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Lamentations

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Table of Contents

unfoldingWord® Translation Notes	8
Lamentations	8
Introduction to Lamentations	9
Lamentations 1	11
Lamentations 2	50
Lamentations 3	89
Lamentations 4	156
Lamentations 5	179
unfoldingWord® Translation Academy	202
Abstract Nouns	203
Active or Passive	205
Apostrophe	208
Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information	210
Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding	213
Double Negatives	216
Doublet	219
Ellipsis	221
Euphemism	224
Exclamations	226
How to Translate Names	228
Hyperbole	232
Hypothetical Situations	236
Idiom	239
Irony	241
Merism	244
Metaphor	246
Metonymy	252
Nominal Adjectives	254
Parallelism	256
Personification	259
Poetry	261
Rhetorical Question	264
Simile	267
Symbolic Action	270
Synecdoche	272
unfoldingWord® Translation Words	274
Adam	275
adversary, enemy	276
afflict, affliction, distress	277
altar	278
amazed, amazement, astonished, marvel, marveled, marvelous, wonder,	279
ancestor, father, fathered, forefather, grandfather	280
assembly, assemble, congregation, meeting, gather, community	282
Assyria, Assyrian, Assyrian Empire	283
blood	284
bread	286
bronze	287

burden, load, heavy, hard work, hard labor, utterances	288
call, call out	289
captive, captivate, captivity, catch	291
comfort, comforts, comforter, uncomfoted	292
command, commandment	293
confess, confession	294
consume, devour	295
covenant faithfulness, covenant loyalty, covenant love	296
cry, cry out, outcry	297
darkness	298
decree, decreed	299
deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue	300
desert, wilderness	301
devour	302
die, dead, deadly, death	303
disobey, disobeyed, disobedience, rebellious	305
dominion	306
earth, land	307
Egypt, Egyptian	308
elder, older, old	309
eternity, everlasting, eternal, forever	310
evil, wicked, unpleasant	312
exile, exiled	314
face, facial	315
faith	317
faithful, faithfulness, trustworthy	318
famine	320
fear, afraid, frighten	321
feast, feasting	322
fire, firebrands, firepans, fireplace, firepot	323
flesh	324
forsake, forsaken, leave	325
fruit, fruitful, unfruitful	326
gate, gate bars, gatekeeper, gateposts, gateway	328
generation	329
gird, girded, wrapped around, tied up, belt, tuck in belt, put belt	330
god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry	331
gold, golden	333
good, right, pleasant, better, best	334
grain, grainfields	336
groan	337
hand	338
hang, hung	340
head	341
heart	342
heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly	343
holy, holiness, unholy, sacred	345
hope, hoped	347
house, household	348
household	349
inherit, inheritance, heir	350
iniquity	352

Israel, Israelites	353
Jacob, Israel	355
Jerusalem	356
joy, joyful, rejoice, glad	358
Judea, Judah	360
judge, judgment	361
king, kingship	363
kingdom	364
know, knowledge, unknown, distinguish	366
law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God	368
life, live, living, alive	370
lord, Lord, master, sir	372
love, beloved	374
mourn, mourner, weeping	376
name	377
nation	378
people, people group	380
perish	382
persecute	383
pray, prayer	384
priest, priesthood	385
prince, princess, governors, provincial governors, officials,	387
prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess	388
proud, pride, prideful	390
province, provincial	392
rebel, rebellion, rebellious, rebelliousness	393
redeem, redeemer, redemption	394
rest, rested, restless	395
restore, restoration	396
return, turn back	397
righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright,	398
Sabbath	400
sackcloth	402
sanctuary	403
seek, search, look for	404
servant, serve, slave, young man, young women	405
shame, ashamed, disgrace, humiliate, reproach	407
silver	409
sin, sinful, sinner, sinning	410
Sodom	412
son	413
spirit, wind, breath	415
strength, strengthen, strong	417
sword, swordsmen	419
temple, house, house of God	420
testimony, testify, witness, eyewitness, evidence	422
throne, enthroned	424
virgin, virginity	425
walk, walked	426
wine, wineskin, new wine	427
winepress	428
wrath, fury	429

Yahweh	430
Zion, Mount Zion	432
Contributors	433
unfoldingWord® Translation Notes Contributors	433
unfoldingWord® Literal Text Contributors	439
unfoldingWord® Simplified Text Contributors	440
unfoldingWord® Translation Academy Contributors	441
unfoldingWord® Translation Words Contributors	441
unfoldingWord® Translation Words Links Contributors	442



unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Lamentations

Introduction to Lamentations

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Lamentations

First lament: Yahweh and his people have abandoned Jerusalem (1:1–22)

Second lament: Yahweh was angry with Jerusalem and caused it to be destroyed (2:1–22)

Third lament (3:1–66)

- The people grieve (3:1–20)
- Yahweh comforts those who turn back to him (3:21–39)
- Judah is learning to return to Yahweh (3:40–54)
- Judah cries out to be avenged of its enemies (3:55–66)

Fourth lament: The terrors of the siege of Jerusalem (4:1–4:22)

- The people's sin caused Jerusalem to be punished (4:1–20)
- Their being punished satisfied Yahweh's wrath for their sin (4:21–22a)
- Edom will be punished also (4:22b)

Fifth lament: The broken nation cries out to Yahweh (5:1–22)

What is the Book of Lamentations about?

The Babylonians captured the city of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. In the Book of Lamentations, the writer grieves over Jerusalem being destroyed.

The Book of Lamentations is organized into five poems. The writer describes how God allowed Jerusalem to be destroyed because the people sinned against him. However, the writer also states that God is always loving and faithful to his people. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [faith](#))

Who wrote the Book of Lamentations?

The text of Lamentations does not give the name of the author. The traditional view is that Jeremiah wrote it. The writer seems to have personally seen Jerusalem destroyed. The serious and grieving words in the Book of Jeremiah are similar to those in the Book of Lamentations.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may use the traditional title of "Lamentations." Or they may call the book "Poems of Sadness." If translators want to take the view that the prophet Jeremiah wrote this book, they might decide on a title such as "The Sad Sayings of Jeremiah." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Did God abandon Israel?

The author of Lamentations often speaks of God abandoning Israel. But this did not mean that God had completely given up on Israel. He rejected Israel for a period of time as the special place where he would be present. However, God remained faithful to what he promised Israel in his covenant.

While it was common in the ancient Near East to think that a god might leave its city, it usually did so because it was too weak to defend the city. In Lamentations, Yahweh abandons Jerusalem because the people sinned against him, not because he was too weak to defend the city. (See: [god](#), [false god](#), [goddess](#), [idol](#), [idolater](#), [idolatrous](#), [idolatry](#))

What is a funeral song?

People groups commonly sing songs after someone dies or during a funeral. Depending on the culture, these songs can sound either happy or sad. The Book of Lamentations is like a sad song, called a “lament,” sung at a funeral. Some scholars think the rhythm of the laments in Hebrew makes them sound slow like a funeral procession.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What style of writing is Lamentations?

Lamentations is a collection of five poems. The Jewish exiles living in captivity in Babylon may have sung or chanted these laments. The Jews who remained in Jerusalem after the Babylonians conquered it may also have sung them. In Chapters 1, 2, and 4, each line of the poem begins with a different Hebrew letter, in the order of the Hebrew alphabet. The third chapter repeats three lines starting with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The next three lines begin with next letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

Who are the woman and the man in Lamentations?

The author uses the image of an abandoned woman and a persecuted man to represent Judah and Jerusalem. He uses this type of personification to help readers understand the pain and sorrow. (See: [Personification](#))

Lamentations 1

Lamentations 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Judah destroyed for her sin

Judah used to be great, but is now a slave. The temple is stripped of all its valuables. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [temple](#), [house](#), [house of God](#))

Lamentations 1:1

General Information:

Various poetic forms are used throughout this book. (See [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

is now sitting all alone

This speaks of the city of Jerusalem being empty, as if it were a woman who was sitting alone. Alternate translation: "is now empty" (See: [Metaphor](#))

She

The writer of Lamentations writes about the city of Jerusalem as if it were a woman. (See: [Personification](#))

like a widow

This speaks of Jerusalem as being without protection, as if it were a vulnerable widow. (See: [Simile](#))

She was a princess among the nations

This speaks of Jerusalem being honored as if it were a princess. Alternate translation: "She was like a princess among the nations" (See: [Metaphor](#))

forced into slavery

"forced to become a slave." If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "but she is now a slave" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [people](#)
- [among nations](#)
- [among the provinces](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [people](#)
- [nation](#)
- [province, provincial](#)

ULT

¹ O how she sits alone, that city, a mighty [people](#). She has become like a widow, mighty [among nations](#). A princess [among the provinces](#), she became a slave.

UST

¹ Jerusalem was once full of [people](#), but now it is completely deserted. Once it was a powerful nation, but now it is alone, like a widow. Once everyone in the world honored it like a king's daughter, but now it is like a slave.

Lamentations 1:2

She weeps and wails ... and her tears cover her cheeks

The author describes Jerusalem as having emotions like a human being. The city also stands for her inhabitants. Alternate translation: "Those who live in her weep and wail ... and their tears cover their cheeks" (See: [Personification](#) and [Metonymy](#))

weeps and wails

The word "wails" refers to the sounds that a person makes when they "weep" loudly. Alternate translation: "weeps loudly" (See: [Doublet](#))

None of her lovers comfort her. All her friends have betrayed her

This speaks of the people groups that had been faithful to Jerusalem betraying Jerusalem, as if the people groups were Jerusalem's lovers and friends. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Of...her lovers](#)
- [brings...comfort](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [with us](#)
- [and the people groups that we did trust failed to help us; none of those people comfort](#)

ULT

² She weeps excessively in the night and her tears are on her cheeks. Of all [her lovers](#), no one [brings](#) her [comfort](#). All her friends betrayed her. They have become for her enemies.

UST

² We in the city weep bitterly all during the nights, with tears flowing down our cheeks. We did not trust Yahweh to help us, and the people groups that we did trust failed to help us; none of those people comfort us now. All the people groups that were friends [with us](#) have betrayed us; they are all now our enemies.

Lamentations 1:3

General Information:

In these verses, Jerusalem and Judah are spoken of as if they were women. (See: [Personification](#))

After poverty and affliction

Alternate translation: "After suffering poverty and affliction"

Judah has gone into exile

Here Judah refers to its inhabitants. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah have gone into exile" or "the people of Judah have been taken into a foreign land" (See: [Metonymy](#))

She lives ... finds

Here the kingdom of Judah is described as a woman. "She" also stands for the citizens of Judah. Alternate translation: "Her people live ... they find" (See: [Personification](#) and [Metonymy](#))

finds no rest

Alternate translation: "does not find rest" or "is always afraid"

All her pursuers overtook her in her desperation

This speaks of the people of Judah being captured by their enemies as if they were a woman who was captured by those pursuing her. (See: [Personification](#))

All her pursuers overtook her

Alternate translation: "Everyone who was chasing her managed to capture her" or "Everyone who was hunting for her found her"

in her desperation

The word "desperation" can be expressed as an adjective. Alternate translation: "when she was desperate" or "when she was distressed" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- Judah
- is exiled
- among the nations
- of her pursuers

Translation Words - UST

- The people of Judah

ULT

³ Judah is exiled, for affliction and great servitude. She sits among the nations. She finds no rest. All of her pursuers overtake her in the midst of distress.

UST

³ The people of Judah have become poor and have suffered greatly. Almost all of our people were forced to leave our land. We now live in another country and we have no peace. When the people of Judah were unable to defend ourselves, that was when our enemies captured us.

- in another country
- to defend ourselves
- exile, exiled

Lamentations 1:4

General Information:

The city of Zion is spoken of as if it were a woman. In Lamentations, Zion and Jerusalem are names used to refer to the same city. (See: [Personification](#))

The roads of Zion mourn

The author speaks of the roads that lead to Zion mourning as if they were human beings. (See: [Personification](#))

the appointed feasts

Alternate translation: "the feasts that God told them to celebrate"

All her gates are desolate

The word "her" refers to Zion. Alternate translation: "All of Zion's gates are empty" (See: [Personification](#))

Her virgins are sorrowful and she herself is in complete distress

Here the people of Zion being distressed are spoken of as if they were a woman in distress. Alternate translation: "Zion's virgins are sorrowful, and its people despairing" (See: [Personification](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Zion](#)
- [to the appointed time](#)
- [her gates](#)
- [are desolate](#)
- [Her priests](#)
- [are groaning](#)
- [Her virgins](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [the sacred festivals](#)
- [groan](#)
- [Mount Zion are empty because](#)
- [priest, priesthood](#)
- [amazed, amazement, astonished, marvel, marveled, marvelous, wonder, dumbfounded](#)
- [gate, gate bars, gatekeeper, gateposts, gateway](#)
- [virgin, virginity](#)

ULT

⁴ The roads of [Zion](#) mourn; no one is coming [to the appointed time](#). All [her gates are desolate](#). [Her priests are groaning](#). [Her virgins](#) are grieving and she makes herself bitter.

UST

⁴ The roads to Mount Zion are empty because no one comes here to celebrate [the sacred festivals](#) any longer. No elders or leaders sit under the city gates to talk any more, and Jerusalem's priests [groan](#) in sorrow. The young women left in Jerusalem cry because they are suffering greatly.

Lamentations 1:5

Her adversaries have become her master; her enemies prosper

Alternate translation: "Zion's adversaries rule over it; its enemies prosper"

Yahweh has afflicted her for her many sins

This speaks of Yahweh punishing the people of Zion for their sins as if they were a woman that Yahweh was punishing. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has afflicted her people because of the sins they have committed" (See: [Personification](#))

Her little children go into captivity to her adversary

The word "captivity" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "Her enemy captures her little children" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Her adversaries](#)
- [her enemies](#)
- [the adversary](#)
- [Yahweh](#)
- [go into](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [punished us](#)
- [Our enemies...of Jerusalem](#)
- [Our enemies](#)
- [Yahweh](#)
- [go to other countries](#)

ULT

⁵ [Her adversaries](#) have become a chief; [her enemies](#) prosper for [Yahweh](#) has afflicted her because of her many transgressions. Her children [go into](#) captivity before [the adversary](#).

UST

⁵ [Our enemies](#) are now masters of our city, and they prosper. [Yahweh](#) has [punished us](#), the people [of Jerusalem](#), because of all the sins that we have committed. [Our enemies](#) have taken all our children and made them [go to other countries](#).

