UST

⁴ The woman was wearing purple and red clothes. She had jewelry of gold, precious stones, and pearls; she held in her hand a golden cup. The cup was full of something to drink that stands for the detestable and filthy things that she does when she commits sexual immorality.

Revelation 17:5

on her forehead had been written a name (ULT)

a name written on her forehead, a name (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had written on her forehead a name" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Babylon the Great (ULT)

This woman is Babylon, the very evil city (UST)

If it needs to be made explicit that the name refers to the woman, it can be put in a new sentence. Alternate translation: "I am Babylon, the powerful one" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁵ and on her forehead had been written a name: "Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Prostitutes and of the Abominations of the Earth."

UST

⁵ There was a name written on her forehead, a name with a secret meaning. It is "This woman is Babylon, the very evil city! She is the mother of all the prostitutes on the earth. She teaches them to do all the filthy, immoral things in the world."

Revelation 17:6

General Information:

The angel begins to explain to John the meaning of the prostitute and the red beast. The angel explains these things through verse 18.

is drunk with the blood...And...with the blood (ULT)

had become drunk because she had drunk the blood...I saw that...because she had drunk the blood (UST)

Alternate translation: "was drunk because she had drunk the blood ... and had drunk the blood"

the...of...witnesses of Jesus (ULT)

of...proclaiming the truth about...Jesus (UST)

Alternate translation: "of the believers who have died because they told others about Jesus"

I marveled (ULT)

saw her, I was...amazed (UST)

Alternate translation: "I was amazed" or "I was surprised"

ULT

⁶ And I saw that the woman is drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus, and having seen her, I marveled with great wonder.

UST

⁶ I saw that the woman had become drunk because she had drunk the blood of God's people, those who had suffered for proclaiming the truth about Jesus. When I saw her, I was completely amazed.

Revelation 17:7

Why are you astonished (ULT)

Do not be amazed (UST)

The angel used this question to gently scold John. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you could express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not be astonished!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁷ But the angel said to me, "Why are you astonished? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that is carrying her, that has the seven heads and the ten horns.

UST

⁷ The angel said to me, "Do not be amazed. I will explain to you the hidden meaning of the woman and of the beast on which she rides, the beast with the seven heads and the ten horns.

Revelation 17:8

the abyss (ULT)
the shaft that went down but had no ending (UST)

The **abyss** is an extremely deep narrow hole. This could mean: (1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever. (2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in [Revelation 9:1](#).

and it will go to destruction (ULT)
Eventually God will destroy him (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **destruction**, you can express it with a verb. Alternate translation: “and then he will be destroyed” or “and God will destroy him” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

it will go to destruction (ULT)
Eventually God...will destroy him (UST)

The certainty of what will happen in the future is spoken of as if the beast were going to it. (See: [Metaphor](#))

whose names have not been written (ULT)
names have not been written (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “those whose names God did not write” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ The beast that you saw existed, does not exist now, but is about to come up from the abyss, and it will go to destruction, and those who live on the earth, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life since the foundation of the world, will be astounded when they see the beast that existed, and does not exist, but will come.

UST

⁸ The beast that you saw lived previously. Eventually God will destroy him, but now he is not alive. He is about to come up from the shaft that went down but had no ending. When that beast appears again, the people on the earth will be amazed. They are people whose names have not been written in the Book of Life before God created the world.

Revelation 17:9

**Here {is} the mind that has wisdom (ULT)
People need to think wisely to understand
this (UST)**

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract nouns **mind** and **wisdom**, you can express them with “think” and “wise” or “wisely.”
Alternate translation: “You need to think wisely in order to understand this” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

**Here {is} the mind that has wisdom (ULT)
People need to think wisely to understand
this (UST)**

You can state explicitly why a wise **mind** is needed. Alternate translation: “A wise mind is needed in order to understand this” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

The seven heads are seven hills

Here, **are** means “stand for” or “represent.”

ULT

⁹ Here {is} the mind that has wisdom:
The seven heads are seven hills where
the woman is seated on them, and they
are seven kings;

UST

⁹ People need to think wisely to
understand this: The seven heads of the
beast on which the woman sits
symbolize the seven hills of the city that
the woman represents. They also
symbolize seven rulers.

Revelation 17:10

five have fallen (ULT)

Five of those rulers have died (UST)

The angel speaks of dying as falling. Alternate translation: “five kings have died” (See: [Metaphor](#))

one is (ULT)

One is still alive (UST)

Alternate translation: “one is king now” or “one king is alive now”

the other has not yet come (ULT)

The seventh ruler has not yet come (UST)

Not having existed yet is spoken of as not yet having **come**. Alternate translation: “the other has not yet become king” (See: [Metaphor](#))

when he comes, it is necessary for him to remain a little while (ULT)

When...he comes, he must remain for only a short time (UST)

The angel speaks of someone continuing to be king as if he were remaining in a place. Alternate translation: “he can be king only for a little while” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁰ five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come. But when he comes, it is necessary for him to remain a little while.

UST

¹⁰ Five of those rulers have died. One is still alive. The seventh ruler has not yet come. When he comes, he must remain for only a short time.

Revelation 17:11

**is...from among those seven (ULT)
will be...the...He...actually one of those seven
rulers (UST)**

This could mean: (1) the beast rules twice: first as one of the seven kings, and then as the eighth king. (2) the beast belongs to that group of seven kings because he is like them.

**is going to destruction (ULT)
God will certainly destroy him (UST)**

The certainty of what will happen in the future is spoken of as if the beast were **going** to it. Alternate translation: "it will certainly be destroyed" or "God will surely destroy it" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹¹ And the beast that was but is not, is itself also an eighth {king}; but is from among those seven and is going to destruction.

UST

¹¹ The beast that lived before and then was not alive will be the eighth ruler. He is actually one of those seven rulers, but God will certainly destroy him.

Revelation 17:12

Connecting Statement:

The angel explains the meaning of the ten horns of the beast.

for one hour (ULT) together...as if it were for only one hour (UST)

If your language does not divide the day into 24 hours, you may need to use a more general expression. Alternate translation: "for a very short time" or "for a very small part of a day" (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

12 And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they will receive authority as kings for one hour with the beast.

UST

12 The ten horns that you saw represent ten rulers who have not yet begun to rule. They will receive authority in order to rule people together with the beast, but they will rule for only a short time, as if it were for only one hour.

Revelation 17:13

**These have one mind (ULT)
Those rulers will all agree to do the same
thing (UST)**

Alternate translation: "These all think the same thing" or "These all agree to do the same thing"

ULT

¹³ These have one mind, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

UST

¹³ Those rulers will all agree to do the same thing. As a result they will give to the beast their right and authority to rule people.

Revelation 17:14

the Lamb (ULT)

the lamb (UST)

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

are} called and chosen and faithful (ULT) are the ones whom God has chosen and called to himself, and who keep serving him faithfully (UST)

This refers to one group of people. If your language does not use this passive form, you can state the words **called** and **chosen** in active form. Alternate translation: “the called, chosen, and faithful ones” or “the ones whom God has called and chosen, who are faithful to him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁴ They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and those with him {are} called and chosen and faithful.”

UST

¹⁴ The rulers and the beast will fight against the lamb. He will defeat them because he is the Lord who rules over all other lords and the King who rules over all other kings. The people who are with him are the ones whom God has chosen and called to himself, and who keep serving him faithfully.”

Revelation 17:15

The waters that you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues (ULT)

The waters that you saw in the city represent many different kinds of people, and many different groups of people, and different languages that the people speak, where the prostitute sits (UST)

Here, **are** stands for “represent.” (See: [Metaphor](#))

The waters (ULT)

The waters (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a more specific word for the kind of **water**. See how you translated “many waters” in [Revelation 17:1](#). Alternate translation: “The rivers” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

multitudes (ULT)

many different (UST)

large groups of people

tongues (ULT)

different languages that the people speak (UST)

Here, **tongues** refers to people who speak the languages. See how you translated this in [Revelation 10:11](#). (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁵ And he says to me, “The waters that you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.

UST

¹⁵ Then the angel said to me, “The waters that you saw in the city represent many different kinds of people, and many different groups of people, and different languages that the people speak, where the prostitute sits.

Revelation 17:16

And...they will make her desolate...naked (ULT)

The...take away everything that is in the city as if they were...leaving...it...naked...They will destroy...as if (UST)

Alternate translation: "they will steal everything that she has and leave her with nothing"

they will devour her flesh (ULT)

it...devouring...flesh (UST)

Destroying her completely is spoken of as eating all **her flesh**.

Alternate translation: "they will destroy her completely" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁶ And the ten horns that you saw, and the beast—they will hate the prostitute, and they will make her desolate and naked, and they will devour her flesh, and they will burn her completely with fire,

UST

¹⁶ The ten horns that you saw represent rulers. They and the beast will hate the prostitute. So they will take away everything that is in the city as if they were leaving it naked. They will destroy it as if devouring flesh, and they will burn it completely.

Revelation 17:17

For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give ... until God's words are fulfilled

They would agree to give their power **to the beast**, but it would not be that they want to obey **God**. Alternate translation: "For God has put it into their hearts to agree to give their kingdom to the beast until God's words are fulfilled, and by doing this, they would carry out God's purpose"

for God has put into their hearts to do (ULT)
They will do that because God has caused them to decide to do (UST)

Here, **heart** is a metonym for desires. (See: [Metonymy](#))

for God has put into their hearts to do (ULT)
They will do that because God has caused them to decide to do (UST)

Making them want to do something is spoken of as putting it **into their hearts** to do it. Alternate translation: "God has made them want to do" (See: [Metaphor](#))

their...purpose...kingdom (ULT)
them...what...wants them to do...rule (UST)

Alternate translation: "their authority" or "their kingly authority"

until the words of God will be fulfilled (ULT)
until what God has said is fulfilled (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "until God fulfills what he said will happen" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁷ for God has put into their hearts to do his purpose and to do one purpose and to give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God will be fulfilled.

UST

¹⁷ They will do that because God has caused them to decide to do what he wants them to do. As a result, they will let the beast have their power to rule until what God has said is fulfilled.

Revelation 17:18

Connecting Statement:

The angel finishes speaking to John about the prostitute and the beast.

is (ULT) represents (UST)

Here, **is** stands for “represents.” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the great city that has a kingdom (ULT) the very evil city whose leaders rule (UST)

When it says that the **city** rules, it means that the leader of the city rules. Alternate translation: “the great city whose leader rules” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

18 And the woman that you saw is the great city that has a kingdom over the kings of the earth.”

UST

18 The prostitute that you saw represents the very evil city whose leaders rule over the kings of the earth.”

Revelation 18

Revelation 18 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verses 1-8.

Special concepts in this chapter

Prophecy

The angel prophesies about Babylon falling, which here means being destroyed. It is spoken of as having already happened. This is common in prophecy. It emphasizes that the coming judgment will certainly happen. The angel also prophesies that the people will lament over Babylon falling. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [judge](#), [judgment](#) and [Symbolic Prophecy](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Prophecy frequently uses metaphors. This chapter has a slightly different apocalyptic style than the Book of Revelation overall. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Revelation 18:1

Connecting Statement:

Another angel comes down from heaven and speaks. This is a different angel than the one in the previous chapter, who spoke about the prostitute and the beast.

ULT

¹ After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined by his glory.

UST

¹ After this I saw another angel, one who had great authority, coming down from heaven. The earth became bright because he was shining so intensely.

Revelation 18:2

Fallen {is} Babylon the great (ULT) **God is about to completely destroy the very** **evil city of Babylon (UST)**

The angel speaks of **Babylon** having been destroyed as if it had fallen. See how you translated this in [Revelation 14:8](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

is} Babylon the great (ULT) **the very evil city of Babylon (UST)**

The angel speaks of the city of Babylon as if it were a prostitute. (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

² And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen {is} Babylon the great! And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a refuge of every unclean spirit and a refuge of every unclean and detestable bird. ^[1]"

UST

² He shouted with a very loud voice, "God is about to completely destroy the very evil city of Babylon. As a result, all kinds of evil spirits will live there, and all kinds of foul and detestable birds will live there. Babylon is like a prostitute

Revelation 18:3

all the nations (ULT)

all the people groups (UST)

Here, **the nations** is a metonym for the people of those nations.
Alternate translation: “the people of all the nations” (See: [Metonymy](#))

have drunk from the wine of her immoral passion (ULT)

with...engaged with her in the passion of sexual immorality, which is like getting drunk on too much wine (UST)

Here, drinking **from the wine of her immoral passion** is a symbol for participating in her sexually immoral passion. Alternate translation: “have become sexually immoral like her” or “have become drunk like her in sexual sin” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

of her immoral passion (ULT)
engaged with her in the passion of sexual immorality (UST)

This may well have a double meaning: literal sexual immorality and also the worship of false gods. (See: [Metaphor](#))

have committed immorality with her (ULT)
have done the same things with her (UST)

Babylon is spoken of as if it were a prostitute who has caused other people to sin along **with her**. (See: [Personification](#))

merchants (ULT)
merchants of the earth (UST)

A merchant is a person who sells things.

from the...her immoral...power...of...sensual way of living (ULT)
with...engaged with her...of...on too much wine...strongly desired and bought from the merchants...many luxuries things (UST)

Alternate translation: “because she spent so much money on sexual immorality”

ULT

³ For all the nations have drunk from the wine of her immoral passion and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her and the merchants of the earth have become rich from the power of her sensual way of living.”

UST

³ with whom all the people groups engaged with her in the passion of sexual immorality, which is like getting drunk on too much wine. Yes, and the kings of the earth have done the same things with her. The merchants of the earth have become rich because the people of those cities strongly desired and bought from the merchants many luxuries things.”

Revelation 18:4

another voice (ULT)

Jesus speak (UST)

Here, **voice** refers to the speaker, which is probably either Jesus or the Father. Alternate translation: “someone else” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out from her, my people, so that you might not share in her sins, and so that you might not receive from her plagues.

UST

⁴ I heard Jesus speak from heaven. He said, “My people, flee from that Babylon in order that you do not sin as those people do. If you sin as they do, I will punish you in those seven different ways, just as I will punish them.

Revelation 18:5

her sins have piled up as far as heaven (ULT)
their sins have been piled up to heaven (UST)

The voice speaks of Babylon's **sins** as if they were objects that could form a pile. Alternate translation: "her sins are so many they are like a pile that reaches heaven" (See: [Metaphor](#))

has remembered (ULT)
remembers (UST)

This does not mean that God **remembered** something he had forgotten. See how you translated "called to mind" in [Revelation 16:19](#). Alternate translation: "has thought of" or "has started to pay attention to"

ULT

⁵ For her sins have piled up as far as heaven, and God has remembered her sinful actions.

UST

⁵ It is as though their sins have been piled up to heaven and God remembers them, so now he will punish them."

Revelation 18:6

**Give back to her even as she has given (ULT)
To the angels whom God assigned to punish
Babylon, Jesus said, "Pay back the people of
that city to the same extent...as they caused
other people to suffer (UST)**

The voice speaks of punishment as if it were repayment. Alternate translation: "Punish her as she has punished others" (See: [Metaphor](#))

**repay her double, twice as much (ULT)
Cause them to suffer twice as much (UST)**

The voice speaks of punishment as if it were repayment. Alternate translation: "punish her twice as much" (See: [Metaphor](#))

**in the cup that she mixed, mix double for her (ULT)
Cause them to suffer twice as much (UST)**

The voice speaks of causing others to suffer as preparing strong wine for them to drink. Alternate translation: "prepare for her the wine of suffering that is twice as strong as what she made for others" or "make her suffer twice as much as she made others suffer" (See: [Metaphor](#))

**mix...double (ULT)
Cause them to suffer twice as much...Cause them to suffer twice as much
(UST)**

Here, **mix double** could mean: (1) they should prepare twice the amount. (2) they should make it twice as strong.

ULT

⁶ Give back to her even as she has given, and repay her double, twice as much according to her deeds; in the cup that she mixed, mix double for her.

UST

⁶ To the angels whom God assigned to punish Babylon, Jesus said, "Pay back the people of that city to the same extent that they harmed other people. Cause them to suffer twice as much as they caused other people to suffer.

Revelation 18:7

she glorified herself (ULT)
that Babylon, like a woman, has honored herself (UST)

Alternate translation: "the people of Babylon glorified themselves"

For she says in her heart (ULT)
Do that because in her mind she thought (UST)

Here, **heart** is a metonym for a person's mind or thoughts. Alternate translation: "For she says to herself" (See: [Metonymy](#))

I sit {as} a queen (ULT)
I rule...as a queen (UST)

She claims to be a ruler, having her own authority. (See: [Simile](#))

I am not a widow (ULT)
I am not...a widow (UST)

She implies that she will not be dependent on other people. (See: [Metaphor](#))

I will certainly not see mourning (ULT)
I will never mourn as widows do (UST)

Experiencing mourning is spoken of as seeing **mourning**. Alternate translation: "I will never mourn" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ As much as she glorified herself and lived in luxury, give her just as much torture and grief. For she says in her heart, 'I sit {as} a queen and I am not a widow and I will certainly not see mourning.'

UST

⁷ To the same extent that Babylon, like a woman, has honored herself and done the things she wanted to do, to that extent torment her and cause her to grieve. Do that because in her mind she thought, 'I rule as a queen! I am not a widow, and I will never mourn as widows do!'

Revelation 18:8

her plagues will come (ULT)
terrible calamities will come upon her (UST)

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

she will be consumed by fire (ULT)
burn up (UST)

Being burned up by fire is spoken of as being eaten up **by fire**.
 Alternate translation: “she will be completely burned up” (See: [Metaphor](#))

she will be consumed by fire (ULT)
burn up (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “fire will completely burn her up” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ Therefore, in one day her plagues will come: death and mourning and famine, and she will be consumed by fire, for the Lord God who judges her {is} mighty.”

UST

⁸ So in one day, terrible calamities will come upon her. The people in that city will die, others will mourn for them, people will be hungry because there will be no food, and the city will burn up. The Lord God is able to punish her because he is mighty.”

Revelation 18:9

General Information:

In these verses the word **her** refers to the city of Babylon.

**And...committed sexual immorality...lived in luxury with her (ULT)
have acted immorally with her...have done just what they wanted to do with her will weep (UST)**

Alternate translation: "sinned sexually and did whatever they wanted just as the people of Babylon did"

ULT

⁹ And the kings of the earth who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning,

UST

⁹ The kings on earth who have acted immorally with her and have done just what they wanted to do with her will weep and mourn for her when they see the smoke of the fire that will burn there.

Revelation 18:10

because of the fear of her torment (ULT)
because they will be afraid that they will
suffer just as she does (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **torment**, you can express it with a verb. Alternate translation: “because they were afraid that they would be tormented like Babylon” or “because they were afraid that God would torment them as he torments Babylon” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Woe, woe (ULT)
How terrible it is (UST)

The word **Woe** is repeated for emphasis.

your judgment has come (ULT)
God is punishing her (UST)

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

ULT

¹⁰ having stood at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, “Woe, woe to the great city, Babylon, the powerful city! For in one hour your judgment has come.”

UST

¹⁰ They will stand far away from Babylon because they will be afraid that they will suffer just as she does. They will say, “How terrible it is for Babylon, that strong city! God is punishing her suddenly and swiftly!”

Revelation 18:11

mourn for her (ULT)

will mourn for her (UST)

Alternate translation: "mourn for the people of Babylon"

ULT

11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, because no one buys her cargo anymore—

UST

11 The merchants of the earth will weep and will mourn for her because no one in her will ever again buy the things that they have to sell.

Revelation 18:12

and...precious stone...pearls (ULT)

See how you translated these in [Revelation 17:4](#). Alternate translation: “many kinds of expensive stones”

fine linen (ULT)

The **fine linen** is an expensive cloth made from flax. See how you translated “linen” in [Revelation 15:6](#).

purple cloth and silk and scarlet cloth (ULT)

Purple cloth is a very dark red cloth that was very expensive at that time. Silk is a soft, strong cloth made from the fine string that silkworms make when they make their cocoons. Scarlet cloth was an expensive red cloth. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

every...ivory vessel (ULT)

Alternate translation: “all kinds of containers made of ivory”

ivory vessel (ULT)

Ivory is a beautiful hard, white material that people get from the tusks or teeth of very large animals such as elephants or walruses. Alternate translation: “container made from tusks” or “container made from valuable animal teeth” (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

marble (ULT)

Marble is a precious stone that is used for building and to make statues, furniture, and many other things. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

¹² cargo of gold and silver and precious stone and pearls and fine linen and purple cloth and silk and scarlet cloth and every scented wood and every ivory vessel and every vessel from precious wood and bronze and iron and marble

UST

¹²⁻¹³ They sell ornaments made of gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls. They sell expensive cloth made of fine linen and silk, expensive cloth that is dyed purple and crimson. They sell all kinds of rare wood, all kinds of items made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble. They sell cinnamon, spice, perfume, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, and grain. They sell cattle, sheep, horses, and chariots. They even sell human beings as slaves.

Revelation 18:13

cinnamon (ULT)

Cinnamon is a spice that smells nice and comes from the bark of a certain kind of tree.

spice (ULT)

Spice is a substance used to add flavor to food or a good smell to oil.

ULT

13 and cinnamon and spice and incense and myrrh and frankincense and wine and oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep and horses and chariots and slaves and souls of men.

UST

12-13 They sell ornaments made of gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls. They sell expensive cloth made of fine linen and silk, expensive cloth that is dyed purple and crimson. They sell all kinds of rare wood, all kinds of items made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble. They sell cinnamon, spice, perfume, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, and grain. They sell cattle, sheep, horses, and chariots. They even sell human beings as slaves.

Revelation 18:14

autumn fruit (ULT) good things (UST)

The **autumn fruit** refers to fruit that ripens in the fall. Here, it is a metaphor for “result” or “outcome.” Alternate translation: “result” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the desire of your soul

Alternate translation: “what you wanted very much”

has perished from you, and they will certainly not be found any longer (ULT) have vanished! They will be gone forever (UST)

Not to **be found** stands for not existing. Alternate translation: “has vanished, and they will never exist again” (See: [Metaphor](#))

has perished from you, and they will certainly not be found any longer (ULT) have vanished! They will be gone forever (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand this figure of speech, you can state it in active form. Alternate translation: “has vanished; you will never have them again” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁴ And your autumn fruit, the desire of your soul, has gone away from you, and all the luxury and the splendor has perished from you, and they will certainly not be found any longer.

UST

¹⁴ The good things you people longed to have are gone! All your luxurious and splendid possessions have vanished! They will be gone forever!

Revelation 18:15

**because of the fear of her torment (ULT)
because...will be afraid that they will suffer
just as the city has. They (UST)**

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract nouns **fear** and **torment**, you can express them as verbs. Alternate translation: “because they will be afraid of God tormenting them the way he torments her” or “because they will be afraid of suffering the way she is suffering” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

**weeping and mourning loudly (ULT)
will weep and mourn (UST)**

The merchants are the ones who will be **weeping and mourning loudly**. Alternate translation: “and the merchants will weep and mourn loudly”

ULT

¹⁵ The merchants of these things who became rich will stand at a distance from her because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning loudly,

UST

¹⁵ The merchants who sold these things and who had become rich will stand far away because they will be afraid that they will suffer just as the city has. They will weep and mourn,

Revelation 18:16

to the great city— having been dressed in fine linen (ULT)

to that great city! That city was like a woman, dressed in clothes made of fine linen cloth (UST)

Throughout this chapter, Babylon is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “the great city, which was like a woman dressed in fine linen” (See: [Metaphor](#))

to the great city— having been dressed in fine linen (ULT)

to that great city! That city was like a woman, dressed in clothes made of fine linen cloth (UST)

The merchants speak of Babylon as being **dressed in fine linen** because its people were dressed in fine linen. Alternate translation: “the great city, whose women were dressed in fine linen” (See: [Metonymy](#))

having been dressed in fine linen (ULT)

That city was like a woman, dressed in clothes made of fine linen cloth (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “that wore fine linen” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

adorned with gold (ULT)

adorned with gold (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “adorned herself with gold” or “adorned themselves with gold” or “wore gold” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

precious stones (ULT)

precious stones (UST)

Alternate translation: “valuable gems” or “treasured gems”

pearls (ULT)

pearls (UST)

Pearls are beautiful and valuable white beads that are formed inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean. See how you translated this in [Revelation 17:4](#). (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

¹⁶ saying, “Woe, woe to the great city— having been dressed in fine linen and purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls—

UST

¹⁶ and they will say, “Terrible things have happened to that great city! That city was like a woman, dressed in clothes made of fine linen cloth and expensive cloth dyed purple and crimson, and adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls.

Revelation 18:17

work the sea (ULT)
who earn their living by traveling on the ocean (UST)

The phrase **work the sea** refers to what they do on the sea.
Alternate translation: “who travel on the sea to make their living” or “who sail on the sea to different places in order to trade things” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁷ for in one hour such great wealth has been destroyed.” And every ship’s captain and all who sail to a place and sailors and as many as work the sea stood at a distance

UST

¹⁷ But suddenly and swiftly God has destroyed all these expensive things.” Every ship’s captain, all people who travel by ship, all sailors, and all others who earn their living by traveling on the ocean will stand far away from the city.”

Revelation 18:18

**What city {is} like the great city (ULT)
No other city has ever been like that great
city (UST)**

This question shows the people the importance of the **city** of Babylon. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you could translate it as a statement. Alternate translation: "No other city is like the great city, Babylon!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁸ and were crying out, seeing the smoke of her burning, saying, "What city {is} like the great city?"

UST

¹⁸ When they see the smoke of the fire that is burning there, they will shout, "No other city has ever been like that great city!"

Revelation 18:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 And they threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and mourning, saying, "Woe, woe to the great city in which all who have {their} ships in the sea became rich from her wealth, for in one hour she was destroyed."

UST

19 They will throw dust on their heads to show that they are sad, and they will shout, weep, and mourn. They will say, "Terrible things have happened to Babylon. That city made many people rich, the people who had ships that sail on the ocean in order to sell their expensive things. God has suddenly and swiftly destroyed that city!"

Revelation 18:20

God has pronounced your judgment against her (ULT)

rejoice. You must rejoice; God has justly punished the people there...they acted so terribly toward you (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **judgment**, you can express it with the verb "judge." Alternate translation: "God has judged her for you" or "God has judged her because of the bad things she did to you" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²⁰ "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and saints and apostles and prophets, for God has pronounced your judgment against her!"

UST

²⁰ Then someone spoke from heaven saying, "You who live in heaven, rejoice over what has happened to Babylon! You who are God's people, including you apostles and prophets, rejoice. You must rejoice; God has justly punished the people there because they acted so terribly toward you!"

Revelation 18:21

Connecting Statement:

Another angel begins to speak about Babylon. This is a different angel than the ones who have spoken previously.

a great millstone (ULT) a large stone for grinding grain (UST)

A **millstone** large round stone used to crush grain.

Babylon, the great city, will be thrown down with violence and will certainly not be seen anymore (ULT)

You people in the great city of Babylon, God will throw down your city so that it will disappear...that stone disappeared in the ocean! Your city will be gone forever (UST)

To be **thrown down** and **not be seen anymore** speaks of complete destruction of the **city**. Alternate translation: "Babylon will be completely destroyed and will no longer exist" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Babylon, the great city, will be thrown down with violence and will certainly not be seen anymore (ULT)

You people in the great city of Babylon, God will throw down your city so that it will disappear...that stone disappeared in the ocean! Your city will be gone forever (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God will violently throw down Babylon, the great city, and it will no longer exist" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

will certainly not be seen anymore (ULT) so that it will disappear...forever (UST)

Not being **seen** here means that it will not exist. Alternate translation: "it will not exist anymore" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²¹ And one mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "In this way, Babylon, the great city, will be thrown down with violence and will certainly not be seen anymore,

UST

²¹ Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large stone for grinding grain, and he threw it into the ocean. Then he said, "You people in the great city of Babylon, God will throw down your city so that it will disappear just as that stone disappeared in the ocean! Your city will be gone forever!

Revelation 18:22

**the sound made by harpists and musicians and flute players and trumpeters will certainly not be heard anymore in you (ULT)
In your city...anyone playing harps...singing, playing flutes, or blowing trumpets. There will no longer be any skilled workers making things (UST)**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “no one in your city will ever again hear the sound that harpists, musicians, flute players, and trumpeters make” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

**in you (ULT)
In your city...be any skilled workers making things (UST)**

The angel speaks as if Babylon were there listening to him. Alternate translation: “in Babylon” (See: [Apostrophe](#))

**will certainly not be heard anymore in you (ULT)
In your city...There will no longer be any skilled workers making things (UST)**

Not being **heard** here means that they will not be there. Alternate translation: “they will not be in your city anymore” (See: [Metonymy](#))

**every craftsman will certainly not be found in you (ULT)
In your city...there will never again be...be any skilled workers making things...There will never again be people grinding grain at the mills (UST)**

Not being **found** there means that they will not be there. Alternate translation: “no craftsman of any kind will be in your city” (See: [Metonymy](#))

**the sound of a mill will certainly not be heard anymore in you (ULT)
never again be people grinding grain at the mills (UST)**

The sound of something not being **heard** means that no one will make that sound. Alternate translation: “no one will use a mill in your city” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²² and the sound made by harpists and musicians and flute players and trumpeters will certainly not be heard anymore in you, and every craftsman will certainly not be found in you anymore, and the sound of a mill will certainly not be heard anymore in you.

UST

²² In your city, there will never again be anyone playing harps, singing, playing flutes, or blowing trumpets. There will no longer be any skilled workers making things. There will never again be people grinding grain at the mills.

Revelation 18:23

Connecting Statement:

The angel who threw the millstone finishes talking.

the voices of the bridegroom and the bride will certainly not be heard in you anymore (ULT)

There will never again...be the happy voices of any bridegroom...and his bride...merchants (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “no one will ever again hear in Babylon the happy voices of a bridegroom and a bride” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

will certainly not be heard in you anymore (ULT)

There will never again...merchants (UST)

Not being **heard** here means that they will not be there. Alternate translation: “will not be in your city anymore” (See: [Metonymy](#))

your merchants were the princes of the earth (ULT)

your...merchants...were the most important men in the world (UST)

The angel speaks of important and powerful people as if they were **princes**. Alternate translation: “your merchants were like princes of the earth” or “your merchants were the most important men in the world” (See: [Metaphor](#))

all the nations were deceived by your sorcery (ULT)

You used witchcraft to deceive people of all groups of people (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “you deceived the people of the nations with your magic spells” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²³ And the light of a lamp will certainly not shine in you anymore, and the voices of the bridegroom and the bride will certainly not be heard in you anymore, for your merchants were the princes of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.

UST

²³ No lamp will ever again shine there. There will never again be the happy voices of any bridegroom and his bride. God will destroy your city because your merchants were the most important men in the world. You used witchcraft to deceive people of all groups of people.

Revelation 18:24

in her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all those who have been killed on the earth (ULT)

You are...responsible for killing the prophets and others of God's people. Indeed, you are guilty of every murder committed on the earth (UST)

Here, **blood** being **found** means that the people of the city were guilty of killing people. Alternate translation: "in her is the guilt for the death of the prophets and saints, along with all the other people in the world who were killed" (See: [Metonymy](#))

in her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all those who have been killed on the earth (ULT)

You are...responsible for killing the prophets and others of God's people. Indeed, you are guilty of every murder committed on the earth (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "Babylon is guilty of killing the prophets and believers and all the other people in the world who were killed" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all those who have been killed on the earth."

UST

²⁴ You are also responsible for killing the prophets and others of God's people. Indeed, you are guilty of every murder committed on the earth!"

Revelation 19

Revelation 19 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The beginning of chapter 19 concludes the topic of Babylon falling.

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verses 1-8.

Special concepts in this chapter

Songs

The Book of Revelation often describes heaven as a place where people sing. They worship God with songs. This illustrates that heaven is a place where God is always worshiped. (See: [heaven](#), [sky](#), [heavens](#), [heavenly](#))

Wedding celebration

The wedding celebration or feast is an important image in Scripture. Jewish culture often pictured paradise, or life with God after death, as a feast. Here, the wedding feast is for the Lamb, who is Jesus, and his bride, who is all his people.

Revelation 19:1

General Information:

This is the next part of John's vision. Here he describes the rejoicing in heaven over the fall of the great prostitute, who is the city of Babylon.

I heard (ULT)

I heard (UST)

Here, **I** refers to John.

Hallelujah (ULT)

Hallelujah (UST)

The word **Hallelujah** means "Praise God" or "Let us praise God."

ULT

¹ After these things I heard as if the loud voice of a large crowd in heaven saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power to our God,

UST

¹ After these things I heard what sounded like a huge crowd in heaven. They were shouting things like, "Hallelujah! He has saved us! Our God is glorious and mighty!

Revelation 19:2

the great prostitute (ULT)
the very evil city that was like a prostitute (UST)

Here John refers to the city of Babylon whose wicked people rule over all the people of the earth and lead them to worship false gods. He speaks of the wicked people of Babylon as if they were a **great prostitute**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

who was corrupting the earth (ULT)
persuaded the other people of earth (UST)

Here, **the earth** is a metonym for its inhabitants. Alternate translation: “who corrupted the people of the earth” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the blood of his servants (ULT)
for murdering his servants (UST)

Here, **the blood** is a metonym that represents murder. Alternate translation: “the murder of his servants” (See: [Metonymy](#))

from her hand (ULT)
for murdering his servants (UST)

Here, **he** refers to Babylon. (See: [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

ULT

² because his judgments {are} true and righteous; because he has judged the great prostitute who was corrupting the earth with her sexual immorality, and he has avenged the blood of his servants from her hand.”

UST

² Praise him because he judges truly and justly! He has punished the very evil city that was like a prostitute because their people persuaded the other people of earth to act immorally as they did. Praise him because he has punished them for murdering his servants!”

Revelation 19:3**they spoke (ULT)
saying (UST)**

Here, **they** refers to the crowd of people in heaven.

**Hallelujah (ULT)
Hallelujah (UST)**

The word **Hallelujah** means "Praise God" or "Let us praise God." See how you translated this in [Revelation 19:1](#).

**smoke rises from her (ULT)
smoke of the fire that is burning that city will rise (UST)**

The word **her** refers to the city of Babylon, which is spoken of as if it were a prostitute. The **smoke** is from the fire that destroys the city. Alternate translation: "smoke rises from that city"

ULT

³ And they spoke a second {time}:
"Hallelujah! And the smoke rises from
her forever {and} ever."

UST

³ The crowd shouted a second time,
saying, "Hallelujah! The smoke of the
fire that is burning that city will rise
forever!"

Revelation 19:4

the 24 elders (ULT)

The twenty-four elders (UST)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:4](#). (See: [Numbers](#))

the four living creatures (ULT)

the four living creatures (UST)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:6](#) Alternate translation: “the four living beings” or “the four living things”

who is seated on the throne (ULT)

who sits on the throne (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “who sat on the throne” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ And the 24 elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who is seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!”

UST

⁴ The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures prostrated themselves and worshiped God, who sits on the throne. They said: “It is true! Hallelujah!”

Revelation 19:5

a voice came out from the throne (ULT)
Someone spoke...from the throne (UST)

Here John speaks of a **voice** as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "someone spoke from the throne" (See: [Personification](#))

Praise our God (ULT)
praise our God (UST)

Here, **our** refers to the speaker and all God's servants. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

those who fear him (ULT)
All you who honor him (UST)

Here, **fear** does not mean to be afraid of God, but to honor him. Alternate translation: "all you who honor him" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the small and the great (ULT)
whether you are important or not, everyone praise him (UST)

The speaker uses the words **small** and **great** together to include all of God's people. (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

⁵ And a voice came out from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all his servants, and those who fear him, the small and the great."

UST

⁵ Someone spoke from the throne and said, "All you who are his servants, praise our God! All you who honor him, whether you are important or not, everyone praise him!"

Revelation 19:6

And I heard as if the sound of a great crowd, and as if the sound of many waters, and as if the loud sound of thunder (ULT)

Then I heard something like the noise of a huge crowd of people, like the sound of a huge waterfall, and like the sound of loud claps of thunder (UST)

John speaks of what he is hearing as if it were like the sound made by a very large **crowd** of people, a large body of rushing water, and very loud **thunder**. (See: [Simile](#))

Hallelujah (ULT)

Hallelujah (UST)

The word **Hallelujah** means “Praise God” or “Let us praise God.” See how you translated this in [Revelation 19:1](#).

For...the Lord (ULT)

reigns...Lord (UST)

Alternate translation: “Because the Lord”

ULT

⁶ And I heard as if the sound of a great crowd, and as if the sound of many waters, and as if the loud sound of thunder, saying, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God Almighty reigns.

UST

⁶ Then I heard something like the noise of a huge crowd of people, like the sound of a huge waterfall, and like the sound of loud claps of thunder. They were shouting: “Hallelujah! Our Lord God, who rules over everything, reigns!

Revelation 19:7

Connecting Statement:

The voice of the crowd from the previous verse continues speaking.

Let us rejoice (ULT)

We should rejoice (UST)

Here, **us** refers to all of God's servants.

give him the glory (ULT)

we should honor him (UST)

Alternate translation: "give God the glory" or "honor God"

the wedding celebration of the Lamb...his bride has made herself ready (ULT)

Lamb to be united with...the...woman he is marrying. She has made herself ready (UST)

Here John speaks of the joining of Jesus and his people together forever as if it were a **wedding celebration** and his people were **his bride**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

of the Lamb (ULT)

Lamb (UST)

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

has come (ULT)

it is now time for the (UST)

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

his bride has made herself ready (ULT)

the...woman he is marrying. She has made herself ready (UST)

John speaks of God's people as if they were a **bride** who has gotten **herself ready** for her wedding. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, because the wedding celebration of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

UST

⁷ We should rejoice, we should be extremely glad, and we should honor him because it is now time for the Lamb to be united with the woman he is marrying. She has made herself ready.

Revelation 19:8

**it had been given to her that she might be dressed in bright {and} clean fine linen (ULT)
God has permitted her to dress herself in fine linen, bright...clean (UST)**

Here, **her** and **she** refer to the people of God. John speaks of the righteous acts of God's people as if they were a bright and clean dress that a bride wears on her wedding day. Alternate translation: "and it was permitted to them to wear a dress of bright and clean fine linen" (See: [Metaphor](#))

**it had been given to her that she might be dressed in bright {and} clean fine linen (ULT)
God has permitted her to dress herself in fine linen, bright...clean (UST)**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God allowed her to wear a dress of bright and clean fine linen" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ And it had been given to her that she might be dressed in bright {and} clean fine linen" (for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints).

UST

⁸ God has permitted her to dress herself in fine linen, bright and clean." Fine, bright, and clean linen represents the righteous actions of God's people.

Revelation 19:9

General Information:

An angel begins to speak to John. This is likely the same angel who began to speak to John in [Revelation 17:1](#).

those...who are invited (ULT) the people whom...God invites (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "the people whom God invites" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the wedding supper of the Lamb (ULT) the feast when the Lamb marries his wife (UST)

Here the angel speaks of the joining of Jesus and his people forever as if it were a **wedding supper**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ And he says to me, "Write: Blessed {are} those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb," and he says to me, "These are true words of God."

UST

⁹ Then the angel said to me, "Write this: how fortunate are the people whom God invites to the feast when the Lamb marries his wife!" He also said to me: "These words that God declares are true!"

Revelation 19:10

I fell down at his feet (ULT)

I immediately prostrated myself...at his feet (UST)

This means that John purposely lay on the ground and stretched himself out in reverence or submission. This action was an important part of worship, to show respect and willingness to serve. See note in [Revelation 19:3](#).

feet...your...brothers (ULT)

feet...just...your...fellow servant (UST)

Here the word **brothers** here refers to all believers, male and female.

who hold the testimony of Jesus (ULT)

those who speak the truth about Jesus (UST)

Here holding stands for believing in or announcing. Alternate translation: "who speak the truth about Jesus" (See: [Metaphor](#))

for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (ULT)

because it is the Spirit of God who gives people the power to speak the truth about Jesus (UST)

Here, **the spirit of prophecy** refers to God's Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "for it is the Spirit of God who gives people the power to speak the truth about Jesus" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁰ And I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he says to me, "Do not do that! I am a fellow servant of you and your brothers who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

UST

¹⁰ I immediately prostrated myself at his feet in order to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not worship me! I am just your fellow servant and the fellow servant of your fellow believers, those who speak the truth about Jesus. God is the one you should worship because it is the Spirit of God who gives people the power to speak the truth about Jesus!"

Revelation 19:11

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new vision. John begins to describe a rider on a white horse.

And I saw heaven having been opened (ULT) Then I saw the heavens open up (UST)

This imagery is used to signify the beginning of a new vision. See how you translated this idea in [Revelation 4:1](#) and [Revelation 11:19](#) and [Revelation 15:5](#).

the one riding on it (ULT) the one who was riding on the horse (UST)

The rider is Jesus.

he judges and wages war in righteousness (ULT) He judges all people according...to...what is right; he fights in justice against his enemies (UST)

Here, **righteousness** refers to what is right. Alternate translation: "he judges all people and wages war according to what is right" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

11 And I saw heaven having been opened, and behold, a white horse, and the one riding on it is called faithful and true, and he judges and wages war in righteousness.

UST

11 Then I saw the heavens open up, and I was surprised to see a white horse. Jesus, the one who was riding on the horse, is called "Trustworthy and Genuine." He judges all people according to what is right; he fights in justice against his enemies.

Revelation 19:12

eyes...his...eyes...are like} a fiery flame (ULT)
eyes...His...eyes...shone like a flame of fire (UST)

John speaks of the rider's **eyes** as if they shone like a **flame** of fire. (See: [Simile](#))

having a name written (ULT)
There were...A name had been written on him (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "and someone has written a name on him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

that no one knows except himself (ULT)
Only he knows the meaning of that name (UST)

Here, **except himself** means that he is the only one. Alternate translation: "on him, and only he knows the meaning of that name" (See: [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

ULT

¹² Now his eyes {are like} a fiery flame, and on his head {are} many crowns, having a name written that no one knows except himself.

UST

¹² His eyes shone like a flame of fire. There were many royal crowns on his head. A name had been written on him. Only he knows the meaning of that name.

Revelation 19:13

he is clothed in a robe dipped in blood (ULT)
The...cloak...he was wearing...was drenched with blood (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "and blood had covered his robe"
 (See: [Active or Passive](#))

his name is called the Word of God (ULT)
His name is...The Message of God (UST)

Here, **Word of God** is a metonym for Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "his name is called the Message of God"
 (See: [Metonymy](#))

his name is called the Word of God (ULT)
His name is...The Message of God (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "his name is also the Word of God" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹³ And he is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God.

UST

¹³ The cloak he was wearing was drenched with blood. His name is also "The Message of God."

Revelation 19:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 And the armies of heaven were following him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

UST

14 The armies of heaven were following him. They were riding on white horses. They were wearing clothes made of clean white linen.

Revelation 19:15

**from his mouth goes out a sharp sword (ULT)
A sharp sword extends...from...his mouth
(UST)**

The **sword** blade was sticking out of **his mouth**. The sword itself was not in motion. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 1:16](#).

**he might strike the nations (ULT)
he will strike the rebellious people groups
(UST)**

Alternate translation: "he could destroy the nations" or "he could bring the nations under his control"

**will shepherd them with an iron rod (ULT)
himself will rule them powerfully as though
he had an iron rod (UST)**

John speaks of the rider's power as if he were ruling with **an iron rod**. See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:5](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

**he tramples the winepress of the wrath of the fury of God Almighty (ULT)
He...will crush his enemies as a person crushes grapes in a winepress. He will
do this for God, who rules over everything and who is furiously angry with
them because of their sins (UST)**

John speaks of the rider's destroying his enemies as if they were grapes that a person **tramples** in a **winepress**. Alternate translation: "he crushes his enemies according to the wrath of God Almighty, just as a person crushes grapes in a winepress" (See: [Metaphor](#))

**he tramples the winepress of the wrath of the fury of God Almighty (ULT)
He...will crush his enemies as a person crushes grapes in a winepress. He will
do this for God, who rules over everything and who is furiously angry with
them because of their sins (UST)**

Here, **wrath** refers to God's punishment of evil persons. Alternate translation: "he crushes his enemies according to the judgment of God Almighty" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁵ And from his mouth goes out a sharp sword so that with it he might strike the nations, and he will shepherd them with an iron rod, and he tramples the winepress of the wrath of the fury of God Almighty.

UST

¹⁵ A sharp sword extends from his mouth; with it he will strike the rebellious people groups. He himself will rule them powerfully as though he had an iron rod. He will crush his enemies as a person crushes grapes in a winepress. He will do this for God, who rules over everything and who is furiously angry with them because of their sins.

Revelation 19:16

he has a name written on {his} robe and on his thigh (ULT)

On...his cloak over his thigh a name had been written (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "someone has written a name on his robe and thigh:" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁶ And he has a name written on {his} robe and on his thigh: "King of kings and Lord of lords."

UST

¹⁶ On his cloak over his thigh a name had been written: "King who rules over all other kings and Lord who rules over all other lords."

Revelation 19:17

I saw one angel standing in the sun (ULT)
I saw an angel standing in the light of the sun (UST)

Here, **the sun** is a metonym for the light of the sun. Alternate translation: "Then I saw an angel standing in the light of the sun" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁷ And I saw one angel standing in the sun, and he called out in a loud voice, saying to all the birds flying in midheaven, "Come, be gathered together for the great supper of God,

UST

¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the light of the sun. He called loudly to all the flesh-eating birds flying high in the sky, "Come and gather for the large feast that God is providing for you!

Revelation 19:18

**both free and slaves—and small and great
(ULT)**

**whether they were free or slave, important or
not. All kinds (UST)**

The angel uses these two sets of opposite-meaning words together to refer to all people. (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

¹⁸ so that you might eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those sitting on them and the flesh of all {men}—both free and slaves—and small and great.”

UST

¹⁸ Come and eat the flesh of all God’s enemies who are dead—the flesh of kings, of army commanders, of people who fought powerfully, of horses and of the soldiers who rode them, and the flesh of all other kinds of people, whether they were free or slave, important or not. All kinds!”

Revelation 19:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies having been gathered to make war with the one sitting on the horse and with his army.

UST

¹⁹ Then I saw the beast and the kings of earth with their armies; they had gathered together to fight against the rider on the horse and his army.

Revelation 19:20

the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet (ULT)
captured the beast and the false prophet (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the rider on the white horse captured the beast and the false prophet” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the...mark of the beast (ULT)
the...the beast’s...mark on their foreheads (UST)

The **mark of the beast** was an identifying mark that indicated that the person who received it worshiped the beast. See how you translated this in [Revelation 13:17](#).

The two were thrown alive (ULT)
Then God threw the beast and the false prophet alive (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God threw the beast and the false prophet alive” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

by...the...the lake...of fire...that burns...sulfur (ULT)
By...the...the lake...fire that burns...sulfur (UST)

Alternate translation: “place full of fire that burns with sulfur”

ULT

²⁰ And the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs before him, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image. The two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

UST

²⁰ The rider on the white horse captured the beast and the false prophet. The false prophet is the one who had performed miracles in the beast’s presence. By doing that he had deceived the people who had accepted the beast’s mark on their foreheads and who had worshiped its image. Then God threw the beast and the false prophet alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

Revelation 19:21

the rest were killed by the sword of the one who sat on the horse, {the sword} that came out from his mouth (ULT)

The rider on the horse killed...the...rest of their armies with his sword, the one that extended from his mouth (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the rider of the horse killed the remainder of the beast’s armies with the sword that extended from his mouth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the sword...the...of the one...came out from his...mouth (ULT)

his sword...The...his...extended...from his mouth (UST)

The **sword** blade was sticking out of **his mouth**. The sword itself was not in motion. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 1:16](#).

ULT

²¹ And the rest were killed by the sword of the one who sat on the horse, {the sword} that came out from his mouth, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

UST

²¹ The rider on the horse killed the rest of their armies with his sword, the one that extended from his mouth. All the birds gorged themselves on the flesh of the people and horses that he had killed.

Revelation 20

Revelation 20 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The thousand-year reign of Christ

In this chapter, Jesus is said to reign for a thousand years, at the same time that Satan is bound. Scholars are divided over whether this refers to a future period of time or to Jesus reigning now from heaven. It is not necessary to understand this passage in order to translate it accurately. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Final rebellion

This chapter also describes what happens after the thousand years are ended. During this time, Satan and many people will attempt to rebel against Jesus. This will result in God's ultimate and final victory over sin and evil. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [evil](#), [wicked](#), [unpleasant](#) and [eternity](#), [everlasting](#), [eternal](#), [forever](#))

Great white throne

This chapter ends with God judging all people who ever lived. God separates people who believe in Jesus from those who do not believe in him. (See: [judge](#), [judgment](#) and [heaven](#), [sky](#), [heavens](#), [heavenly](#) and [faith](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Book of Life

This is a metaphor for eternal life. Those possessing eternal life are said to have their names written in this Book of Life. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Hades and the lake of fire

These appear to be two distinct places. The translator may wish to do further research to determine how to translate these two places differently. They should not be made the same as each other in translation. (See: [hell](#), [lake of fire](#))

Revelation 20:1

General Information:

John begins to describe a vision of an angel throwing the devil into the bottomless pit.

And I saw (ULT)

Then I saw (UST)

Here, **I** refers to John.

to the abyss (ULT)

to the deep, dark pit (UST)

The **abyss** is an extremely deep narrow hole. This could mean: (1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever. (2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in [Revelation 9:1](#).

ULT

¹ And I saw an angel coming down from heaven having the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand.

UST

¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven. He had the key to the deep, dark pit, and he was carrying a large chain in his hand.

Revelation 20:2

of the dragon (ULT)

the dragon (UST)

The **dragon** was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

² And he took hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him for 1,000 years.

UST

² He seized the dragon. That dragon is the ancient serpent, the devil, that is, Satan. The angel bound him with the chain. That chain could not be loosed for one thousand years.

Revelation 20:3

sealed {it} over him (ULT)

locked it...sealed it (UST)

The angel **sealed** the abyss to keep anyone from opening it.
Alternate translation: "sealed it to prevent anyone from opening it"
(See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

he would not deceive...the nations (ULT)
to prevent anyone from opening it. He did
that in order that Satan might no...deceive...
all the many groups of people (UST)

Here, **nations** is a metonym for the people of the earth. Alternate translation: "he would not deceive the people-groups" (See: [Metonymy](#))

it is necessary for him to be released (ULT)
Satan must go free (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God will command the angel to free him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ And he threw him into the abyss and shut {it} and sealed {it} over him so that he would not deceive the nations anymore until the 1,000 years would be completed. After that, it is necessary for him to be released for a short time.

UST

³ The angel threw him into the deep, dark pit. He shut the door of the pit, locked it, and sealed it to prevent anyone from opening it. He did that in order that Satan might no longer deceive all the many groups of people, until those one thousand years are ended. After that time, Satan must go free for a short time in order that he can do what God has planned.

Revelation 20:4

General Information:

This is the next part of John's vision. He describes suddenly seeing thrones and the souls of believers.

judgment was given to them (ULT)

God gave them...authority to judge (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God had given authority to them to judge" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

of those who had been beheaded (ULT) of other people whose heads had been cut off (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "whose heads others had cut off" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

for the testimony about Jesus and for the word of God

Alternate translation: "because they had spoken the truth about Jesus and about the word of God"

because of the word of God (ULT) and...had declared God's message (UST)

Here, **the word of God** is a metonym for the message from God. Alternate translation: "for what they taught about the scriptures" (See: [Metonymy](#))

they came to life (ULT)

They became alive again (UST)

Alternate translation: "they came back to life" or "they became alive again"

ULT

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them, both the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who did not worship the beast nor his image and did not receive the mark on {their} forehead or on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for 1,000 years.

UST

⁴ I saw thrones on which people were sitting. God gave them authority to judge. I also saw the souls of other people whose heads had been cut off because they had spoken the truth about Jesus and had declared God's message. They were people who had refused to worship the beast or its image, and who had not allowed the beast's servants to put the beast's mark on them, either on their foreheads or on their hands. They became alive again, and they ruled with the Messiah during those one thousand years.

Revelation 20:5

The rest of the dead (ULT)

The rest of the believers who had died (UST)

Alternate translation: "All of the other dead people"

the 1,000 years were ended (ULT)
after those one thousand years (UST)

Alternate translation: "the end of the thousand years" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁵ (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1,000 years were ended.)
This {is} the first resurrection.

UST

⁵ They were the ones who lived again the first time that God caused dead people to live again. The rest of the believers who had died did not live again until after those one thousand years.

Revelation 20:6

Over these the second death has no power (ULT)

They will not die a second time (UST)

Here John describes **the second death** as a person with power. Alternate translation: "These people will not experience the second death" (See: [Personification](#))

the second death (ULT)
will not die a second time (UST)

The **second death** is described as eternal punishment in the lake of fire in [Revelation 20:14](#) and [Revelation 21:8](#). See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:11](#). Alternate translation: "the final death in the lake of fire" or "dying a second time" (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

⁶ Blessed and holy {is} the one who has a part in the first resurrection! Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for 1,000 years.

UST

⁶ God will be pleased with those who live again this first time. God will consider them holy. They will not die a second time. Instead, they will be priests who serve God and the Messiah, and they will rule with the Messiah during those one thousand years.

Revelation 20:7

Satan will be released from his prison (ULT) **God will release Satan from his prison (UST)**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God will release Satan from his prison" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ But when the 1,000 years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison

UST

⁷ When the one thousand years are ended, God will release Satan from his prison.

Revelation 20:8

The number of them {will be} like the sand of the sea (ULT)

There will be so many of them fighting against God's people that no one will be able to count them, just as no one can count the grains of sand on the ocean shore (UST)

The comparison to **the sand of the sea** emphasizes the extremely large **number** of soldiers in Satan's army. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations that {are} at the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them together to the battle. The number of them {will be} like the sand of the sea.

UST

⁸ Satan will go out to deceive the rebellious people groups all over the earth. These are the nations that the prophet Ezekiel called Gog and Magog. Satan will gather them to fight against God's people. There will be so many of them fighting against God's people that no one will be able to count them, just as no one can count the grains of sand on the ocean shore.

Revelation 20:9

they went up (ULT)
They will march (UST)

Alternate translation: "Satan's army went up"

the beloved city

Here, **the beloved city** refers to Jerusalem.

fire came down from heaven and devoured them (ULT)
Then God will send...fire...down...from heaven, and it will burn them up (UST)

Here John speaks of **fire** as if it were alive. Alternate translation: "God sent fire from heaven to burn them up" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

⁹ And they went up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

UST

⁹ They will march over the whole earth and will surround the camp of God's people in Jerusalem, the city that God loves. Then God will send fire down from heaven, and it will burn them up.

Revelation 20:10

the devil who deceived them was thrown into (ULT)

God will throw...the...devil, who had deceived those people, into (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God threw the devil, who had deceived them, into" or "God's angel threw the devil, who had deceived them, into" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

And...the lake of fire...sulfur (ULT)
the...the lake of burning...sulfur (UST)

See how you translated this in [Revelation 19:20](#). Alternate translation: "the lake of fire that burns with sulfur" or "place full of fire that burns with sulfur"

they will be tormented (ULT)
they will...suffer severely (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God will torment them" or "the fire will torment them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁰ And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet {were}, and they will be tormented day and night forever {and} ever.

UST

¹⁰ God will throw the devil, who had deceived those people, into the lake of burning sulfur. This is also where God had thrown the beast and the false prophet. As a result, they will continually suffer severely forever.

Revelation 20:11

General Information:

This is the next part of John's vision. He describes suddenly seeing a great white throne and the dead being judged.

from whose presence the earth and the heaven fled away (ULT)
He was so fearsome that the earth and the sky disappeared from his presence completely (UST)

John describes **the earth and the heaven** as if they were people who were trying to escape God's judgment. This means that God completely destroyed the old heaven and earth. (See: [Personification](#))

the earth and the heaven fled away, but no place was found for them (ULT)
the earth and the sky disappeared...completely; they were no more (UST)

Here, not having a **place** means that God completely destroyed the old heaven and earth. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 And I saw a great white throne and the one seated on it, from whose presence the earth and the heaven fled away, but no place was found for them.

UST

11 Then I saw a huge white throne on which God was sitting. He was so fearsome that the earth and the sky disappeared from his presence completely; they were no more.

Revelation 20:12

books were opened (ULT)

The books in which God records what people do...were opened (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “someone opened the books” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the dead were judged (ULT)

God judged...the people who had died and now lived again (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God judged the people who had died and now lived again” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

from the things that were written (ULT) just as he had recorded it (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “by what he had recorded” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² And I saw the dead—both the great and the small—standing before the throne, and books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the {Book} of Life. And the dead were judged from the things that were written in the books, according to their deeds.

UST

¹² I saw that the people who had died but now lived again were standing in front of the throne. They were both important and unimportant people! The books in which God records what people do were opened. Another book was also opened, which is the Book of Life in which God has written the names of people who have eternal life. God judged the people who had died and now lived again according to what they had done, just as he had recorded it in the books.

Revelation 20:13

the sea gave up the dead...Death and Hades gave up the dead (ULT)

The people whose bodies were buried...the sea...became alive again...on the land became alive again (UST)

Here John speaks of **the sea**, **Death**, and **Hades** as if they were living persons. (See: [Personification](#))

each of them was judged (ULT)

God judged each one (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God judged each of the dead people" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Hades (ULT)

on the land (UST)

Here, **Hades** is a metonym that represents the place where unbelievers go when they die, to wait for God's judgment. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who {were} in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead who {were} in them, and each of them was judged according to their deeds.

UST

¹³ The people whose bodies were buried in the sea became alive again in order to stand before God's throne. Everyone who had been buried on the land became alive again also in order to stand before the throne. God judged each one of them according to what each one had done.

Revelation 20:14

**Death and Hades were thrown (ULT)
those who had been in the place where they
waited after they died—were thrown (UST)**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God threw Death and Hades” or “God’s angel threw Death and Hades” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

**the second death (ULT)
people die the second time (UST)**

The **second death** is described as eternal punishment in the lake of fire in [Revelation 20:14](#) and [Revelation 21:8](#). See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:11](#). Alternate translation: “the final death in the lake of fire” or “dying a second time” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

¹⁴ And Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death—the lake of fire.

UST

¹⁴ All the unbelievers—those who had been in the place where they waited after they died—were thrown into the burning lake. The burning lake is the place in which people die the second time.

Revelation 20:15

**if anyone was not found...written (ULT)
the people whose names were not...God has
written the names of the people (UST)**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “if God’s angel did not find a person’s name written” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

**he was thrown into the lake of fire (ULT)
God...threw...into the lake of fire (UST)**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the angel threw him into the lake of fire” or “the angel threw him into the place where fire burns forever” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁵ And if anyone was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

UST

¹⁵ God also threw the people whose names were not in the book, the book where God has written the names of the people who have eternal life, into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21

Revelation 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter gives a detailed picture of the new Jerusalem.

Special concepts in this chapter

Second death

Death is a type of separation. The first death is physically dying, when the soul is separated from the body. The second death is being eternally separated from God. (See: [die](#), [dead](#), [deadly](#), [death](#) and [soul](#), [self](#), [person](#) and [eternity](#), [everlasting](#), [eternal](#), [forever](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Book of Life

This is a metaphor for eternal life. Those possessing eternal life are said to have their names written in this Book of Life. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

New heaven and new earth

It is unclear whether this is an entirely new heaven and earth or if it is remade out of the present heaven and earth. The same is also true of the new Jerusalem. It is possible this will affect translation in some languages. The word “new” in the original language means different and better than the old. It does not mean new in time.

Revelation 21:1

General Information:

John begins to describe his vision of the new Jerusalem.

I saw (ULT)

I saw (UST)

Here, **I** refers to John.

ULT

¹ And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

UST

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and the oceans no longer existed.

Revelation 21:2

**like a bride adorned for her husband (ULT)
just as women decorate a bride in order to
marry a man (UST)**

John compares the new Jerusalem to **a bride** who has made herself beautiful for her bridegroom. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

UST

² I saw God's holy city, which is the new city of Jerusalem. It was coming down out of heaven from God. God had prepared it and decorated it, just as women decorate a bride in order to marry a man.

Revelation 21:3

**a great voice from the throne saying (ULT)
a loud voice calling out from the throne of
God saying (UST)**

The **great voice** refers to the one who speaks. Alternate translation: “someone speak loudly from the throne saying” (See: [Metonymy](#))

**Behold (ULT)
Listen to this! Now (UST)**

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

**The tabernacle of God {is} with men, and he
will live with them (ULT)
God will live with people. He will live right in the midst of them (UST)**

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that God will, indeed, live among men. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

³ And I heard a great voice from the throne saying, “Behold! The tabernacle of God {is} with men, and he will live with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them. ^[1]”

UST

³ Then I heard a loud voice calling out from the throne of God saying, “Listen to this! Now God will live with people. He will live right in the midst of them! They will be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God.”