Lamentations 1:6

General Information:

The city of Zion is spoken of as if it were a woman. In Lamentations, Zion and Jerusalem are names used to refer to the same city. (See: [Personification](#))

Beauty has left the daughter of Zion

This speaks of everything beautiful in Zion being destroyed as if “beauty” were a person that left Zion. Alternate translation: “Everything that was beautiful about the daughter of Zion is destroyed”

daughter of Zion

This is a poetic name for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. (See: [Personification](#))

Her princes have become like deer that cannot find pasture

This speaks of Zion’s princes having nothing to eat like deer that cannot find grass to eat. Alternate translation: “Her princes are starving, they are like deer that cannot find grass to eat” (See: [Simile](#))

deer

A deer is a medium-sized, grass-eating animal that is often hunted by humans for food. It is also a beautiful animal to look at.

they go without strength before

Alternate translation: “they are not strong enough to run away from” or “they are very weak before”

their pursuer

Alternate translation: “the person that is pursuing them”

Translation Words - ULT

- [was sent out](#)
- [Zion](#)
- [Her princes](#)
- [strength](#)
- [the pursuer](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Jerusalem](#)
- [to eat](#)
- [very weak](#)
- [command, commandment](#)

ULT

⁶ All her splendor [was sent out](#) from the daughter of [Zion](#). [Her princes](#) have become like deer; they do not find a pasture and they go without [strength](#) before [the pursuer](#).

UST

⁶ [Jerusalem](#) was a beautiful city, but it is not beautiful now. The leaders of our city are like deer that are starving because they can find no grass [to eat](#). They are [very weak](#) and cannot run from our enemies.

- prince, princess, governors, provincial governors, officials, noblemen, nobility

Lamentations 1:7

In the days of her affliction and her homelessness

Alternate translation: "During the time of her affliction and her homelessness"

Jerusalem will call to mind

Here "Jerusalem" refers to the people who live there. The phrase "call to mind" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "the people of Jerusalem will remember" or "Jerusalem will remember" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

precious treasures

This refers to their valuable possessions.

in former days

"in the past." This refers to the time before the people of Jerusalem were captured. Alternate translation: "before this disaster happened" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

When her people fell into the hand of the adversary

Here the word "hand" refers the control of the enemy army. Alternate translation: "When the adversary conquered and captured her people" (See: [Metonymy](#))

saw her and laughed at her destruction

This means that they were glad and mocked Jerusalem when it was destroyed.

at her destruction

This word "destruction" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "because she was destroyed" or "while they destroyed her" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [her affliction](#)
- [her people](#)
- [into the hand of](#)
- [the adversary](#)
- [the adversaries](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [are sad](#)
- [our enemies](#)

ULT

⁷ Jerusalem remembers the days of [her affliction](#) and her homelessness, all her treasures which were from former days. When [her people](#) fell [into the hand of the adversary](#) and there was no one to help her, [the adversaries](#) saw her. They laughed over her destruction.

UST

⁷ We, the people of Jerusalem, [are sad](#) and have no more homes to live in; we think about all the splendid things that once filled our city. But now [our enemies](#) have captured the city, and there is no one to help us. [Our enemies](#) destroyed our city and laughed while they were doing it.

- Our enemies
- Jerusalem
- hand
- people, people group

Lamentations 1:8

General Information:

The city of Jerusalem is spoken of as if it were a woman. In Lamentations, Zion and Jerusalem are names used to refer to the same city. (See: [Personification](#))

Jerusalem sinned greatly, therefore, she has become scorned as something that is filthy

This speaks of Jerusalem being scorned in the same way that a woman is scorned when she is unclean. According to the law of Moses, a woman was considered unclean during her monthly bleeding. Alternate translation: "Jerusalem's sins have made her filthy and unclean, and therefore she was unacceptable before God" (See: [Simile](#))

Jerusalem sinned greatly

This describes Jerusalem as a woman who sinned, while it also stands for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "The people of Jerusalem sinned greatly" (See: [Personification](#) and [Metonymy](#))

has become scorned

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "has become an object of scorn" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

her nakedness

"her naked." Jerusalem is described as a woman whose private parts have been exposed to everyone to shame her. (See: [Personification](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [sinned](#)
- [her glory](#)
- [groans](#)
- [and turns](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [sinned](#)
- [we groan](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)
- [burden, load, heavy, hard work, hard labor, utterances](#)
- [return, turn back](#)

ULT

⁸ Jerusalem [sinned](#) greatly; therefore, she became filthy. All [her glory](#) is scorned, for they have seen her nakedness; again, she [groans and turns](#) away.

UST

⁸ We, the people of Jerusalem, have [sinned](#) very much; our city has become like a bloody rag between a woman's legs. Everyone who previously honored our city now despise it; they are like people who strip a woman bare and then mock her. Now [we groan](#) in the city; we are like a woman without clothes who tries to cover herself with her hands.

Lamentations 1:9

She has become unclean beneath her skirts

According to the I of Moses, a woman was considered unclean during her monthly bleeding. This speaks of Jerusalem being unclean, as if it were a menstruating woman. Alternate translation: "Jerusalem has become unclean, as when a woman is unclean beneath her skirts" (See: [Metaphor](#))

unclean

A person who God considers to be spiritually unacceptable or defiled is spoken of as if the person were physically unclean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Her fall was terrible

The phrase "her fall" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "Her downfall was astonishing" or "Those who saw her destruction were surprised" (See: [Idiom](#))

Look at my affliction, Yahweh

This could mean that: (1) the author of Lamentations now talks directly to Yahweh or (2) Jerusalem is described as talking to Yahweh like a person. (See: [Personification](#))

Look at

Alternate translation: "Pay attention to"

the enemy has become too great

This means that the enemy army has become too large and powerful and has defeated Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the enemy army has defeated me" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [comforter](#)
- [O, Yahweh](#)
- [my affliction](#)
- [the enemy is](#)
- [great](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [to comfort](#)
- [God, "Yahweh](#)
- [we are suffering](#)
- [our enemies](#)
- [proud, pride, prideful](#)

ULT

⁹ Her uncleanness is in her skirt. She did not remember her end and her descent was marvelous. There was no [comforter](#) for her. "O, [Yahweh](#), see [my affliction](#), for [the enemy is great!](#)"

UST

⁹ It is as if our city has become filthy because we have sinned so greatly; we did not think about how God would punish us. We did not imagine how we would suffer; there is no one [to comfort](#) us. We all call out to [God](#), "[Yahweh](#), look at how [we are suffering](#) because [our enemies](#) have defeated us!"

Lamentations 1:10

has put his hand on

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “has taken possession of” or “has stolen” (See: [Idiom](#))

precious treasures

This refers to their valuable possessions.

She has seen

The word “She” refers to Jerusalem. (See: [Personification](#))

the nations

This refers to people from various nations, not the entire population of those nations. Alternate translation: “people from the nations” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

you had commanded

The word “you” refers to Yahweh.

Translation Words - ULT

- [The adversary](#)
- [his hand](#)
- [the nations](#)
- [her sanctuary](#)
- [you ordered](#)
- [into...assembly](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Our enemies](#)
- [all the valuable things](#)
- [People](#)
- [command, commandment](#)
- [sanctuary](#)
- [assembly, assemble, congregation, meeting, gather, community](#)

ULT

¹⁰ [The adversary](#) spread [his hand](#) over all her treasures. So, she saw [the nations](#); they entered [her sanctuary](#), those whom [you ordered](#) they not enter into your [assembly](#).

UST

¹⁰ [Our enemies](#) have taken away all our treasures, [all the valuable things](#) that we owned. [People](#) who do not worship you, Yahweh, are going into our sacred temple, where you had said no foreigner must go into the place where your people worship you.

Lamentations 1:11

her people

The word “her” refers to Jerusalem which is described as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “her inhabitants” or “the people of the city” (See: [Personification](#))

bread

This refers to food in general. Alternate translation: “food” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

They have given their precious treasures for food

This means they traded their wealth and their valuables in exchange for food. Alternate translation: “They have traded their precious treasures in exchange for food” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

precious treasures

This refers to their valuable possessions.

to restore their lives

Alternate translation: “to save their lives” or “to restore their strength”

Look, Yahweh, and consider me

Here Jerusalem speaks directly to Yahweh. (See: [Personification](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- her people
- are groaning
- searching
- for bread
- to restore
- life
- O, Yahweh

Translation Words - UST

- cry out with pain
- for food
- Yahweh
- no one values my life
- restore, restoration
- people, people group
- seek, search, look for

ULT

¹¹ All her people are groaning, searching for bread. They give their treasures to restore life with food. “O, Yahweh, look and see, for I have become worthless.

UST

¹¹ All the people in the city cry out with pain while they search for food. They have given their most valuable things to get food to eat to restore their strength. Yahweh, look at me, no one values my life.

Lamentations 1:12

Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?

This rhetorical question is an accusation against the people who walk past Jerusalem and do not care about its well-being. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "All you who pass by should care more for my affliction!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Is it nothing to you

Here Jerusalem continues to speak, but now to people who pass by instead of to Yahweh. (See: [Personification](#))

Look and see

These words share similar meanings. Together they invite the reader to understand by seeing that no one has suffered so much. (See: [Doublet](#))

the sorrow that is being inflicted on me

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the sorrow that Yahweh is inflicting upon me" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

on the day of his fierce anger

Here the word "day" is used as an idiom. Alternate translation: "when he was fiercely angry" (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Yahweh](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)

ULT

¹² Is it nothing to you, all those passing by the way? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which has been forced on me, which [Yahweh](#) inflicted on the day of his fierce anger.

UST

¹² You people who pass by, you do not seem to care at all about what has happened to me. Look around and see that there are no other people who are suffering as I do. [Yahweh](#) has caused me to suffer because he has punished me on the day he was angry with us, his people.

Lamentations 1:13

General Information:

In this section Jerusalem is portrayed as a woman speaking about herself. (See: [Personification](#))

on high

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "heaven" (See: [Idiom](#))

he has sent fire into my bones, and it has conquered them

This speaks of Yahweh punishing Jerusalem as if Jerusalem were a person that Yahweh were punishing with fire. Alternate translation: "he has sent a painful punishment into my inner being, and it has destroyed me" or "he has sent a destructive punishment into the middle of Jerusalem, and it has destroyed the city" (See: [Personification](#) and [Metaphor](#))

has sent fire into my bones

Here "fire" represents pain and "bones" represents one's inner being. Alternate translation: "has sent pain into my bones" or "has sent pain into my inner being" (See: [Metonymy](#))

He has spread a net for my feet

This speaks of Yahweh punishing Jerusalem as if Jerusalem were a person that Yahweh had set a trap for. This refers to a type of trap usually used to catch an animal. (See: [Personification](#) and [Metaphor](#))

turned me back

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "prevented my from walking any further" (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [fire](#)
- [and brought it down](#)
- [and turned me](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [a fire](#)
- [dominion](#)
- [restore, restoration](#)

ULT

¹³ From on high, he sent [fire](#) into my bones [and brought it down](#). He spread a net for my feet [and turned me](#) away. He made me desolate, every day of menstration.

UST

¹³ It is as though he sent [a fire](#) from heaven that burned in my bones; it is as though he has placed a trap to entangle my feet, and made me turn back. He has abandoned me; I am weak and alone every day, all during the day.

Lamentations 1:14

The yoke of my transgressions ... They are knit together and placed upon my neck

This speaks of the people of Jerusalem's sins as if they were a yoke bearing a heavy burden that Yahweh had placed on their necks. Also, If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "My transgressions are like a yoke that he has bound together with his hands and placed upon my neck" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

given me over into their hands

"given me over into the hands of my enemies." Here their enemies' control is represented by their "hands." Alternate translation: "given my over to the control of my enemies" or "let my enemies defeat me" (See: [Metonymy](#))

I am not able to stand

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "I cannot resist them" (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [by his hand](#)
- [with hands](#)
- [My strength](#)
- [The Lord](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [He](#)
- [hand](#)
- [hand](#)
- [strength, strengthen, strong](#)

ULT

¹⁴ The yoke of my transgressions is bound. They are knit [by his hand](#). They are placed upon my neck. [My strength](#) is made to stumble. [The Lord](#) appointed me [with hands](#) I cannot raise.

UST

¹⁴ He turned the sins that I have committed into a heavy load for me to carry; it is as though he tied them around my neck. Previously we were strong, but he has caused me to become weak. [He](#) has allowed my enemies to capture me, and I was not able to do anything to resist them.

Lamentations 1:15

General Information:

In this section Jerusalem is portrayed as a woman speaking about herself. (See: [Personification](#))

mighty men

Alternate translation: "strongest soldiers"

an assembly

Here the enemy army attacking Jerusalem is spoken of as if it were a meeting of people who have come together in order to accuse and condemn someone. Alternate translation: "a great army" (See: [Metaphor](#))

to crush my vigorous men

This speaks of the enemy army defeating the soldiers of Jerusalem as if they crushed them. Alternate translation: "to defeat my vigorous men"

vigorous men

This refers to men at the strongest time of their lives.

The Lord has trampled ... in the winepress

Here the judgment of God is described as if Jerusalem were grapes on which he had trampled in order to squeeze out the juice. Alternate translation: "It is as though the Lord has trampled upon the virgin daughter of Judah in a winepress" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the virgin daughter of Judah

This is a poetic name for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. The word "virgin" suggests that this woman is pure. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [The Lord](#)
- [The Lord](#)
- [He has spoken](#)
- [an appointed time](#)
- [the winepress](#)
- [Judah](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [The Lord](#)
- [The Lord has trampled](#)
- [looked at](#)

ULT

¹⁵ [The Lord](#) has rejected all my mighty men in my midst. [He has spoken](#) against me [an appointed time](#) to destroy my young men. [The Lord](#) has tread [the winepress](#) for the virgin daughter of [Judah](#).

UST

¹⁵ [The Lord](#) [looked at](#) my mighty soldiers, who kept me safe. [He summoned](#) a great army to come and crush me to defeat my strong young soldiers. [The Lord](#) [has trampled](#) on the people of [Judah](#) as people trample on grapes in a pit to make juice.

- He summoned
- of Judah
- winepress

Lamentations 1:16

General Information:

In this section Jerusalem is portrayed as a woman speaking about herself. In Lamentations, Zion and Jerusalem are names used to refer to the same city. (See: [Personification](#))

for a comforter is far from me, one who restores my life

This speaks of Jerusalem having no one to comfort her as if she did have a comforter, but that he was far away. The word “comforter” can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: “for there is no one to comfort me and restore my life” (See: [Metaphor](#))

restores my life

Alternate translation: “revives me”

Translation Words - ULT

- [the comforter](#)
- [one who restores](#)
- [my life](#)
- [My sons](#)
- [desolate](#)
- [the enemy](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [to comfort me](#)
- [My children](#)
- [the enemy](#)
- [life, live, living, alive](#)
- [restore, restoration](#)
- [amazed, amazement, astonished, marvel, marveled, marvelous, wonder, dumbfounded](#)

ULT

16 Because of these things, I weep. O my eyes, my eyes overflow with water; for [the comforter](#) is far from me, [one who restores my life](#). My sons have become [desolate](#), for [the enemy](#) is made mighty.”

UST

16 I weep because of all these things. My eyes are filled with tears. There is no one [to comfort me](#). The one who comforts me is far away from me. [My children](#) have no hope because [the enemy](#) has taken us all captive.

Lamentations 1:17

Zion has spread her hands wide

Here Jerusalem no longer speaks about herself; instead the author describes Jerusalem. He speaks of Zion as if it were a woman that lifts up her hands to ask for help. Alternate translation: "Zion has reached out for help" (See: [Personification](#) and [Symbolic Action](#))

those around Jacob

Alternate translation: "the people around Jacob" or "the nations surrounding Jacob"

around Jacob should be his adversaries

Here "Jacob" refers to his descendants, that is Israel. Alternate translation: "around Jacob's descendants should be their adversaries" (See: [Metonymy](#))

unclean

A person who God considers spiritually unacceptable or defiled is spoken of as if the person were physically unclean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Zion](#)
- [her hands](#)
- [comforter](#)
- [Yahweh](#)
- [commanded](#)
- [Jacob](#)
- [be his adversaries](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [The people who lived in Zion \(the city of Jerusalem\)](#)
- [comfort](#)
- [Yahweh](#)
- [will become the enemies of the descendants](#)
- [of our father Jacob](#)
- [command, commandment](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)
- [hand](#)

ULT

17 [Zion](#) has spread [her hands](#) wide; there is no [comforter](#) for her. [Yahweh](#) [commanded](#) that those surrounding [Jacob](#) [be his adversaries](#). Jerusalem has become filth in their midst.

UST

17 [The people who lived in Zion \(the city of Jerusalem\)](#) have no one to give them [comfort](#). [Yahweh](#) has given the order that the people in nearby nations [will become the enemies of the descendants of our father Jacob](#) (who are also called the Israelites). Jerusalem has become disgusting to them.

Lamentations 1:18

General Information:

In this section Jerusalem is portrayed as a woman speaking about herself. (See: [Personification](#))

Yahweh is righteous

This implies that what Yahweh has done, he has done because he is righteous. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has acted out of his righteousness" or "What Yahweh has done is right"

see my sorrow

The word "sorrow" can be expressed as a "sad." Alternate translation: "see how extremely sad I am" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

My virgins and my vigorous men have gone into captivity

Here all of the people of Jerusalem who were taken into captivity are represented by the "virgins" and the "vigorous men" who were taken. Alternate translation: "Many of my people, including my virgins and vigorous men, have gone into captivity" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

vigorous men

This refers to men at the strongest time of their lives. See how you translated this in [Lamentations 1:15](#).

Translation Words - ULT

- Yahweh
- is...righteous
- I disobeyed
- peoples
- My virgins
- have gone into
- captivity

Translation Words - UST

- But what Yahweh has done to me
- I had refused to obey what he told me
- people
- have been taken away
- righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness
- captive, captivate, captivity, catch
- virgin, virginity

ULT

18 "Yahweh is surely righteous, for I disobeyed his word. Hear, all peoples, and see my sorrow. My virgins and my young men have gone into captivity.

UST

18 But what Yahweh has done to me is fair, for I had refused to obey what he told me to do. You people everywhere, listen to me! Look and see that I am suffering greatly. My young daughters and brave sons have been taken away to far off lands.

Lamentations 1:19

I called for my friends

Alternate translation: "I called for my friends to help me" or "I called for my allies to help me"

they were treacherous toward me

This means that they betrayed him. Alternate translation: "they betrayed me" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

to restore their lives

Alternate translation: "to save their lives" or "to restore their strength"

Translation Words - ULT

- I called
- to my lovers
- My priests
- they sought
- and restored
- their life

Translation Words - UST

- I pleaded with our allies, in whom we trusted
- to help
- searched
- life, live, living, alive
- priest, priesthood
- return, turn back

ULT

19 I called to my lovers; they deceived me. My priests and my elders perished in the city, while they sought their food and restored their life.

UST

19 I pleaded with our allies, in whom we trusted, to help, but they all refused, they told lies and did not keep their promises. My priests and my leaders died within the walls of the city while they searched for food to eat.

Lamentations 1:20

General Information:

In this section Jerusalem is portrayed as a woman speaking about herself. (See: [Personification](#))

Look, Yahweh, for I am in distress

Jerusalem continues to talk about herself as if she were a woman, but now talks directly to Yahweh. (See: [Personification](#))

my stomach churns

The word “churn” means to move around violently, normally in a circular rotation. This does not mean the stomach is literally churning, but describes how the woman, representing Jerusalem, feels. Alternate translation: “my insides ache” or “my stomach hurts” (See: [Metaphor](#))

my heart is disturbed within me

Here the woman, representing Jerusalem, refers to her “heart” to emphasize her feelings. Alternate translation: “my heart is broken” or “I am extremely sad” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

the sword bereaves a mother

The “sword” represents the enemy. Alternate translation: “the enemy kills a mother’s children” (See: [Metonymy](#))

inside the house there is only death

This could mean: (1) “inside the house, everyone is dying” or (2) “and inside the house the dead people are kept” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [O Yahweh](#)
- [my heart](#)
- [grievously](#)
- [I have disobeyed](#)
- [the sword](#)
- [inside a house](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [I have rebelled against you](#)
- [and have caused you great sadness](#)
- [with their swords](#)
- [heart](#)
- [temple, house, house of God](#)

ULT

²⁰ Look, [O Yahweh](#), for I am engulfed; my stomach churns, [my heart](#) is undone within me, for [I have disobeyed grievously](#). From the outside, [the sword](#) makes a barren womb [inside a house](#) like death.

UST

²⁰ [Yahweh](#), see that I am suffering very much! Inside of my body I am in great distress. I am sad in the center of my being, because [I have rebelled against you and have caused you great sadness!](#) Our enemies kill people in the streets [with their swords](#); and that makes our homes the places where the dead are kept.

Lamentations 1:21

General Information:

In this section Jerusalem is portrayed as a woman speaking about herself. (See: [Personification](#))

They have heard my groaning

“People have heard my groaning.” Jerusalem continues to speak as if she were a woman. (See: [Personification](#))

you have done it

Here the word “you” refers to Yahweh.

You have brought the day you promised

The phrase “the day” is an idiom that refers to a specific event happening. Alternate translation: “You have done what you have promised” (See: [Idiom](#))

now let them become like me

This is a request for Jerusalem’s enemies to suffer as the people of Jerusalem have. Alternate translation: “now let them suffer like me” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [am groaning](#)
- [comforter](#)
- [my enemies](#)
- [my trouble](#)
- [you declared](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [groaning](#)
- [to comfort](#)
- [All our enemies](#)
- [to](#)
- [what Yahweh](#)

ULT

²¹ Hear, for I [am groaning](#). There is no [comforter](#) for me. All [my enemies](#) heard [my trouble](#). They rejoiced that you did it. You brought about the day [you declared](#). Yet, may they become like me.

UST

²¹ Hear my [groaning](#)! but no one came [to comfort](#) me. [All our enemies](#) know what happened to me; they were all happy [to](#) hear about [what Yahweh](#) has done to his people. Please do soon what you have promised, when our enemies will suffer like we have suffered!

Lamentations 1:22

Let all their wickedness come before you

This is a request for Yahweh to judge Jerusalem's enemies for their wickedness. The phrase "come before you" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "Pay attention to all of the wickedness they have committed" or "Judge them for all of their wickedness" (See: [Idiom](#))

deal with them as you have dealt with me

This is a request for Yahweh to punish Jerusalem's enemies as he punished the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "punish them as you have punished me" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

my heart is faint

Here the "heart" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "I am faint" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [their evil](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [evil deeds](#)

ULT

22 May all [their evil](#) come before you and deal with them just as you have dealt with me because of all my transgressions. For my groans are many and my heart is faint."

UST

22 Yahweh, let those [evil deeds](#) come near to you so you may see them all! Punish them as you have punished me for all my sins! I suffer and groan very much, and I faint within my inner self.

Lamentations 2

Lamentations 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

God has become Judah's enemy. He is determined to destroy them.

Lamentations 2:1

General Information:

A new poem begins. The writer of Lamentations uses many different ways to express that the people of Israel have lost God's favor. (See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

The Lord has covered the daughter of Zion under the cloud of his anger

This speaks of the Lord's anger against Jerusalem (Zion) as if it were a dark cloud. This could mean: (1) God is threatening to harm the people of Jerusalem or (2) God has already harmed the people. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the daughter of Zion

This is a poetic name for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. Translate as you did in [Lamentations 1:6](#).(See: [Personification](#))

He has thrown the splendor of Israel down from heaven to earth

The phrase "the splendor of Israel" refers to Jerusalem. This passage speaks of the people of Jerusalem losing favor with the Lord as if he threw them out of his presence. The phrase "from heaven to earth" is a great distance used to represent how much they lost favor with the Lord. Alternate translation: "Jerusalem, the splendor of Israel, has lost all favor with the Lord" or "Jerusalem has lost all favor with the Lord" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

He has not remembered his footstool

This is a reference to the Lord having considered Jerusalem his "footstool" in the past, which symbolized that he had authority over them and that they were submissive to him. This speaks of the Lord disregarding Jerusalem as his footstool as if he did not remember them. Alternate translation: "He disregarded Jerusalem as his footstool" (See: [Metaphor](#))

not remembered

This speaks of the Lord not paying attention to Jerusalem as if he did not remember them. Alternate translation: "disregarded" or "paid no attention to" (See: [Metaphor](#))

on the day of his anger

Here "day" is used as an idiom that refers to a general period of time. Alternate translation: "at the time when he displays his anger" or "at the time he acts in his anger" (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [the Lord](#)
- [Zion](#)
- [from heaven](#)
- [to earth](#)

ULT

¹ O how [the Lord](#) engulfed in his anger the daughter of [Zion](#). He has thrown down [from heaven to earth](#) the splendor of [Israel](#). And he has not remembered the footstool of his feet on the day of his anger.

UST

¹ [The Lord](#) was extremely angry with us; it was as though he covered [Jerusalem](#) with a dark cloud. Previously it was a beautiful city, but he has caused it to become a ruin. At the time he punished Israel, he even abandoned his temple in Jerusalem.

- Israel

Translation Words - UST

- The Lord
- Jerusalem
- heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly
- Israel, Israelites
- earth, land

Lamentations 2:2

the daughter of Judah

This is a poetic name for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. (See: [Personification](#))

the days of his anger

Here “day” is used as an idiom that refers to a general period of time. Alternate translation: “the time of his anger” or “the time of his anger” (See: [Idiom](#))

swallowed up

This speaks of the Lord completely destroying the towns as if he were an animal who ate them. Alternate translation: “completely destroyed” (See: [Metaphor](#))

all the towns of Jacob

Here “the towns of Jacob” refers to the towns where his descendants lived. Alternate translation: “all the towns of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the fortified cities of the daughter of Judah

This could mean: (1) the fortified cities throughout Judah or (2) the fortified walls of Jerusalem.

Translation Words - ULT

- [The Lord](#)
- [Jacob](#)
- [Judah](#)
- [the kingdom](#)
- [and its princes](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [The Lord](#)
- [of Judah...of Judah](#)
- [he](#)
- [kingdom](#)
- [prince, princess, governors, provincial governors, officials, noblemen, nobility](#)

ULT

² [The Lord](#) devoured; he did not show compassion on all the pastures of [Jacob](#). In his fury, he threw down the fortifications of the daughter of [Judah](#). He struck the earth with disgrace, [the kingdom and its princes](#).

UST

² [The Lord](#) destroyed the homes of the people [of Judah](#); he did not act mercifully. Because he was very angry, [he](#) broke down the fortresses [of Judah](#). He has made our [kingdom](#) to be completely helpless, and he has caused our rulers to lose all honor.

Lamentations 2:3

he has cut off every horn of Israel

This speaks of the Lord taking away Israel's strength as if he were cutting off its horns. The word "horn" refers to an animal horn, not a musical instrument. Alternate translation: "he has taken away all of Israel's strength" (See: [Metaphor](#))

withdrawn his right hand from before the enemy

Here the Lord's protection is represented by his "right hand."
Alternate translation: "stopped protecting us from our enemies" (See: [Metonymy](#))

He has burned up Jacob like a blazing fire that devours everything around it

This speaks of how the Lord has destroyed Jacob as if a fire has completely burned it. Alternate translation: "He has destroyed Jacob like a blazing fire destroys everything"

Jacob

Here "Jacob" refers to the places where his descendants lived. Alternate translation: "Israel" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Israel](#)
- [He turned](#)
- [the enemy](#)
- [Jacob](#)
- [it devoured](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [our enemies](#)
- [like a raging](#)
- [Israel, Israelites](#)
- [restore, restoration](#)
- [Jacob, Israel](#)

ULT

³ With fierce anger he cut off every horn of [Israel](#). [He turned](#) away his right hand from before [the enemy](#). And he has burned [Jacob](#); like a flame of fire [it devoured](#) the surrounding.

UST

³ Because he was extremely angry, he has caused Israel to not be powerful anymore. He has refused to assist us when [our enemies](#) attacked us. He has destroyed Israel [like a raging](#) fire destroys everything.

Lamentations 2:4

Like an enemy he has bent his bow toward us, with his right is ready to shoot

A soldier has to bend his bow in order to shoot an arrow from it. This speaks of the Lord preparing to attack Israel as if he were an enemy about to shoot them with a bow and arrow. Alternate translation: "He has prepared to kill us, like an enemy who has made his bow ready to shoot us" (See: [Simile](#))

in the tent of the daughter of Zion

The "daughter of Zion" is a poetic name for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. The phrase "tent of the daughter of Zion" speaks of Jerusalem as a "tent" emphasizing that it is the home of those who live there. Alternate translation: "who live in Jerusalem" (See: [Personification](#) and [Metaphor](#))

he has poured out his wrath like fire

This speaks of the Lord's wrath as if it were a liquid that he were pouring out on the people. His wrath is also compared to a "fire" to emphasize how destructive it is. Alternate translation: "in his anger he has destroyed everything like a blazing fire" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Zion](#)
- [his wrath](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [is extremely angry with us](#)
- [of Jerusalem](#)

ULT

⁴ He has bent his bow like an enemy; his right hand is posed like an adversary. And he has slain all those precious to the eye in the tent of the daughter of [Zion](#). he has poured out [his wrath](#) like fire.

UST

⁴ He has gotten ready to kill us, his people, as though we were his enemies. He prepared to kill the people whom we love the most, members of our own families. He [is extremely angry with us](#) people [of Jerusalem](#); his anger is like a fire.