Revelation 21:4

**he will wipe away every tear from their eyes
(ULT)**

**He will cause...them to no longer be sad. He
will stop them from weeping ever again (UST)**

Here, tears represent sadness. See how you translated this in [Revelation 7:17](#). Alternate translation: "God will wipe away their sadness, like wiping away tears" or "God will cause them to not be sad anymore" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ And he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will not be any longer, nor grieving nor crying nor pain. They will not be any longer; the first things have passed away."

UST

⁴ He will cause them to no longer be sad. He will stop them from weeping ever again. None of them will ever again die or mourn or cry or suffer pain because God has taken away those things and they are gone forever."

Revelation 21:5

**these words are trustworthy and true (ULT)
these things that I have told you...you can
trust that I will certainly cause them to
happen (UST)**

Here, **these words** refers to the message that they formed. Alternate translation: "this message is trustworthy and true" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ And the one who was seated on the throne said, "Behold! I make all things new." And he says to me, "Write, because these words are trustworthy and true."

UST

⁵ Then God, who sits on the throne, said, "Listen to this! I am now making everything new!" He said to me: "Write these things that I have told you because you can trust that I will certainly cause them to happen."

Revelation 21:6

the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end (ULT)

these things! I am the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end (UST)

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize God's eternal nature. (See: [Parallelism](#))

the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end (ULT)

these things! I am the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end (UST)

These two phrases mean that God exists from the beginning of everything to the end of it, including everything in between. (See: [Merism](#))

the alpha and the omega (ULT)

these things! I am the one who...all things and the one who will cause all things (UST)

The **alpha** and the **omega** are first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This could refer to: (1) the one who began all things and who ends all things. (2) the one who has always lived and who always will live. If your readers would misunderstand this, you may consider using the first and last letters of your alphabet. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "the A and the Z" or "the first and the last" (See: [Metaphor](#))

And...the...the beginning...end (ULT)

He also...the...began...to end (UST)

This could refer to: (1) the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end. (2) the one who existed before all things and who will exist after all things.

To the one who thirsts...will give without cost from the spring of the water of life (ULT)

To everyone who wants it...will freely give water from the spring that causes people to live forever (UST)

God speaks of a person's desire for eternal life as if it were thirst and of that person receiving eternal life as if he were drinking life-giving **water**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I {am} the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. To the one who thirsts I will give without cost from the spring of the water of life.

UST

⁶ He also said to me, "I have completed all these things! I am the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end. To everyone who wants it, I will freely give water from the spring that causes people to live forever.

Revelation 21:7

Connecting Statement:

The one seated on the throne continues to speak to John.

ULT

⁷ The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son.

UST

⁷ I will give this to all who are victorious over Satan. I will be their God, and they will be my children.

Revelation 21:8

the...cowards (ULT)

But those who are cowardly...But those who are cowardly (UST)

Alternate translation: "those who are too afraid to do what is right"

detestable (ULT)

those who do detestable things (UST)

Alternate translation: "those who do terrible things"

the fiery lake of burning sulfur

See how you translated this in [Revelation 19:20](#). Alternate translation: "the lake of fire that burns with sulfur" or "place full of fire that burns with sulfur"

the second death (ULT)

That is what it means...to die a second time (UST)

The **second death** is described as eternal punishment in the lake of fire in [Revelation 20:14](#) and [Revelation 21:8](#). See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:11](#). Alternate translation: "the final death in the lake of fire" or "dying a second time" (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

ULT

⁸ But the cowards and unbelieving and detestable and murderers and sexually immoral and sorcerers and idolaters and all the liars—their place {will be} in the lake burning with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

UST

⁸ But those who are cowardly, those who do not believe in me, those who do detestable things, those who murder people, those who sin sexually, those who do witchcraft, those who worship idols, and every liar will all suffer in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. That is what it means to die a second time."

Revelation 21:9

the bride, the wife of the Lamb (ULT)
the people who have permanently united with the Lamb as a woman marries a man (UST)

The angel speaks of Jerusalem as if it were a **bride** who is about to marry her groom, **the Lamb**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

of the Lamb (ULT)
the Lamb (UST)

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

ULT

⁹ And one of the seven angels came—the one who had the seven bowls that were full of the seven last plagues—and he spoke with me, saying, “Come here. I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

UST

⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls of wine—the wine that caused the seven last ways of suffering—came and said to me, “Come with me and I will show you the people who have permanently united with the Lamb as a woman marries a man!”

Revelation 21:10

he carried me away in the Spirit (ULT)
God's Spirit took control of me, and the angel took me (UST)

The setting changes as **the Spirit** takes John to a high mountain where he can see the city of Jerusalem. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 17:3](#). (See: [Background Information](#))

Jerusalem (ULT)
new Jerusalem (UST)

Jerusalem is a metonymy for those believers who will inhabit it. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,

UST

¹⁰ Then God's Spirit took control of me, and the angel took me to the top of a very high mountain. He showed me God's holy city, the new Jerusalem, which was coming down out of heaven from God.

Revelation 21:11

having (ULT)

It was shining with (UST)

This refers to the “Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven” that he described in the previous verse and not to the physical Jerusalem.

its brilliance {was} like a very precious stone, like a stone of crystal-clear jasper (ULT) himself. The city was shining as a very precious jasper stone shines, and it was clear like crystal (UST)

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the **brilliance** of Jerusalem by naming a specific jewel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

crystal-clear (ULT)

was clear...crystal (UST)

Alternate translation: “extremely clear”

of...jasper (ULT)

jasper (UST)

Jasper is a valuable stone. This **jasper** may have been clear like glass or crystal. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:3](#). (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

¹¹ having the glory of God; its brilliance {was} like a very precious stone, like a stone of crystal-clear jasper,

UST

¹¹ It was shining with the brilliant light that came from God himself. The city was shining as a very precious jasper stone shines, and it was clear like crystal.

Revelation 21:12

**were written {on the gates (ULT)
were written over...the name of one tribe
(UST)**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had written" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² having a great and high wall having 12 gates and 12 angels at the gates, and names were written {on the gates}, which were those of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel.

UST

¹² Around the city was a very high wall. The wall had twelve gates. An angel was at each gate. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written over the gates. Each gate had the name of one tribe.

Revelation 21:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹³ On the east {were} three gates, and on the north three gates, and on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.

UST

¹³ Three gates were on the east side, three gates were on the north side, three gates were on the south side, and three gates were on the west side.

Revelation 21:14

of the Lamb (ULT) the Lamb had appointed (UST)

Here, **the Lamb** refers to Jesus. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6](#).

ULT

¹⁴ And the wall of the city had 12 foundations, and on them {were} the 12 names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

UST

¹⁴ The city wall had twelve foundation stones. On each foundation stone was the name of one of the twelve apostles whom the Lamb had appointed.

Revelation 21:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁵ And the one who was speaking with me had a golden measuring rod so that he might measure the city and its gates and its wall.

UST

¹⁵ The angel who was speaking to me carried a golden measuring rod, a rod that he used to measure the city, its gates, and its wall.

Revelation 21:16

12,000 stadia (ULT)

You may convert **12,000 stadia** to modern measures. Alternate translation: "2,200 kilometers" (See: [Biblical Distance](#))

ULT

16 And the city is laid out {as} a square, and its length {is} as much as {its} width. And he measured the city with the measuring rod, at 12,000 stadia (the length and the width and the height of it are equal).

UST

16 The city was square in shape; it was as long as it was wide. After the angel measured the city with his rod, he reported that it was 2, 200 kilometers long, and that its width and height were each the same as its length.

Revelation 21:17

144 cubits {thick (ULT)} **sixty-six meters thick (UST)**

You may convert **144 cubits** to modern measures. Alternate translation: "66 meters" (See: [Biblical Distance](#))

ULT

¹⁷ And he measured its wall, 144 cubits {thick} by man's measurement (which is {also} an angel's {measurement}).

UST

¹⁷ He measured its wall and reported that it was sixty-six meters thick. The angel used the measure that people normally use.

Revelation 21:18**pure gold, like clear glass (ULT)****pure gold that looked like clear glass (UST)**

The **gold** was so **clear** that it is spoken of as if it were **glass**. (See: [Simile](#))

is} jasper (ULT)**the green stone that we call jasper (UST)**

Jasper is a valuable stone. It may have been clear like glass or crystal. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:3](#). (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

¹⁸ And the material of its wall {is} jasper and the city—pure gold, like clear glass.

UST

¹⁸ The city wall was made of something like the green stone that we call jasper. The city itself was made of pure gold that looked like clear glass.

Revelation 21:19

The foundations of the wall of the city...were adorned (ULT)

The foundations of the wall of the city...were beautifully made (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone adorned the foundations of the city wall" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

was} jasper...sapphire...agate...emerald (ULT)
jasper...sapphire...chalcedony...emerald (UST)

These are valuable stones. Jasper may have been clear like glass or crystal. See how you translated it in [Revelation 4:3](#). (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone. The first foundation {was} jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,

UST

¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city were beautifully made with precious stones. The first foundation stone was jasper, the second foundation stone was sapphire, the third foundation stone was chalcedony, the fourth foundation stone was emerald,

Revelation 21:20

**onyx...carnelian...chrysolite...beryl...topaz...
chrysoprase...jacinth...amethyst (ULT)
sardonyx...sardius...chrysolite...beryl...topaz...
chrysoprase...jacinth...amethyst (UST)**

These are all precious gems. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.

UST

²⁰ the fifth foundation stone was sardonyx, the sixth foundation stone was sardius, the seventh foundation stone was chrysolite, the eighth foundation stone was beryl, the ninth foundation stone was topaz, the tenth foundation stone was chrysoprase, the eleventh foundation stone was jacinth, and the twelfth foundation stone was amethyst.

Revelation 21:21

are...pearls (ULT)

were something like huge pearls (UST)

Pearls are beautiful and valuable white beads that are formed inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean. See how you translated this in [Revelation 17:4](#). (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

each of the gates was from a single pearl (ULT)

Each gate was like a single pearl (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had made each of the gates from a single pearl" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

were} pure gold, like transparent glass (ULT)

appeared to be pure gold that looked like clear glass (UST)

The **gold** was so **pure** that it is spoken of as if it was clear glass. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 21:18](#). (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²¹ And the 12 gates {are} 12 pearls; each of the gates was from a single pearl, and the streets of the city {were} pure gold, like transparent glass.

UST

²¹ The twelve gates of the city were something like huge pearls. Each gate was like a single pearl. The city streets appeared to be pure gold that looked like clear glass.

Revelation 21:22

the...Lord God Almighty is its temple, and the Lamb (ULT)

The...Lord God himself, who rules over all, and the Lamb are there, so there was no need for a temple (UST)

The **temple** represented God's presence. This means the new Jerusalem does not need a temple because **God** and **the Lamb** will live there. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²² And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty is its temple, and the Lamb.

UST

²² There was no temple in the city. The Lord God himself, who rules over all, and the Lamb are there, so there was no need for a temple.

Revelation 21:23

its lamp {is} the Lamb (ULT)
the Lamb will...be its light (UST)

Here the glory of Jesus, **the Lamb**, is spoken of as if it were a **lamp** that gives light to the city. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²³ And the city does not have need of the sun nor the moon so that it might shine on it, because the glory of God shone on it, and its lamp {is} the Lamb.

UST

²³ The city will not need the sun or the moon to light the city because the light coming from God will light the city, and the Lamb will also be its light.

Revelation 21:24

the nations will walk (ULT)

The people groups...will live (UST)

Here, **the nations** are a metonym for the people who live in the nations. Alternate translation: “the people from all the different nations will walk” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the nations will walk (ULT)

The people groups...will live (UST)

Here, **walk** here is a metaphor for “live.” Alternate translation: “the people from all the different nations will live” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁴ And the nations will walk by the light of it, and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. ^[2]

UST

²⁴ The people groups will live with the light of the city shining on them. The kings of the earth will bring their wealth into the city to honor God and the lamb.

Revelation 21:25

its gates will never be shut (ULT)

The...gates of the city will not be shut (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will ever shut the gates"
(See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁵ And its gates will never be shut during the day, for there will be no night there.

UST

²⁵ The gates of the city will not be shut at the end of the day as they usually are shut because there will be no night there.

Revelation 21:26

they will bring (ULT)

will...bring (UST)

Alternate translation: "the kings of the earth will bring"

ULT

²⁶ And they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it,

UST

²⁶ The people of the world will also bring their wealth into the city.

Revelation 21:27

anything unclean will certainly not enter into it, nor the one (ULT)

Nothing...that is morally impure...will ever enter that city...the (UST)

If your readers would misunderstand this double negative, you can state it in positive form. Alternate translation: “only what is clean will ever enter, and never anyone” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

but only those who are written in the book of life of the Lamb (ULT)

no...Only those people whose names are written in...book that belongs to the lamb, the book that has the names of people who have eternal life, will be there (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “but only those whose names the Lamb wrote in his book of life” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

of the Lamb (ULT)

that belongs to...lamb...the (UST)

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

ULT

²⁷ but anything unclean will certainly not enter into it, nor the one who does abominations and falsehoods, but only those who are written in the book of life of the Lamb.

UST

²⁷ Nothing that is morally impure, no one who does deeds that God considers detestable, and no one who tells lies will ever enter that city. Only those people whose names are written in the book that belongs to the lamb, the book that has the names of people who have eternal life, will be there.

Revelation 22

Revelation 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter emphasizes that Jesus is coming soon.

Special concepts in this chapter

Tree of life

There is probably an intended connection between the tree of life in the Garden of Eden and the tree of life mentioned in this chapter. The curse that began in Eden will end at this time.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Alpha and omega

These are the names of the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. The ULT spells out their names in English. This strategy can serve as a model for translators. Some translators, however, may decide to use the first and last letters in their own alphabet. This would be "A and Z" in English.

Revelation 22:1

Connecting Statement:

John continues to describe the new Jerusalem as the angel shows it to him.

he showed me (ULT) showed me (UST)

Here, **me** refers to John.

the river of the water of life (ULT) the river that causes people who drink from it to live forever (UST)

Alternate translation: “the river flowing with life-giving water”

the river of the water of life (ULT) the river that causes people who drink from it to live forever (UST)

Eternal **life** is spoken of as if it were provided by life-giving **water**. See how you translated this in [Revelation 21:6](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

of the Lamb (ULT) the Lamb were sitting (UST)

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

ULT

¹ And he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

UST

¹ Then the angel showed me the river that causes people who drink from it to live forever. The water was sparkling and clear like crystal. The river was flowing out from the throne where God and the Lamb were sitting.

Revelation 22:2

of the nations (ULT)

The people groups use...their (UST)

Here, **the nations** refers to the people who live in every nation.
Alternate translation: “the people of all nations” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² in the middle of its street. And on this side and on that side of the river {was} the tree of life, bearing 12 {crops of} fruit, bearing its fruit according to each month, and the leaves of the tree {are} for the healing of the nations.

UST

² It flowed down through the middle of the main street of the city. On each side of the river were trees with fruit that causes people who eat it to live forever. The trees bear twelve kinds of fruit; they produce one crop each month. The people groups use the leaves of the trees as medicine in order that their wounds may heal.

Revelation 22:3

there will no longer be any curse (ULT)
There will never be...anyone or anything...
there that God will curse (UST)

This could mean: (1) there will never be anyone there that God will **curse**. (2) there will not be anyone there who is under God's **curse**.

his servants will serve him (ULT)
God's...servants...will worship him there (UST)

Here, **his** and **him** could refer to: (1) God the Father. (2) both God and the Lamb, who rule together as one.

ULT

³ And there will no longer be any curse, and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will serve him.

UST

³ There will never be anyone or anything there that God will curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city. God's servants will worship him there.

Revelation 22:4

they will see his face (ULT)

They will see...him face to face (UST)

Here, **see his face** is an idiom that refers to being in God's presence.
Alternate translation: "they will be in God's presence" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁴ And they will see his face, and his name {will be} on their foreheads.

UST

⁴ They will see him face to face, and his name will be written on their foreheads.

Revelation 22:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ And there will be no more night, and they have no need of the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will shine on them, and they will reign forever {and} ever.

UST

⁵ There will never again be night. God's servants will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun because the Lord God will shine his light upon them. They will rule forever.

Revelation 22:6

General Information:

This is the beginning of the end of John's vision. In verse 6 the angel is speaking to John. In verse 7, Jesus is speaking. You can state this explicitly as is in the UST. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

These words {are} trustworthy and true (ULT) These things that God has shown you are true, and he will certainly make them happen (UST)

Here, **words** refers to the message that they formed. See how you translated this in [Revelation 21:5](#). Alternate translation: "This message is trustworthy and true" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the God of the spirits of the prophets (ULT) God who inspires the prophets (UST)

Here, **spirits** refers to: (1) the inward disposition of the **prophets** and indicates that God inspires them. Alternate translation: "God who inspires the prophets" (2) the Holy Spirit who inspires the **prophets**. Alternate translation: "God who gives his Spirit to the prophets" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ And he said to me, "These words {are} trustworthy and true, and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants what must happen soon."

UST

⁶ The angel said to me: "These things that God has shown you are true, and he will certainly make them happen. The Lord God who inspires the prophets sent his angel to show the people who serve him the events that must happen soon."

Revelation 22:7

behold (ULT)

Listen to this (UST)

Here Jesus begins to speak. The word **behold** adds emphasis to what follows.

I am coming quickly (ULT)

I am coming soon (UST)

It is understood that he is **coming** in order to judge. See how you translated this in [Revelation 3:11](#). Alternate translation: "I am coming to judge soon!" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁷ "And behold, I am coming quickly!
Blessed {is} the one who keeps the
words of the prophecy of this book."

UST

⁷ Jesus says to all his people, "Listen to
this! I am coming soon; God will
abundantly bless everyone who obeys
the message that has been written in
this book."

Revelation 22:8

General Information:

John tells his readers about how he responded to the angel.

I fell down to worship at the feet (ULT) **I immediately lay down in front...in order to worship him (UST)**

This means that John purposely lay on the ground and stretched himself out in reverence or submission. This action was an important part of **worship**, to show respect and willingness to serve. See how you translated similar words in [Revelation 19:10](#).

ULT

⁸ And I, John, {am} the one who saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing me these things.

UST

⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw in a vision these things that I have written down. When I had heard and seen them, I immediately lay down in front of the angel who had shown me these things in order to worship him.

Revelation 22:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ But he says to me, "Watch out! I am a fellow servant of you and of your brothers the prophets and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"

UST

⁹ But he said to me, "Do not worship me! I am just a servant of God like you! I am also a servant like your fellow believers who are the prophets, and like those who obey the message in this book. Instead, worship God!"

Revelation 22:10

Connecting Statement:

The angel finishes speaking to John.

Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book (ULT)

Do not keep secret the message about what God has foretold in this book (UST)

To **seal a book** was to keep it closed with something that makes it impossible for anyone to read what was inside without breaking the seal. The angel is telling John not to keep the message a secret.

Alternate translation: "Do not keep secret ... this book" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the words of the prophecy of this book (ULT)

the message about what God has foretold in this book (UST)

Here, **words** refers to the message that they formed. See how you translated this in [Revelation 22:7](#). Alternate translation: "This prophetic message of this book" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁰ And he says to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

UST

¹⁰ He also said to me, "Do not keep secret the message about what God has foretold in this book because it is almost time for him to fulfill this message.

Revelation 22:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 Let the one who is unrighteous still be unrighteous, and let the morally filthy one still be morally filthy, and let the righteous one still do righteousness, and let the holy one still be holy.”

UST

11 Since that time is near, if those who act in an evil manner want to continue to act that way, let them continue to do so. God will soon pay them back for that. If those who are vile want to continue to be vile, let them continue to do so. God will soon pay them back for that. Those who are acting righteously should continue to act righteously. Those who are perfect should continue to be perfect.”

Revelation 22:12

General Information:

As the book of Revelation is ending, Jesus gives a closing greeting.
(See: [End of Story](#))

ULT

¹² "Behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward {is} with me, to pay back each one just as his deeds are.

UST

¹² Jesus says to all people: "Listen! I am coming soon! And I will pay back and punish or reward everyone according to what each one has done.

Revelation 22:13

**the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (ULT)
am the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end. I am before all things and I am at the end of all things (UST)**

These three phrases share similar meanings and emphasize that Jesus has existed and will exist for all time. (See: [Parallelism](#))

**the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (ULT)
am the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end. I am before all things and I am at the end of all things (UST)**

These three phrases are merisms. They each represent everything included between the two ends. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet are **alpha** and **omega**. They represent all the letters in between. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “the A and the Z, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (See: [Merism](#))

**the alpha and the omega (ULT)
am the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end (UST)**

This could refer to: (1) the one who began all things and who ends all things. (2) the one who has always lived and who always will live. If your readers would misunderstand this, you may consider using the first and last letters of your alphabet. (See: [Metaphor](#))

**the first and the last (ULT)
one who will cause all things to end...I am before all things...I am at (UST)**

This refers to the eternal nature of Jesus. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:17](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

**the beginning and the end (ULT)
and...I am at...the end of all things (UST)**

This could refer to: (1) the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end. (2) the one who existed before all things and who will exist after all things. See how you translated this in [Revelation 21:6](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ I {am} the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

UST

¹³ I am the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end. I am before all things and I am at the end of all things.

Revelation 22:14

those who wash their robes (ULT) who wash their robes...make them clean (UST)

Becoming righteous is spoken of as if it were washing one's clothing. See how you translated as similar phrase in [Revelation 7:14](#).
Alternate translation: "those who have become righteous, as if they have washed their robes" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁴ Blessed {are} those who wash their robes so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter into the city through the gates. ^[1]

UST

¹⁴ God is very pleased with the people who wash their robes and make them clean because they will be able to eat the fruit of the tree that enables people to live forever and because they will be able to enter the gates into the holy city.

Revelation 22:15

Outside (ULT)

Outside (UST)

This means they are outside the city and not allowed to enter.

are} the dogs (ULT)

are people who are unholy (UST)

In that culture, **dogs** were considered to be unclean, despised animals. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

are} the dogs (ULT)

are people who are unholy (UST)

Here the word **dogs** is derogatory and refers to people who are wicked. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Outside {are} the dogs and the sorcerers and the sexually immoral and the murderers and the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

UST

¹⁵ Outside are people who are unholy. They include people who practice witchcraft, people who sin sexually, people who murder others, idol worshipers, and all people who enjoy telling lies and are continual liars. They can never enter that city.”

Revelation 22:16

**to testify to you about (ULT)
in order that he might say to you (UST)**

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

**the root and the offspring of David (ULT)
I am the descendant of King David...the one
who is like (UST)**

The words **root** and **descendant** mean basically the same thing. Together the words emphasize that Jesus belongs to the family of David. (See: [Doublet](#))

**the root and the offspring of David (ULT)
I am the descendant of King David...the one
who is like (UST)**

Jesus speaks of being a **descendant** as if he were a **root** that grew out of David. (See: [Metaphor](#))

**the bright morning star (ULT)
the bright morning star (UST)**

Jesus speaks of himself as if he were the **bright star** that sometimes appears early in the **morning** and indicates that a new day is about to begin. See how you translated "morning star" in [Revelation 2:28](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁶ I, Jesus, sent my angel to testify to you about these things to the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."

UST

¹⁶ "I, Jesus, sent my angel in order that he might say to you people who are the groups of believers that all these things are true. I am the descendant of King David whom the prophets promised would come. I am the one who is like the bright morning star."

Revelation 22:17

Connecting Statement:

This verse is a response to what Jesus said.

the Bride (ULT) his people, who are like the bride of the Messiah (UST)

Believers are spoken of as if they were a **Bride** about to be married to her groom, Jesus. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Come (ULT) Come (UST)

Here, **Come** could mean: (1) this is an invitation for people to come and drink the water of life. Alternate translation: "Come and drink!" (2) this is a polite request for Jesus to return. Alternate translation: "Please come!" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the one who thirsts, let him come. The one who desires it, let him freely take the water of life (ULT)

The...people who want to come should come! Everyone who desires the water that enables people to live forever should take it as a free gift (UST)

A person's desire for eternal **life** is spoken of as if it were thirst and of that person receiving eternal life as if he were drinking life-giving **water**. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the water of life (ULT) the water that enables people to live forever..as (UST)

Eternal **life** is spoken of as if it were provided by life-giving **water**. See how you translated this in [Revelation 21:6](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 And the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" And the one who thirsts, let him come. The one who desires it, let him freely take the water of life.

UST

17 God's Spirit and his people, who are like the bride of the Messiah, say to each one who desires to believe, "Come!" Whoever hears this should also say to each one who desires to believe, "Come!" The people who want to come should come! Everyone who desires the water that enables people to live forever should take it as a free gift!

Revelation 22:18

General Information:

John gives his final remarks about the book of Revelation.

I testify (ULT)

I, John, solemnly warn (UST)

Here, **I** refers to John.

the words of the prophecy of this book (ULT) the message about what I have foretold in this book (UST)

Here, **the words** refers to the message that they formed. See how you translated this in [Revelation 22:7](#). Alternate translation: “this prophetic message of this book” (See: [Metonymy](#))

If anyone adds to them ... God will add

This is a strong warning to not change anything about this prophecy.

that are written about in this book (ULT) book tells about (UST)

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “which I have written about in this book” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone might add to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written about in this book.

UST

18 I, John, solemnly warn everyone who hears the message about what I have foretold in this book: If anyone adds anything to this message, God will punish him in the ways that this book tells about.

Revelation 22:19

If anyone takes away ... God will take away

This is a strong warning to not change anything about this prophecy.

ULT

19 And if anyone might take away from the words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are written about in this book. ^[2]

UST

19 If anyone takes away any of the message about what I have foretold in this book, God will take away that person's right to eat fruit from the tree that enables people to live forever. He will also take away that person's right to enter God's city. Both these things are described in this book.

Revelation 22:20

General Information:

In these verses John gives his and Jesus' closing greetings.

The one who testifies (ULT) that all (UST)

Alternate translation: "Jesus, who testifies"

ULT

²⁰ The one who testifies these things says, "Yes! I am coming quickly." Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

UST

²⁰ Jesus, who says that all these things are true, says, "Certainly I am coming soon!" I, John, reply, "May it be so! Lord Jesus, come!"

Revelation 22:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus {be} with the saints. Amen.

UST

²¹ I pray that our Lord Jesus will continue to act kindly to all of you who are God's people. Amen!



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Version 28

Abstract Nouns

Description

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Go back to: Revelation 1:1; 1:2; 1:4; 1:6; 1:9; 2:2; 2:9; 2:13; 2:19; 2:24; 5:12; 7:10; 9:6; 12:11; 12:17; 13:10; 13:18; 14:7; 17:1; 17:8; 17:9; 18:10; 18:15; 18:20)

Active or Passive

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

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

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

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

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

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

Description

Some languages have both active and passive forms of sentences.

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

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

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

Purposes for the Passive

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

Translation Principles Regarding the Passive

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

When the men of the city arose early in the morning, and see, the altar of Baal **was torn down**. (Judges 6:28a ULT)

The men of the town saw what had happened to the altar of Baal, but they did not know who broke it down. The purpose of the passive form here is to communicate this event from the perspective of the men of the town.

It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)

This describes a situation in which a person ends up in the sea with a millstone around his neck. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on what happens to this person. Who does these things to the person is not important.

Translation Strategies

If your language would use a passive form for the same purpose as in the passage that you are translating, then use a passive form. If you decide that it is better to translate without a passive form, here are some strategies that you might consider.

- (1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who or what did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.
- (2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who or what did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."
- (3) Use a different verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21b ULT)

The king's servants gave Jeremiah a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

- (2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."

It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)

It would be better for him if **they were to put** a millstone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea.

It would be better for him if **someone were to put** a heavy stone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea.

- (3) Use a different verb in an active sentence.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21 ULT)

He **received** a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Abstract Nouns](#)

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

(Go back to: Revelation 1:3; 3:5; 5:6; 5:9; 6:2; 6:4; 6:9; 6:11; 6:13; 7:4; Notes; 8:2; 8:7; 8:8; 8:12; 8:13; 9:2; 9:5; 9:14; 9:15; 9:20; 10:7; 11:1; 11:18; 11:19; Notes; 12:1; 12:5; 12:9; 12:13; 12:15; 13:3; 13:5; 13:7; 13:8; 13:10; 13:12; 13:15; 14:1; 14:10; 14:16; 15:1; 15:4; 15:8; 16:8; 16:9; 16:10; 16:12; 16:16; 16:19; 17:5; 17:8; 17:14; 17:17; 18:8; 18:14; 18:16; 18:21; 18:22; 18:23; 18:24; 19:4; 19:8; 19:9; 19:12; 19:13; 19:16; 19:20; 19:21; 20:3; 20:4; 20:7; 20:10; 20:12; 20:13; 20:14; 20:15; 21:12; 21:19; 21:21; 21:25; 21:27; 22:18)

Apostrophe

Description

An apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him. He does this to tell his listeners his message or feelings about that person or thing in a very strong way.

This page answers the question: *What is the figure of speech called an apostrophe?*

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use apostrophe, and readers could be confused by it. They may wonder who the speaker is talking to, or think that the speaker is crazy to talk to things or people who cannot hear.

Examples from the Bible

Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on you. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

King Saul was killed on Mount Gilboa, and David sang a sad song about it. By telling these mountains that he wanted them to have no dew or rain, he showed how sad he was.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to you. (Luke 13:34a ULT)

Jesus was expressing his feelings for the people of Jerusalem in front of his disciples and a group of Pharisees. By speaking directly to Jerusalem as though its people could hear him, Jesus showed how deeply he cared about them.

He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: “**Altar, altar!** This is what Yahweh says, ‘See, ... on you they will burn human bones.’” (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

The man of God spoke as if the altar could hear him, but he really wanted the king, who was standing there, to hear him.

Translation Strategies

If apostrophe would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. But if this way of speaking would be confusing to your people, let the speaker continue speaking to the people that are listening to him as he tells **them** his message or feelings about the people or thing that cannot hear him. See the example below.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: “**Altar, altar!** This is what Yahweh says, ‘See, ... on you they will burn human bones.’” (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

He said this about the altar: “This is what Yahweh says **about this altar**. ‘See, ... they will burn people’s bones on **it**.’”

Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on **you**. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

As for these mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on **them**.