Lamentations 2:5

swallowed up

This speaks of the Lord completely destroying Israel as if he were animal who ate them. See how you translated this in [Lamentations 2:2](#). Alternate translation: “completely destroyed” (See: [Metaphor](#))

her palaces ... her strongholds

Israel is spoken of as if it were female.

He has increased mourning and lamentation within the daughter of Judah

The words “mourning” and “lamentation” can be expressed as verbs. Alternate translation: “He has caused more and more people within the daughter of Judah to mourn and lament” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

daughter of Judah

This is a poetic name for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “Judah” (See: [Personification](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [The Lord](#)
- [Israel](#)
- [Judah](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [The Lord](#)
- [He has gotten rid of](#)
- [Israel, Israelites](#)

ULT

⁵ [The Lord](#) has become like an enemy. He has swallowed up [Israel](#). He has swallowed up all her palaces. He has destroyed its fortifications. And he has multiplied mourning and lamentation within the daughter of [Judah](#).

UST

⁵ [The Lord](#) has become like an enemy to us Israelites; he has destroyed us; he has destroyed our palaces and made our fortresses into ruins. [He has gotten rid of](#) many people in Jerusalem, and caused us to mourn and weep for those who were killed.

Lamentations 2:6

He has attacked his tabernacle like a garden hut

This speaks of the tabernacle being easily destroyed, as if it were a garden hut. The Lord caused Israel's enemies to destroy it. He did not destroy it himself. Alternate translation: "He has caused their enemies to attack his tabernacle as easily as if it were a garden hut" (See: [Simile](#) and [Metonymy](#))

a garden hut

a very small building for holding farming tools or for sheltering someone who is guarding a garden

He has destroyed the place of the solemn assembly

The Lord caused Israel's enemies to destroy it. He did not destroy it himself. Alternate translation: "He has caused the place of the solemn assembly to be destroyed" or "He has caused their enemies to destroy the place of the solemn assembly" (See: [Metonymy](#))

caused both solemn assembly and Sabbath to be forgotten in Zion

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "caused the people in Zion to forget both solemn assembly and Sabbath" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

in the indignation of his anger

Alternate translation: "because he was extremely angry with them"

Translation Words - ULT

- [his appointed place](#)
- [the appointed festival](#)
- [Yahweh](#)
- [and Sabbath](#)
- [in Zion](#)
- [the king](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [all our sacred](#)
- [festivals](#)
- [our kings](#)
- [Sabbath](#)
- [Yahweh](#)
- [Zion, Mount Zion](#)

ULT

⁶ And he was violent with his garden tabernacle. He ruined [his appointed place](#). Yahweh has caused [the appointed festival and Sabbath](#) to be forgotten [in Zion](#). And he has despised [the king](#) and priest in his indignant anger.

UST

⁶ He has caused our enemies to smash his temple as easily as if it had been a hut in a garden. He has caused us, his people, to forget [all our sacred festivals](#) and Sabbath days. He has hated [our kings](#) and priests because he was extremely angry with them.

Lamentations 2:7

He has given over the walls of her palaces into the hand of the enemy

Here the enemy's "hand" refers to the enemy's control. Alternate translation: "He has allowed the enemy to capture the walls of her palaces" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the walls of her palaces

Here, the word **her** may refer either to the temple or to Jerusalem. Possible translations are: (1) "the walls of the temple" or (2) "the walls of Jerusalem's palaces." The word "walls" is a synecdoche for the whole building, and the building is a synecdoche for all of Jerusalem. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

They have raised a shout in the house of Yahweh, as on the day of an appointed feast

This is an ironic comparison between the happy, noisy festivals of Israel and the loud shouts of victory of the Babylonians. Alternate translation: "They have raised a shout in the house of Yahweh, as the Israelites would during an appointed feast" (See: [Irony](#))

have raised a shout

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "have shouted victoriously" (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [The Lord](#)
- [his altar](#)
- [his sanctuary](#)
- [in the hand of](#)
- [the enemy](#)
- [in the house of](#)
- [Yahweh](#)
- [the appointed festival](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [our enemies](#)
- [Yahweh](#)
- [like we previously shouted during our sacred festivals](#)
- [altar](#)
- [sanctuary](#)
- [temple, house, house of God](#)
- [hand](#)

ULT

⁷ [The Lord](#) has rejected [his altar](#). He abandoned [his sanctuary](#). He has closed [in the hand of the enemy](#) the walls of her palaces. They raised a shout [in the house of Yahweh](#), as a day of [the appointed festival](#).

UST

⁷ [Yahweh](#) has rejected the very altar on which we had sacrificed animals to him; he has abandoned his temple. He has allowed [our enemies](#) to tear down the walls of our temple and our palaces. They shout victoriously in the temple of [Yahweh](#), [like we previously shouted during our sacred festivals](#).

Lamentations 2:8

Yahweh decided to destroy the city wall

Yahweh chose to have the wall destroyed and caused Jerusalem's enemy to destroy it. He did not destroy it himself. (See: [Metonymy](#))

daughter of Zion

This is a poetic name for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. (See: [Personification](#))

He has stretched out the measuring line

This speaks of preparing to destroy the wall as if he measured it before he destroyed it, so that he knew how much to destroy. Alternate translation: "It is as though he has measured the wall" (See: [Metaphor](#))

has not withheld his hand from destroying

This can be stated without the double negatives. Also, here the Lord is referred to by his "hand." Alternate translation: "with his hand he has destroyed the wall" or "he has destroyed the wall" (See: [Double Negatives](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

He has made the ramparts and wall to lament; together they wasted away

The walls and ramparts are spoken of as if they were people who lamented and died. Alternate translation: "Because he has destroyed the ramparts and walls, they are like people who lament and have lost their strength" (See: [Personification](#))

ramparts

Ancient cities had a main "wall" to keep attackers out, and an outer line of "ramparts" to keep attackers from the wall.

Translation Words - ULT

- [Yahweh](#)
- [Zion](#)
- [He did...withhold](#)
- [his hand](#)
- [And he has brought...to mourning](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [our city](#)
- [them](#)
- [restore, restoration](#)
- [mourn, mourner, weeping](#)

ULT

⁸ [Yahweh](#) planned to destroy the wall of the daughter of [Zion](#). He stretched out the measuring line. [He did not withhold his hand](#) from devouring. [And he has brought](#) the ramparts and wall [to mourning](#). Together they wasted away.

UST

⁸ [Yahweh](#) was determined that our enemies would tear down [our city](#) wall. It was as though he had first measured the walls and then completely destroyed [them](#). It was as though he caused the towers and walls to lament because they were now ruins.

Lamentations 2:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Translation Words - ULT

- Her gates
- He has destroyed
- Her king
- and her princes
- are among the nations
- law
- her prophets

Translation Words - UST

- countries
- teaches the laws that God gave to Moses
- The prophets
- perish
- gate, gate bars, gatekeeper, gateposts, gateway
- king, kingship
- prince, princess, governors, provincial governors, officials, noblemen, nobility

ULT

⁹ Her gates sank into the ground. He has destroyed and shattered her bars. Her king and her princes are among the nations. There is no law. Also, her prophets do not find a vision from Yahweh.

UST

⁹ The city gates have collapsed; the enemy has destroyed the bars that fastened the gates shut. The king and his officials have been forced to go to other countries, where no one teaches the laws that God gave to Moses. The prophets do not receive any visions because Yahweh does not give them any.

Lamentations 2:10

daughter of Zion

This is a poetic name for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. (See: [Personification](#))

sit on the ground in silence

Often people would sit on the ground to show they were mourning. Alternate translation: "sit on the ground, mourning in silence" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

They have thrown dust on their heads and put on sackcloth

These are actions of mourning. Alternate translation: "To show their mourning, they have thrown dust on their heads and put on sackcloth" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

have bowed their heads to the ground

This is an action of mourning. Alternate translation: "have sorrowfully bowed their heads to the ground" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [The elders of](#)
- [Zion](#)
- [their heads](#)
- [their heads](#)
- [and put on](#)
- [sackcloth](#)
- [The virgins of](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [old men](#)
- [of Jerusalem](#)
- [They are so sad that they wear](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)
- [head](#)
- [head](#)
- [sackcloth](#)
- [virgin, virginity](#)

ULT

¹⁰ They sit on the ground. [The elders of the daughter of Zion](#) are silenced. They have thrown up dust on [their heads and put on sackcloth](#). [The virgins of Jerusalem](#) have bowed [their heads](#) to the ground.

UST

¹⁰ The [old men of Jerusalem](#) sit on the ground, and they say nothing. [They are so sad that they wear](#) rough sackcloth and throw dust on their heads. The young girls of Jerusalem bow down sorrowfully, their faces touch the ground.

Lamentations 2:11

General Information:

The author shifts from describing Jerusalem to describing his own experience.

My eyes have failed from their tears

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "I have cried until I cannot cry anymore" (See: [Idiom](#))

my stomach churns

The word "churn" means to move around violently, normally in a circular rotation. This does not mean the stomach is literally churning, but describes how the author feels. Alternate translation: "my insides ache" or "my stomach hurts" (See: [Metaphor](#))

my inner parts are poured out to the ground

The author speaks of feeling grief in his inner being as if his inner body parts had fallen out of his body onto the ground. Alternate translation: "my entire inner being is in grief" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the daughter of my people

This is a poetic name of Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: "my people" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [have failed](#)
- [my people](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [consume, devour](#)
- [people, people group](#)

ULT

11 My eyes [have failed](#) with tears. My stomach churns. My inner parts are poured out to the ground, because of the destruction of the daughter of [my people](#), when child and infant faint in the streets of the town.

UST

11 My eyes are very tired because of my tears; I am very grieved within my inner being. Because very many of my people have died, in my inner being I grieve and am exhausted. Even children and babies are fainting and dying in the streets because they have no food.

Lamentations 2:12

Where is grain and wine?

This rhetorical question is used as a request for something to eat. The children are telling their mother that they are hungry. The phrase “grain and wine” represents food and drink. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: “Give us something to eat and drink.” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

as they faint like a wounded man

This speaks of the children fainting from hunger and thirst in the same way that a wounded man faints. (See: [Simile](#))

their lives are poured out on the bosom of their mothers

This speaks of the children dying as if their lives were a liquid that was being poured out. Alternate translation: “they slowly die in the arms of their mothers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [grain](#)
- [and wine](#)
- [their lives](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [and drink](#)
- [life, live, living, alive](#)
- [grain, grainfields](#)

ULT

¹² They say to their mothers, “Where is [grain and wine?](#)” when they faint like the slain in the streets of the city, when [their lives](#) are poured out in the lap of their mothers.

UST

¹² They cry out to their mothers, “We need something to eat [and drink!](#)” They collapse like wounded men in the streets of the city. They slowly die in the arms of their mothers.

Lamentations 2:13

General Information:

The author begins to address Jerusalem.

What can I say ... Jerusalem?

The author uses this rhetorical question to express that he does not know what to say to help Jerusalem. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "There is nothing that I can say ... Jerusalem." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

daughter of Jerusalem ... virgin daughter of Zion

These are poetic names for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. "Zion" is another name for Jerusalem. (See: [Personification](#))

To what can I compare to you ... Zion?

The author uses this rhetorical question to express that he does not know how to give comfort to Jerusalem. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "There is nothing to which I can compare you ... Zion." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Your wound is as great as the sea

This speaks of Jerusalem's great suffering as if it were as terrible as the sea is great. Alternate translation: "Your suffering is as terrible as the sea is large" (See: [Simile](#))

Who can heal you?

"Who can restore you?" The author uses this rhetorical question to express that there is no one who can restore Jerusalem to the way it was before. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one can heal you." or "No one can restore you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [I testify to you](#)
- [O virgin](#)
- [Zion](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [I can do](#)
- [your city back to what it was](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)
- [virgin, virginity](#)

ULT

¹³ What can [I testify to you](#)? To what can I compare you, O daughter of Jerusalem? To what can I liken you, that I may comfort you, [O virgin](#) daughter of [Zion](#)? For your brokenness is as great as the sea. Who can heal you?

UST

¹³ You people of Jerusalem, I cannot say anything to help you. No people have suffered like you are suffering; I do not know what [I can do](#) to comfort you. You have fallen just as far as if you had sunk in the ocean; there is no one who can bring [your city back to what it was](#).

Lamentations 2:14

They have not exposed your iniquity to restore your fortunes

“They did not tell you about your sins to restore your fortunes.” The word “fortune” refers to a person’s wealth and prosperity.

for you they gave utterances

The word “utterances” can be expressed with the verb “spoke.” Alternate translation: “they spoke things to you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- Your prophets
- they did...expose
- your iniquity
- to restore
- your fortunes

Translation Words - UST

- The prophets
- your enemies
- they did not tell you
- restore, restoration
- captive, captivate, captivity, catch

ULT

¹⁴ Your prophets have seen for you false and worthless visions. And they did not expose your iniquity, to restore your fortunes, but they have seen for you false and enticing oracles.

UST

¹⁴ The prophets among you claimed that they had seen visions from Yahweh, but what they said was false and worthless. They did not work to save you from your enemies; they did not tell you that you had sinned. Instead, they announced to you things that they said Yahweh had told them; they tempted you to believe them, and you did.

Lamentations 2:15

clap their hands ... hiss and shake their heads

These actions are used to mock and insult others. Alternate translation: "mock you by clapping their hands ... hiss and shake their heads" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

the daughter of Jerusalem

This is a poetic name for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. (See: [Personification](#))

Is this the city that they called 'The Perfection of Beauty,' 'The Joy for All of Earth'?

This rhetorical question is used to express sarcasm. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "This city that they called 'The Perfection of Beauty,' 'The Joy for All of Earth,' is not so beautiful or joyful anymore!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

The Perfection of Beauty

Alternate translation: "Perfectly Beautiful"

Translation Words - ULT

- [their hands](#)
- [their heads](#)
- [the earth](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [the earth](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)
- [hand](#)
- [head](#)

ULT

15 All those passing on the road clap [their hands](#) at you. They hiss and shake [their heads](#) at the daughter of Jerusalem. "Is this the city that they called 'the fullness of beauty, the joy of all [the earth](#)'?"

UST

15 All those who pass by you make fun of you by clapping their hands; they shake their heads and hiss at you; They say, "Is this the great city of Jerusalem? Is it the city that people said was the most beautiful city in the world, the city that caused all the people on [the earth](#) to rejoice?"

Lamentations 2:16

grind their teeth

This action shows a person's anger and that they are mocking others. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

We have swallowed her up

Here the people speak of destroying Jerusalem as if they were an animal swallowing its food. Alternate translation: "We have completely destroyed Jerusalem" (See: [Metaphor](#))

We have lived to see it

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "We have greatly desired to see it happen" (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [your enemies](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [enemies](#)

ULT

16 All [your enemies](#) opened their mouths against you. They hiss and grind their teeth. They say, "We have devoured! Surely this is the day we have waited for! We have found, we have seen!"

UST

16 Now all our [enemies](#) laugh at you; they hate you so much that they hiss at you and grind their teeth at you. They say, "We have destroyed Israel! This is what we longed for, and now it has happened!"

Lamentations 2:17

He has overthrown

Alternate translation: "He has destroyed"

to rejoice over you

This means that the enemy rejoiced because they defeated them.
Alternate translation: "to rejoice over defeating you"

he has lifted up the horn of your enemies

Here **horn** (that is, an animal horn) represents strength. Alternate translation: "he has increased the power of your enemies" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- Yahweh
- he commanded
- the enemy
- your adversaries
- And...rejoiced

Translation Words - UST

- Yahweh
- your enemies
- enemies
- command, commandment
- joy, joyful, rejoice, glad

ULT

¹⁷ Yahweh has done what he planned to finish. His word, which he commanded from days before, he has overthrown and showed no compassion. And the enemy rejoiced over you. He has lifted up the horn of your adversaries.

UST

¹⁷ Yahweh has done what he planned; long ago he threatened to destroy you, and now he has done it. He has destroyed your city without acting mercifully toward you; he has enabled your enemies to be happy about defeating you; he has enabled your enemies to continually become stronger.

Lamentations 2:18

Their heart cried out to the Lord

Here the word **heart** represents the whole person emphasizing one's innermost being. Possible meanings of who cried out are: (1) the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "The people of Jerusalem shouted to the Lord from their innermost being" or (2) the walls are being personified. Alternate translation: "You walls, cry out to the Lord from your innermost being" (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Personification](#))

walls of the daughter of Zion! Make your tears flow ... no relief

The writer speaks to the walls of Jerusalem. He wants the people of Jerusalem to do what he is telling the walls to do. Some translations take this whole section to be spoken to the "walls," though this can be written with the first phrase "walls of the daughter of Zion!" spoken to the "walls," and the rest of the section spoken directly to the people. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

the daughter of Zion

This is a poetic name for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. (See: [Personification](#))

Make your tears flow down like a river

This speaks of the people crying so much that their tears would flow like a river. Alternate translation: "Cry many, many tears" (See: [Metaphor](#))

day and night

These two opposite times of day refer to all the time. Alternate translation: "all of the time" (See: [Merism](#))

Give yourself no relief, your eyes no relief

Alternate translation: "Do not allow yourself and your eyes to rest from crying"

Translation Words - ULT

- [Their heart](#)
- [cried out](#)
- [the Lord](#)
- [Zion](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [I wish the city](#)
- [could speak like](#)
- [Yahweh! I](#)
- [heart](#)

ULT

¹⁸ [Their heart cried out to the Lord](#), "O walls of the daughter of [Zion](#)." Like a tearful river, let your tears flow down day and night. Do not give relief to yourself. Do not rest your eyes.

UST

¹⁸ [I wish the city walls could speak like](#) the people who cry out to Yahweh! I would tell the walls, "Cry out for help to Yahweh! Let your tears flow day and night! Let them flow like rivers. Do not stop grieving; do not stop crying."

Lamentations 2:19

Arise, cry out ... of every street

The writer continues speaking to the walls of Jerusalem. He wants the people of Jerusalem to do what he is telling the walls to do. Some translations take this whole section to be spoken to the “walls,” though this can be written with the first phrase “walls of the daughter of Zion!” spoken to the “walls,” and the rest of the section spoken directly to the people. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

at the beginning of the night watches

“many times during the night.” This refers to every time a watchman came on duty.

Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord

The phrase “pour out your heart like water” is an idiom. Here the Lord is represented by his “face” to emphasize his presence. Alternate translation: “Tell the Lord how you feel in your inner being” (See: [Idiom](#))

Lift up your hands to him

This was an action often performed while praying. Alternate translation: “Lift up your hands to him in prayer” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

for the lives of your children

This means for them to request that the Lord save their children. Alternate translation: “to save the lives of your children” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

at the corner of every street

The word “every” here is an exaggeration for “many.” Alternate translation: “where the streets come together” or “by the roads” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [your heart](#)
- [the face of](#)
- [the Lord](#)
- [your hands](#)
- [the life of](#)
- [with hunger](#)
- [at the center of](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [they are](#)
- [heart](#)

ULT

¹⁹ Arise, shout in the night, at the center of the night watches! Pour out [your heart](#) like water before [the face of the Lord](#). Lift up [your hands](#) to him for [the life of your children](#), those fainting [with hunger at the center of every street](#).”

UST

¹⁹ Get up during every night and cry out; tell [Yahweh](#) what you feel in your inner beings. Raise your arms to plead to him to act mercifully to prevent our children from dying; [they are](#) fainting on the street corners because they have no food to eat.

- face, facial
- famine
- hand
- head

Lamentations 2:20

Should women eat the fruit of their wombs ... for?

This rhetorical question is asked to emphasize that it is not right for women to eat their children. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "Woman should not eat their own children ... for!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the fruit of their wombs

This speaks of children having come from their mother as if they were fruit that came from her womb. Alternate translation: "their children that they have given birth to" or "their own children" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Should priest and prophet be slaughtered in the sanctuary of the Lord?

This rhetorical question is used to emphasize that the prophets and priests should not be killed. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "The prophets and priests should not be slaughtered in the sanctuary of the Lord!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Should priest and prophet be slaughtered

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Should our enemies slaughter priests and prophets" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [O Yahweh](#)
- [eat](#)
- [their fruit](#)
- [priest](#)
- [be slaughtered](#)
- [in the sanctuary of](#)
- [the Lord](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [Have you ever caused people to suffer](#)
- [that our enemies are killing](#)
- [priest, priesthood](#)
- [sanctuary](#)
- [devour](#)
- [fruit, fruitful, unfruitful](#)

ULT

²⁰ Look, [O Yahweh](#), and see those you have dealt with in this way. Should women [eat their fruit](#), newborn children? Should [priest](#) and prophet [be slaughtered in the sanctuary of the Lord](#)?

UST

²⁰ [Yahweh](#), look at your people and have mercy on us. [Have you ever caused people to suffer](#) like this before? It is certainly not right that women are eating the flesh of their own children, the children whom they have always taken care of. It is not right [that our enemies are killing](#) priests and prophets in your own temple!

Lamentations 2:21

Both the young and the old lie on the dust

It is implied here that this refers to dead people. Alternate translation: "The corpses of both the young and the old lie on the dust" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Both the young and the old

These phrases refer to people. These two opposites are used to refer to all ages of people. Alternate translation: "Both young people and old people" or "People of all ages" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#) and [Merism](#))

My young women and my young men have fallen by the sword

Here the "sword" refers to their enemies. This is a euphemism that means that they were murdered by their enemies. Alternate translation: "My young women and my young men have been murdered by their enemies" or "My enemies have murdered my young women and my young men" (See: [Euphemism](#))

you have slaughtered them

This speaks of Yahweh allowing the people to be slaughtered as if he killed them himself. Alternate translation: "you allowed them to be slaughtered" or "you allowed this to happen" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [The young](#)
- [My young women](#)
- [by the sword](#)
- [You have struck down](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [there are even corpses of](#)
- [with their swords](#)
- [die, dead, deadly, death](#)
- [virgin, virginity](#)

ULT

²¹ [The young](#) and the old lie down in the dirt of the streets. [My young women](#) and my young men have fallen [by the sword](#). [You have struck down](#); in the day of your anger you slaughtered. You showed no compassion.

UST

²¹ The corpses of people of all ages lie in the streets; [there are even corpses of](#) young men and young women whom our enemies have killed [with their swords](#). Because you were very angry, you caused them to be killed; you have slaughtered them without pitying them at all.

Lamentations 2:22

as you would call the people to a feast day

“as if they were coming to a feast.” This speaks of how Yahweh summoned his enemies as if he were inviting them to a feast. (See: [Simile](#))

my terrors

Here the people the author fears are referred to as his “terrors.”
Alternate translation: “the attackers I was afraid of” (See: [Metonymy](#))

on every side

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “to attack from every direction” (See: [Idiom](#))

on the day of the anger of Yahweh

Here “day” is used as an idiom that refers to a general period of time.
Alternate translation: “at the time when Yahweh acted in his anger” or “during the time that Yahweh displayed his anger” (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [You have summoned](#)
- [festival](#)
- [Yahweh](#)
- [my enemy](#)
- [has ended them](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [my enemies](#)
- [At](#)
- [Our enemies](#)
- [call, call out](#)
- [consume, devour](#)

ULT

²² [You have summoned](#), as a [festival](#) day, my surrounding terrors. And there was not an escapee nor survivor on the day of the anger of [Yahweh](#). Those I birthed and multiplied, [my enemy has ended them](#).

UST

²² You summoned [my enemies](#) to attack from every direction, as though you were calling them to come to a feast. [At](#) that time you showed that you were very angry, and no one escaped. [Our enemies](#) murdered our little children, the ones whom we took care of and reared up.

Lamentations 3

Lamentations 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Troubles

Here the author speaks of the suffering experienced by the people of Jerusalem during the Babylonian siege and after the city's fall. He speaks of these sufferings as if they had been directed against him personally, as if God had personally attacked him. However, we should understand the writer's feelings as having been shared by everyone in the city.

In verse 19, the writer begins to think about the lessons that he and his fellow citizens should learn about God and his anger and his mercy. He also thinks about what it means to repent and to trust in God.

In verse 43, the writer speaks again about the suffering that God has caused to Jerusalem, but here the writer speaks of "we" and "us," not "I" and "me." But in verse 48, he begins to speak about how he himself will continually mourn over what has happened.

In verse 52, the writer begins to think about his personal enemies in Jerusalem, those who persecuted him for bringing Yahweh's messages to the city. He asks for God to show his enemies that he was doing right, and to take revenge on them for their crimes against him.

Lamentations 3:1

A new poem begins. Here the author speaks of the sufferings that his people experienced. He speaks about them as if God had personally attacked only him. However, the writer intends to speak for everyone in the city. (See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#))

who has seen misery

Here “has seen” represents has experienced. Alternate translation: “who has experienced misery” or “who has suffered” (See: [Metaphor](#))

under the rod of Yahweh’s fury

Being “under the rod” represents being beaten with a rod. The author speaks of God’s punishment as if God had beaten him with a rod. Alternate translation: “because Yahweh was very angry and has beaten me with a rod” or “because Yahweh was very angry and has punished me severely” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [affliction](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [made to suffer](#)

ULT

¹ I am the man seeing [affliction](#) by the rod of his fury.

UST

¹ I, the one who am writing this, am a man whom Yahweh [made to suffer](#), because he was angry.

Lamentations 3:2

He drove me away

Alternate translation: "He forced me to go away"

caused me to walk in darkness rather than light

Here "darkness" represents suffering. Alternate translation: "caused me to suffer terribly with no hope, like a person walking in darkness rather than light" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [darkness](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [darkness](#)

ULT

² He led me and brought about [darkness](#) and not light.

UST

² It was as though he caused me to walk in a very dark place without any light at all.

Lamentations 3:3

he turned his hand against me

Here “turned his hand against me” represents attacking him. The author speaks of God causing bad things to happen to him as if God had attacked him. Alternate translation: “he has attacked me” or “he has caused many bad things to happen to me, like someone who attacks a person” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [his hand](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [has](#)

ULT

³ Surely, against me he turned; [his hand](#) twisted all day.

UST

³ He [has](#) punished me many times, many times during each day.

Lamentations 3:4

He made my flesh and my skin waste away; he broke my bones

This could mean: (1) these things are a result of being beaten or (2) these are more ways that God punished the man.

Translation Words - ULT

- my flesh

Translation Words - UST

- flesh

ULT

⁴ He exhausted my flesh and my skin; he shattered my bones.

UST

⁴ He has caused my skin and my flesh to become old. He has broken my bones.

Lamentations 3:5

He built up siege works against me

Siege works are ramps that an army builds around a city to enable them to climb over the city walls and invade the city.

He built up siege works against me

This could mean: (1) the author speaks of God causing bad things to happen to him as if he were a city and God was an enemy that built up siege works against him. Alternate translation: "God attacked me like an enemy army that sets up siege works around a city" or (2) the author speaks of God causing the enemy army to attack Jerusalem as if God were the enemy. Alternate translation: "God caused the enemy army to build up siege works against me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

surrounded me with bitterness and hardship

This represents God causing him to experience much bitterness and hardship. Alternate translation: "caused me to experience much bitterness and hardship" or "caused me to suffer and have many problems" (See: [Metaphor](#))

bitterness

Here "bitterness" represents suffering. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ He built up against me and made a surrounding of bitterness and hardship.

UST

⁵ He has surrounded me with things that make me suffer very bitterly.

Lamentations 3:6

He made me live in dark places, like those who died long ago

Here “dark places” is a metaphor for suffering. The author compares the intensity of his suffering to the intensity of the darkness that those who died long ago experience. Alternate translation: “The suffering that he causes me is intense like the darkness of the grave” or “He makes me suffer terribly, as if I were in the darkness of those who died long ago” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#))

ULT

⁶ He makes me dwell in dark places like the dead of long ago.

UST

⁶ It is as though he has buried me in a dark place like those who have been dead for a long time.

Lamentations 3:7

He built a wall around me and I cannot escape. He made my chains heavy

This represents the continuing suffering. Like a person who cannot escape from prison, the author cannot make his suffering stop. Alternate translation: "My suffering continues. It is as though he has built a wall around me and put heavy chains on me, and I cannot escape" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [I...escape](#)
- [He made...heavy](#)
- [my chains](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [escape](#)
- [bronze](#)
- [burden, load, heavy, hard work, hard labor, utterances](#)

ULT

⁷ He built a wall around me and I cannot [escape](#). [He made my chains heavy](#).

UST

⁷ It is as though he has built a prison wall around me, and fastened me with heavy chains, so I cannot [escape](#).

Lamentations 3:8

he shut out my prayer

The author speaks about God refusing to listen to his prayers as though God was shutting his ears so that the author's prayers could not go into them. Alternate translation: "he refuses to hear my prayer" (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [my prayer](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [pray, prayer](#)

ULT

⁸ Even though I call out and cry for help, he blocks [my prayer](#).

UST

⁸ Although I call out and cry out for him to help me, he does not pay attention to me.