(Go back to: [Revelation 18:22](#))

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Assumed knowledge is whatever a speaker assumes his audience knows before he speaks and gives them some kind of information. The speaker does not give the audience this information because he believes that they already know it.

This page answers the question: *How can I be sure that my translation communicates the assumed knowledge and implicit information along with the explicit information of the original message?*

When the speaker does give the audience information, he can do so in two ways. The speaker gives explicit information in what he states directly. Implicit Information is what the speaker does not state directly because he expects his audience to be able to learn it from other things he says.

Description

When someone speaks or writes, he has something specific that he wants people to know or do or think about. He normally states this directly. This is explicit information.

The speaker assumes that his audience already knows certain things that they will need to think about in order to understand this information. Normally he does not tell people these things, because they already know them. This is called assumed knowledge.

The speaker does not always directly state everything that he expects his audience to learn from what he says. Implicit information is information that he expects people to learn from what he says even though he does not state it directly.

Often, the audience understands this implicit information by combining what they already know (assumed knowledge) with the explicit information that the speaker tells them directly.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

All three kinds of information are part of the speaker's message. If one of these kinds of information is missing, then the audience will not understand the message. Because the target translation is in a language that is very different from the biblical languages and is made for an audience that lives in a very different time and place than the people in the Bible, many times the assumed knowledge or the implicit information is missing from the message. In other words, modern readers do not know everything that the original speakers and hearers in the Bible knew. When these things are important for understanding the message, it is helpful if you include this information in the text or in a footnote.

Examples From the Bible

Then a scribe came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him, "Foxes **have holes**, and the birds of the sky **have nests**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:19-20 ULT)

Jesus did not say what foxes and birds use holes and nests for, because he assumed that the scribe would have known that foxes sleep in holes in the ground and birds sleep in their nests. This is **assumed knowledge**.

Jesus did not directly say here "I am the Son of Man" but, if the scribe did not already know it, then that fact would be **implicit information** that he could learn because Jesus referred to himself that way. Also, Jesus did not state explicitly that he travelled a lot and did not have a house that he slept in every night. That is **implicit information** that the scribe could learn when Jesus said that he had nowhere to lay his head.

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the mighty deeds had been done in **Tyre and Sidon** which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But

I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the **day of judgment** than for you.
(Matthew 11:21-22 ULT)

Jesus assumed that the people he was speaking to knew that Tyre and Sidon were very wicked, and that the day of judgment is a time when God will judge every person. Jesus also knew that the people he was talking to believed that they were good and did not need to repent. Jesus did not need to tell them these things. This is all **assumed knowledge**.

An important piece of **implicit information** here is that the people he was speaking to would be judged more severely than the people of Tyre and Sidon would be judged **because** they did not repent.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not wash their hands when they eat bread**. (Matthew 15:2 ULT)

One of the traditions of the elders was a ceremony in which people would wash their hands in order to be ritually clean before eating. People thought that in order to be righteous, they had to follow all the traditions of the elders. This was **assumed knowledge** that the Pharisees who were speaking to Jesus expected him to know. By saying this, they were accusing his disciples of not following the traditions, and thus not being righteous. This is **implicit information** that they wanted him to understand from what they said.

Translation Strategies

If readers have enough assumed knowledge to be able to understand the message, along with any important implicit information that goes with the explicit information, then it is good to leave that knowledge unstated and leave the implicit information implicit. If the readers do not understand the message because one of these is missing for them, then follow these strategies:

(1) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.

(2) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.

Jesus said to him, "Foxes **have holes**, and the birds of the sky **have nests**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:20 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that the foxes slept in their holes and birds slept in their nests.

Jesus said to him, "Foxes **have holes to live in**, and the birds of the sky **have nests to live in**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head and sleep."

It will be more tolerable for **Tyre and Sidon** at the day of judgment than for you (Matthew 11:22 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that the people of Tyre and Sidon were very, very wicked. This can be stated explicitly.
>

At the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable for **those cities of Tyre and Sidon, whose people were very wicked**, than it will be for you. or At

the day of judgment, It will be more tolerable for those **wicked cities, Tyre and Sidon**, than for you.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not wash their hands** when they eat bread. (Matthew 15:2 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that one of the traditions of the elders was a ceremony in which people would wash their hands in order to be ritually clean before eating, which they must do to be righteous. It was not to remove germs from their hands to avoid sickness, as a modern reader might think.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not go through the ceremonial handwashing ritual of righteousness** when they eat bread.

(2) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.

Then a scribe came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:19-20 ULT)

The implicit information is that Jesus himself is the Son of Man. Other implicit information is that if the scribe wanted to follow Jesus, then, like Jesus, he would have to live without a house.

Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but **I, the Son of Man, have no home to rest in. If you want to follow me, you will live as I live.**"

It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you (Matthew 11:22 ULT)

The implicit information is that God would not only judge the people; he would punish them. This can be made explicit.

At the day of judgment, God will **punish Tyre and Sidon**, cities whose people were very wicked, **less severely than he will punish you.**
or:

At the day of judgment, God will **punish you more severely** than Tyre and Sidon, cities whose people were very wicked.

Modern readers may not know some of the things that the people in the Bible and the people who first read it knew. This can make it hard for them to understand what a speaker or writer says, and to learn things that the speaker left implicit. Translators may need to state some things explicitly in the translation that the original speaker or writer left unstated or implicit.

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:1](#); [1:3](#); [1:4](#); [1:18](#); [2:19](#); [2:22](#); [2:28](#); [3:3](#); [3:11](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [9:3](#); [11:3](#); [11:4](#); [11:17](#); [Notes](#); [12:11](#); [13:10](#); [13:17](#); [15:2](#); [16:15](#); [Notes](#); [17:1](#); [17:5](#); [17:9](#); [17:15](#); [19:5](#); [19:10](#); [19:11](#); [19:15](#); [20:3](#); [22:6](#); [22:7](#); [22:10](#); [22:15](#); [22:17](#))

Background Information

Description

When people tell a story, they normally tell the events in the order that they happened. This sequence of events makes up the storyline. The storyline is full of action verbs that move the story along in time. But sometimes a writer may take a break from the storyline and give some information to help his listeners understand the story better. This type of information is called background information. The background information might be about things that happened before the events he has already told about, or it might explain something in the story, or it might be about something that would happen much later in the story.

This page answers the question: *What is background information, and how can I show that some information is background information?*

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

[Order of Events](#)

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

Example — The bolded phrases in the story below are all background information.

Peter and John went on a hunting trip because **their village was going to have a feast the next day. Peter was the best hunter in the village. He once killed three wild pigs in one day!** They walked for hours through low bushes until they heard a wild pig. The pig ran, but they managed to shoot the pig and kill it. Then they tied up its legs with some rope **they had brought with them** and carried it home on a pole. When they brought it to the village, Peter's cousin saw the pig and realized that it was his own pig. Peter had mistakenly killed his cousin's pig.

Background information often tells about something that had happened earlier or something that would happen much later. Examples of these are: "their village was going to have a feast the next day," "He once killed three wild pigs in one day," and "that they had brought with them."

Often background information uses "be" verbs like "was" and "were," rather than action verbs. Examples of these are "their village was going to have a feast the next day," and "Peter **was** the best hunter in the village."

Background information can also be marked with words that tell the reader that this information is not part of the event line of the story. In this story, some of these words are "because," "once," and "had."

A writer may use background information:

- to help their listeners be interested in the story
- to help their listeners understand something in the story
- to help the listeners understand why something is important in the story
- to tell the setting of a story
 - > * Setting includes:
 - > * where the story takes place
 - > * when the story takes place
 - > * who is present when the story begins
 - > * what is happening when the story begins

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of marking background information and storyline information.
- You (the translator) need to know the order of the events in the Bible, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.
- You will need to translate the story in a way that marks the background information in a way that your own readers will understand the order of events, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.

Examples From the Bible

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram **was 86 years old** when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:15-16 ULT)

The first sentence tells about two events. Hagar gave birth and Abraham named his son. The second sentence is background information about how old Abram was when those things happened.

And Jesus himself **was beginning about 30 years old**. He **was the son** (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli, (Luke 3:23 ULT)

The verses before this tell about when Jesus was baptized. This sentence introduces background information about Jesus' age and ancestors. The story resumes in chapter 4 where it tells about Jesus going to the wilderness.

Then **it happened on a Sabbath** that he **was going through the grain fields**, and his disciples **were picking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands**. But some of the Pharisees said ... (Luke 6:1-2a ULT)

These verses give the setting of the story. The events took place in a grain field on the Sabbath day. Jesus, his disciples, and some Pharisees were there, and Jesus' disciples were picking heads of grain and eating them. The main action in the story starts with the phrase, "But some of the Pharisees said"

Translation Strategies

To keep translations clear and natural you will need to study how people tell stories in your language. Observe how your language marks background information. You may need to write down some stories in order to study this. Observe what kinds of verbs your language uses for background information and what kinds of words or other markers signal that something is background information. Do these same things when you translate, so that your translation is clear and natural and people can understand it easily.

(1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information.

(2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first. (This is not always possible when the background information is very long.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information. The examples below explain how this was done in the ULT English translations.

And Jesus himself **was** beginning about 30 years old. He **was** the son (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli. (Luke 3:23 ULT)

As here, English sometimes uses the word "and" to show that there is some kind of change in the story. The verb "was" shows that it is background information.

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The bolded phrase happened before John rebuked Herod. In English, the helping verb "had" in "had done" shows that Herod did those things before John rebuked him.

(2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first.

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.
Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

"When Abram was 86 years old, Hagar gave birth to his son, and Abram named his son Ishmael."

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done,** added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The translation below reorders John's rebuke and Herod's actions.

"Now Herod the tetrarch married his brother's wife, Herodias, and **he did many other evil things,** so John rebuked him. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/grammar-connect-words-phrases\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-newevent\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 17:3; 21:10](#))

Biblical Distance

Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man’s hand.
- The **span** or handspan was the width of a man’s hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man’s forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **“long” cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as “furlong,” which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

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

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal\]\]](#)
[Fractions](#)

The metric values in the table below are close but not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact length from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Metric Measure
handbreadth	8 centimeters
span	23 centimeters
cubit	46 centimeters
“long” cubit	54 centimeters
stadia	185 meters

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as “.46 meters” or even as “46 centimeters,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a meter,” “45 centimeters,” or “50 centimeters.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as “about ten kilometers” from Jerusalem.

When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 25:10 below.

They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half. (Exodus 25:10 ULT)

- (1) Use the measurements given in the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half kubits**; its width will be **one kubit and a half**; and its height will be **one kubit and a half**.”

- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement. For example, if you measure things using the standard meter length, you could translate it as below.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half cubits (one meter)**; its width will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**; and its height will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**.”

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

[¹] two and a half cubits
[²] one cubit and a half

(Go back to: [Revelation 14:20](#); [21:16](#); [21:17](#))

Biblical Money

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of money in the Bible?*

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals, such as silver and gold, and would pay a certain weight of that metal in order to buy things. Later, people started to make coins that each contained a standard amount of a certain metal. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

Unit in OT	Metal	Weight
daric	gold coin	8.4 grams
shekel	various metals	11 grams
talent	various metals	33 kilograms

Unit in NT	Metal	Day's Wage
denarius/denarii	silver coin	1 day
drachma	silver coin	1 day
mite	copper coin	1/64 day
shekel	silver coin	4 days
talent	silver	6,000 days

Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see [Biblical Weight](#). The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament.

- (1) Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
- (3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
- (4) Use the biblical term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

(5) Use the biblical term and explain it in a footnote.

Translation Strategies Applied

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

█ The one owed 500 denarii, and the other, 50. (Luke 7:41b ULT)

Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

█ "The one owed **500 denali**, and the other, **50**."

Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.

█ "The one owed **500 silver coins**, and the other, **50**."

(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.

█ "The one owed **500 days' wages**, and the other, **50**."

(4) Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2"

The footnotes would look like:

█ [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii**,¹ and the other, **50**." (Luke 7:41 ULT)

█ ^[1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

[Translate Unknowns](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 6:6](#))

Biblical Volume

Description

The following terms are the most common units of volume used in the Bible to state how much a certain container could hold. The containers and measurements are given for both liquids (such as wine) and dry solids (such as grain). The metric values are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the measures of volume that are in the Bible?*

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

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

Type	Original Measure	Liters
Dry	omer	2 liters
Dry	ephah	22 liters
Dry	homer	220 liters
Dry	cor	220 liters
Dry	seah	7.7 liters
Dry	lethek	114.8 liters
Liquid	metrete	40 liters
Liquid	bath	22 liters
Liquid	hin	3.7 liters
Liquid	kab	1.23 liters
Liquid	log	0.31 liters

Translation Principles

- The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
- Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
- Whatever measures you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kinds of measures in the text or a footnote.
- If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one hin as “3.7 liters,” readers might think that the measurement is exactly 3.7 liters, not 3.6 or 3.8. It would be better to use a more approximate measure such as “three and a half liters” or “four liters.”
- When God tells people how much of something to use, and when people use those amounts in obedience to him, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much they used.

When the unit of measure is stated

Translation Strategies

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Isaiah 5:10 below.

For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one bath, and one homer of seed will yield only an ephah. (Isaiah 5:10 ULT)

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one **bat**, and one **homer** of seed will yield only an **efa**.”

- (2) Use the measurements given in the UST. Usually they are metric measurements. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22 liters** and **220 liters** of seed will yield only **22 liters**.”

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22**, and **ten baskets** of seed will yield only **one basket**.”

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **six gallons**, and **six and a half bushels** of seed will yield only **20 quarts**.”

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **one bath (six gallons)**, and **one homer (six and a half bushels)** of seed will yield only **an ephah (20 quarts)**.”

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in footnotes.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only 22 liters¹, and 220 liters² of seed will yield only 22 liters³.”

The footnotes would look like:

[1] one bath
[2] one homer
[3] one ephah

When the unit of measure is implied

Sometimes the Hebrew does not specify a particular unit of volume but only uses a number. In these cases, many English versions, including the ULT and UST, add the word “measure.”

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 measures** of wine, there were only 20. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.
- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”
- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.
- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Haggai 2:16 below.

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty measures** of wine, there were only **20**. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.

When you came to a heap of **20** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”

When you came to a heap of **20 amounts** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty amounts** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.

When you came to a heap of **20 baskets** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 jars** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

When you came to a heap for **20 liters** of grain, there were only **ten liters**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 liters** of wine, there were only **20 liters**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions](#)

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

(Go back to: [Revelation 6:6](#))

Biblical Weight

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of weight in the Bible?*

The following terms are the most common units of weight in the Bible. The term “shekel” means “weight,” and many other weights are described in terms of the shekel. Some of these weights were used for money. The metric values in the table below are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are only an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Shekels	Grams	Kilograms
shekel	1 shekel	11 grams	-
bekah	1/2 shekel	5.7 grams	-
pim	2/3 shekel	7.6 grams	-
gerah	1/20 shekel	0.57 grams	-
mina	50 shekels	550 grams	1/2 kilogram
talent	3,000 shekels	-	34 kilograms

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one gerah as “.57 grams,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a gram.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, 2 Samuel 21:16 says that Goliath’s spear weighed 300 shekels. Instead of translating this as “3300 grams” or “3.3 kilograms,” it can be translated as “about three and one half kilograms.”

When God tells people how much something should weigh, and when people use those weights, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise, it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much the thing should weigh.

Translation Strategies

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words.](#))

(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this, you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 38:29 below.

█ The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. (Exodus 38:29 ULT)

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talentes and 2,400 sekeles**."

(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **2,400 kilograms**."

(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **5,300 pounds**."

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a footnote. The following shows both measurements in the text.

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents (2,380 kilograms) and 2,400 shekels (26.4 kilograms)**."

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a footnote. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

█ "The bronze from the offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. ¹"

The footnote would look like:

█ ^[1] This was a total of about 2,400 kilograms.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 16:21](#))

Blessings

Description

Blessings are short sayings that people use to ask God to do something good for another person. In the Bible, the person saying the blessing speaks or writes directly to the person who will receive the blessing. The person who says the blessing does not directly speak to God, but it is understood that God is the one who will do the good thing mentioned. It is also understood that God hears the blessing, whether he is mentioned by name or not.

This page answers the question: *What are blessings, and how can I translate them?*

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

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

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-poetry\]\]](#)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Each language has its own ways of saying blessings. There are many blessings in the Bible. They need to be translated in the way that people say blessings in your language, so that people recognize them as blessings and understand what one person wants God to do for another.

Examples From the Bible

In the Bible, people often said a blessing when they met someone or when they were leaving someone or sending someone off.

In the book of Ruth, when Boaz meets his workers in the fields, he greets them with a blessing:

Then behold, Boaz coming from Bethlehem! And he said to the reapers, “Yahweh be with you.” And they said to him, “May Yahweh bless you.” (Ruth 2:4 ULT)

Similarly, when Rebekah leaves her family, they say farewell with a blessing:

They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, “Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them.” (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

In a similar way, the writers of letters in the New Testament often wrote a blessing at the beginning of their letters as well as at the end. Here are examples from the beginning and end of Paul’s second letter to Timothy:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. (2 Tim 1:2 ULT)
The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

Translation Strategies

Find out how people say blessings in your language. Collect a list of common blessings, noting the form of the verb, the use of certain words, and the words that are not used in a blessing but would normally be in a sentence. Also find out what differences there might be between blessings that people use when they are speaking to each other and when they are writing to each other.

If translating a blessing literally would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing that. If not, here are some options:

Add a verb if that is natural in your language.

Mention God as the subject of a blessing if that is natural in your language.

Translate the blessing in a form that is natural and clear in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add a verb if that is natural in your language.

▮ The Lord with your spirit. The grace with you. (2 Tim 4:22, literal from the Greek)

In the Greek of this verse, there is no verb 'be.' However, in blessings in English, it is natural to use a verb. The idea that the 'grace' from God will be or remain with the person is implied in Greek.

The Lord **be** with your spirit. Grace **be** with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

(2) Mention God as the subject of a blessing if that is natural in your language.

If people expect a blessing to refer to God in your language, you might have to provide 'God' as the subject or as the source of the blessing. In Greek and Hebrew, usually God is not explicitly mentioned in the blessing, but it is implied that God is the one acting to show his kindness to the person being addressed.

▮ The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

The Lord be with your spirit. **May God give** grace to you.

▮ They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them." (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, may **God grant that** you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may **God empower** your descendants **to** possess the gate of those who hate them."

(3) Translate the blessing in a form that is natural and clear in your language.

Here are some ideas for ways that people might say a blessing in their language.

▮ The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

May the Lord be with your spirit. May God cause his grace to be with you.

May you have God's presence with you. May you experience grace from God.

▮ "Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them." (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

"Our sister, we pray to God that you may be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and appeal to him that your descendants may possess the gate of those who hate them."

"Our sister, by God's power you will be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and your descendants will possess the gate of those who hate them."

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

Collective Nouns

Description

This page answers the question: *What are collective nouns and how can I translate them?*

A collective noun is a singular noun that refers to a group of something. Examples: a **family**, **clan**, or **tribe** is a group of people who are related to each other; a **flock** is a group of birds or sheep; a **fleet** is a group of ships; and an **army** is a group of soldiers.

Many collective nouns are used exclusively as a singular replacement for a group as in the examples above. Frequently in the Bible the name of an ancestor is used, through a process of metonymy, as a collective noun referencing the group of his descendants. In the Bible, sometimes the singular noun will take a singular verb form, other times it will take a plural verb form. This may depend on how the author is thinking about the group, or whether the action is being done as a group or as individuals.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

There are several issues that require care when translating collective nouns. Further care is needed because the language you are translating into may not use collective nouns in the same way as the language you are translating from. Issues include:

The source language may have a collective noun for a group that the target language does not and vice-versa. You may have to translate a collective noun with a plural noun in your language, or you may need to translate a plural noun with a collective noun in your language.

Subject-verb agreement. Different languages or dialects may have different rules about using singular or plural verbs with collective nouns.

Examples (from Wikipedia):

- a singular noun with a singular verb: The team *is* in the dressing room.
- a singular noun with a plural verb which is correct in British, but not American, English: The team *are* fighting among themselves. The team *have* finished the project.

Pronoun agreement. Similar to the previous, care needs to be taken to use the correct pronoun plurality and possibly gender or noun class to agree with the number/gender/class of the noun used. See the biblical examples below.

Clarity of referent. Especially if there is a mismatch in your translation between the verb and noun or pronoun concerning any of the factors above, readers may be confused about who or what is being referenced.

Examples from the Bible

And Joab and all the **army** which was with him arrived (2 Samuel 3:23a ULT)

The word in bold is written in singular form in both Hebrew and English, but it refers to a group of warriors that fight together.

and though the **flock** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls. (Habakkuk 3:17b ULT)

The word in bold is singular and refers to a group of sheep.

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **crowd** was coming to him, and he was teaching **them**. (Mark 2:13 ULT)

Note in this example that the noun is singular but the pronoun is plural. This may or may not be allowed or natural in your language.

Do not let **your heart** be troubled. **You** believe in God; believe also in me. (John 14:1 ULT)

In this verse, the words translated “your” and “you” are plural, referring to many people. The word “heart” is singular in form, but it refers to all of their hearts as a group.

And he shall take the **hair** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **it** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. (Num 6:18b ULT)

The word **hair** is singular, but it refers to many hairs, not just one.

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go.” (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

Here, “Israel” is singular, but means “the Israelites” by metonymy.

Translation Strategies

If your language has a collective (singular) noun that refers to the same group as referenced by the collective noun in the source text, then translate the word using that term. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Translate the collective noun with a plural noun.
- (2) Add a plural word to the collective noun so that you can use a plural verb and pronouns.
- (3) Use a phrase to describe the group that the collective noun references. A useful strategy here can be to use a general collective noun that refers to a group of people or things.
- (4) If your language uses a collective noun for something that is a plural noun in the source language, you can translate the plural noun as a collective noun and, if necessary, change the form of the verb and any pronouns so that they agree with the singular noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the collective noun with a plural noun.

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go.” (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **the Israelites** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **the Israelites** go.”

And he shall take the **hair** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **it** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. (Num 6:18b ULT)

And he shall take the **hairs** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **them** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

- (2) Add a plural word to the collective noun so that you can use a plural verb and pronouns.

And Joab and all the **army** which was with him arrived (2 Samuel 3:23a ULT)

And Joab and all the **army men who were** with him arrived

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **crowd** was coming to him, and he was teaching **them**. (Mark 2:13 ULT)

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **people of the crowd were** coming to him, and he was teaching **them**.

(3) Use a phrase to describe the group that the collective noun references. A useful strategy here can be to use a general collective noun that refers to a group of people or things.

and though the **flock** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls. (Habakkuk 3:17b ULT)

and though the **group of sheep** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls.

And Pharaoh said, "Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go." (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

And Pharaoh said, "Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **the people of Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **the people of Israel** go."

(4) If your language uses a collective noun for something that is a plural noun in the source language, you can translate the plural noun as a collective noun and, if necessary, change the form of the verb and any pronouns so that they agree with the singular noun.

Now this John had his clothing from the **hairs** of a camel and a leather belt around his waist (Matthew 3:4a ULT)

Now this John had his clothing from the **hair** of a camel and a leather belt around his waist

You shall not make for yourself a carved figure nor any likeness that {is} in **the heavens** above, or that {is} in the earth beneath, or that {is} in **the waters** under the earth. (Deuteronomy 5:8 ULT)

You shall not make for yourself a carved figure nor any likeness that is in **heaven** above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in **the water** under the earth.

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:5](#); [1:7](#))

Copy or Borrow Words

Description

Sometimes the Bible includes things that are not part of your culture and for which your language may not have a word. The Bible also includes people and places for which you may not have names.

When that happens you can “borrow” the word from the Bible in a familiar language and use it in your translation in your own language. This means that you basically copy it from the other language. This page tells how to “borrow” words. (There are also other ways to translate words for things that are not in your language. See [Translate Unknowns](#).)

This page answers the question: *What does it mean to borrow words from another language and how can I do it?*

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

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Examples From the Bible

Seeing one fig tree along the roadside, he went to it. (Matthew 21:19a ULT)

If there are no fig trees where your language is spoken, there might not be a name for this kind of tree in your language.

Above him were the **seraphim**; each one had six wings; with two each covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (Isaiah 6:2 ULT)

Your language might not have a name for this kind of creature.

The declaration of the word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of **Malachi**. (Malachi 1:1 ULT)

Malachi might not be a name that people who speak your language use.

Translation Strategies

There are several things to be aware of when borrowing words from another language.

- Different languages use different scripts, such as the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Devanagari, and Korean scripts. These scripts use different shapes to represent the letters in their alphabets.
- Languages that use the same script might pronounce the letters in that script differently. For example, when speaking German, people pronounce the letter “j” the same way that people pronounce the letter “y” when speaking English.
- Languages do not all have the same sounds or combinations of sounds. For example, many languages do not have the soft “th” sound in the English word “think,” and some languages cannot start a word with a combination of sounds like “st” as in “stop.”

There are several ways to borrow a word.

- (1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.
- (2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.
- (3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.

.A man's name in Hebrew letters — זְפַנְיָהּ
 "Zephaniah" — The same name in Roman letters

(2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.

Zephaniah — This is a man's name.
 "Zephaniah" — The name as it is spelled in English, but you can pronounce it according to the rules of your language.

(3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Zephaniah — If your language does not have the "z," you could use "s." If your writing system does not use "ph" you could use "f." Depending on how you pronounce the "i" you could spell it with "i" or "ai" or "ay."
 "Sefania"
 "Sefanaia"
 "Sefanaya"

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:18](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

Description

In some languages, phrases that modify a noun can be used with the noun for two different purposes. They can either (1) distinguish the noun from other similar items, or (2) they can give more information about the noun. That information could be new to the reader, or a reminder about something the reader might already know. Other languages use modifying phrases with a noun only for distinguishing the noun from other similar things. When people who speak these languages hear a modifying phrase along with a noun, they assume that its function is to distinguish one item from another similar item.

This page answers the question: *When a phrase is used with a noun, what is the difference between phrases that distinguish the noun from others and phrases that simply inform or remind?*

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

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

Some languages use a comma to mark the difference between (1) making a distinction between similar items and (2) giving more information about an item. Without the comma, the sentence below communicates that it is making a distinction:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister who was very thankful**.
 - If her sister was usually thankful, the phrase “who was thankful” could distinguish this sister of Mary’s from another sister who was not usually thankful.

With the comma, the sentence is giving more information:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister, who was very thankful**.
 - This same phrase can be used to give us more information about Mary’s sister. It tells us about how Mary’s sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish one sister from another sister.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Many source languages of the Bible use phrases that modify a noun both for distinguishing the noun from another similar item and also for giving more information about the noun. You (the translator) must be careful to understand which meaning the author intended in each case.
- Some languages use phrases that modify a noun only for distinguishing the noun from another similar item. When translating a phrase that is used for giving more information, translators who speak these languages will need to separate the phrase from the noun. Otherwise, people who read it or hear it will think that the phrase is meant to distinguish the noun from other similar items.

Examples From the Bible

Examples of words and phrases that are used to distinguish one item from other possible items:

(These usually do not cause any problem in translation.)

█ The curtain is to separate **the holy place** from **the most holy place**. (Exodus 26:33b ULT)

The words “holy” and “most holy” distinguish two different places from each other and from any other place.

█ A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to **the woman who bore him**. (Proverbs 17:25 ULT)

The phrase “who bore him” distinguishes which woman the son is bitterness to. He is not bitterness to all women, but to his mother.

Examples of words and phrases that are used to give added information or a reminder about an item:

(These are a translation issue for languages that do not use these.)

... for **your righteous judgments** are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

The word “righteous” simply reminds us that God’s judgments are righteous. It does not distinguish his righteous judgments from his unrighteous judgments, because all of his judgments are righteous.

How can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is the reason that Abraham did not think that Sarah could bear a son. He was not distinguishing one woman named Sarah from another woman named Sarah who was a different age, and he was not telling anyone something new about her age. He simply did not think that a woman who was that old could bear a child.

I will wipe away mankind **whom I have created** from the surface of the earth. (Genesis 6:7 ULT)

The phrase “whom I have created” is a reminder of the relationship between God and mankind. It is the reason God had the right to wipe away mankind. There is not another mankind that God did not create.

Translation Strategies

If readers would understand the purpose of a phrase with a noun, then consider keeping the phrase and the noun together. For languages that use words or phrases with a noun only to distinguish one item from another, here are some strategies for translating phrases that are used to inform or remind.

- (1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.
- (2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information. It may be by adding a small word, or by changing the way the voice sounds. Sometimes changes in the voice can be shown with punctuation marks, such as parentheses or commas.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.

I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

By saying “worthless idols,” David was commenting about all idols and giving his reason for hating those who serve them. He was not distinguishing worthless idols from valuable idols.

>

Because idols are worthless, I hate those who serve them.

... for your **righteous** judgments are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

... for your judgments are good **because they are righteous**.

Can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is a reminder of Sarah’s age. It tells why Abraham was asking the question. He did not expect that a woman who was that old could bear a child.

>

Can Sarah bear a son **even when she is 90 years old**?

I will call on Yahweh, **who is worthy to be praised**. (2 Samuel 22:4a ULT) There is only one Yahweh. The phrase “who is worthy to be praised” gives a reason for calling on Yahweh.

I will call on Yahweh, because **he is worthy to be praised**

(2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information.

You are my Son, **whom I love**. I am pleased with you. (Luke 3:22 ULT)

You are my Son. **I love you** and I am pleased with you.

Receiving my love, you are my Son. I am pleased with you.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Double Negatives](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 9:20](#); [11:17](#); [12:9](#); [16:9](#); [17:2](#))

Double Negatives

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each express the meaning of “not.” Double negatives mean very different things in different languages. To translate sentences that have double negatives accurately and clearly, you need to know what a double negative means in the Bible and how to express this idea in your language.

This page answers the question: *What are double negatives?*

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

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

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

Description

Negative words are words that have in them the meaning “not.” Examples in English are “no,” “not,” “none,” “no one,” “nothing,” “nowhere,” “never,” “nor,” “neither,” and “without.” Also, some words have prefixes or suffixes that mean “not,” such as the bolded parts of these words: “**un**happy,” “**im**possible,” and “use**less**.” Some other kinds of words also have a negative meaning, such as “lack” or “reject,” or even “fight” or “evil.”

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each have a negative meaning.

We did this **not** because we have **no** authority ... (2 Thessalonians 3:9a ULT)

And this was **not** done **without** an oath! (Hebrews 7:20a ULT)

Be sure of this—the wicked person will **not** go **un**punished. (Proverbs 11:21a ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Double negatives mean very different things in different languages.

- In some languages, such as English, a second negative in a clause cancels the first one, creating a positive sentence. So, “He is not unintelligent” means “He is intelligent.”
- In some languages, such as French and Spanish, two negative words in a clause do not cancel each other to become a positive. The Spanish sentence, “No vi a nadie,” literally says “I did not see no one.” It has both the word ‘no’ next to the verb and ‘nadie,’ which means “no one.” The two negatives are seen as in agreement with each other, and the sentence means, “I did not see anyone.”
- In some languages, a double negative creates a stronger negative statement.
- In some languages, a double negative creates a positive sentence, but it is a weak statement. So, “He is not unintelligent” means, “He is somewhat intelligent.”
- In some languages, including the languages of the Bible, a double negative can produce a stronger positive meaning than a simple positive statement. So, “He is not unintelligent” can mean “He is very intelligent.” In this case, the double negative is actually the figure of speech called [litotes](#).

Biblical Greek can do all of the above. So to translate sentences with double negatives accurately and clearly in your language, you need to know what each double negative means in the Bible and how to express the same idea in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The Greek of John 15:5 says:

χωρὶς ἐμοῦ οὐ δύνασθε ποιεῖν οὐδέν

Without me **not** you can do **nothing**

We cannot reproduce this double negative in the English ULT because in English, a second negative in a clause cancels the first one. In English, and perhaps in your language, we need to choose only one of the negatives and say either:

Without me, you can do **nothing**.

or:

Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

... in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

This means "in order to be fruitful."

A prophet is **not without** honor (Mark 6:4 ULT)

This means "a prophet is honored."

I do **not** want you to be **ignorant**. (1 Corinthians 12:1)

This means "I want you to be knowledgeable."

Translation Strategies

If the way that the double negative is used in the Bible is natural and has the same meaning as in your language, consider using it in the same way. Otherwise, you could consider these strategies:

(1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.

(2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives.

(3) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a stronger negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives and add a strengthening word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.

For we do **not** have a high priest who **cannot** feel sympathy for our weaknesses. (Hebrews 4:15a ULT)

"For we have a high priest who can feel sympathy for our weaknesses."

... in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

"... so that they may be fruitful."

(2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives.

χωρὶς ἐμοῦ οὐ δύνασθε ποιεῖν οὐδέν

Without me **not** you can do **nothing** (John 15:5)

Without me, you can do **nothing**.

or:

Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

(3) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a stronger negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives and add a strengthening word.

...ἰῶτα ἓν ἢ μία κεραία **οὐ μὴ** παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου (Matthew 5:18)

...iota one or one serif **not not** may pass away from the law

...**not even** one iota or one serif may pass away from the law

or:

...**certainly no** iota or serif may pass away from the law

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

(Go back to: [Revelation 21:27](#))

Doublet

Description

We are using the word “doublet” to refer to two words or phrases that are used together and either mean the same thing or mean very close to the same thing. Often they are joined with the word “and.” Unlike Hendiadys, in which one of the words modifies the other, in a doublet the two words or phrases are equal and are used to emphasize or intensify the one idea that is expressed by the two words or phrases.

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: [Revelation 1:14](#); [4:9](#); [15:1](#); [22:16](#))

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: [Revelation 1:7](#); [2:16](#); [7:4](#); [7:5](#); [9:4](#))

End of Story

Description

There are different types of information that may be given at the end of a story. Often this is background information. This background information is different from the actions that make up the main part of the story. A book of the Bible is often made up of many smaller stories that are part of the larger story of the book itself. For example, the story of Jesus' birth is a smaller story in the larger story of the book of Luke. Each of these stories, whether large or small, can have background information at the end of it.

This page answers the question: *What kinds of information are given at the end of a story?*

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

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)
Background Information

The following are purposes for end of story information:

- to summarize the story
- to give a comment about what happened in the story
- to connect a smaller story to the larger story it is a part of
- to tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends
- to tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends
- to tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of presenting these kinds of information. If you (the translator) do not use your language's ways of doing this, readers may not know:

- that this information is ending the story
- what the purpose of the information is
- how the information is related to the story

Translation Strategies

- Translate the particular kind of information at the end of a story the way your language expresses that kind of information.
- Translate it so that people will understand how it relates to the story it is part of.
- If possible, translate the end of the story in a way that people will know where that story ends and the next begins.

Examples From the Bible

- To summarize the story

Then the rest of the men should follow, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. **In this way it happened that all of us were brought safely to the land.** (Acts 27:44 ULT)

- To give a comment about what happened in the story

Many of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of everyone. Then they counted the value of them, and found it was 50,000 pieces of silver. **So the word of the Lord was spreading and prevailing with power.** (Acts 19:19-20 ULT)

- To tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoiced in God my savior." **And Mary stayed with her about three months and then returned to her house.** (Luke 1:46-47, 56 ULT)

- To tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends

All who those who heard it were amazed concerning the things that were spoken to them by the shepherds. **But Mary kept all the things, pondering them in her heart.** (Luke 2:18-19 ULT)

- To tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

"Woe to you, experts in the Jewish law, because you have taken away the key of knowledge; you do not enter in yourselves, and you hinder those who are entering." **After he went from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to fiercely oppose him and argued against him about many things, lying in wait to trap him in something from his mouth.** (Luke 11:52-54 ULT)

(Go back to: [Revelation 22:12](#))

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

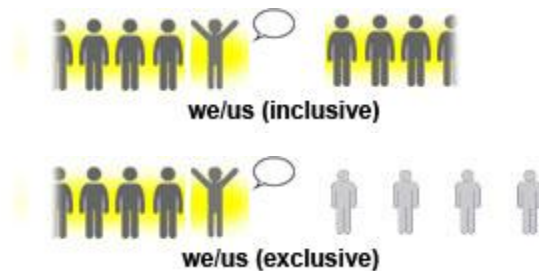
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also true for "us," "our," "ours," and "ourselves." Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these. Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms for these words will need to understand what the speaker meant so that they can decide which form to use.

This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*

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

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

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive "we" and the exclusive "we" refer to.



Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for "we." If your language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of "we," then you will need to understand what the speaker meant so that you can decide which form of "we" to use.

Examples From the Bible

Exclusive

They said, "There are not more than five loaves of bread and two fish with us—unless **we** go and buy food for all these people." (Luke 9:13 ULT)

In the second clause, the disciples are talking about some of them going to buy food. They were speaking to Jesus, but Jesus was not going to buy food. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" would use the **exclusive** form there.

We have seen it, and **we** bear witness to it. **We** are announcing to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and which has been made known to **us**. (1 John 1:2 ULT)

John is telling people who have not seen Jesus what he and the other apostles have seen. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **exclusive** forms in this verse.

Inclusive

The shepherds said one to each other, "Let **us** now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to **us**." (Luke 2:15b ULT)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said "us," they were including the people they were speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Now it happened that on one of those days, he indeed got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let **us** go over to the other side of the lake." So they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULT)

When Jesus said "us," he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

(Go back to: [Revelation 19:5](#))

First, Second or Third Person

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

Description

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

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

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

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Forms of You](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:1](#); [1:4](#); [1:9](#); [2:7](#); [2:11](#); [2:17](#); [2:29](#); [3:6](#); [3:13](#); [3:22](#); [13:9](#))

Forms of You

Singular, Dual, and Plural

Some languages have more than one word for “you” based on how many people the word “you” refers to. The **singular** form refers to one person, and the **plural** form refers to more than one person. Some languages also have a **dual** form which refers to two people, and some languages have other forms that refer to three or four people.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_younum.

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses a singular form of “you” even though he is speaking to a crowd.

- [Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups](#)

Formal and Informal

Some languages have more than one form of “you” based on the relationship between the speaker and the person he is talking to. People use the **formal** form of “you” when speaking to someone who is older, or has higher authority, or is someone they do not know very well. People use the **informal** form when speaking to someone who is not older, or does not have higher authority, or is a family member or close friend.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_youform.

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- [Forms of “You” — Formal or Informal](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:9](#); [16:5](#); [22:16](#))

This page answers the question: *What are the different forms of you?*

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

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

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

Fractions

Description

A fraction is a number that represents part of a whole. When an item is divided into several equal parts, a fraction refers to one or more of those parts.

For the drink offering, you must offer **a third** of a hin of wine. (Numbers 15:7a ULT)

A hin is a container of a set size which is used for measuring wine and other liquids. The people were to think about dividing a hin container into three equal parts, filling up only one of those parts and offering that amount.

... **a third** of the ships were destroyed. (Revelation 8:9b ULT)

There were many ships. If all those ships were divided into three equal groups of ships, one group of ships was destroyed.

Most fractions in English simply have the letters “th” added to the end of the number, such as fourth, sixth, ninth, tenth.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | ----- | ----- | | four | fourth | | ten | tenth | | one hundred | one hundredth | | one thousand | one thousandth |

Some fractions in English do not follow that pattern.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | ----- | ----- | | two | half | | three | third | | five | fifth |

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use fractions. They may simply talk about parts or groups, but they do not use fractions to tell how big a part is or how many parts are included in a group.

Examples From the Bible

Now to the **half-tribe** of Manasseh, Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the other **half**, Joshua gave a possession among their brothers across the Jordan on the west. (Joshua 22:7 ULT)

The tribe of Manasseh divided into two groups. The phrase “the half-tribe of Manasseh” refers one of those groups. The phrase “the other half” refers to the other group.

So the four angels who had been prepared for that hour, that day, that month, and that year, were released so that they would kill **a third** of mankind. (Revelation 9:15 ULT)

If all the people in the world were to be divided into three equal groups, then the number of people in one group would be killed.

You must also prepare **a fourth** of a hin of wine as the drink offering. (Numbers 15:5 ULT)

They were to imagine dividing a hin of wine into four equal parts and prepare the amount equal to one of them.

This page answers the question: *What are fractions and how can I translate them?*

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

[Numbers](#)

Translation Strategies

If a fraction in your language would give the right meaning, consider using it. If not, you could consider these strategies.

- (1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.
- (2) For measurements such as for weight and length, use a unit that your people might know or the unit in the UST.
- (3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

Examples of These Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.

A third of the ocean became red like blood (Revelation 8:8 ULT)

It was like they **divided** the ocean **into three parts**, and **one part** of the ocean became blood.

Then you must offer with the bull a grain offering of **three-tenths** of an ephah of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9 ULT)

... then you must **divide** an ephah of fine flour **into ten parts** and **divide** a hin of oil **into two parts**. Then mix **three of those parts** of the flour with **one of the parts** of oil. Then you must offer that grain offering along with the bull.

(2) For measurements, use the measurements that are given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

... **two-thirds of a shekel** ... (1 Samuel 13:21b ULT)

... **eight grams** of silver ... (1 Samuel 13:21b UST)

... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)

... **six and one-half liters** of finely ground flour mixed with **two liters** of olive oil. (Numbers 15:9b UST)

(3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)

six quarts of fine flour mixed with **two quarts** of oil.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#)

[Biblical Money](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 6:8](#); [8:8](#); [9:18](#); [12:4](#))

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

Generic noun phrases refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things. This happens frequently in proverbs, because proverbs tell about things that are true about people in general.

This page answers the question: *What are generic noun phrases and how can I translate them?*

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

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

Can **a man** walk on hot coals without scorching his feet?
So is **the man who goes in to his neighbor's wife;**
the one who touches her will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28-29 ULT)

The phrases in bold above do not refer to a specific man. They refer to any man who does these things.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of showing that noun phrases refer to something in general. You (the translator) should refer to these general ideas in ways that are natural in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The **righteous person** is kept away from trouble and it comes upon **the wicked** instead. (Proverbs 11:8 ULT)

The bold phrases above do not refer to a specific person but to anyone who does what is right or anyone who is wicked.

People curse **the man who refuses to sell grain**. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

This does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who refuses to sell grain.

Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

The phrase "a good man" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who is good. The phrase "a man who makes evil plans" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who makes evil plans.

Translation Strategies

If your language can use the same wording as in the ULT to refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things, consider using the same wording. If not, here are some strategies you might use.

- (1) Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.
- (2) Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.
- (3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."
- (4) Use the plural form, as in "people."

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the word “the” in the noun phrase.

Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)
 “Yahweh gives favor to **the good man**, but he condemns **the man who makes evil plans**.” (Proverbs 12:2)

(2) Use the word “a” in the noun phrase.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)
 “People curse **a man** who refuses to sell grain.”

(3) Use the word “any,” as in “any person” or “anyone.”

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)
 “People curse **any man** who refuses to sell grain.”

(4) Use the plural form, as in “people” (or in this sentence, “men”).

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)
 “People curse **men** who refuse to sell grain”

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)
 “People curse **whoever** refuses to sell grain.”

Next we recommend you learn about:
 [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-gendernotations]]

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:3](#); [2:7](#); [2:11](#); [2:17](#); [2:26](#); [3:5](#); [3:12](#); [3:21](#))

Go and Come

Description

This page answers the question: *What do I do if the word "go" or "come" is confusing in a certain sentence?*

Different languages have different ways of determining whether to use the words "go" or "come" and whether to use the words "take" or "bring" when talking about motion. For example, when saying that they are approaching a person who has called them, English speakers say "I'm coming," while Spanish speakers say "I'm going." You will need to study the context in order to understand what is meant by the words "go" and "come" (and also "take" and "bring"), and then translate those words in a way that your readers will understand which direction people are moving in.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of talking about motion. The biblical languages or your source language may use the words "go" and "come" or "take" and "bring" differently than your language uses them. If these words are not translated in the way that is natural in your language, your readers may be confused about which direction people are moving.

Examples From the Bible

Yahweh said to Noah, "**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark." (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

In some languages, this would lead people to think that Yahweh was in the ark.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. Then you will be free from my oath. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to his servant. Abraham's relatives lived far away from where he and his servant were standing and he wanted his servant to **go** to them, not **come** toward Abraham.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14a ULT)

Moses is speaking to the people in the wilderness. They had not yet gone into the land that God was giving them. In some languages, it would make more sense to say, "When you have **gone** into the land ..."

They **brought** him up to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (Luke 2:22b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to say that they **took** or **carried** Jesus to the temple.

Then see, there was a man whose name was Jairus, and he was a leader of the synagogue. And falling at the feet of Jesus, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

The man was not at his house when he spoke to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to **go** with him to his house.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to ask what did you come out to see.

Translation Strategies

If the word used in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other strategies.

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.
- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

But you will be free from my oath if you **go** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you come out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14 ULT)

“When you have **arrived** in the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ...”

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark ...” (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Enter**, you and all your household, into the ark ...”

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you travel out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

(Go back to: [Revelation 3:20; 5:7](#))

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

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

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see [Borrow Words](#).
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

Saul was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.
- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
- (3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
- (4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
- (5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like ‘drawn out’)**, and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.”

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called “Saul” before Acts 13 and “Paul” after Acts 13. You could translate his name as “Paul” all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** 1

The footnote would look like:

[1] Most versions say “Saul” here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called “Paul.”

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write “Saul” where the source text has “Saul” and “Paul” where the source text has “Paul.”

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

[1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

(Go back to: [Introduction to Revelation](#); [Revelation 1:1](#); [1:11](#); [2:1](#); [2:6](#); [2:8](#); [2:12](#); [2:13](#); [2:14](#); [2:15](#); [2:18](#); [3:1](#); [3:7](#); [3:14](#); [9:11](#); [16:16](#))

Idiom

An idiom is a figure of speech made up of a group of words that, as a whole, has a meaning that is different from what one would understand from the meanings of the individual words. Someone from outside of the culture usually cannot understand an idiom without someone inside the culture explaining its true meaning. Every language uses idioms. Some English examples are:

- You are pulling my leg. (This means, “You are teasing me by telling me something that is not true.”)
- Do not push the envelope. (This means, “Do not take a matter to its extreme.”)
- This house is under water. (This means, “The debt owed for this house is greater than its actual value.”)
- We are painting the town red. (This means, “We are going around town tonight celebrating very intensely.”)

This page answers the question: *What are idioms and how can I translate them?*

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

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

Description

An idiom is a phrase that has a special meaning to the people of the language or culture who use it. Its meaning is different than what a person would understand from the meanings of the individual words that form the phrase.

He **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

The words “set his face” is an idiom that means “decided.”

Sometimes people may be able to understand an idiom from another culture, but it might sound like a strange way to express the meaning.

I am not worthy that you would **come under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

The phrase “come under my roof” is an idiom that means “enter my house.”

Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

This idiom means “Listen carefully and remember what I say.”

Purpose: An idiom is probably created in a culture somewhat by accident when someone describes something in an unusual way. But, when that unusual way communicates the message powerfully and people understand it clearly, other people start to use it. After a while, it becomes a normal way of talking in that language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People can easily misunderstand idioms in the original languages of the Bible if they do not know the cultures that produced the Bible.
- People can easily misunderstand idioms that are in the source language Bibles if they do not know the cultures that made those translations.
- It is useless to translate idioms literally (according to the meaning of each word) when the target language audience will not understand what they mean.

Examples From the Bible

Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Look, we are your **flesh and bone**.” (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

This means, “We and you belong to the same race, the same family.”

█ The children of Israel went out **with a high hand**. (Exodus 14:8b ASV)

This means, "The Israelites went out defiantly."

█ the one who **lifts up my head** (Psalm 3:3b ULT)

This means, "the one who helps me."

Translation Strategies

If the idiom would be clearly understood in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.
- (2) Use a different idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.

█ Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Look, we are your **flesh and bone**." (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

█ Look, we all **belong to the same nation**.

█ Then he **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

█ He started to travel to Jerusalem, **determined to reach it**.

█ I am not worthy that you would come **under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

█ I am not worthy that you should enter **my house**.

- (2) Use an idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

█ Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

█ **Be all ears** when I say these words to you.

█ My **eyes grow dim** from grief. (Psalm 6:7a ULT)

█ I am crying my **eyes out**

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:5](#); [1:10](#); [2:23](#); [4:2](#); [7:11](#); [11:16](#); [22:4](#))

Introduction of New and Old Participants

Description

The first time that people or things are mentioned in a story, they are **new participants**. After that, whenever they are mentioned, they are **old participants**.

Now **there was a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus** ... **This man** came to Jesus at night ... Jesus replied and said to **him** ... (John 3:1, 2a, 3a)

The first bolded phrase introduces Nicodemus as a new participant. After being introduced, he is then referred to as “This man” and “him” when he has become an old participant.

This page answers the question: *Why cannot the readers of my translation understand who the author was writing about?*

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In order to make your translation clear and natural, it is necessary to refer to the participants in such a way that people will know if they are new participants or participants that they have already read about. Different languages have different ways of doing this. You must follow the way that your language does this, not the way that the source language does this.

Examples From the Bible

New Participants

Often the most important new participant is introduced with a phrase that says that he existed, such as “There was a man,” as in the example below. The phrase “There was” tells us that this man existed. The word “a” in “a man” tells us that the author is speaking about him for the first time. The rest of the sentence tells where this man was from, who his family was, and what his name was.

Now there was a man from Zorah, of the families of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. (Judges 13:2a ULT)

A new participant who is not the most important participant is often introduced in relation to the more important person who was already introduced. In the example below, Manoah’s wife is simply referred to as “his wife.” This phrase shows her relationship to him.

Now there was one man from Zorah, of the families of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. **His wife** was barren and she had never given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULT)

Sometimes a new participant is introduced simply by name because the author assumes that the readers know who the person is. In the first verse of 1 Kings, the author assumes that his readers know who King David is, so there is no need to explain who he is.

Now King David was old, he had advanced in the days, and they covered him with the garments, but it was not warm enough for him. (1 Kings 1:1 ULT)

Old Participants

A person who has already been brought into the story can be referred to with a pronoun after that. In the example below, Manoah is referred to with the pronoun “his,” and his wife is referred to with the pronoun “she.”

His wife was barren and she had never given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULT)

Old participants can also be referred to in other ways, depending on what is happening in the story. In the example below, the story is about bearing a son, and Manoah’s wife is referred to by the noun phrase “the wife.”

The angel of Yahweh appeared to the wife and he said to her ... (Judges 13:3a ULT)

If the old participant has not been mentioned for a while, or if there could be confusion between participants, the author may use the participant’s name again. In the example below, Manoah is referred to by his name, which the author has not used since verse 2.

Then Manoah prayed to Yahweh. (Judges 13:8a ULT)

Some languages place an affix on the verb that tells something about the subject. In some of those languages, people do not always use noun phrases or pronouns for old participants when they are the subject of the sentence. The marker on the verb gives enough information for the listener to understand who the subject is. (See Verbs.)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If the participant is new, use one of your language’s ways of introducing new participants.
- (2) If it is not clear to whom a pronoun refers, use a noun phrase or name.
- (3) If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the participant is new, use one of your language’s ways of introducing new participants.

Then Joseph, who was called Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated as Son of Encouragement), a Levite from Cyprus by birth ... (Acts 4:36-37 ULT) — Starting the sentence with Joseph’s name when he has not been introduced yet might be confusing in some languages.

There was a man from Cyprus who was a Levite. His name was Joseph, and he was given the name Barnabas by the apostles (that is, being interpreted, Son of Encouragement). There was a Levite from Cyprus whose name was Joseph. The apostles gave him the name Barnabas, which means Son of encouragement.

- (2) If it is not clear who a pronoun refers to, use a noun phrase or name.

And it happened that when he was praying in a certain place, when he stopped, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.” (Luke 11:1 ULT) — Since this is the first verse in a chapter, readers might wonder who “he” refers to.

It happened when Jesus finished praying in a certain place, that one of his disciples said, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.”

(3) If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.

Joseph's master took Joseph and put him in prison, in the place where all the king's prisoners were put, and Joseph stayed there. (Genesis 39:20) — Since Joseph is the main person in the story, some languages might prefer the pronoun.

Joseph's master took **him** and put **him** in prison, in the place where all the king's prisoners were put, and **he** stayed there in the prison.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Pronouns — When to Use Them](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 5:6](#))

Litany

Description

A litany is a figure of speech in which the various components of a thing are listed in a series of very similar statements. The speaker does this to indicate that what he is saying should be understood as comprehensive and without exceptions.

This page answers the question: *What is the figure of speech called litany?*

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use litanies, and readers could be confused by them. They may wonder why the speaker seems to be saying the same thing over and over again.

Examples From the Bible

Though they dig into Sheol, there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to heaven, there I will bring them down. Though they hide on the top of Carmel, there I will search and take them. Though they are hidden from my sight in the bottom of the sea, there will I give orders to the serpent, and it will bite them. Though they go into captivity, driven by their enemies before them, there will I give orders to the sword, and it will kill them. (Amos 9:2-4 ULT)

In this passage Yahweh is telling the people of Israel that when he punishes them, none of them will escape.

But you should not have looked on the day of your brother, on the day of his misfortune. And you should not have rejoiced over the sons of Judah in the day of their perishing. And you should not have made your mouth great in a day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of my people in the day of their calamity. Yes, you! You should not have looked on his evil in the day of his calamity. And you women should not have looted his wealth in the day of his calamity. And you should not have stood at the crossroads to cut down his fugitives. And you should not have delivered up his survivors in a day of distress. (Obadiah 1:12-14)

In this passage Yahweh is telling the people of Edom that they should have helped the people of Judah when they were conquered by the Babylonians.

Translation Strategies

If the litany is understood as it is in the ULT, then translate the litany as it is. If it is not understood, then try one or more of the following strategies.

- (1) Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany.
- (2) You can put each sentence of the litany on a separate line. Also, if each sentence in the litany has two parts, you can format the litany so that the equivalent parts of each sentence line up. Use this or any other type of formatting that will show that each sentence is reinforcing the same meaning.
- (3) You can eliminate words like “and,” “but,” and “or” at the beginning of sentences so that it will be clearer that the component parts of the litany are all being listed in a row.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) combined with (3):

Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany;

You can eliminate words like “and,” “but,” and “or” at the beginning of sentences so that it will be clearer that the component parts of the litany are all being listed in a row.

You did nothing to help the Israelites when strangers carried away their wealth. They conquered all the cities of Judah, and they even plundered Jerusalem. And you were just as bad as those foreigners, because you did nothing to help:

You should not have looked on the day of your brother, on the day of his misfortune. You should not have rejoiced over the sons of Judah in the day of their perishing. You should not have made your mouth great in a day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of my people in the day of their calamity. Yes, you! You should not have looked on his evil in the day of his calamity. You women should not have looted his wealth in the day of his calamity. You should not have stood at the crossroads to cut down his fugitives. You should not have delivered up his survivors in a day of distress. (Obadiah 1:11-14)

In the above example, verse 11 provides the summary and meaning for the litany that follows in verses 12-14.

(1) combined with (2):

Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany;

You can put each sentence of the litany on a separate line. Also, if each sentence in the litany has two parts, you can format the litany so that the equivalent parts of each sentence line up. Use this or any other type of formatting that will show that each sentence is reinforcing the same meaning.

Not one of them will get away, not one of them will escape:

Though they dig into Sheol,	there my hand will take them.
Though they climb up to heaven,	there I will bring them down.
Though they hide on the top of Carmel,	there I will search and take them.
Though they are hidden from my sight in the bottom of the sea,	there will I give orders to the serpent, and it will bite them.
Though they go into captivity, driven by their enemies before them,	there will I give orders to the sword, and it will kill them.

(Amos 9:1b-4 ULT)

In the above example, the sentence before the litany explains its overall meaning. That sentence can be placed as an introduction. The second half of each sentence can be formatted in a descending staircase pattern as above, or

lined up evenly like the first half of each sentence, or in another way. Use whatever format best shows that these sentences are all communicating the same truth, that it is not possible to escape from God.

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:19](#))

Merism

Definition

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it. By referring to the extreme parts, the speaker intends to include also everything in between those parts.

“I am **the alpha and the omega**,” says the Lord God,
“the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:8 ULT)

I am **the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end**.
(Revelation 22:13, ULT)

This page answers the question: *What does the word merism mean and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

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

Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a merism that includes everything from the beginning to the end. It means eternal.

... I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth** ..., (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

Heaven and earth is a merism that includes everything that exists.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use merism. The readers of those languages may think that the phrase only applies to the items mentioned. They may not realize that it refers to those two things and everything in between.

Examples From the Bible

From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh’s name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

This bolded phrase is a merism because it speaks of the east and the west and everywhere in between. It means “everywhere.”

He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13)

The bolded phrase is merism because it speaks of old people and young people and everyone in between. It means “everyone.”

Translation Strategies

If the merism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.
- (2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything**.

From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

In all places, people should praise Yahweh's name.

(2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything, including both what is in heaven and what is on earth**.

He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13 ULT)

He will bless **all those** who honor him, regardless of whether they are **young or old**.

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:8](#); [1:17](#); [2:8](#); [5:3](#); [5:13](#); [7:15](#); [12:10](#); [19:5](#); [19:18](#); [21:6](#); [22:13](#))

Metaphor

Description

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Simile](#)

The Parts of a Metaphor

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

Every metaphor has three parts:

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

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

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

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

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

Passive Metaphors

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

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

Patterned Pairs of Concepts Acting as Metaphors

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

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

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

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

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

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

Active Metaphors

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Purposes of Metaphor

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

Translation Principles

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity (the **Idea**) between the topic and the image, then state it clearly.

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Go back to: Revelation 1 General Notes; 1:3; 1:5; 1:6; 1:7; 1:8; 1:18; 2:3; 2:4; 2:5; 2:9; 2:10; 2:13; 2:14; 2:20; 2:22; 2:23; 2:24; 2:27; Notes; 3:1; 3:2; 3:3; 3:4; 3:9; 3:10; 3:11; 3:12; 3:15; 3:16; 3:17; 3:18; 3:20; 4:1; 4:6; 4:8; Notes; 5:5; 6:9; 6:11; 6:17; 7:14; 7:15; 7:16; 7:17; 8:11; 8:12; 9:12; 10:1; 11:5; 11:6; 11:11; 11:14; 11:18; 12:5; 12:10; Notes; 14:4; 14:7; 14:8; 14:15; 15:2; Notes; 16:9; 16:15; Notes; 17:2; 17:8; 17:10; 17:11; 17:15; 17:16; 17:17; 17:18; Notes; 18:2; 18:3; 18:5; 18:6; 18:7; 18:8; 18:10; 18:14; 18:16; 18:21; 18:23; 19:2; 19:7; 19:8; 19:9; 19:10; 19:15; Notes; 20:11; Notes; 21:6; 21:9; 21:22; 21:23; 21:24; 22:1; 22:13; 22:14; 22:15; 22:16; 22:17)

Metonymy

Description

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which an item (either physical or abstract) is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. A metonym is a word or phrase used as a substitute for something that it is associated with.

This page answers the question: *What is a metonymy?*

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

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

... and **the blood** of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin. (1 John 1:7b ULT)

The blood represents Christ's death.

And he took **the cup** in the same way after supper, saying, "**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20 ULT)

The cup represents the wine that is in the cup.

Metonymy can be used

- as a shorter way of referring to something
- to make an abstract idea more meaningful by referring to it with the name of a physical object associated with it

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible uses metonymy very often. Speakers of some languages are not familiar with metonymy and they may not recognize it when they read it in the Bible. If they do not recognize the metonymy, they will not understand the passage or, worse yet, they will get a wrong understanding of the passage. Whenever a metonym is used, people need to be able to understand what it represents.

Examples From the Bible

The Lord God will give to him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

A throne represents the authority of a king. "Throne" is a metonym for "kingly authority," "kingship," or "reign." This means that God would make him become a king who would follow King David.

Then immediately his **mouth** was opened (Luke 1:64a ULT)

The mouth here represents the power to speak. This means that he was able to talk again.

Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

The word "wrath" or "anger" is a metonym for "punishment." God was extremely angry with the people and, as a result, he would punish them.

Translation Strategies

If people would easily understand the metonym, consider using it. Otherwise, here are some options.

- (1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.
- (2) Use only the name of the thing the metonym represents.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.

And he took the cup in the same way after the supper, saying, “**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” (Luke 22:20 ULT)

He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, “**The wine in this cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

This verse also contains a second metonym: The cup, (representing the wine it contains) also represents the new covenant made with the blood Christ shed for us.

- (2) Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.

The Lord God will give him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

“The Lord God will give him **the kingly authority** of his father, David.”

or:

“The Lord God will **make him king** like his ancestor, King David.”

Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

“Who warned you to flee from God’s coming **punishment?**”

To learn about some common metonymies, see [Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies](#).