Lamentations 3:9

He blocked my path

The author speaks of God causing him to continue to suffer as if God was preventing him from escaping the suffering by blocking his path. Alternate translation: "It is as though he blocked my path" (See: [Metaphor](#))

a wall of hewn stone

"a wall of cut stones." People would cut stones into regular shapes that could fit together well in order to build a strong wall.

he made my paths crooked

Crooked paths do not lead people to where they want to go. Here they represent unsuccessful ways of escaping suffering. Alternate translation: "it is as though he has made my paths crooked" or "I have tried to make the suffering stop, but God has prevented me, like one who prevents another from escaping by making his paths crooked" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ He built a wall around my way with hewn stone; he perverted my paths.

UST

⁹ It is as though he has blocked my path with a high stone wall and has caused me to wander everywhere to try to get out.

Lamentations 3:10

He is like a bear waiting to ambush me, a lion in hiding

The author speaks of God being ready to cause him to suffer more, as if God were a wild animal waiting to attack him. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

¹⁰ He is a bear ready to ambush me, a lion in hiding.

UST

¹⁰ He has waited to attack me like a bear or a lion hides and waits to attack a man.

Lamentations 3:11

he turned aside my paths

This could mean: (1) "he dragged me off the path" or (2) "he caused my path to turn in the wrong direction"

he has made me desolate

Alternate translation: "he has made me hopeless" or "he has not allowed me to have any help"

ULT

11 He disordered my paths and tore me apart; he has made me desolate.

UST

11 It is as though a bear has dragged me off the path and mauled me, and left me alone without help.

Lamentations 3:12

General Information:

God is often spoken of as if he were a warrior.

He bent his bow

A soldier has to bend his bow in order to shoot an arrow from it. The author speaks of God deciding to cause him trouble as if God were a warrior ready to shoot him with an arrow. See how you translated this in [Lamentations 2:4](#). Alternate translation: "It was as if God made his bow ready to shoot"

ULT

¹² He bent his bow and set me up like a target for an arrow.

UST

¹² It is as though he strung his bow and made me the target to shoot at with his arrows.

Lamentations 3:13

He pierced my kidneys with the arrows of his quiver

The author speaks of the deep grief he feels as if God had shot his kidneys with an arrow. Alternate translation: "My grief is great. It is as if he pierced my kidneys with the arrows of his quiver" (See: [Metaphor](#))

my kidneys

The kidneys are abdominal organs that move urine into the bladder. They are a metaphor for a person's emotions. Alternate translation: "deep into my body" or "my heart" (See: [Metaphor](#))

quiver

a bag worn on the back in which to store arrows

Translation Words - ULT

- [with the arrows of](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [son](#)

ULT

¹³ He pierced my kidneys [with the arrows of](#) his quiver.

UST

¹³ It is as though he shot his arrows deep into my body.

Lamentations 3:14

a laughingstock to all my people

The word “all” is a generalization, meaning “most.” Alternate translation: “a laughingstock to most of my people” or “someone whom all my people mock” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

laughingstock

someone whom many people mock

Translation Words - ULT

- [the peoples](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [people, people group](#)

ULT

¹⁴ I became a joke to all [the peoples](#), their taunt all day.

UST

¹⁴ All my relatives laugh at me; all during each day they sing songs that make fun of me.

Lamentations 3:15

He filled me with bitterness

Here “bitterness” represents suffering. It is referred to as if it were something that could fill the speaker. Alternate translation: “He has caused me to suffer very much” (See: [Metaphor](#))

forced me to drink wormwood

Wormwood is the bitter juice from the leaves and flowers of a certain plant. Drinking that bitter juice represents suffering. Alternate translation: “it is as though he forced me to drink something very bitter” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁵ He filled me with bitterness; he forced me to drink wormwood.

UST

¹⁵ Yahweh has made me suffer greatly, like someone suffers after drinking something very bitter.

Lamentations 3:16

He has made my teeth grind with gravel

This could mean: (1) the author speaks of God humiliating him as if God had forced him to chew gravel. Alternate translation: "He has humiliated me, like someone who forces another to chew gravel" or (2) the author speaks of God humiliating him as if God had pushed his face down into the gravel on the ground. Alternate translation: "He has humiliated me, like someone who pushes another man's face down into the gravel" (See: [Metaphor](#))

he made me cower in the ashes

The author speaks of God humiliating him as if God had pushed him down into the ashes of a fire on the ground. (See: [Metaphor](#))

cower

make oneself as small as possible because of fear of something one cannot fight against

ULT

16 And he made my teeth grind with gravel; he made me cower in the dust.

UST

16 It is as though he has caused me to chew gravel that broke my teeth; it is as though he has trampled me in the ground.

Lamentations 3:17

My soul is deprived of peace

This could mean: (1) the author's experiences are not peaceful. Alternate translation: "I have no peace in my life" or (2) the author does not feel peace. Alternate translation: "I feel no peace in my soul"

Translation Words - ULT

- my soul
- good

Translation Words - UST

- being prosperous
- life, live, living, alive

ULT

¹⁷ And my soul is deprived of peace; I have forgotten good.

UST

¹⁷ Things no longer go well for me; I no longer remember being prosperous.

Lamentations 3:18

My endurance has perished and so has my hope in Yahweh

The author speaks as if his ability to endure more suffering and his hope that Yahweh will help him were living beings that have died. Alternate translation: "I cannot endure anymore suffering and I can no longer hope that Yahweh will help me" (See: [Personification](#))

endurance

Some versions translate this as "glory" or "splendor."

Translation Words - ULT

- [has perished](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [I am not strong enough to bear any more hardships](#)

ULT

¹⁸ And I said, "My endurance [has perished](#) and my hope in Yahweh."

UST

¹⁸ I continue to say to myself, "[I am not strong enough to bear any more hardships](#). I no longer expect that Yahweh will rescue me."

Lamentations 3:19

General Information:

In verses 19 to 42, the writer thinks about the lessons that he and his fellow citizens should learn about God and his anger and mercy.

wormwood and bitterness

Wormwood is a plant that gives a liquid which is very bitter to drink. Together “wormwood” and “bitterness” represent severe suffering. (See: [Doublet](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [my affliction](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [how I suffer](#)

ULT

19 Remember [my affliction](#) and my wanderings, the wormwood and bitterness.

UST

19 When I think about [how I suffer](#) and how I wander far from home, it is like drinking a very bitter liquid.

Lamentations 3:20

my soul is bowed down within me

Alternate translation: "I am depressed" or "I am discouraged"

Translation Words - ULT

- my soul

Translation Words - UST

- life, live, living, alive

ULT

²⁰ It continually remembers and my soul melts within me.

UST

²⁰ I will never forget this time when I feel very depressed.

Lamentations 3:21

But I call this to mind

This means to intentionally think about something. The word “this” refers to something that the author will start to speak about in the next verse. Alternate translation: “But I choose to think about this” or “But I remember this”

I have hope

Alternate translation: “I hope”

Translation Words - ULT

- I return
- my heart

Translation Words - UST

- heart
- restore, restoration

ULT

²¹ This I return to my heart; therefore, I have hope.

UST

²¹ However, I confidently expect Yahweh to do good things for me again, and this I know is true.

Lamentations 3:22

The steadfast love of Yahweh never ceases

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **steadfast love**, you could express the same idea with the phrase “love faithfully.” Alternate translation: “Yahweh never stops loving his people faithfully” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

his compassions never end

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **compassions**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form such as “care.” Alternate translation: “he never stops caring for those who suffer” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [The steadfast love of](#)
- [Yahweh](#)
- [does...end](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [faithfully loving us](#)
- [He never stops](#)

ULT

²² [The steadfast love of Yahweh](#) does not cease; his mercy does not [end](#).

UST

²² [Yahweh](#) never stops [faithfully loving us](#), and he shows his compassion for us forever. [He never stops](#) acting kindly toward us.

Lamentations 3:23

they are new every morning

The word “they” refers to God’s steadfast love and compassions. Their being new represents God continuing to act according to them. Alternate translation: “every morning he treats us again with steadfast love and compassion” (See: [Metaphor](#))

your faithfulness

The word “your” refers to Yahweh.

ULT

²³ They are new morning by morning;
great is your faithfulness.

UST

²³ Every morning he acts mercifully
toward us again. He is the one in whom
we can always trust.

Lamentations 3:24

Yahweh is my inheritance

When God gave each tribe of Israel their land, he called it an inheritance. The author speaks of Yahweh being all he needs as if Yahweh were the inheritance that he had received. Alternate translation: "Because Yahweh is with me, I have everything I need" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

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

Translation Words - UST

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

ULT

²⁴ "[Yahweh](#) is my portion," [my soul](#) said; therefore, I will hope in him.

UST

²⁴ So I sincerely say to myself, "[Yahweh](#) gives me what I need!" Because I believe this, I will confidently wait for him to do good things for me.

Lamentations 3:25

Yahweh is good to those who wait for him

Here “good” refers to kindness. Alternate translation: “Yahweh is kind to those who wait for him” or “Yahweh does good things for those who wait for him”

those who wait for him

This could mean: (1) “all those who depend on him” or (2) “the one who waits patiently for him to act.”

the one who seeks him

Here, **seeks him** could mean: (1) asking God for help or (2) wanting to know God. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Yahweh](#)
- [is good](#)
- [seeking him](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [is good](#)
- [seek, search, look for](#)

ULT

²⁵ [Yahweh is good](#) to those who wait for him, to the soul [seeking him](#).

UST

²⁵ [Yahweh is good](#) to all those who depend on him, to those who seek him to help them.

Lamentations 3:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Translation Words - ULT

- It is good
- Yahweh

Translation Words - UST

- So it is good
- Yahweh

ULT

²⁶ It is good to wait and be silent for the salvation of Yahweh.

UST

²⁶ So it is good for us to wait quietly for Yahweh to save us.

Lamentations 3:27

that he bear the yoke in his youth

Here “bear the yoke” represents suffering. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **his youth**, you could express the same idea with another word such as “young.” Alternate translation: “that he suffer while he is young” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [It is good](#)
- [for a man](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [is good](#)
- [household](#)

ULT

²⁷ [It is good for a man](#) that he bear the yoke in his youth.

UST

²⁷ And it [is good](#) for us to suffer patiently while we are young.

Lamentations 3:28

Let him sit alone in silence

The phrase “in silence” refers to not speaking. Here it may refer specifically to not complaining. Alternate translation: “Let him sit alone without speaking” or “Let him sit alone and not complain”

when it is laid upon him

“when the yoke is laid upon him.” Here the yoke represents suffering. Alternate translation: “when he suffers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

28 Let him sit alone and be silent when it is laid upon him.

UST

28 Those who seek him to help them should sit by themselves and not complain, because they know that it is Yahweh who has allowed them to suffer.

Lamentations 3:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Translation Words - ULT

- hope

Translation Words - UST

- hope, hoped

ULT

²⁹ Let him put his mouth in the dust;
perhaps there is hope.

UST

²⁹ They should lie in the dirt, with their
faces on the ground, because they can
still hope that Yahweh will help them.

Lamentations 3:30

General Information:

The writer speaks of the one who waits for Yahweh ([Lamentations 3:25](#)).

Let him offer his cheek to the one who strikes him

The word “him” refers to anyone who is suffering and who waits for Yahweh. Here “offer his cheek” represents allowing someone to strike his cheek. Alternate translation: “Let him allow people to hit him on the face” (See: [Metaphor](#))

let him be filled to the full with reproach

The author speaks of a person as if he were a container and reproach were a liquid. Being filled with reproach represents being reproached much. The implication is that he should be patient when this happens. Alternate translation: “let him be insulted much” or “let him be patient when people reproach him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁰ Let him give his cheek to the one striking him; let him be filled with reproach.

UST

³⁰ If someone strikes us on one cheek, we should turn the other cheek toward that person in order that he may strike it, too, and accept it when others insult us.

Lamentations 3:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Translation Words - ULT

- the Lord

Translation Words - UST

- The Lord

ULT

³¹ For the Lord will not withhold forever.

UST

³¹ The Lord does not abandon his people forever.

Lamentations 3:32

though he causes grief

Alternate translation: "though the Lord causes people to suffer" or "though he afflicts people"

he will have compassion

Alternate translation: "he will be compassionate to them"

Translation Words - ULT

- [his steadfast love](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [and faithfully loves us](#)

ULT

³² Though he brings grief, he will be merciful according to the abundance of [his steadfast love](#).

UST

³² Sometimes he causes us to suffer, but he also acts kindly toward us because he continually [and faithfully loves us](#).

Lamentations 3:33

For he does not afflict from his heart

Here the heart represents desire or pleasure, and afflicting from the heart represents afflicting with pleasure. Alternate translation: "For it does not make him happy to afflict people" or "He does not take pleasure in afflicting people" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the children of mankind

This refers to people in general. Alternate translation: "human beings" or "people" (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [from his heart](#)
- [the sons of](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [people](#)
- [heart](#)

ULT

³³ For he does not afflict [from his heart](#) or grieve [the sons of](#) man.

UST

³³ And he does not take pleasure when he causes [people](#) to suffer or be sad.

Lamentations 3:34

General Information:

The author wrote in general terms about what is true for all people, but it shows God's concern for his people, the people of Israel, who were being mistreated by their enemies.

To crush underfoot

Here "crush underfoot" represents abusing and mistreating people. Alternate translation: "To abuse" or "To mistreat" (See: [Metaphor](#))-

To crush

Alternate translation: "If people crush"

Translation Words - ULT

- [the earth](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [the](#)

ULT

³⁴ Crushing under his feet all the prisoners of [the earth](#);

UST

³⁴ If people mistreat and oppress all [the](#) prisoners,

Lamentations 3:35

to deny a man justice

This refers to not allowing a person to have what he deserves. Alternate translation: “to deny a person his rights” or “to keep a person from having what he deserves”

in the presence of the Most High

Doing something “in the presence of the Most High” represents doing it while knowing that God sees it. Alternate translation: “knowing that the Most High sees it” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [justice](#)
- [the face of](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [judge, judgment](#)
- [face, facial](#)

ULT

³⁵ denying a man [justice](#) before [the face of](#) the Most High;

UST

³⁵ or if they rebel against God by refusing to do for others what is right,

Lamentations 3:36

to deny justice to a person

Here “deny justice” refers to not making a just decision for a person in a legal concern. Alternate translation: “to judge a person wrongly in court” or “to keep a person who goes to a judge from getting what is right”

to deny justice

Alternate translation: “if they deny justice”

Translation Words - ULT

- a man
- the Lord

Translation Words - UST

- or if they
- the Lord

ULT

³⁶ perverting a man in his dispute—the Lord does not approve.

UST

³⁶ or if they cause judges to decide matters unjustly, the Lord certainly sees all these things.

Lamentations 3:37

Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord decreed it?