(Go back to: [Revelation 1 General Notes](#); 1:2; 1:5; 1:7; 1:9; 1:10; 1:12; Notes; 2:3; 2:7; 2:10; 2:11; 2:13; 2:17; 2:22; 2:23; 2:29; Notes; 3:4; 3:5; 3:6; 3:8; 3:13; 3:20; 3:21; 3:22; 4:11; 5:9; 5:12; 6:6; 6:8; 6:9; 6:10; 6:16; 6:17; 7:2; 7:3; 7:14; 7:17; 8:4; 8:5; 9:4; 10:1; 10:11; 11:12; 11:15; 11:18; 12:10; 12:11; 13:2; 13:3; 13:5; 13:9; 13:10; 13:15; 14:5; 14:8; 14:11; 15:4; 16:2; 16:3; 16:4; 16:6; 16:7; 16:8; 16:9; 16:10; 16:12; 16:17; 16:20; 17:15; 17:17; 17:18; 18:3; 18:4; 18:7; 18:16; 18:17; 18:21; 18:22; 18:23; 18:24; 19:2; 19:13; 19:17; 20:3; 20:4; 20:13; 21:3; 21:4; 21:5; 21:10; 21:24; 22:2; 22:6; 22:10; 22:18)

Nominal Adjectives

Description

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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]]

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

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

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

Blessed are **people who are meek**.

(Go back to: [Revelation 2:2; 11:18](#))

Numbers

Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words (“five”) or as numerals (“5”). Some numbers are very large, such as “two hundred” (200), “twenty-two thousand” (22,000), or “one hundred million” (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

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

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

▮ Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

▮ That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word “about” shows that it is not an exact number.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

Examples From the Bible

▮ When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

▮ Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands**. (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Write numbers using numerals.
- (2) Write numbers using your language’s words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
- (3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

(1) Write numbers using numerals.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents), ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord® Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord® Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died.
(Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#)

[Fractions](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 5:11](#); [9:16](#); [11:9](#); [11:11](#); [14:1](#); [14:3](#); [14:20](#); [19:4](#); [20:5](#))

Order of Events

Description

In the Bible, events are not always told in the order in which they occurred. Sometimes the author wanted to discuss something that happened at an earlier time than the event that he just talked about. This can be confusing to the reader.

This page answers the question: *Why are some events not listed in the order they happened, and how do I translate them?*

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

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers might think that the events happened in the order that they are told. It is important to help them understand the correct order of events.

Examples From the Bible

He even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

This could sound like John baptized Jesus after John was locked up in prison, but John baptized Jesus before John was locked up in prison.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed after them. But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

This could sound like Joshua gave the order not to shout after the army had already started their march, but he had given that order before they started marching.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

This sounds like a person must first open the scroll and then break its seals, but the seals that lock the scroll must be broken before the scroll can be unrolled.

Translation Strategies

(1) If your language uses phrases or time words to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using one of them.

(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that. (See the section on "Aspect" of Verbs.)

(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occurred, consider reordering the events so they are in that order. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6). (See Verse Bridges.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses phrases, time words or tenses to show that an event happened before the one just mentioned, consider using one of them.

20 he even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

20 But then Herod ... had John locked up in prison. 21 **Before John was put in prison**, while all the people were being baptized by John, Jesus also was baptized.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to open the scroll **after** breaking its seals?

(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets 10 But Joshua **had commanded** the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout."

(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occur, consider reordering the events. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6).

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8,10 Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout." Then just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets...

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_events.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Background Information](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/grammar-connect-words-phrases\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-newevent\]\]](#)

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

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:15](#); [5:2](#))

Ordinal Numbers

Description

Ordinal numbers are used in the Bible mainly to tell the position of something in a list.

And God has indeed appointed some in the church, **first** apostles, **second** prophets, **third** teachers, then miracles. (1 Corinthians 12:28a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are ordinal numbers and how can I translate them?*

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

[Numbers](#)

This is a list of workers that God gave to the church in their order.

Ordinal Numbers in English

Most ordinal numbers in English simply have “-th” added to the end.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
4	four	fourth
10	ten	tenth
100	one hundred	one hundredth
1,000	one thousand	one thousandth

Some ordinal numbers in English do not follow that pattern.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
1	one	first
2	two	second
3	three	third
5	five	fifth
12	twelve	twelfth

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have special numbers for showing the order of items in a list. There are different ways to deal with this.

Examples From the Bible

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

The people cast lots and one went to each of these people in the order given.

You must place in it four rows of precious stones. The **first** row must have a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet. The **second** row must have an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. The **third** row must have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. The **fourth** row must have a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They must be mounted in gold settings. (Exodus 28:17-20 ULT)

This describes four rows of stones. The first row is probably the top row, and the fourth row is probably the bottom row.

Translation Strategies

If your language has ordinal numbers and using them would give the right meaning, consider using them. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.
- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Tell the total number of items, and use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.

The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim ... the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **another** to Jedaiah, **another** to Harim ... **another** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **the next** to Jedaiah, **the next** to Harim ... **the next** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **the first** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the second** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the third** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. **The fourth** river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10-14 ULT)

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **one** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the next** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the next** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. **The last** river is the Euphrates.

- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

They cast **24** lots. The lots went to Jerhoiarib, Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim ... Delaiah, and Maaziah.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 6:3](#); [6:5](#); [6:7](#); [6:9](#); [6:12](#); [8:1](#); [8:8](#); [11:15](#))

Parallelism

Description

Parallelism is a poetic device in which two phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. The following are some of the different kinds of parallelism.

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "doublet" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and raises it above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULT)

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

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

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

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

Yahweh sees everything a person does
and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The first phrase and the second phrase mean the same thing. There are three ideas that are the same between these two phrases. "Sees" corresponds to "watches," "everything...does" corresponds to "all the paths...takes," and "a person" corresponds to "he."

Praise Yahweh, all you nations;
exalt him, all you peoples! (Psalm 117:1 ULT)

Both parts of this verse tell people everywhere to praise Yahweh. The words 'Praise' and 'exalt' mean the same thing. The words 'Yahweh' and 'him' refer to the same person. The terms 'all you nations' and 'all you peoples' refer to the same people.

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people,
and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2b ULT)

The two parts of this verse say that Yahweh has a serious disagreement with his people, Israel. These are not two different disagreements or two different groups of people.

Translation Strategies

For most kinds of parallelism, it is good to translate both of the clauses or phrases. For synonymous parallelism, it is good to translate both clauses if people in your language understand that the purpose of saying something twice is to strengthen a single idea. But if your language does not use parallelism in this way, then consider using one of the following translation strategies.

- (1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.
- (2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as "truly" or "certainly."
- (3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like "very," "completely," or "all."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

Delilah expressed this idea twice to emphasize that she was very upset.

Until now you have deceived me with your lies.
Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The phrase "all the paths he takes" is a metaphor for "all he does."

Yahweh pays attention to everything a person does.
For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2 ULT)

This parallelism describes one serious disagreement that Yahweh had with one group of people. If this is unclear, the phrases can be combined:

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, Israel.

(2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”

Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

Yahweh truly sees everything a person does.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

You have certainly made him to rule over everything that you have created.

(3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely” or “all.”

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

All you have done is lie to me.

Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

Yahweh sees absolutely everything that a person does.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Personification](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 9:15](#); [21:3](#); [21:6](#); [21:11](#); [22:13](#))

Personification

Description

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

Such as wisdom:

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples From the Bible

You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

- (1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
- (2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
- (3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

This page answers the question: *What is personification?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — God speaks of sin as if it were a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.

Sin is at your door, **waiting to attack you**.

(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — This can be translated with the word “as.”

Sin is crouching at the door, **just as a wild animal does as it waits to attack a person..**

(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Even the **winds and the sea obey him**. (Matthew 8:27b ULT) — The men speak of the “wind and the sea” as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus, just as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.

He even **controls the winds and the sea**.

NOTE: We have broadened our definition of “personification” to include “zoomorphism” (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and “anthropomorphism” (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics) because the translation strategies for them are the same.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Apostrophe](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1]]

(Go back to: [Revelation 9:6](#); [Notes](#); [12:16](#); [14:8](#); [14:13](#); [16:8](#); [18:2](#); [18:3](#); [19:5](#); [20:6](#); [20:9](#); [20:11](#); [20:13](#))

Possession

Description

In English, the grammatical form that commonly indicates possession is also used to indicate a variety of relationships between people and objects or people and other people. In English, that grammatical relationship is shown by using the word “of,” by using **an apostrophe and the letter “s”**, or by using a **possessive pronoun**. The following examples are different ways to indicate that my grandfather owns a house.

- the house **of** my grandfather
- my grandfather **'s** house
- **his** house

Possession is used in Hebrew, Greek, and English for a variety of situations. Here are a few common situations that it is used for.

- Ownership — Someone owns something.
 - The clothes of me - my clothes — The clothes that I own
- Social Relationship — Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.
 - The mother of John — John's mother - the woman who gave birth to John, or the woman who cared for John
 - A teacher of Israel - Israel's teacher — a person who teaches Israel
- Association — A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.
 - The sickness of David - David's sickness — the sickness that David is experiencing
 - the fear of the Lord — the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord
- Contents — Something has something in it.
 - a bag of clothes — a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes
- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.
 - my head — the head that is part of my body
 - the roof of a house — the roof that is part of a house

In some languages there is a special form of possession, termed **inalienable possession**. This form of possession is used for things that cannot be removed from you, as opposed to things you could lose. In the examples above, *my head* and *my mother* are examples of inalienable possession (at least in some languages), while *my clothes* or *my teacher* would be alienably possessed. What may be considered alienable vs. inalienable may differ by language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between two ideas represented by the two nouns when one is in the grammatical relationship of possessing the other.
- Some languages do not use grammatical possession for all of the situations that your source text Bible might use it for.

Examples From the Bible

Ownership — In the example below, the son owned the money.

▮ The younger son ... wasted his wealth by living recklessly. (Luke 15:13b)

This page answers the question: *What is possession and how can I translate phrases that show it?*

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]]

Social Relationship — In the example below, the disciples were people who learned from John.

Then **the disciples of John** came to him. (Matthew 9:14a ULT)

Association — In the example below, the gospel is the message associated with Paul because he preaches it.

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, from the seed of David, according to **my gospel**, (2 Timothy 2:8 ULT)

Material — In the example below, the material used for making the crowns was gold.

On their heads were something like **crowns of gold**. (Revelation 9:7b)

Contents — In the example below, the cup has water in it.

For whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink ... will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

Part of a whole — In the example below, the door was a part of the palace.

But Uriah slept at **the door of the king's palace**. (2 Samuel 11:9a ULT)

Part of a group — In the example below, “us” refers to the whole group and “each one” refers to the individual members.

Now to **each one of us** grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (Ephesians 4:7 ULT)

Events and Possession

Sometimes one or both of the nouns is an abstract noun that refers to an event or action. In the examples below, the abstract nouns are in **bold** print. These are just some of the relationships that are possible between two nouns when one of them refers to an event.

Subject — Sometimes the word after “of” tells who would do the action named by the first noun. In the example below, **John baptized people**.

The **baptism of John**, was it from heaven or from men? Answer me. (Mark 11:30)

In the example below, **Christ loves us**.

Who will separate us from the **love of Christ**? (Romans 8:35)

Object — Sometimes the word after “of” tells who or what something would happen to. In the example below, **people love money**.

For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10a ULT)

Instrument — Sometimes the word after “of” tells how something would happen. In the example below, God would **punish people by sending enemies to attack them with swords**.

Then be afraid of the sword, because wrath brings **the punishment of the sword**. (Job 19:29a ULT)

Representation — In the example below, John was baptizing people who were repenting of their sins. They were being baptized to show that they were repenting. Their **baptism represented their repentance**.

John came, baptizing in the wilderness and preaching **a baptism of repentance** for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 1:4 ULT)

Strategies for learning what the relationship is between the two nouns

- (1) Read the surrounding verses to see if they help you to understand the relationship between the two nouns.
- (2) Read the verse in the UST. Sometimes it shows the relationship clearly.
- (3) See what the notes say about it.

Translation Strategies

If possession would be a natural way to show a particular relationship between two nouns, consider using it. If it would be strange or hard to understand, consider these.

- (1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.
- (2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.
- (3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.

On their heads were something like **crowns of gold**. (Revelation 9:7b)

“On their heads were **gold crowns**”

- (2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.

Whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink ... will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

Whoever gives you a **cup that has water in it** to drink ... will not lose his reward.

Wealth is worthless on **the day of wrath**. (Proverbs 11:4a ULT)

Wealth is worthless on **the day when God shows his wrath**.

or:

Wealth is worthless on the **day when God punishes people because of his wrath**.

- (3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb. (In the example below, there are two possession relationships, “punishment of Yahweh” and “your God.”)

Notice that I am not speaking to your children, who have not known or seen **the punishment of Yahweh your God**. (Deuteronomy 11:2a ULT)

Notice that I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen **how Yahweh, the God whom you worship, punished the people of Egypt**.

You will only observe and see the **punishment of the wicked**. (Psalms 91:8 ULT)

You will only observe and see **how Yahweh punishes the wicked**.

You will receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. (Acts 2:38b ULT)

|| You will receive the **Holy Spirit, whom God will give to you.**

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:1](#); [1:2](#); [1:9](#))

Pronouns — When to Use Them

Description

When we talk or write, we use pronouns to refer to people or things without always having to repeat the noun or name. Usually, the first time we refer to someone in a story, we use a descriptive phrase or a name. The next time we might refer to that person with a simple noun or by name. After that we might refer to him simply with a pronoun as long as we think that our listeners will be able to understand easily to whom the pronoun refers.

This page answers the question: *How do I decide whether or not to use a pronoun?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)

Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**. **This man** came to Jesus at night. Jesus replied and said to **him** ... (John 3:1, 2a, 3a ULT)

In John 3, Nicodemus is first referred to with noun phrases and his name. Then he is referred to with the noun phrase “this man.” Then he is referred to with the pronoun “him.”

Each language has its rules and exceptions to this usual way of referring to people and things.

- In some languages, the first time something is referred to in a paragraph or chapter, it is referred to with a noun rather than a pronoun.
- The main character is the person whom a story is about. In some languages, after a main character is introduced in a story, he is usually referred to with a pronoun. Some languages have special pronouns that refer only to the main character.
- In some languages, marking on the verb helps people know who the subject is. (See Verbs.) In some of these languages, listeners rely on this marking to help them understand who the subject is. Speakers will use a pronoun, noun phrase, or proper name only when they want either to emphasize or to clarify who the subject is.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- If translators use a pronoun at the wrong time for their language, readers might not know about whom the writer is talking.
- If translators too frequently refer to a main character by name, listeners of some languages might not realize that the person is a main character, or they might think that there is a new character with the same name.
- If translators use pronouns, nouns, or names at the wrong time, people might think that there is some special emphasis on the person or thing to which it refers.

Examples From the Bible

The example below occurs at the beginning of a chapter. In some languages it might not be clear to whom the pronouns refer.

Then Jesus entered into the synagogue again, and there was a man who had a withered hand. Some people watched **him** closely to see if **he** would heal **him** on the Sabbath so that they might accuse **him**. (Mark 3:1-2 ULT)

In the example below, two men are named in the first sentence. It might not be clear whom “he” in the second sentence refers to.

Now after some days had passed, **King Agrippa** and Bernice came down to Caesarea to pay their respects to **Festus**. After **he** had been there for many days, Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul. (Acts 25:13-14)

Jesus is the main character of the book of Matthew, but in the verses below he is referred to four times by name. This may lead speakers of some languages to think that Jesus is not the main character. Or it might lead them to think that there is more than one person named Jesus in this story. Or it might lead them to think that there is some kind of emphasis on him, even though there is no emphasis.

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, “See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.” But **Jesus** said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?” Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.
- (2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.

Again **he** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **him** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath. (Mark 3:1-2)

Again **Jesus** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **Jesus** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath.

- (2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, “See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.” But **Jesus** said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?” Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

This may be translated as:

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **him**, “See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.” But **he** said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?” Then **he** left from there and went into their synagogue.

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:1](#); [1:11](#); [1:16](#); [1:17](#); [2:1](#))

Quotations and Quote Margins

Description

This page answers the question: *What are quote margins and where should I put them?*

When saying that someone said something, we often tell who spoke, whom they spoke to, and what they said. The information about who spoke and whom they spoke to is called the quote margin. What the person said is the quotation. (This is also called a quote.) In some languages the quote margin may come first, last, or even in between two parts of the quotation.

The quote margins are bolded below.

- **She said**, “The food is ready. Come and eat.”
- “The food is ready. Come and eat,” **she said**.
- “The food is ready,” **she said**. “Come and eat.”

Also in some languages, the quote margin may have more than one verb meaning “said.”

But his mother **answered** and **said**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.” (Luke 1:60 ULT)

When writing that someone said something, some languages put the quote (what was said) in quotation marks called inverted commas (“ ”). Some languages use other symbols around the quotation, such as these angle quote marks (« »), or something else.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to put the quote margin where it is most clear and natural in their language.
- Translators need to decide whether they want the quote margin to have one or two verbs meaning “said.”
- Translators need to decide which marks to use around the quotation.

Examples From the Bible

Quote margin before the quote

Then Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in her days.” (Luke 1:18 ULT)

Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and **they said to him**, “Teacher, what should we do?” (Luke 3:12 ULT)

So **he said to them**, “Collect nothing more than what you have been ordered.” (Luke 3:13 ULT)

Quote margin after the quote

Yahweh relented concerning this. “It will not happen,” **he said**. (Amos 7:3 ULT)

Quote margin between two parts of the quote

“I will hide my face from them,” **he said**, “and I will see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful.” (Deuteronomy 32:20 ULT)

For look, days are coming—**this is Yahweh’s declaration**—when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah. (Jeremiah 30:3a ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.
- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning “said.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.

He said, “Therefore, those among you who are leaders should go down with us. If there is something wrong with the man, let them accuse him.” (Acts 25:5 ULT)

“Therefore, those who can should go there with us,” **he said**. “If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him.”

“Therefore, those who can should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him,” **he said**.

“Therefore, those who can,” **he said**, “should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him.”

- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning “said.”

But his mother **answered and said**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.” (Luke 1:60 ULT)

But his mother **replied**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.”

But his mother **said**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.”

But his mother **answered** like this. “No. Rather, he will be called John,” she **said**.

Next we recommend you learn about:
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](https://en.ta.man/translate/figs-quotations)

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:5](#); [1:7](#); [1:8](#); [1:13](#))

Reflexive Pronouns

Description

All languages have ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. English does this by using reflexive pronouns. These are pronouns that refer to someone or something that has already been mentioned in a sentence. In English the reflexive pronouns are: “myself,” “yourself,” “himself,” “herself,” “itself,” “ourselves,” “yourselves,” and “themselves.” Other languages may have other ways to show this.

This page answers the question: *What are reflexive pronouns?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. For those languages, translators will need to know how to translate the English reflexive pronouns.
- The reflexive pronouns in English also have other functions.

Uses of Reflexive Pronouns

- To show that the same person or things fills two different roles in a sentence
- To emphasize a person or thing in the sentence
- To show that someone did something alone
- To show that someone or something was alone

Examples From the Bible

Reflexive pronouns are used to show the same person or thing fills two different roles in a sentence.

If **I** should testify about **myself**, my testimony would not be true. (John 5:31 ULT)

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and **many** went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to purify **themselves**. (John 11:55 ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to emphasize a person or thing in the sentence.

Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2 ULT)

So they left the crowd, taking Jesus with them, just as he was, in the boat. There also were other boats with him. Then a violent windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already full of water. But **Jesus himself** was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. (Mark 4:36-38a ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to show that someone did something alone.

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15 ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to show that someone or something was alone.

He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. **It** was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If a reflexive pronoun would have the same function in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other strategies.

- (1) In some languages people put something on the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.
- (2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.
- (3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it.
- (4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like “alone.”
- (5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) In some languages people modify the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.

If I should testify about **myself** alone, my testimony would not be true. (John 5:31)

“If I should **self-testify** alone, my testimony would not be true.”

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to **purify themselves**. (John 11:55)

“Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out from country before the Passover in order to **self-purify**.”

- (2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.

He himself took our sickness and bore our diseases. (Matthew 8:17 ULT)

“**It was he who** took our sickness and bore our diseases.”

Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2)

“**It was not Jesus who** was baptizing, but his disciples were.”

- (3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it. English adds the reflexive pronoun.

But Jesus said this to test Philip, for he **himself** knew what he was going to do. (John 6:6)

- (4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like “alone.”

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15)

“When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again **alone** up the mountain.”

- (5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)

“He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up and lying **in its own place.**”

(Go back to: [Revelation 19:2](#); [19:12](#))

Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is a question that a speaker asks when he is more interested in expressing his attitude about something than in getting information about it. Speakers use rhetorical questions to express deep emotion or to encourage hearers to think deeply about something. The Bible contains many rhetorical questions, often to express surprise, to rebuke or scold the hearer, or to teach. Speakers of some languages use rhetorical questions for other purposes as well.

This page answers the question: *What are rhetorical questions and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentencetypes\]\]](#)

Description

A rhetorical question is a question that strongly expresses the speaker's attitude toward something. Often the speaker is not looking for information at all. Or, if he is asking for information, it is not usually the information that the question appears to ask for. The speaker is more interested in expressing his attitude than in getting information.

But those who stood by said, **“Are you insulting the high priest of God?”**(Acts 23:4 ULT)

The people who asked Paul this question were not asking if he was insulting God's high priest. Rather, they used this question to accuse Paul of insulting the high priest.

The Bible contains many rhetorical questions. These rhetorical questions might be used for the purposes: of expressing attitudes or feelings, rebuking people, teaching something by reminding people of something they know and encouraging them to apply it to something new, or introducing something they want to talk about.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use rhetorical questions; for them a question is always a request for information.
- Some languages use rhetorical questions, but for purposes that are different or more limited than in the Bible.
- Because of these differences between languages, some readers might misunderstand the purpose of a rhetorical question in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

Jezebel used the question above to remind King Ahab of something he already knew: he still ruled the kingdom of Israel. The rhetorical question made her point more strongly than if she had merely stated it, because it forced Ahab to admit the point himself. She did this in order to rebuke him for being unwilling to take over a poor man's property. She was implying that, since he was the king of Israel, he had the power to take the man's property.

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

God used the question above to remind his people of something they already knew: a young woman would never forget her jewelry or a bride forget her veils. He then rebuked his people for forgetting him who is so much greater than those things.

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

Job used the question above to show deep emotion. This rhetorical question expresses how sad he was that he did not die as soon as he was born. He wished that he had not lived.

And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

Elizabeth used the question above to show how surprised and happy she was that the mother of her Lord came to her.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Jesus used the question above to remind the people of something they already knew: a good father would never give his son something bad to eat. By introducing this point, Jesus could go on to teach them about God with his next rhetorical question:

Therefore, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? (Matthew 7:11 ULT)

Jesus used this question to teach the people in an emphatic way that God gives good things to those who ask him.

What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed that a man took and threw into his garden ... (Luke 13:18b-19a ULT)

Jesus used the question above to introduce what he was going to talk about. He was about to compare the kingdom of God to something. In this case, he compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed.

Translation Strategies

In order to translate a rhetorical question accurately, first be sure that the question you are translating truly is a rhetorical question and is not an information question. Ask yourself, "Does the person asking the question already know the answer to the question?" If so, it is a rhetorical question. Or, if no one answers the question, did the person who asked it expect to receive an answer? If not, it is a rhetorical question.

When you are sure that the question is rhetorical, then be sure that you understand the purpose for the rhetorical question. Is it to encourage or rebuke or shame the hearer? Is it to bring up a new topic? Is it to do something else?

When you know the purpose of the rhetorical question, then think of the most natural way to express that purpose in the target language. It might be as a question, or a statement, or an exclamation.

If using the rhetorical question would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing so. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Add the answer after the question.
- (2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
- (3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.
- (4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Add the answer after the question.

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? **Of course not!** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? **None of you would do that!**

(2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.

What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed. (Luke 13:18-19a ULT)

This is what the kingdom of God is like. It is like a mustard seed ...

Are you insulting the high priest of God? (Acts 23:4b ULT) (Acts 23:4 ULT)

You should not insult God's high priest!

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

I wish I had died when I came out from the womb!

And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!

(3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

You still rule the kingdom of Israel, **do you not?**

(4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

If your son asks you for a loaf of bread, **would you give him a stone?**

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

What virgin would forget her jewelry, and what bride would forget her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number

(Go back to: [Revelation 5:2](#); [6:17](#); [13:4](#); [15:4](#); [17:7](#); [18:18](#))

Simile

Description

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. The simile focuses on a particular trait the two items have in common, and it includes the words “like,” “as,” or “than.”

This page answers the question: *What is a simile?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were troubled and discouraged, **like sheep not having a shepherd**. (Matthew 9:36)

Jesus compared the crowds of people to sheep without a shepherd. Sheep grow frightened when they do not have a good shepherd to lead them in safe places. The crowds were like that because they did not have good religious leaders.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, so be as wise **as the serpents** and harmless **as the doves**. (Matthew 10:16 ULT)

Jesus compared his disciples to sheep and their enemies to wolves. Wolves attack sheep; Jesus’ enemies would attack his disciples.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

God’s word is compared to a two-edged sword. A two-edged sword is a weapon that can easily cut through a person’s flesh. God’s word is very effective in showing what is in a person’s heart and thoughts.

Purposes of Simile

- A simile can teach about something that is unknown by showing how it is similar to something that is known.
- A simile can emphasize a particular trait, sometimes in a way that gets people’s attention.
- Similes help form a picture in the mind or help the reader experience what he is reading about more fully.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not know how the two items are similar.
- People may not be familiar with both of the items being compared.

Examples From the Bible

Suffer hardship with me, **as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3 ULT)

In this simile, Paul compares suffering with what soldiers endure, and he encourages Timothy to follow their example.

Just as the lightning flashing from a place under the sky shines to another place under the sky, so will the Son of Man be. (Luke 17:24b ULT)

This verse does not tell how the Son of Man will be like the lightning. But in context we can understand from the verses before it that just as lighting flashes suddenly and everyone can see it, the Son of Man will come suddenly and everyone will be able to see him. No one will have to be told about it.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the correct meaning of a simile, consider using it. If they would not, here are some strategies you can use:

- (1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.
- (2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.
- (3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — This compares the danger that Jesus' disciples would be in with the danger that sheep are in when they are surrounded by wolves.

See, I send **you out among wicked people** and you will be in danger from them **as sheep are in danger when they are among wolves**.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

For the word of God is living and active and **more powerful than a very sharp two-edged sword**.

- (2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — If people do not know what sheep and wolves are, or that wolves kill and eat sheep, you could use some other animal that kills another.

See, I send you out **as chickens in the midst of wild dogs**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to gather your children together, **as a mother closely watches over her infants**, but you refused!

If you have faith **as a grain of mustard** ... (Matthew 17:20)

If you have faith even as small **as a tiny seed**,

- (3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT)

See, I send you out among **people who will want to harm you**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to **protect you**, but you refused!

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metaphor](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1]]

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:10](#); [1:13](#); [1:14](#); [1:15](#); [1:16](#); [2:18](#); [2:27](#); [3:3](#); [4:1](#); [4:6](#); [4:7](#); [Notes](#); [6:12](#); [6:14](#); [Notes](#); [8:8](#); [8:10](#); [Notes](#); [9:2](#); [9:10](#); [Notes](#); [10:1](#); [12:15](#); [Notes](#); [13:11](#); [14:14](#); [16:15](#); [18:7](#); [19:6](#); [19:12](#); [20:8](#); [21:2](#); [21:18](#); [21:21](#))

Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups

Description

The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. These languages have a singular form of “you” for when the word “you” refers to just one person, and a plural form for when the word “you” refers to more than one person. However, sometimes speakers in the Bible used the singular form of “you” even though they were speaking to a group of people. This is not obvious when you read the Bible in English because English does not have different forms that indicate where “you” is singular and where “you” is plural. But you may see this if you read a Bible in a language that does have distinct forms.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate singular pronouns that refer to groups of people?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Forms of You](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-yousingular\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns\]\]](#)

Also, speakers and writers of the Old Testament often referred to groups of people with the singular pronoun “he,” rather than with the plural pronoun “they.”

Finally, Old Testament speakers and writers also refer to actions that they performed as part of a group by saying ‘I’ did it when, really, the whole group was involved.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- For many languages, a translator who reads a Bible with a general form of “you” will need to know whether the speaker was speaking to one person or to more than one.
- In some languages, it might be confusing if a speaker uses a singular pronoun when speaking to or about more than one person.

Examples From the Bible

1 Now take heed that **you** do not do **your** acts of righteousness before people to be seen by them, otherwise **you** will not have a reward with **your** Father who is in heaven. 2 So when **you** give alms, do not sound a trumpet before **yourself** as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may have the praise of people. Truly I say to **you**, they have received their reward. (Matthew 6:1-2 ULT)

Jesus said this to a crowd. He used “you” plural in verse 1, and “you” singular in the first sentence of verse 2. Then, in the last sentence, he used the plural again.

God spoke all these words: “I am Yahweh, **your** God, who brought **you** out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. **You** must have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:1-3 ULT)

God said this to all the people of Israel. He had taken them all out of Egypt and he wanted them all to obey him, but he used the singular form of you here when speaking to them.

This is what Yahweh says,
 “For three sins of Edom,
 even for four,
 I will not turn away punishment,
 because **he** pursued **his** brother with the sword
 and cast off all pity.
His anger raged continually,
 and **his** wrath lasted forever.” (Amos 1:11 ULT)

Yahweh said these things about the nation of Edom, not about only one person.

And I arose in the night, myself and a few men with me. And I was going up by the wadi at night, and I was looking intently at the wall. And I turned back, and I entered by the gate of the valley, and I returned. (Nehemiah 2:12a,15 ULT)

Nehemiah makes clear that he brought other people with him on his inspection tour of the wall of Jerusalem. But as he describes the tour, he just says “I” did this and that.

Translation Strategies

(1) If the singular form of the pronoun would be natural when referring to a group of people, consider using it.

- Whether you can use it may depend on who the speaker is and who the people are that he is talking about or talking to.
- It may also depend on what the speaker is saying.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the singular form of the pronoun would not be natural when referring to a group of people, or if the readers would be confused by it, use the plural form of the pronoun.

This is what Yahweh says,
 “For three sins of Edom,
 even for four,
 I will not turn away punishment,
 because **he** pursued **his** brother with the sword
 and cast off all pity.
His anger raged continually,
 and **his** wrath lasted forever.” (Amos 1:11 ULT)

This is what Yahweh says,
 “For three sins of Edom,
 even for four,
 I will not turn away punishment,
 because **they** pursued **their brothers** with the sword
 and cast off all pity.
Their anger raged continually,
 and **their** wrath lasted forever.”

And I arose in the night, myself and a few men with me. And **I** was going up by the wadi at night, and **I** was looking intently at the wall. And **I** turned back, and **I** entered by the gate of the valley, and **I** returned. (Nehemiah 2:12a,15 ULT)

And I arose in the night, myself and a few men with me. ... And **we** were going up by the wadi at night and **we** were looking intently at the wall. And **we** turned back and **we** entered by the gate of the valley, and **we** returned.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-youduall\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 2:2](#))

Symbolic Action

Description

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their heads up and down to mean “yes” or turn their heads from side to side to mean “no.” Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures. In the Bible, sometimes people perform symbolic actions and sometimes they only refer to the symbolic action.

This page answers the question: *What is a symbolic action and how do I translate it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Examples of symbolic actions

- In some cultures people shake hands when they meet to show that they are willing to be friendly.
- In some cultures people bow when they meet to show respect to each other.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

An action may have a meaning in one culture and a different meaning or no meaning at all in another culture. For example, in some cultures raising the eyebrows means “I am surprised” or “What did you say?” In other cultures it means “yes.”

In the Bible, people did things that had certain meanings in their culture. When we read the Bible, we might not understand what someone meant if we interpret the action based on what it means in our own culture today.

You (the translator) need to understand what people in the Bible meant when they used symbolic actions. If an action does not mean the same thing in your own culture, then you need to figure out how to translate what the action meant.

Examples From the Bible

And behold, a man came whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And **falling at the feet of Jesus**, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: He did this to show great respect to Jesus.

Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: When people wanted someone to welcome them into their home, they stood at the door and knocked on it.

Translation Strategies

If people would correctly understand what a symbolic action meant to the people in the Bible, consider using it. If not, here are some strategies for translating it.

- (1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.
- (2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning. Do this only in poetry, parables, and sermons. Do not do this when there actually was a person who did a specific action.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet in order to show that he greatly respected him.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Look, I stand at the door and knock on it, asking you to let me in.

(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Jairus showed Jesus great respect.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Look, I stand at the door and ask you to let me in.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT) — Since Jairus actually did this, you should not substitute an action from your own culture.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT) — Jesus was not standing at a real door. Rather he was speaking about wanting to have a relationship with people. So in cultures where it is polite to clear one's throat when wanting to be let into a house, you could use that.

Look, I stand at the door and clear my throat.

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:17](#); [3:9](#); [3:20](#); [4:10](#); [10:5](#); [11:10](#))

Symbolic Language

Description

Symbolic language in speech and writing is the use of symbols to represent other things, other events, etc. In the Bible it occurs most in prophecy and poetry, especially in visions and dreams about things that will happen in the future. Though people may not immediately know the meaning of a symbol, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.

This page answers the question: *What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)

Eat this scroll; then go speak to the house of Israel. (Ezekiel 3:1 ULT)

This was in a dream. Eating the scroll is a symbol of Ezekiel reading and understanding well what was written on the scroll, and accepting these words from God into himself.

Purposes of Symbolism

- One purpose of symbolism is to help people understand the importance or severity of an event by putting it in other, very dramatic terms.
- Another purpose of symbolism is to tell some people about something while hiding the true meaning from others who do not understand the symbolism.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

People who read the Bible today may find it hard to recognize that the language is symbolic, and they may not know what the symbol stands for.

Translation Principles

- When symbolic language is used, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.
- It is also important not to explain the symbol more than the original speaker or writer did, since he may not have wanted everyone living then to be able to understand it easily.

Examples From the Bible

After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

The meaning of the bolded symbols is explained in Daniel 7:23-24 as shown below. The animals represent kingdoms, iron teeth represent a powerful army, and the horns represent powerful leaders.

This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.' (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me, and as I turned I saw **seven golden lampstands**. In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a son of man ... He had **seven**

stars in his right hand and **a sword with two sharp edges** was coming out of his mouth. As for the hidden meaning about the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: **The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches**, and **the seven lampstands are the seven churches**. (Revelation 1:12-13a, 16a, 20 ULT)

This passage explains the meaning of the seven lampstands and the seven stars. The two-edged sword represents God's word and judgment.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.
- (2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.

This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.' (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

- (2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

After this I saw in my dream at night a fourth animal, ¹ terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had large iron teeth; ² it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had ten horns. ³

The footnotes would look like:

[1] The animal is a symbol for a kingdom.

[2] The iron teeth is a symbol for the kingdom's powerful army.

[3] The horns are a symbol of powerful kings.

(Go back to: Revelation 1:4; 1:12; 1:16; 1:20; 2:1; 2:5; 2:16; 2:28; 3:1; 3:7; 4:5; 5:6; 5:8; 11:4; 12:3; 12:7; 12:13; 12:16; 13:2; 13:4; 13:8; 13:11; 14:1; 14:8; 14:10; 14:14; 15:7; 16:1; 16:13; 16:19; 17:1; 17:2; 17:14; 18:3; 19:7; 20:2; 20:6; 20:14; 21:8; 21:9; 21:27; 22:1)

Symbolic Prophecy

Description

Symbolic prophecy is a type of message that God gave to a prophet so that the prophet would tell others. These messages use images and symbols to show what God will do in the future.

The main books that have these prophecies are Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation. Shorter examples of symbolic prophecy are also found in other Scriptures, such as in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

The Bible tells both how God gave each message and what the message was. When God gave the messages, he often did so in miraculous ways such as in dreams and visions. (See *Dream and Vision* for help translating “dreams” and “visions.”) When prophets saw these dreams and visions, they often saw images and symbols about God and heaven. Some of these images included a throne, golden lamp stands, a powerful man with white hair and white clothes, and eyes like fire and legs like bronze. Some of these images were seen by more than one prophet.

The prophecies about the world also contain images and symbols. For example, in some of the prophecies, strong animals represent kingdoms, horns represent kings or kingdoms, a dragon or serpent represents the devil, the sea represents the nations, and weeks represent longer periods of time. Some of these images were also seen by more than one prophet.

The prophecies tell about the evil in this world, how God will judge the world and punish sin, and how God will establish his righteous kingdom in the new world he is creating. They also tell about things that will happen concerning heaven and hell.

Much of prophecy in the Bible is presented as poetry. In some cultures people assume that if something is said in poetry, then it might not be true or very important. However, the prophecies in the Bible are true and very important, whether they are presented in poetic forms or non-poetic forms.

Sometimes the past tense is used in these books for events that happened in the past. However, sometimes the past tense is used for events that would happen in the future. There are two reasons for this. When prophets told about things that they saw in a dream or vision, they often used the past tense because their dream was in the past. The other reason for using the past tense to refer to future events was to emphasize that those events would certainly happen. The events were so certain to happen, it was as if they had already happened. We call this second use of the past tense “the predictive past.” (See *Predictive Past*.)

Some of these things happened after the prophets told about them, and some of them will happen at the end of this world.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some of the images are hard to understand because we have never seen things like them before.
- Descriptions of things that we have never seen or that do not exist in this world are hard to translate.
- In places where God or the prophet used the past tense, readers may have difficulty knowing whether he was talking about something that had already happened or something that would happen later.

Translation Principles

- Translate the images in the text. Do not try to interpret them and translate their meaning.

This page answers the question: *What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)

[Symbolic Language](#)

- When an image appears in more than one place in the Bible, and it is described in the same way, try to translate it the same way in all those places.
- If either poetic forms or non-poetic forms would imply to your readers that the prophecy is not true or is unimportant, use a form that would not imply those things.
- Sometimes it is difficult to understand in what order the events described in the various prophecies happen. Simply write them as they appear in each prophecy.
- Translate tense in a way that the readers can understand what the speaker meant. If readers would not understand the predictive past, it is acceptable to use the future tense.
- Some of the prophecies were fulfilled after the prophets wrote about them. Some of them have not been fulfilled yet. Do not clarify in the prophecy when these prophecies were fulfilled or how they were fulfilled.

Examples From the Bible

The following passages describe powerful beings that Ezekiel, Daniel, and John saw. Images mentioned in these visions include hair that is white as wool, a voice like many waters, a golden belt, and legs or feet like polished bronze. Though the prophets saw various details, it would be good to translate the details that are the same in the same way. The bolded phrases in the passage from Revelation also occur in the passages from Daniel and Ezekiel.

In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a son of man, wearing a robe that reached down to his feet and he wore a golden sash across his chest. **His head and hair were as white as wool**—as white as snow—and his eyes were like a flame of fire. **His feet were like polished bronze**, like bronze that had been refined in a furnace, and **his voice was like the sound of many rushing waters**. He had seven stars in his right hand, and a sword with two sharp edges was coming out of his mouth. His face was shining like the sun at its strongest. (Revelation 1:13-16 ULT)

As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow, and **the hair of his head was like pure wool**. (Daniel 7:9 ULT)

I looked up and saw a man dressed in linen, with a belt around his waist made of pure gold from Uphaz. His body was like topaz, his face was like lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and **his feet were like polished bronze**, and the sound of his words was like the sound of a great crowd. (Daniel 10:5-6 ULT)

Behold! The glory of the God of Israel came from the east; **his voice was like the sound of many waters**, and the earth shone with his glory! (Ezekiel 43:2 ULT)

The following passage shows the use of the past tense to refer to past events. The bolded verbs refer to past events.

The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, that he **saw** concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. (Isaiah 1:1 ULT)

Hear, heavens, and give ear, earth; for Yahweh **has spoken**: (Isaiah 1:2a ULT)

“I **have nourished** and **brought up** children, but they **have rebelled** against me.” (Isaiah 1:2b ULT)

The following passage shows the future tense and different uses of the past tense. The bolded verbs are examples of the predictive past, where the past tense is used to show that the events certainly will happen.

The gloom will be dispelled from her who was in anguish. In an earlier time he humiliated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the later time he will make it glorious, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness **have seen** a great light; those who have lived in the land of the shadow of death, the light **has shone** on them. (Isaiah 9:1-2 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- If the prophecy uses the past tense to talk about the future and this would be misunderstood in your language, use the strategies in Predictive Past.
- If the images in the prophecy are of things that are unknown in your culture, use the strategies in [Translate Unknowns](#).

(Go back to: [Introduction to Revelation](#); [Revelation 4 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

Synecdoche

Description

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole thing, or uses the whole to refer to a part.

■ **My soul** magnifies the Lord. (Luke 1:46b ULT)

Mary was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said “my soul,” which means the inner, emotional part of herself, to refer to her whole self.

■ So **the Pharisees** said to him, “Look, why are they doing that which is not lawful?” (Mark 2:24a ULT)

The Pharisees who were standing there did not all say the same words at the same time. Instead, it is more likely that one man representing the group said those words.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some readers may not recognize the synecdoche and thus misunderstand the words as a literal statement.
- Some readers may realize that they are not to understand the words literally, but they may not know what the meaning is.

Example From the Bible

■ Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

“My hands” is a synecdoche for the whole person because clearly the arms and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved in the person’s accomplishments. The hands are chosen to represent the person because they are the parts of the body most directly involved in the work.

Translation Strategies

If the synecdoche would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

■ **“My soul** magnifies the Lord.” (Luke 1:46b ULT)

■ **“I** magnify the Lord.”

So **the Pharisees** said to him ... (Mark 2:24a ULT)

■ **A representative of the Pharisees** said to him ...

Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What is a synecdoche, and how can I translate such a thing into my language?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

I looked on all the deeds that I had accomplished

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metonymy](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part2]]

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:7](#); [3:9](#); [9:13](#); [9:14](#); [10:4](#); [10:8](#); [16:3](#); [16:4](#))

Textual Variants

Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However, people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, or some mistook one word for another that looked like it. Occasionally, they added words or even whole sentences, either by accident or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles include some of these sentences that were added. In the ULT, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

Bible scholars have read many old copies and compared them with each other. For each place in the Bible where there was a difference, they have figured out which wordings are most likely correct. The translators of the ULT based the ULT on wordings that scholars say are most likely correct. Because people who use the ULT may have access to Bibles that are based on other copies, the ULT translators have sometimes included information about some of the differences between them, either in the ULT footnotes or in the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes.

Translators are encouraged to translate the text in the ULT and to write about added sentences in footnotes, as is done in the ULT. However, if the local church really wants those sentences to be included in the main text, translators may put them in the text and include a footnote about them.

This page answers the question: *Why does the ULT have missing or added verses, and should I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-source-text]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-manuscripts]]

Examples From the Bible

Matthew 18:10-11 ULT has a footnote about verse 11.

¹⁰ See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ ^[1]

[1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

John 7:53-8:11 is not in the best earliest manuscripts. It has been included in the ULT, but it is marked off with square brackets ([]) at the beginning and end, and there is a footnote after verse 11.

53 [Then everyone went to his own house ... 11 She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."] ^[2]

[2] Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

Translation Strategies

When there is a textual variant, you may choose to follow the ULT or another version that you have access to.

- (1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.
- (2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The translation strategies are applied to Mark 7:14-16 ULT, which has a footnote about verse 16.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man.” ¹⁶ [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man.” ¹⁶ [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man. ¹⁶ If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.” [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-chapverse\]\]](#)
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-manuscripts\]\]](#)
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-terms\]\]](#)
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-original\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Introduction to Revelation](#); [Revelation 1:8](#))

Translate Unknowns

While working to translate the Bible, you (the translator) might find yourself asking: “How do I translate words like lion, fig tree, mountain, priest, or temple when people in my culture have never seen these things and we do not have a word for them?”

This page answers the question: *How can I translate ideas that my readers are not familiar with?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)

Description

Unknowns are things that occur in the source text that are not known to the people of your culture. The unfoldingWord® Translation Words pages and the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes will help you understand what they are. After you understand them, you will need to find ways to refer to those things so that people who read your translation will understand what they are.

They said to him, “We have nothing here except five loaves of **bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread and do not know what it is.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God’s commands and historical facts accurately.

Examples From the Bible

So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals**. (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

They offered him wine mixed with **myrrh**, but he did not drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
- (4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.
- (5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but **inwardly they are very hungry and dangerous animals**.

"Ravenous wolves" is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See [Translating Metaphors](#).)

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked grain seeds** and two fish.

- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.

Your sins ... will be white like **milk**.

Your sins ... will be white like **the moon**.

- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **myrrh**. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT) — People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word “medicine.”

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **a medicine called myrrh**. But he refused to drink it.

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT) — People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).

We have nothing here except five loaves of **baked crushed seed bread** and two fish.

(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **wild dogs**

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked food** and two fish.

(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

to him who made **the sun and the moon**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

[How to Translate Names](#)

(Go back to: [Revelation 4:3](#); [8:11](#); [9:3](#); [Notes](#); [14:14](#); [17:4](#); [17:12](#); [18:12](#); [18:16](#); [21:11](#); [21:18](#); [21:19](#); [21:20](#); [21:21](#))

Translating Son and Father

Door43 supports Bible translations that represent these concepts when they refer to God.

Biblical Witness

“Father” and “Son” are names that God calls himself in the Bible.

The Bible shows that God called Jesus his Son:

After he was baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and ... a voice came out of the heavens saying, **“This is my beloved Son.** I am very pleased with him.” (Matthew 3:16-17 ULT)

The Bible shows that Jesus called God his Father:

Jesus ... said, “I praise you **Father**, Lord of heaven and earth ... no one knows the **Son** except the **Father**, and no one knows the **Father** except the **Son.**” (Matthew 11:25a, 27b ULT) (See also: John 6:26-57)

Christians have found that “Father” and “Son” are the ideas that most essentially describe the eternal relationship of the First and Second Persons of the Trinity to each other. The Bible indeed refers to them in various ways, but no other terms reflect the eternal love and intimacy between these Persons, nor the interdependent eternal relationship between them.

Jesus referred to God in the following terms:

Baptize them into **the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.** (Matthew 28:19b ULT)

The intimate, loving relationship between the Father and the Son is eternal, just as they are eternal. The Father **loves** the Son. (See John 3:35-36; 5:19-20 ULT)

I love the Father, and just as the Father commanded me, thus I do. (John 14:31 ULT)

No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son. (Luke 10:22b ULT)

The terms “Father” and “Son” also communicate that the Father and the Son are of the same essence; they are both eternal God.

Jesus said, “Father, ... glorify your Son so that the Son will glorify you ... I glorified you on the earth ... Now Father, glorify me ... with the glory that **I had with you before the world was made.**” (John 17:1, 4a, 5 ULT)

But in these last days, he [God the Father] has spoken to us through a Son, whom he appointed to be the heir of all things. Through him, he also made the universe. He is the brightness of God’s glory and **the very exact representation of his being.** He holds everything together by the word of his power. (Hebrews 1:2-3a ULT)

Jesus said to him, “I have been with you for so long and you still do not know me, Philip? **Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.** How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:9 ULT)

This page answers the question: *Why are these concepts important in referring to God?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/guidelines-faithful\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/guidelines-sonofgod\]\]](#)

Human Relationships

Human fathers and sons are not perfect, but the Bible still uses those terms for the Father and Son, who are perfect.

Just as today, human father-son relationships during Bible times were never as loving or perfect as the relationship between Jesus and his Father. But this does not mean that the translator should avoid the concepts of father and son. The Scriptures use these terms to refer to God, the perfect Father and Son, as well as to sinful human fathers and sons. In referring to God as Father and Son, choose words in your language that are widely used to refer to a human "father" and "son." In this way you will communicate that God the Father and God the Son are of the same divine essence (they are both God), just as a human father and son are of the same human essence (they are both human and share the same human characteristics).

Translation Strategies

(1) Think through all the possibilities within your language to translate the words "son" and "father." Determine which words in your language best represent the divine "Son" and "Father."

(2) If your language has more than one word for "son," use the word that has the closest meaning to "only son" (or "first son" if necessary).

(3) If your language has more than one word for "father," use the word that has the closest meaning to "birth father," rather than "adoptive father."

(See *God the Father and Son of God* pages in [unfoldingWord® Translation Words](#) for help translating "Father" and "Son.")

(Go back to: [Revelation 1:6](#); [2:18](#); [2:28](#); [3:5](#); [3:21](#); [14:1](#))



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 31

authority

Definition:

The term “authority” usually refers to a position of influence, responsibility, or rule over another person.

- Kings and other governing rulers have authority over the people they are ruling.
- The word “authorities” can refer to people, governments, or organizations that have authority over others.
- The word “authorities” can also refer to spirit beings who have power over people who have not submitted themselves to God’s authority.
- Masters have authority over their servants or slaves. Parents have authority over their children.
- Governments have the authority or right to make laws that govern their citizens.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “authority” can also be translated as “control” or “right” or “qualifications.”
- Sometimes “authority” is used with the meaning of “power.”
- When “authorities” is used to refer to people or organizations who rule people, it could also be translated as “leaders” or “rulers” or “powers.”
- The phrase “by his own authority” could also be translated as “with his own right to lead” or “based on his own qualifications.”
- The expression, “under authority” could be translated as “responsible to obey” or “having to obey others’ commands.”

(See also: dominion, king, ruler, power)

Bible References:

- Colossians 2:10
- Esther 9:29
- Genesis 41:35
- Jonah 3:6-7
- Luke 12:5
- Luke 20:1-2
- Mark 1:22
- Matthew 8:9
- Matthew 28:19
- Titus 3:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H8633, G08310, G14130, G18490, G18500, G20030, G27150, G52470

(Go back to: [Revelation 5 General Notes](#))

die, dead, deadly, death

Definition:

The term "death" refers to being physically dead instead of alive.

1. Physical death

- To "die" means to stop living. Death is the end of physical life.
- The expression "put to death" refers to killing or murdering someone, especially when a king or other ruler gives an order for someone to be killed.

2. Eternal death

- Eternal death is the separation of a person from God.
- This is the kind of death that happened to Adam when he sinned and disobeyed God. His relationship with God was broken. He became ashamed and tried to hide from God.
- This same kind of death happens to every person, because we sin. But God gives us eternal life when we have faith in Jesus Christ.

Translation Suggestions:

- To translate this term, it is best to use the everyday, natural word or expression in the target language that refers to death.
- In some languages, to "die" may be expressed as to "not live." The term "dead" may be translated as "not alive" or "not having any life" or "not living."
- Many languages use figurative expressions to describe death, such as to "pass away" in English. However, in the Bible it is best to use the most direct term for death that is used in everyday language.
- In the Bible, eternal life and eternal death are often compared to physical life and physical death. It is important in a translation to use the same word or phrase for both physical death and eternal death.
- In some languages it may be more clear to say "eternal death" when the context requires that meaning. Some translators may also feel it is best to say "physical death" in contexts where it is being contrasted to spiritual death.
- The expression "the dead" is a nominal adjective that refers to people who have died. Some languages will translate this as "dead people" or "people who have died." (See: [nominal adjective](#))
- The expression "put to death" could also be translated as "kill" or "murder" or "execute."

(See also: believe, [faith](#), life)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 15:21
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Acts 10:42
- Acts 14:19
- Colossians 2:15
- Colossians 2:20
- Genesis 2:15-17
- Genesis 34:27
- Matthew 16:28
- Romans 5:10

- Romans 5:12
- Romans 6:10

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:11** God told Adam that he could eat from any tree in the garden except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If he ate from this tree, he would **die**.
- **2:11** "Then you will **die**, and your body will return to dirt."
- **7:10** Then Isaac **died**, and Jacob and Esau buried him.
- **37:5** Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he **dies**. Everyone who believes in me will never **die**."
- **40:8** Through his **death**, Jesus opened a way for people to come to God.
- **43:7** "Although Jesus **died**, God raised him from the dead."
- **48:2** Because they sinned, everyone on earth gets sick and everyone **dies**.
- **50:17** He (Jesus) will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, evil, pain, or **death**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0006, H1478, H1826, H1934, H2491, H4191, H4192, H4193, H4194, H4463, H5038, H5315, H6297, H6757, H7496, H7523, H8045, H8546, H8552, G03360, G03370, G05200, G05990, G06150, G06220, G16340, G19350, G20790, G22530, G22860, G22870, G22880, G22890, G23480, G28370, G29660, G34980, G34990, G35000, G44300, G48800, G48810, G50530, G50540

(Go back to: [Revelation 21 General Notes](#))

eternity, everlasting, eternal, forever

Definition:

The terms “everlasting” and “eternal” have very similar meanings and refer to something that will always exist or that lasts forever.

- The term “eternity” refers to a state of being that has no beginning or end. It can also refer to life that never ends.
- After this present life on earth, humans will spend eternity either in heaven with God or in hell apart from God.
- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” are used in the New Testament to refer to living forever with God in heaven.

The term “forever” refers to never-ending time.

- The phrase “forever and ever” has the idea of time that never ends and expresses what eternity or eternal life is like. It emphasizes that something will always happen or exist. It refers to time that never ends.
- God said that David’s throne would last “forever.” This is referred to the fact that David’s descendant Jesus will reign as king forever.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “eternal” or “everlasting” could include “unending” or “never stopping” or “always continuing.”
- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” could also be translated as “life that never ends” or “life that continues without stopping” or “the raising up of our bodies to live forever.”
- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “eternity” could include “existing outside of time” or “unending life” or “life in heaven.”
- Also consider how this word is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))
- “Forever” could also be translated by “always” or “never ending.”
- The phrase “will last forever” could also be translated as “always exist” or “will never stop” or “will always continue.”
- The emphatic phrase “forever and ever” could also be translated as “for always and always” or “not ever ending” or “which never, ever ends.”
- David’s throne lasting forever could be translated as “David’s descendant will reign forever” or “a descendant of David will always be reigning.”

(See also: David, reign, life)

Bible References:

- Genesis 17:8
- Genesis 48:4
- Exodus 15:17
- 2 Samuel 3:28-30
- 1 Kings 2:32-33
- Job 4:20-21
- Psalms 21:4
- Isaiah 9:6-7
- Isaiah 40:27-28
- Daniel 7:18

- Luke 18:18
- Acts 13:46
- Romans 5:21
- Hebrews 6:19-20
- Hebrews 10:11-14
- 1 John 1:2
- 1 John 5:12
- Revelation 1:4-6
- Revelation 22:3-5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:1** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit **eternal life**?”
- **28:1** One day, a rich young ruler came up to Jesus and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to have **eternal life**?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only One who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have **eternal life**, obey God’s laws.”
- **28:10** Jesus answered, “Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or property for my name’s sake, will receive 100 times more and will also receive **eternal life**.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3117, H4481, H5331, H5703, H5705, H5769, H5865, H5957, H6924, G01260, G01650, G01660, G13360

(Go back to: [Revelation 20 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

evil, wicked, unpleasant

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “evil” can refer either to the concept of moral wickedness or emotional unpleasantness. The context will usually make it clear which meaning is intended in the specific instance of the term.

- While “evil” may describe a person’s character, “wicked” may refer more to a person’s behavior. However, both terms are very similar in meaning.
- The term “wickedness” refers to the state of being that exists when people do wicked things.
- The results of evil are clearly shown in how people mistreat others by killing, stealing, slandering and being cruel and unkind.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the terms “evil” and “wicked” can be translated as “bad” or “sinful” or “immoral.”
- Other ways to translate these could include “not good” or “not righteous” or “not moral.”
- Make sure the words or phrases that are used to translate these terms fit the context that is natural in the target language.

(See also: disobey, [sin](#), good, [righteous](#), demon)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 24:11
- 1 Timothy 6:10
- 3 John 1:10
- Genesis 2:17
- Genesis 6:5-6
- Job 1:1
- Job 8:20
- Judges 9:57
- Luke 6:22-23
- Matthew 7:11-12
- Proverbs 3:7
- Psalms 22:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:4** “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand good and **evil** like he does.”
- **3:1** After a long time, many people were living in the world. They had become very **wicked** and violent.
- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a righteous man living among **wicked** people.
- **4:2** God saw that if they all kept working together to do **evil**, they could do many more sinful things.
- **8:12** “You tried to do **evil** when you sold me as a slave, but God used the **evil** for good!”
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false gods and did many **evil** things.
- **17:1** But then he (Saul) became a **wicked** man who did not obey God, so God chose a different man who would one day be king in his place.
- **18:11** In the new kingdom of Israel, all the kings were **evil**.
- **29:8** The king was so angry that he threw the **wicked** servant into prison until he could pay back all of his debt.
- **45:2** They said, “We heard him (Stephen) speak **evil** things about Moses and God!”

- **50:17** He (Jesus) will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, **evil**, pain, or death.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H0605, H1100, H1681, H1942, H2154, H2162, H2254, H2617, H3399, H3415, H4209, H4849, H5753, H5766, H5767, H5999, H6001, H6090, H7451, H7455, H7489, H7561, H7562, H7563, H7564, G00920, G01130, G04590, G09320, G09870, G09880, G14260, G25490, G25510, G25540, G25550, G25560, G25570, G25590, G25600, G26350, G26360, G41510, G41890, G41900, G41910, G53370

(Go back to: [Revelation 20 General Notes](#))

faith

Definition:

In general, the term “faith” refers to a belief, trust or confidence in someone or something.

- To “have faith” in someone is to believe that what he says and does is true and trustworthy.
- To “have faith in Jesus” means to believe all of God’s teachings about Jesus. It especially means that people trust in Jesus and his sacrifice to cleanse them from their sin and to rescue them from the punishment they deserve because of their sin.
- True faith or belief in Jesus will cause a person to produce good spiritual fruits or behaviors because the Holy Spirit is living in him.
- Sometimes “faith” refers generally to all the teachings about Jesus, as in the expression “the truths of the faith.”
- In contexts such as “keep the faith” or “abandon the faith,” the term “faith” refers to the state or condition of believing all the teachings about Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, “faith” can be translated as “belief” or “conviction” or “confidence” or “trust.”
- For some languages these terms will be translated using forms of the verb “believe.” (See: [abstractnouns](#))
- The expression “keep the faith” could be translated by “keep believing in Jesus” or “continue to believe in Jesus.”
- The sentence “they must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith” could be translated by “they must keep believing all the true things about Jesus that they have been taught.”
- The expression “my true son in the faith” could be translated by something like “who is like a son to me because I taught him to believe in Jesus” or “my true spiritual son, who believes in Jesus.”

(See also: believe, faithful)

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:7
- Acts 6:7
- Galatians 2:20-21
- James 2:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:6** When Isaac was a young man, God tested Abraham’s **faith** by saying, “Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a sacrifice to me.”
- **31:7** Then he (Jesus) said to Peter, “You man of little **faith**, why did you doubt?”
- **32:16** Jesus said to her, “Your **faith** has healed you. Go in peace.”
- **38:9** Then Jesus said to Peter, “Satan wants to have all of you, but I have prayed for you, Peter, that your **faith** will not fail.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0529, H0530, G16800, G36400, G41020, G60660

(Go back to: [Revelation 14 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

glory, glorious, glorify

Definition:

The term “glory” is a general term for a family of concepts including value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, or majesty. The term “glorify” means to ascribe glory to someone or something, or to show or tell how glorious something or someone is.

- In the Bible, the term “glory” is especially used to describe God, who is more valuable, more worthy, more important, more honorable, more splendid, and more majestic than anyone or anything in the universe. Everything about his character reveals his glory.
- People can glorify God by telling about the wonderful things he has done. They can also glorify God by living in accordance with God’s character, because doing so shows to others his value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, and majesty.
- The expression to “glory in” means to boast about or take pride in something.

Old Testament

- The specific phrase “the glory of Yahweh” in the Old Testament usually refers to some perceptible manifestation of Yahweh’s presence in a particular location.

New Testament

- God the Father will glorify God the Son by revealing to all people the full extent of how glorious Jesus is.
- Everyone who believes in Christ will be glorified with him. This use of the term “glorify” carries a unique meaning. It means that when people who believe in Christ are raised to life, they will be changed physically to be like Jesus as he appeared after his resurrection.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “glory” could include “splendor” or “majesty” or “awesome greatness” or “extreme value.”
- The term “glorious” could be translated as “full of glory” or “extremely valuable” or “brightly shining” or “awesomely majestic.”
- The expression “give glory to God” could be translated as “honor God’s greatness” or “praise God because of his splendor” or “tell others how great God is.”
- The expression “glory in” could also be translated as “praise” or “take pride in” or “boast about” or “take pleasure in.”
- “Glorify” could also be translated as “give glory to” or “bring glory to” or “cause to appear great.”
- The phrase “glorify God” could also be translated as “praise God” or “talk about God’s greatness” or “show how great God is” or “honor God (by obeying him).”
- The term “be glorified” could also be translated as “be shown to be very great” or “be praised” or “be exalted.”