The author uses this rhetorical question to teach that when someone commands something to happen, it will happen only if God has already decreed that it should happen. Alternate translation: “No one has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord decreed it.” or “What someone has commanded to happen has never happened unless the Lord decreed it.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

has spoken

It can be expressed clearly that this refers to commanding something to happen. Alternate translation: “has commanded that something should happen” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

it came to pass

Alternate translation: “what he said happened”

Translation Words - ULT

- [if the Lord](#)
- [did...command](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [command, commandment](#)

ULT

³⁷ Who has spoken this and it happened, [if the Lord](#) did not [command](#)?

UST

³⁷ No one can make something happen unless [Yahweh](#) has already decided that it should happen.

Lamentations 3:38

Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and the good come?

The author uses this rhetorical question to teach that both calamities and good things happen only because God has commanded them to happen. Alternate translation: "It is only from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and the good come." or "It is only because the Most High has commanded it that both calamities and good things happen." (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

from the mouth of the Most High

Here "mouth" represents what God says or commands. Alternate translation: "from the command of the Most High" or "because the Most High has commanded it" (See: [Metonymy](#))

both calamities and the good come

Here "come" represents happening. Also, the nominal adjective "the good" can be stated as "good things." Alternate translation: "both calamities and good things happen" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Nominal Adjectives](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [trouble](#)
- [Did...come forth](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [in heaven is the one who](#)
- [disasters should happen](#)

ULT

³⁸ Did not [trouble](#) and good [come forth](#) from the mouth of the Most High?

UST

³⁸ God [in heaven is the one who](#) commands that [disasters should happen](#), and he also causes good things to happen.

Lamentations 3:39

How can any person alive complain? How can a person complain about the punishment for his sins?

The author uses these rhetorical questions to teach that people should not complain when God punishes them. Alternate translation: "A person should not complain when God punishes him for his sins." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

How can any person alive complain

This could mean: (1) it is implied that mere people cannot fully understand God's actions. Alternate translation: "How can a mere person complain" or (2) it is implied that being alive is a gift from God. Alternate translation: "How can a person who is blessed to be alive complain" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- a person
- a living

Translation Words - UST

- So it is
- for us, who are only people

ULT

³⁹ How can a person, a living man, complain about his guilt?

UST

³⁹ So it is certainly not right for us, who are only people on earth, to complain when he punishes us for the sins that we have committed.

Lamentations 3:40

General Information:

The writer speaks again about the suffering that God has caused to Jerusalem, but here he speaks of “we” and “us,” not “I” and “me.” In verse 42 the author starts a prayer that he and the people of Israel should pray.

let us return to Yahweh

Here “return to Yahweh” represents submitting to him again. Alternate translation: “let us submit to Yahweh again” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [and return](#)
- [Yahweh](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [turn back to](#)
- [Yahweh](#)

ULT

⁴⁰ Let us examine our ways and let us seek [and return](#) to [Yahweh](#).

UST

⁴⁰ Instead, we should think carefully about how we behave; we should [turn back to Yahweh](#).

Lamentations 3:41

Let us lift up our hearts and our hands

Here “lift up our hearts” represents praying sincerely. It was customary for the Israelites to raise their hands when praying to God. Alternate translation: “Let us pray sincerely with lifted hands” or “Let us lift up our hands and pray sincerely” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [our hearts](#)
- [our hands](#)
- [in heaven](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [We should pray with all our inner beings](#)
- [heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly](#)
- [hand](#)

ULT

⁴¹ Let us lift up [our hearts](#) with [our hands](#) to God [in heaven](#).

UST

⁴¹ [We should pray with all our inner beings](#) and lift up our arms toward God in heaven, and say,

Lamentations 3:42

We have transgressed and rebelled

The words “transgressed” and “rebelled” share similar meanings. Together they indicate that transgression is the same as rebelling against Yahweh. (See: [Doublet](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [and disobeyed](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [and rebelled against](#)

ULT

⁴² We have surely transgressed [and disobeyed](#) you; you did not pardon.

UST

⁴² “We have sinned [and rebelled against](#) you, and you have not forgiven us.

Lamentations 3:43

You have covered yourself with anger

Here anger is spoken of as if it were a garment that God has put on. Hebrew often spoke of emotions as if they were clothing. Alternate translation: "You have been angry" (See: [Metaphor](#))

you have killed

Alternate translation: "you have killed many of us"

you have not spared

Here "spared" represents having pity. Alternate translation: "you have not had pity on us" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [you slayed](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [die, dead, deadly, death](#)

ULT

⁴³ You wrapped in anger and pursued us; [you slayed](#); you showed no pity.

UST

⁴³ You have been very angry and chased after us; you have slaughtered us without pitying us.

Lamentations 3:44

Connecting Statement:

The prayer that began in [Lamentations 3:42](#) continues.

You have covered yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through

This represents God refusing to listen to the people's prayer.
Alternate translation: "You refuse to listen to our prayers. It is as though you put a cloud between us and you so that our prayers cannot get to you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- a prayer

Translation Words - UST

- pray, prayer

ULT

⁴⁴ You wrapped yourself in a cloud, from a prayer passing through.

UST

⁴⁴ You have hidden yourself away, as if you were in a cloud, so that you will not hear us when we pray.

Lamentations 3:45

You have made us like filthy scum and refuse among the nations

The people of Israel are compared to filthy scum and refuse. This could mean: (1) God has caused the nations to think of his people as worthless. Alternate translation: "You have made the nations think of us as scum and garbage" or (2) God's forcing his people to live among the nations is like throwing them away as garbage. Alternate translation: "You have thrown us away like filthy garbage among the nations" (See: [Simile](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [the nations](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [people, people group](#)

ULT

⁴⁵ You made us an outcast and garbage among [the nations](#).

UST

⁴⁵ You have made us go among the foreign peoples, and they think we are only garbage.

Lamentations 3:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Translation Words - ULT

- our enemies

Translation Words - UST

- enemies

ULT

⁴⁶ They open their mouth against us, all our enemies.

UST

⁴⁶ All our enemies have spoken things to insult us.

Lamentations 3:47

panic and pitfall have come upon us, ruin and destruction

The abstract nouns “panic,” “pitfall,” “ruin” and “destruction” can be expressed with verbs. Alternate translation: “we are panicking. We are trapped, and we are being ruined and destroyed” or “we are terrified and trapped. We are being completely destroyed” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

pitfall

This refers to falling into a pit. Here it represents being trapped in any way.

have come upon us

Alternate translation: “have happened to us”

ruin and destruction

These two words share similar meanings and refer to the destruction of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “total destruction” (See: [Doublet](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Panic](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [fear](#), [afraid](#), [frighten](#)

ULT

⁴⁷ [Panic](#) and pitfall have come for us, ruin and destruction.

UST

⁴⁷ We are constantly afraid that people will trap us, because we have experienced so many disasters and so much ruin.

Lamentations 3:48

General Information:

The author speaks about himself again.

My eyes flow with streams of tears

Here the author speaks of the great amount of his tears as if they were streams. He uses exaggeration to show that he is very sad and has cried much. Alternate translation: "Tears flow from my eyes like water flowing in a river" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Hyperbole](#))

because my people are destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because enemies have destroyed my people" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [my people](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [people, people group](#)

ULT

48 My eyes flow with streams of water because the daughter of [my people](#) are destroyed.

UST

48 Many tears flow from my eyes because my people have been destroyed.

Lamentations 3:49

without ceasing, without relief

Both of these phrases means the same thing. The author speaks of his continuing to cry as if his eyes were a person and had no rest from crying. Alternate translation: "without stopping" (See: [Doublet](#) and [Personification](#))

ULT

⁴⁹ My eye pours forth and it does not cease. There was no relief,

UST

⁴⁹ My tears continually flow; they will not stop

Lamentations 3:50

until Yahweh from heaven looks down and sees

What the author hopes Yahweh will see can be stated clearly.
Alternate translation: “until Yahweh looks down from heaven and sees what has happened to my people” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- Yahweh
- from heaven

Translation Words - UST

- Yahweh
- heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly

ULT

⁵⁰ until he looked down and Yahweh saw from heaven.

UST

⁵⁰ until Yahweh looks down from heaven and sees us.

Lamentations 3:51

My eyes cause me grief

The phrase “My eyes” represents what he sees. Alternate translation: “What I see causes me to grieve” (See: [Metonymy](#))

because of all the daughters of my city

It can be stated clearly that the “daughters of my city” are suffering. Alternate translation: “because the daughters of my city are suffering” or “because I see the daughters of my city suffering” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

all the daughters of my city

This could mean: (1) the women of Jerusalem or (2) all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁵¹ My eyes grieve my soul because of all the daughters of my city.

UST

⁵¹ I am very grieved because of what has happened to the women of my city.

Lamentations 3:52

I have been hunted like a bird by those who were my enemies

The author speaks of people looking for him in order to kill him as if he were an animal that they were hunting. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "My enemies have looked for me in order to kill me like people who hunt for a bird" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [my enemies](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [My enemies](#)

ULT

⁵² Surely, [my enemies](#) hunted me like a bird without cause.

UST

⁵² [My enemies](#) hunted for me like people hunt for a bird to kill it even though there was no reason for them to do that.

Lamentations 3:53

They cast me into a pit

Alternate translation: "They threw me into a pit" or "They dropped me into a well"

threw a stone on me

This could mean: (1) "threw stones down on me" or (2) "covered the pit with a stone"

Translation Words - ULT

- [and threw](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [confess, confession](#)

ULT

⁵³ They silenced my life with a pit [and threw](#) a stone on me.

UST

⁵³ They threw me into a pit to kill me, and placed a heavy stone over the top of it.

Lamentations 3:54

they caused waters to overflow, covering my head

Alternate translation: "the level of the water in the pit rose up over my head"

I have been cut off

Being "cut off" often represents being killed. Here it represents dying very soon. Alternate translation: "I am about to die" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- my head
- I have been cut off

Translation Words - UST

- decree, decreed
- head

ULT

⁵⁴ They made water overflow over my head. I said, 'I have been cut off!'

UST

⁵⁴ The water in the pit rose above my head, and I said to myself, 'I am about to die!'

Lamentations 3:55

I called on your name

God's name represents his character, and here, "called on your name" represents trusting God's character and calling on him for help. Alternate translation: "I called to you for help" (See: [Metonymy](#))

from the depths of the pit

This could mean: (1) this refers to the pit that author had been thrown into. Alternate translation: "from the bottom of the pit" or (2) the author was afraid that he would die soon, so he spoke as if he were in the place of the dead. Alternate translation: "from the pit of the dead"

Translation Words - ULT

- [I called](#)
- [your name](#)
- [O Yahweh](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [I cried out](#)
- [name](#)
- [to you, 'Yahweh, help me](#)

ULT

⁵⁵ I called your name, O Yahweh, from the depths of the pit.

UST

⁵⁵ But from the bottom of the pit I cried out to you, 'Yahweh, help me!'

Lamentations 3:56

You heard my voice

Here “voice” represents what he said. Alternate translation: “You heard my words” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Do not close your ear

Here “close your ear” represents refusing to listen. Alternate translation: “Do not refuse to listen” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵⁶ You heard my voice. ‘Do not shut your ear to my relief, to my cry for help.’

UST

⁵⁶ I pleaded with you, ‘Do not refuse to hear me when I cry out to you!’

Lamentations 3:57

You came near

People often come near to a person they help. Here “came near” represents helping the man. Alternate translation: “you helped me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- I called you
- fear

Translation Words - UST

- call, call out
- fear, afraid, frighten

ULT

⁵⁷ You came near in the day I called you; you said, ‘Do not fear.’

UST

⁵⁷ Then you answered me and said, ‘Do not be afraid!’

Lamentations 3:58

you defended my case, you saved my life

The author speaks of God keeping him from being killed by his enemies as if God had defended him in court as a lawyer defends someone, and kept him from being killed. Alternate translation: “you saved my life from my enemies. It is as though you defended me in court” (See: [Metaphor](#))

you defended my case

Here “defended my case” represents arguing for him. Alternate translation: “you argued my case for me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [O Lord](#)
- [my soul](#)
- [you saved](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [life, live, living, alive](#)
- [redeem, redeemer, redemption](#)

ULT

⁵⁸ [O Lord](#), you defended the dispute of [my soul](#); [you saved](#) my life.

UST

⁵⁸ [Yahweh](#), you argued for me when people wanted to condemn me and execute me; you did not allow me to die.

Lamentations 3:59

judge my case

Here God is no longer pictured as a lawyer, but as the judge. It can be stated clearly that he wanted God to judge in his favor. Alternate translation: "make a decision about me, and show my enemies that I am right" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [O Yahweh](#)
- [my case](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Now, Yahweh](#)
- [judge, judgment](#)

ULT

⁵⁹ [O Yahweh](#), you saw my affliction;
judge [my case](#).

UST

⁵⁹ [Now, Yahweh](#), you have seen the evil things that my enemies have done to me, so judge my case and show that I have done nothing wrong.

Lamentations 3:60

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

60 You have seen all their insults, all their plots against me.

UST

60 You know the evil things that they are planning to do to me.

Lamentations 3:61

You have heard their scorn ... and all their plans regarding me

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **scorn**, you could express the same idea with the verbs “taunt” or “mock.” It can be stated clearly that the plans were to harm him. Alternate translation: “You heard how they have taunted me ... and all they plan to do to me” or “You have heard them mock me ... and plan ways to harm me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [their scorn](#)
- [O Yahweh](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [shame, ashamed, disgrace, humiliate, reproach](#)

ULT

⁶¹ You have heard [their scorn](#), O [Yahweh](#), all their plots against me.

UST

⁶¹ [Yahweh](#), you have heard them insult me; you have heard what they plan to do to me.

Lamentations 3:62

The lips and the accusations ... come against me all the day

The author speaks of his enemies accusing him all day as if their accusations were soldiers that come to attack him all day. Alternate translation: "My enemies speak against me and accuse me through the whole day" (See: [Metaphor](#))

The lips ... of my enemies

Here the lips represent what his enemies say. Alternate translation: "The words ... of my enemies" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶² The lips of my assailants and their songs are against me all day.

UST

⁶² Every day they whisper and mutter things about me, all during the day.

Lamentations 3:63

how they sit and then rise up

These two actions together represent everything the people do.
Alternate translation: "everything they do" (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

⁶³ Look! their sitting and rising, their songs are against me.

UST

⁶³ Look at them! Whatever they are doing at the moment, they make fun of me by the songs that they sing.

Lamentations 3:64

Pay back to them, Yahweh, according to what they have done

Here "Pay back to them" represents punishing them. What they have done can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Punish them, Yahweh, according to what they have done" or "Yahweh, they have made me suffer, so please make them suffer" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [O Yahweh](#)
- [You...will return](#)
- [their hands](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [Pay them back](#)
- [restore, restoration](#)

ULT

⁶⁴ You, [O Yahweh](#), [will return](#) to them a payment according to the deeds of [their hands](#).