(See also: honor, majesty, exalt, obey, praise)

Bible References:

- Exodus 24:17
- Numbers 14:9-10
- Isaiah 35:2

- Luke 18:43
- Luke 2:9
- John 12:28
- Acts 3:13-14
- Acts 7:1-3
- Romans 8:17
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- Philippians 2:14-16
- Philippians 4:19
- Colossians 3:1-4
- 1 Thessalonians 2:5
- James 2:1-4
- 1 Peter 4:15-16
- Revelation 15:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “**Glory** to God in heaven and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- **25:6** Then Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and all their **glory** and said, “I will give you all this if you bow down and worship me.”
- **37:1** When Jesus heard this news, he said, “This sickness will not end in death, but it is for the **glory** of God.”
- **37:8** Jesus responded, “Did I not tell you that you would see God’s **glory** if you believe in me?”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0117, H0142, H0155, H0215, H1342, H1921, H1926, H1935, H1984, H3367, H3513, H3519, H3520, H6286, H6643, H7623, H8597, G13910, G13920, G17400, G17410, G27440, G48880

(Go back to: [Revelation 4 General Notes](#))

godly, godliness, ungodly, godless, ungodliness, godlessness

Definition:

The term “godly” is used to describe a person who acts in a way that honors God and shows what God is like. “Godliness” is the character quality of honoring God by doing his will.

- A person who has godly character will show the fruits of the Holy Spirit, such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and self control.
- The quality of godliness shows that a person has the Holy Spirit and is obeying him.

The terms “ungodly” and “godless” describe people who are in rebellion against God. Living in an evil way, without thought of God, is called “ungodliness” or “godlessness.”

- The meanings of these words are very similar. However, “godless” and “godlessness” may describe a more extreme condition in which people or nations do not even acknowledge God or his right to rule them.
- God pronounces judgment and wrath on ungodly people, on everyone who rejects him and his ways.

Translation Suggestions:

- The phrase “the godly” could be translated as “godly people” or “people who obey God.” (See: [nominaladj](#))
- The adjective “godly” could be translated as “obedient to God” or “righteous” or “pleasing to God.”
- The phrase “in a godly manner” could be translated as “in a way that obeys God” or “with actions and words that please God.”
- Ways to translate “godliness” could include “acting in a way that pleases God” or “obeying God” or “living in a righteous manner.”
- Depending on the context, the term “ungodly” could be translated as “displeasing to God” or “immoral” or “disobeying God.”
- The terms “godless” and “godlessness” literally mean that the people are “without God” or “having no thought of God” or “acting in a way that does not acknowledge God.”
- Other ways to translate “ungodliness” or “godlessness” could be “wickedness” or “evil” or “rebellion against God”.

(See also [evil](#), honor, obey, [righteous](#), [righteous](#))

Bible References:

- Job 27:10
- Proverbs 11:9
- Acts 3:12
- 1 Timothy 1:9-11
- 1 Timothy 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:12
- Hebrews 12:14-17
- Hebrews 11:7
- 1 Peter 4:18
- Jude 1:16

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H1100, H2623, H5760, H7563, G05160, G07630, G07640, G07650, G21240, G21500, G21520, G21530, G23160, G23170

(Go back to: [Revelation 11 General Notes](#))

heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly

Definition:

The term that is translated as “heaven” usually refers to where God lives. The same word can also mean “sky,” depending on the context.

- The term “heavens” refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars. It also includes the heavenly bodies, such as far-off planets, that we can’t directly see from the earth.
- The term “sky” refers to the blue expanse above the earth that has clouds and the air we breathe. Often the sun and moon are also said to be “up in the sky.”
- In some contexts in the Bible, the word “heaven” could refer to either the sky or the place where God lives.

Translation Suggestions:

- For “kingdom of heaven” in the book of Matthew, it is best to keep the word “heaven” since this is distinctive to Matthew’s gospel.
- The terms “heavens” or “heavenly bodies” could also be translated as “sun, moon, and stars” or “all the stars in the universe.”
- The phrase, “stars of heaven” could be translated as “stars in the sky” or “stars in the galaxy” or “stars in the universe.”

(See also: kingdom of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 8:22-24
- 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Deuteronomy 9:1
- Ephesians 6:9
- Genesis 1:1
- Genesis 7:11
- John 3:12
- John 3:27
- Matthew 5:18
- Matthew 5:46-48

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:2** They even began building a tall tower to reach **heaven**.
- **14:11** He (God) gave them bread from **heaven**, called “manna.”
- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “Glory to God in **heaven** and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- **29:9** Then Jesus said, “This is what my **heavenly** Father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”
- **37:9** Then Jesus looked up to **heaven** and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me.”
- **42:11** Then Jesus went up to **heaven**, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1534, H6160, H6183, H7834, H8064, H8065, G09320, G20320, G33210, G37700, G37710, G37720

(Go back to: [Revelation 15 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

hell, lake of fire

Definition:

Hell is the final place of unending pain and suffering where God will punish everyone who rebels against him and rejects his plan of saving them through Jesus' sacrifice. It is also referred to as the "lake of fire."

- Hell is described as a place of fire and severe suffering.
- Satan and the evil spirits who follow him will be thrown into hell for eternal punishment.
- People who do not believe in Jesus' sacrifice for their sin and do not trust in him to save them, will be punished forever in hell.

Translation Suggestions:

- These terms should probably be translated differently since they occur in different contexts.
- Some languages cannot use "lake" in the phrase "lake of fire" because it refers to water.
- The term "hell" could be translated as "place of suffering" or "final place of darkness and pain."
- The term "lake of fire" could also be translated as "sea of fire" or "huge fire (of suffering)" or "field of fire."

(See also: [heaven](#), [death](#), Hades, abyss)

Bible References:

- James 3:6
- Luke 12:5
- Mark 9:42-44
- Matthew 5:21-22
- Matthew 5:29
- Matthew 10:28-31
- Matthew 23:33
- Matthew 25:41-43
- Revelation 20:15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **50:14** He (God) will throw them into **hell**, where they will weep and grind their teeth in anguish forever. A fire that never goes out will continually burn them, and worms will never stop eating them.
- **50:15** He will throw Satan into **hell** where he will burn forever, along with everyone who chose to follow him rather than to obey God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7585, G00860, G04390, G04400, G10670, G30410, G44420, G44430, G44470, G44480, G50200, G53940, G54570

(Go back to: [Revelation 9 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

judge, judgment

Definition:

The terms “judge” and “judgment” often refer to making a decision about whether or not something is good, wise, or right. However, these terms can also refer to actions performed by a person as the result of a decision, usually in the context of deciding that something is bad, wrong, or evil.

- The terms “judge” and “judgment” can also mean “to cause harm to” (usually because God has decided a person or nation’s actions are wicked).
- The “judgment of God” often refers to his decision to condemn something or someone as sinful.
- God’s judgment usually includes punishing people for their sin.
- The term “judge” can also mean “condemn.” God instructs his people not to judge each other in this way.
- Another meaning is “arbitrate between” or “judge between,” as in deciding which person is right in a dispute between them.
- In some contexts, God’s “judgments” are what he has decided is right and just. They are similar to his decrees, laws, or precepts.
- “Judgment” can refer to wise decision-making ability. A person who lacks “judgment” does not have the wisdom to make wise decisions.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate to “judge” could include to “decide” or to “condemn” or to “punish” or to “decree.”
- The term “judgment” could be translated as “punishment” or “decision” or “verdict” or “decree” or “condemnation.”
- In some contexts, the phrase “in the judgment” could also be translated as “on judgment day” or “during the time when God judges people.”

(See also: decree, judge, judgment day, just, law, law)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:17
- 1 Kings 3:9
- Acts 10:42-43
- Isaiah 3:14
- James 2:4
- Luke 6:37
- Micah 3:9-11
- Psalm 54:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **19:16** The prophets warned the people that if they did not stop doing evil and start obeying God, then God would **judge** them as guilty, and he would punish them.
- **21:8** A king is someone who rules over a kingdom and **judges** the people. The Messiah would come would be the perfect king who would sit on the throne of his ancestor David. He would reign over the whole world forever, and who would always **judge** honestly and make the right decisions.
- **39:4** The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted to the other religious leaders, “We do not need any more witnesses! You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your **judgment**?”

- **50:14** But God will **judge** everyone who does not believe in Jesus. He will throw them into hell, where they will weep and grind their teeth in anguish forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0148, H0430, H1777, H1778, H1779, H1780, H1781, H1782, H2940, H4055, H4941, H6414, H6415, H6416, H6417, H6419, H6485, H8196, H8199, H8201, G01440, G03500, G09680, G11060, G12520, G13410, G13450, G13480, G13490, G29170, G29190, G29200, G29220, G29230, G42320

(Go back to: [Revelation 18 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

lamb, Lamb of God

Definition:

The term “lamb” refers to a young sheep. Sheep are four-legged animals with thick, woolly hair, used for sacrifices to God. Jesus is called the “Lamb of God” because he was sacrificed to pay for people’s sins.

- These animals are easily led astray and need protecting. God compares human beings to sheep.
- God instructed his people to sacrifice physically perfect sheep and lambs to him.
- Jesus is called the “Lamb of God” who was sacrificed to pay for people’s sins. He was a perfect, unblemished sacrifice because he was completely without sin.

Translation Suggestions:

- If sheep are known in the language area, the name for their young should be used to translate the terms “lamb” and “Lamb of God.”
- “Lamb of God” could be translated as “God’s (sacrificial) Lamb,” or “Lamb sacrificed to God” or “(sacrificial) Lamb from God.”
- If sheep are not known, this term could be translated as “a young sheep” with a footnote that describes what sheep are like. The note could also compare sheep and lambs to an animal from that area that lives in herds, that is timid and defenseless, and that often wanders away.
- Also consider how this term is translated in a Bible translation of a nearby local or national language.

(See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: sheep, shepherd)

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 12:3
- Ezra 8:35-36
- Isaiah 66:3
- Jeremiah 11:19
- John 1:29
- John 1:36
- Leviticus 14:21-23
- Leviticus 17:1-4
- Luke 10:3
- Revelation 15:3-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:7** As Abraham and Isaac walked to the place of the sacrifice Isaac asked, “Father, we have wood for the sacrifice, but where is the **lamb**?”
- **11:2** God provided a way to save the firstborn son of anyone who believed in him. Each family had to choose a perfect **lamb** or goat and kill it.
- **24:6** The next day, Jesus came to be baptized by John. When John saw him, he said, “Look! There is the **Lamb of God** who will take away the sin of the world.”
- **45:8** He read, “They led him like a **lamb** to be killed, and as a **lamb** is silent, he did not say a word.”
- **48:8** When God told Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice, God provided a **lamb** for the sacrifice instead of his son, Isaac. We all deserve to die for our sins! But God provided Jesus, the **Lamb** of God, as a sacrifice to die in our place.

- **48:9** When God sent the last plague on Egypt, he told each Israelite family to kill a perfect **lamb** and spread its blood around the tops and sides of their door frames.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7716, G07210, G23160

(Go back to: [Revelation 6 General Notes](#))

prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess

Definition:

A “prophet” is a man who speaks God’s messages to people. A woman who does this is called a “prophetess.”

- Often prophets warned people to turn away from their sins and obey God.
- A “prophecy” is the message that the prophet speaks. To “prophesy” means to speak God’s messages.
- Often the message of a prophecy was about something that would happen in the future.
- Many prophecies in the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.
- In the Bible the collection of books written by prophets are sometimes referred to as “the prophets.”
- For example the phrase, “the law and the prophets” is a way of referring to all the Hebrew scriptures, which are also known as the “Old Testament.”
- An older term for a prophet was “seer” or “someone who sees.”
- Sometimes the term “seer” refers to a false prophet or to someone who practices divination.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “prophet” could be translated as “God’s spokesman” or “man who speaks for God” or “man who speaks God’s messages.”
- A “seer” could be translated as “person who sees visions” or “man who sees the future from God.”
- The term “prophetess” could be translated as “spokeswoman for God” or “woman who speaks for God” or “woman who speaks God’s messages.”
- Ways to translate “prophecy” could include, “message from God” or “prophet message.”
- The term “prophesy” could be translated as “speak words from God” or “tell God’s message.”
- The figurative expression, “law and the prophets” could also be translated as “the books of the law and of the prophets” or “everything written about God and his people, including God’s laws and what his prophets preached.” (See: [synecdoche](#))
- When referring to a prophet (or seer) of a false god, it may be necessary to translate this as “false prophet (seer)” or “prophet (seer) of a false god” or “prophet of Baal,” for example.

(See also: Baal, divination, false god, false prophet, fulfill, law, vision)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
- Acts 3:25
- John 1:43-45
- Malachi 4:4-6
- Matthew 1:23
- Matthew 2:18
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalm 51:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they trusted in God and believed that Moses was a **prophet** of God.
- **17:13** God was very angry about what David had done, so he sent the **prophet** Nathan to tell David how evil his sin was.
- **19:1** Throughout the history of the Israelites, God sent them **prophets**. The **prophets** heard messages from God and then told the people God’s messages.

- **19:6** All the people of the entire kingdom of Israel, including the 450 **prophets** of Baal, came to Mount Carmel.
- **19:17** Most of the time, the people did not obey God. They often mistreated the **prophets** and sometimes even killed them.
- **21:9** The **prophet** Isaiah **prophesied** that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- **43:5** "This fulfills the **prophecy** made by the **prophet** Joel in which God said, 'In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.'"
- **43:7** "This fulfills the **prophecy** which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.'"
- **48:12** Moses was a great **prophet** who proclaimed the word of God. But Jesus is the greatest **prophet** of all. He is the Word of God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2372, H2374, H4853, H5012, H5013, H5016, H5017, H5029, H5030, H5031, H5197, G24950, G43940, G43950, G43960, G43970, G43980, G55780

(Go back to: [Revelation 11 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

prostrate, bow down, worship

Definition:

To “prostrate” oneself means to lie flat on the ground, usually in submission to a person of authority such as a king or some other powerful person. This same term can also mean to “worship,” referring to the actions of honoring, praising, and obeying God.

- This term often means literally “bow down” or “prostrate oneself” to humbly honor someone.
- We worship God when we serve and honor him, by praising him and obeying him.
- When the Israelites worshiped God, it often included sacrificing an animal on an altar.
- This term can be used both of people who worship Yahweh as the One True God and others who worship false gods.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “worship” could be translated as “bow down to” or “honor and serve” or “honor and obey.”
- In some contexts, it could also be translated as “humbly praise” or “give honor and praise.”

(See also: bow, fear, sacrifice, praise, honor)

Bible References:

- Colossians 2:18-19
- Deuteronomy 29:18
- Exodus 3:11-12
- Luke 4:7
- Matthew 2:2
- Matthew 2:8

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, “I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not **worship** other gods.”
- **14:2** The Canaanites did not **worship** or obey God. They **worshiped** false gods and did many evil things.
- **17:6** David wanted to build a temple where all the Israelites could **worship** God and offer him sacrifices.
- **18:12** All of the kings and most of the people of the kingdom of Israel **worshiped** idols.
- **25:7** Jesus replied, “Get away from me, Satan! In God’s word he commands his people, ‘**Worship** only the Lord your God and only serve him.’”
- **26:2** On the Sabbath, he (Jesus) went to the place of **worship**.
- **47:1** There they met a woman named Lydia who was a merchant. She loved and **worshiped** God.
- **49:18** God tells you to pray, to study his word, to **worship** him with other Christians, and to tell others what he has done for you.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5457, H5647, H6087, H7812, G13910, G14790, G21510, G23180, G23230, G23560, G30000, G35110, G43520, G43530, G45730, G45740, G45760

(Go back to: [Revelation 4 General Notes; Notes](#))

repent, repentance

Definition:

The terms “repent” and “repentance” refer to turning away from sin and turning back to God.

- To “repent” literally means to “change one’s mind.”
- In the Bible, “repent” usually means to turn away from a sinful, human way of thinking and acting, and to turn to God’s way of thinking and acting.
- When people truly repent of their sins, God forgives them and helps them start obeying him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “repent” can be translated with a word or phrase that means “turn back (to God)” or “turn away from sin and toward God” or “turn toward God, away from sin.”
- Often the term “repentance” can be translated using the verb “repent.” For example, “God has given repentance to Israel” could be translated as “God has enabled Israel to repent.”
- Other ways to translate “repentance” could include “turning away from sin” or “turning to God and away from sin.”

(See also: forgive, [sin](#), turn)

Bible References:

- Acts 3:19-20
- Luke 3:3
- Luke 3:8
- Luke 5:32
- Luke 24:47
- Mark 1:14-15
- Matthew 3:3
- Matthew 3:11
- Matthew 4:17
- Romans 2:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **16:2** After many years of disobeying God and being oppressed by their enemies, the Israelites **repented** and asked God to rescue them.
- **17:13** David **repented** of his sin and God forgave him.
- **19:18** They (prophets) warned people that God would destroy them if they did not **repent**.
- **24:2** Many people came out to the wilderness to listen to John. He preached to them, saying, “**Repent**, for the kingdom of God is near!”
- **42:8** “It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to **receive** forgiveness for their sins.”
- **44:5** “So now, **repent** and turn to God so that your sins will be washed away.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5150, H5162, H5164, G02780, G33380, G33400, G33410

(Go back to: [Revelation 9 General Notes](#))

reveal, revealed, revelation

Definition:

The term “reveal” means to cause something to be known. A “revelation” is something that has been made known.

- God has revealed himself through everything he has created and through his communication with people by spoken and written messages.
- God also reveals himself through dreams or visions.
- When Paul said that he received the gospel by “revelation from Jesus Christ,” he means that Jesus himself explained the gospel to him.
- In the New Testament book “Revelation” is about God revealed events that will happen in the end times. He revealed them to the apostle John through visions.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “reveal” could include “make known” or “disclose” or “show clearly.”
- Depending on the context, possible ways to translate “revelation” could be “communication from God” or “things that God has revealed” or “teachings about God.” It is best to keep the meaning of “reveal” in the translation.
- The phrase “where there is no revelation” could be translated as “when God is not revealing himself to people” or “when God is not speaking to people” or “among people whom God has not communicating.”

(See also: good news, good news, dream, vision)

Bible References:

- Daniel 11:1-2
- Ephesians 3:5
- Galatians 1:12
- Lamentations 2:13-14
- Matthew 10:26
- Philippians 3:15
- Revelation 1:1

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0241, H1540, H1541, G06010, G06020, G55370

(Go back to: [Revelation 10 General Notes](#))

righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness

Definition:

The term “righteousness” refers to God’s absolute goodness, justice, faithfulness, and love. Having these qualities makes God “righteous.” Because God is righteous, he must condemn sin.

- These terms are also often used to describe a person who obeys God and is morally good. However, because all people have sinned, no one except God is completely righteous.
- Examples of people the Bible who were called “righteous” include Noah, Job, Abraham, Zachariah, and Elisabeth.
- When people trust in Jesus to save them, God cleanses them from their sins and declares them to be righteous because of Jesus’ righteousness.

The term “unrighteous” means to be sinful and morally corrupt. “Unrighteousness” refers to sin or the condition of being sinful.

- These terms especially refer to living in a way that disobeys God’s teachings and commands.
- Unrighteous people are immoral in their thoughts and actions.
- Sometimes “the unrighteous” refers specifically to people who do not believe in Jesus.

The terms “upright” and “uprightness” refer to acting in a way that follows God’s laws.

- The meaning of these words includes the idea of standing up straight and looking directly ahead.
- A person who is “upright” is someone who obeys God’s rules and does not do things that are against his will.
- Terms such as “integrity” and “righteous” have similar meanings and are sometimes used in parallelism constructions, such as “integrity and uprightness.” (See: [parallelism](#))

Translation Suggestions:

- When it describes God, the term “righteous” could be translated as “perfectly good and just” or “always acting rightly.”
- God’s “righteousness” could also be translated as “perfect faithfulness and goodness.”
- When it describes people who are obedient to God, the term “righteous” could also be translated as “morally good” or “just” or “living a God-pleasing life.”
- The phrase “the righteous” could also be translated as “righteous people” or “God-fearing people.”
- Depending on the context, “righteousness” could also be translated with a word or phrase that means “goodness” or “being perfect before God” or “acting in a right way by obeying God” or “doing perfectly good.”
- The term “unrighteous” could simply be translated as “not righteous.”
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this could include “wicked” or “immoral” or “people who rebel against God” or “sinful.”
- The phrase “the unrighteous” could be translated as “unrighteous people.”
- The term “unrighteousness” could be translated as “sin” or “evil thoughts and actions” or “wickedness.”
- If possible, it is best to translate this in a way that shows its relationship to “righteous, righteousness.”
- Ways to translate “upright” could include “acting rightly” or “one who acts rightly” or “following God’s laws” or “obedient to God” or “behaving in a way that is right.”
- The term “uprightness” could be translated as “moral purity” or “good moral conduct” or “rightness.”
- The phrase “the upright” could be translated as “people who are upright” or “upright people.”

(See also: [evil](#), faithful, good, holy, integrity, just, law, law, obey, pure, [righteous](#), [sin](#), unlawful)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 19:16
- Job 1:8
- Psalms 37:30
- Psalms 49:14
- Psalms 107:42
- Ecclesiastes 12:10-11
- Isaiah 48:1-2
- Ezekiel 33:13
- Malachi 2:6
- Matthew 6:1
- Acts 3:13-14
- Romans 1:29-31
- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- Galatians 3:7
- Colossians 3:25
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 1 Peter 3:18-20
- 1 John 1:9
- 1 John 5:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a **righteous** man, living among wicked people.
- **4:8** God declared that Abram was **righteous** because he believed in God's promise.
- **17:2** David was a humble and **righteous** man who trusted and obeyed God.
- **23:1** Joseph, the man Mary was engaged to, was a **righteous** man.
- **50:10** Then the **righteous** ones will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God their Father.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H1368, H2555, H3072, H3474, H3476, H3477, H3483, H4334, H4339, H4749, H5228, H5229, H5324, H5765, H5766, H5767, H5977, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6665, H6666, H6968, H8535, H8537, H8549, H8552, G00930, G00940, G04580, G13410, G13420, G13430, G13440, G13450, G13460, G21180, G37160, G37170

(Go back to: [Revelation 1 General Notes](#))

scroll

Definition:

In ancient times, a scroll was a type of book made of one long, rolled-up sheet of papyrus or leather.

- After writing on a scroll or reading from it, people rolled it up by using the rods attached to its ends.
- Scrolls were used for legal documents and scripture.
- Sometimes scrolls that were delivered by a messenger were sealed with wax. If the wax was still present when the scroll was received, then the receiver knew that no one had opened the scroll to read it or write on it since it had been sealed.
- Scrolls containing the Hebrew Scriptures were read aloud in the synagogues.

(See also: seal, synagogue, word of God)

Bible References:

- Jeremiah 29:3
- Luke 4:17
- Numbers 21:14-15
- Revelation 5:2

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4039, H4040, H5612, G09740, G09750

(Go back to: [Revelation 5 General Notes](#))

sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

The term “sin” refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God’s will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people don’t know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God’s will are called “sinful.”
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a “sinful nature,” a nature that that controls them and causes them to sin.
- A “sinner” is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word “sinners” was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who didn’t keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term “sinner” was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- To “sin” could also be translated as to “disobey God” or to “do wrong.”
- Depending on the context “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebellious against God.”
- Depending on the context the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people don’t see or know about.
- The term “sin” should be general, and different from the terms for “wickedness” and “evil.”

(See also: disobey, [evil](#), flesh, tax collector)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3
- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31

- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, "I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children."
- **13:12** God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- **20:1** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- **21:13** The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no **sin**. He would die to receive the punishment for other people's **sin**.
- **35:1** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinner**s who had gathered to hear him.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**."
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**."
- **48:8** We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- **49:17** Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

(Go back to: [Revelation 9 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

soul, self, person

Definition:

The term "soul" can either refer generally to the non-physical part of a person or refer specifically to a person's awareness of themselves as a person distinct from others.

- In the Bible, the terms "soul" and "spirit" may be two different concepts, or they may be two terms that refer to the same concept.
- When a person dies, his soul leaves his body.
- In contrast to the body, the "soul" can be spoken of as the part of a person that "relates to God."
- The word "soul" is sometimes used figuratively to refer to the whole person. For example, "the soul who sins" means "the person who sins" and "my soul is tired" means "I am tired."

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "soul" could also be translated as "inner self" or "inner person."
- In some contexts, "my soul" could be translated as "I" or "me."
- Usually the phrase "the soul" can be translated as "the person" or "he" or "him," depending on the context.
- Some languages might only have one word for the concepts "soul" and "spirit."
- In Hebrews 4:12, the figurative phrase "dividing soul and spirit" could mean "deeply discerning or exposing the inner person."

(See also: [spirit](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 2:8
- Acts 2:27-28
- Acts 2:41
- Genesis 49:6
- Isaiah 53:10-11
- James 1:21
- Jeremiah 6:16-19
- Jonah 2:7-8
- Luke 1:47
- Matthew 22:37
- Psalms 19:7
- Revelation 20:4

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5082, H5315, H5397, G55900

(Go back to: [Revelation 21 General Notes](#))

spirit, wind, breath

Definition:

The term "spirit" refers to the non-physical part of a person which cannot be seen. In biblical times, the concept of a person's spirit was closely related to the concept of a person's breath. The term can also refer to wind, that is, the movement of air in the natural world.

- The term "spirit" can refer to a being that does not have a physical body, such as an evil spirit.
- In general, the term "spiritual" describes things in the non-physical world.
- The term "spirit of" can also mean "having the characteristics of," such as in "spirit of wisdom" or "in the spirit of Elijah." Sometimes the Bible applies this term in the context of a person's attitude or emotional state, such as "spirit of fear" and "spirit of jealousy."
- Jesus said that God is a spirit.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, some ways to translate "spirit" might include "non-physical being" or "inside part" or "inner being."
- In some contexts, the term "spirit" could be translated as "evil spirit" or "evil spirit being."
- Sometimes the term "spirit" is used to express the feelings of a person, as in "my spirit was grieved in my inmost being." This could also be translated as "I felt grieved in my spirit" or "I felt deeply grieved."
- The phrase "spirit of" could be translated as "character of" or "influence of" or "attitude of" or "thinking (that is) characterized by."
- Depending on the context, "spiritual" could be translated as "non-physical" or "from the Holy Spirit" or "God's" or "part of the non-physical world."
- The phrase "spiritual maturity" could be translated as "godly behavior that shows obedience to the Holy Spirit."
- The term "spiritual gift" could be translated as "special ability that the Holy Spirit gives."
- Sometimes this term can be translated as "wind" when referring to the simple movement of air or "breath" when referring to air movement caused by living beings.

(See also: [soul](#), Holy Spirit, demon, breath)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:5
- 1 John 4:3
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- Acts 5:9
- Colossians 1:9
- Ephesians 4:23
- Genesis 7:21-22
- Genesis 8:1
- Isaiah 4:4
- Mark 1:23-26
- Matthew 26:41
- Philippians 1:27

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:3** Three days later, after the people had prepared themselves **spiritually**, God came down on top of Mount Sinai with thunder, lightning, smoke, and a loud trumpet blast.
- **40:7** Then Jesus cried out, "It is finished! Father, I give my **spirit** into your hands." Then he bowed his head and gave up his **spirit**.
- **45:5** As Stephen was dying, he cried out, "Jesus, receive my **spirit**."
- **48:7** All the people groups are blessed through him, because everyone who believes in Jesus is saved from sin, and becomes a **spiritual** descendant of Abraham.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0178, H1172, H5397, H7307, H7308, G41510, G41520, G41530, G53260, G54270

(Go back to: [Revelation 2 General Notes; Notes](#))

worthy, worth, unworthy, worthless

Definition:

The term “worthy” describes someone or something that deserves respect or honor. To “have worth” means to be valuable or important. The term “worthless” means to not have any value.

- Being worthy is related to being valuable or having importance
- To be “unworthy” means to not be deserving of any special notice.
- To not feel worthy means to feel less important than someone else or to not feel deserving of being treated with honor or kindness.
- The term “unworthy” and the term “worthless” have related, but different meanings. To be “unworthy” means to not be deserving of any honor or recognition. To be “worthless” means to not have any purpose or value.

Translation Suggestions:

- “Worthy” could be translated as “deserving” or “important” or “valuable.”
- The word “worth” could be translated as “value” or “importance.”
- The phrase to “have worth” could also be translated as to “be valuable” or to “be important.”
- The phrase “is worth more than” could be translated as “is more valuable than.”
- Depending on the context, the term, “unworthy” could also be translated as “unimportant” or “dishonorable” or “undeserving.”
- The term “worthless” could be translated as “with no value” or “with no purpose” or “worth nothing.”

(See also: honor)

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 22:4
- 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12
- Acts 13:25
- Acts 25:25-27
- Acts 26:31
- Colossians 1:9-10
- Jeremiah 8:19
- Mark 1:7
- Matthew 3:10-12
- Philippians 1:25-27

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0117, H0639, H1929, H3644, H4242, H4373, H4392, H4592, H4941, H6994, H7386, H7939, G00960, G05140, G05150, G05160, G24250, G26610, G27350

(Go back to: [Revelation 4 General Notes](#))

wrath, fury

Definition:

Wrath is an intense anger that is sometimes long-lasting. The Bible describes both people and God as experiencing intense anger. When speaking about God's "wrath," make sure the word or phrase used to translate this term does not refer to a sinful fit of rage (which might be true of a human person).

- In the Bible, "wrath" often refers to God's righteous judgment of sin and punishment of people who rebel against him.
- The "wrath of God" can also refer to his judgment and punishment for sin.
- God's wrath is the righteous penalty for those who do not repent of their sin.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways this term could be translated include "intense anger" or "righteous judgment" or "anger."
- God's wrath is just and holy. When talking about God's wrath, make sure the word or phrase used to translate this term does not refer to a sinful human rage.

(See also: [judge](#), [sin](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10
- 1 Timothy 2:8-10
- Luke 3:7
- Luke 21:23
- Matthew 3:7
- Revelation 14:10
- Romans 1:18
- Romans 5:9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0639, H2197, H2528, H2534, H2740, H3707, H3708, H5678, H7107, H7109, H7110, H7265, H7267, G23720, G37090, G39490, G39500

(Go back to: [Revelation 16 General Notes](#))

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