UST

⁶⁴ [Yahweh](#), give them what they deserve! [Pay them back](#) for what they have done to me!

Lamentations 3:65

You will let their hearts be shameless

Here the “heart” is a metonym that represents their attitudes and emotions, and being “shameless” means not feeling ashamed of their sins even though they should. Their not being ashamed would give even more reason for God to punish them. Alternate translation: “You will let them feel no shame for their sins” (See: [Metonymy](#))

May your condemnation be upon them

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **condemnation**, you could express the same idea with the verbs “condemn” or “curse.” Alternate translation: “Condemn them” or “Curse them” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [heart](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [want, and you punish them by taking away their shame](#)

ULT

65 Give them an insolent [heart](#); your condemnation be upon them!

UST

65 You permit them to do whatever they want, and you punish them by taking away their shame. That is why your curse is upon them.

Lamentations 3:66

from under the heavens

Here “from under the heavens” represents everywhere on earth.
Alternate translation: “wherever they are on earth” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- You pursue
- heaven
- O Yahweh

Translation Words - UST

- Because you are
- heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly
- persecute

ULT

⁶⁶ You pursue in anger and destroy them from under heaven, O Yahweh.

UST

⁶⁶ Because you are angry with them, pursue them and get rid of them, until none of them remain on the earth.”

Lamentations 4

Lamentations 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The story of Judah being destroyed continues in this chapter. Famine destroyed the rulers and the priests. (See: [priest, priesthood](#))

Lamentations 4:1

General Information:

A new poem begins. See [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#).

The gold has become tarnished; how the purest gold has changed

The people of Jerusalem are spoken of as if they were gold that is no longer shiny, and therefore no longer valuable. Alternate translation: "The people of Jerusalem are like gold that is no longer shiny. They are like pure gold that is no longer beautiful" (See: [Metaphor](#))

how the purest gold has changed

This is an exclamation that shows the author's sadness that this has happened. (See: [Exclamations](#))

The holy stones are scattered at the corner of every street

This may refer to the temple being destroyed and its stones scattered throughout the city. It may also be a metaphor for the people being scattered. (See: [Metaphor](#))

at the corner of every street

Alternate translation: "wherever the streets come together" or "by all the roads"

Translation Words - ULT

- [the gold](#)
- [pure](#)
- [holy](#)
- [at the corner of](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Previously our people](#)
- [gold](#)
- [the sacred](#)
- [head](#)

ULT

¹ O how [the gold](#) is tarnished; the [pure](#) gold has changed. The [holy](#) stones are scattered [at the corner of](#) every street.

UST

¹ [Previously our people](#) were like pure [gold](#), but now they are worthless. Just as our enemies have scattered [the sacred](#) stones in the temple, so they have also scattered our young men.

Lamentations 4:2

sons of Zion

Here people of a city are spoken of as if they were the sons of the city. This could mean: (1) this refers to only the young men of Jerusalem or (2) this refers to all the people of Jerusalem. (See: [Metaphor](#))

they are worth no more than clay jars, the work of the potter's hands

The author speaks of the precious sons of Zion as if they were considered to be inexpensive clay jars. Alternate translation: "people consider them to be as worthless as the clay jars that potters make" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [sons of](#)
- [Zion](#)
- [hands](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [of Jerusalem](#)
- [them](#)
- [son](#)

ULT

² The precious [sons of Zion](#) were weighed with fine gold. O how they are regarded as clay jars, the work of potter's [hands](#)!

UST

² The young men [of Jerusalem](#) were as valuable as large amounts of gold, but now people consider [them](#) to be as worthless as ordinary clay pots.

Lamentations 4:3

General Information:

Because of the lack of food in the city, the people of Jerusalem do not give their children all they need.

the jackals offer the breast to nurse their cubs

This means that mother jackals feed their baby jackals.

jackals

fierce wild dogs

the daughter of my people ... like the ostriches in the desert

The people in Jerusalem are compared to ostriches because they are cruel to their children. (See: [Simile](#))

the daughter of my people has

This is a poetic name for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. See how you translated this in [Lamentations 2:11](#). Alternate translation: "my people have" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#))

ostriches

large birds that abandon some of their eggs

Translation Words - ULT

- [my people](#)
- [in the wilderness](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [desert, wilderness](#)
- [people, people group](#)

ULT

³ Even the jackals offer the breast; they nurse their cubs. The daughter of [my people](#) are fierce like the ostriches [in the wilderness](#).

UST

³ Even the female jackals feed their pups, but my people act cruelly toward their own children; the mothers are like ostriches in the desert that abandon their eggs.

Lamentations 4:4

The tongue of the nursing baby sticks to the roof of his mouth by thirst

Alternate translation: "Nursing babies are so thirsty that their tongues stick to the top of their mouths"

Translation Words - ULT

- for food

Translation Words - UST

- food, but

ULT

⁴ The tongue of the nursing baby sticks to the roof of his mouth with thirst. The children ask those dispersing for food; there is none for them.

UST

⁴ My people's infants' tongues cling to the roofs of their mouths because they are extremely thirsty; the children plead for some food, but no one gives them any.

Lamentations 4:5

feast on

Alternate translation: “eat much”

now starve in the streets

These people no longer have homes, so they live outside along the streets.

Those who were brought up wearing scarlet clothing

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “those who grew up wearing scarlet clothing” or “those who wore scarlet clothing when they were growing up” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

scarlet clothing

Here this phrase is a metonym for luxurious, expensive, and comfortable clothing, at least some of which was probably scarlet. Alternate translation: “luxurious clothing” (See: [Metonymy](#))

now lie on piles of ashes

This is because they no longer have homes and soft beds.

Translation Words - ULT

- [are desolate](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [amazed](#), [amazement](#), [astonished](#), [marvel](#), [marveled](#), [marvelous](#), [wonder](#), [dumbfounded](#)

ULT

⁵ Those eating the finest food [are desolate](#) in the streets. Those attended with scarlet cloth embrace piles of garbage.

UST

⁵ People who previously ate fine food are now starving in the streets; those who previously wore fine clothes now lie upon the rubbish heaps with nothing to eat.

Lamentations 4:6

The punishment of the daughter of my people is greater than that of Sodom

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **punishment**, you could express the same idea with the verb “punish.” Alternate translation: “The daughter of my people has been punished more severely than Sodom was punished”

the daughter of my people

This is a poetic name for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. See how you translated this in [Lamentations 2:11](#). Alternate translation: “my people” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#))

which was overthrown in a moment

The word “which” refers to Sodom. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “which God destroyed in a moment” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

no hands were wrung for her

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “no one wrung their hands for her” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

no hands were wrung for her

People sometimes rub and twist their hands when they are worried and cannot fix something, so wringing the hands here represents worrying. The word “her” refers to Jerusalem, which was called “the daughter of my people.” Alternate translation: “no one was worried about her” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [The guilt of](#)
- [my people](#)
- [Sodom](#)
- [hands](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [than the](#)
- [Sodom](#)
- [was concerned about all](#)
- [people, people group](#)

ULT

⁶ [The guilt of](#) the daughter of [my people](#) is greater than the sin of [Sodom](#). It was overthrown as a moment and no [hands](#) were wrung for her.

UST

⁶ The people of Sodom died very suddenly in a disaster. But God punished my people more severely [than the people of Sodom](#), and no one [was concerned about all](#) that we suffered.

Lamentations 4:7

Her leaders were purer than snow, whiter than milk

This could mean: (1) Jerusalem's leaders were beautiful to look at because they were physically healthy or (2) the leaders were morally pure as new snow and milk are pure white. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Her leaders

Alternate translation: "Jerusalem's leaders"

their bodies were more ruddy than coral

"their bodies were redder than coral." This implies that they were healthy. Alternate translation: "their bodies were healthy and red" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

coral

a rock-hard red substance that comes from the ocean and was used for making decorations

sapphire

a costly blue stone used in jewelry

ULT

⁷ Her Nazarites were more pure than snow; they were more white than milk. Their bones were more ruddy than coral; their parts were sapphire.

UST

⁷ Our leaders used to be like pure snow or white milk, they were so clean and spotless. Their bodies were healthy, pink like coral and brilliant like sapphires.

Lamentations 4:8

Their appearance now is darker than soot

This may be because: (1) the sun has darkened the leaders' skin or (2) the soot from the fires that burned Jerusalem has covered their faces.

they are not recognized

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "no one can recognize them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Their skin has shriveled on their bones

This implies that there was not much muscle or fat under the skin. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

it has become as dry as wood

Their dry skin is compared to dry wood. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

8 Blackness has darkened their form; they are not recognized in the streets. Their skin has shriveled on their bones; it has become dry as wood.

UST

8 Now our leaders' faces are blacker than soot, and no one recognizes them when they walk in the streets. Their skin has shriveled and it hangs on their bones, and it has become as dry as a stick of wood.

Lamentations 4:9

Those who have been killed by the sword

Here the “sword” represents an enemy’s attack. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Those whom enemy soldiers have killed” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

those killed by hunger

Here “hunger” represents starvation. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “those who starved to death” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

who wasted away

Alternate translation: “who became extremely thin and weak”

pierced by the lack of any harvest from the field

Here “harvest from the field” is a metonym that represents food to eat. Lack of food is spoken of here as if it were a sword that pierces people. Alternate translation: “who died because there was not enough food to eat” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [the sword](#)
- [happier](#)
- [hunger](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [It is better](#)
- [in a battle](#)
- [of hunger](#)

ULT

⁹ Those slain by [the sword](#) were [happier](#) than those slain by [hunger](#), those who slowly wasted away from the piercing of the field’s produce.

UST

⁹ [It is better](#) to die [in a battle](#) than to die [of hunger](#). There was no food to harvest in the fields, so the people slowly starved until they died.

Lamentations 4:10

The hands of compassionate women

Here the women are represented by their “hands.” Because they were so hungry, women who had been compassionate in the past were no longer compassionate toward their children; instead they boiled them for food. Alternate translation: “Compassionate women” or “Women who had been compassionate in the past” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

they became their food

Alternate translation: “their children became the women’s food”

the daughter of my people was

This is a poetic name for Jerusalem, which is spoken of here as if it were a woman. See how you translated this in [Lamentations 2:11](#). Alternate translation: “my people were” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [The hands of](#)
- [my people](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [who usually acted with love](#)
- [people, people group](#)

ULT

¹⁰ [The hands of](#) compassionate women boiled their children; they became for them a meal in the destruction of the daughter of [my people](#).

UST

¹⁰ Women [who usually acted with love](#) and compassion have killed and cooked their own children; they ate them when there was no other food, when Jerusalem was being destroyed by attacking armies.

Lamentations 4:11

Yahweh showed all his wrath; he poured out his fierce anger

Yahweh was very angry, and he did everything he wanted to do to show that he was angry. (See: [Parallelism](#))

he poured out his fierce anger

God's punishing his people is spoken of as if his anger were a burning hot liquid that he poured out on them. Alternate translation: "because of his fierce anger, he punished his people" or "in fierce anger he responded to his people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

He kindled a fire in Zion

This represents God causing Israel's enemies to start a fire in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "He caused a fire to start in Zion" (See: [Metonymy](#))

that consumed her foundations

Here "her foundations" represents the whole city, even the part of the city that would be ruined last. Alternate translation: "that burned down the city, even its foundations" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Yahweh](#)
- [brought to completion](#)
- [his wrath](#)
- [a fire](#)
- [in Zion](#)
- [that consumed](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [His anger](#)
- [that](#)
- [Zion, Mount Zion](#)
- [consume, devour](#)
- [devour](#)

ULT

¹¹ [Yahweh](#) brought to completion his [wrath](#); he poured out his fierce anger. And he kindled [a fire in Zion](#) that [consumed](#) her foundations.

UST

¹¹ [Yahweh](#) has shown to everyone how angry he was with his people! [His anger](#) spread like a fire in Zion (the city of Jerusalem) [that](#) burned the city down to its rock foundations.

Lamentations 4:12

The kings of the earth did not believe, nor did any of the inhabitants of the world believe,

Alternate translation: "The kings of the earth and the rest of the inhabitants of the world did not believe"

enemies or opponents

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize that these are people who desired to harm Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "any kind of enemy" or "any of Jerusalem's enemies" (See: [Doublet](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [The kings of](#)
- [the earth](#)
- [did...believe](#)
- [the adversary](#)
- [into the gates of](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [of the kings](#)
- [on the earth](#)
- [believed](#)
- [could](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)
- [gate, gate bars, gatekeeper, gateposts, gateway](#)

ULT

¹² [The kings of the earth](#) did not [believe](#), nor any of the inhabitants of the world, that [the adversary](#) and enemy would enter [into the gates of](#) Jerusalem.

UST

¹² None [of the kings on the earth](#) or anyone else [believed](#) that any of our enemies [could](#) enter the gates of Jerusalem.

Lamentations 4:13

the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests

These two lines share similar meanings and emphasize that these spiritual leaders were largely responsible for the fall of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “the terrible sins of her prophets and priests” (See: [Parallelism](#))

who have shed the blood of the righteous

Both the priests and the prophets were guilty of murder. Here “shed the blood” represents murder. Alternate translation: “who have murdered the righteous” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [her prophets](#)
- [were more than the iniquities of](#)
- [her priests](#)
- [the blood of](#)
- [the righteous](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [the prophets](#)
- [sinned](#)
- [blood](#)
- [priest, priesthood](#)
- [righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness](#)

ULT

¹³ The sins of [her prophets were more than the iniquities of her priests](#); they poured out in her midst [the blood of the righteous](#).

UST

¹³ But that is what happened; it happened because [the prophets sinned](#); the priests also sinned by causing innocent people to die.

Lamentations 4:14

They wandered, blind, through the streets

The priests and prophets are spoken of as if they were blind because they wandered through the streets, not knowing where to go. Alternate translation: "They wandered through the streets like blind men" (See: [Metaphor](#))

They were so defiled by that blood

Here "defiled" represents being unacceptable to God. Because the priests and prophets murdered people, they were ritually unclean, unable to worship God or be with ordinary people. (See: [Metaphor](#))

defiled by that blood

"defiled by the blood that they shed." This could mean: (1) the blood was on their clothes or (2) "blood" is a metonym for murder. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

14 They stumble blind in the streets. They are defiled with blood. There were none able to touch their clothes.

UST

14 The priests and prophets wander through the streets as though they were blind. No one will touch them because their clothes are stained with the blood of those innocent people.

Lamentations 4:15

Away! Unclean

Alternate translation: "Go away! You are unclean"

Away! Away! Do not touch

Alternate translation: "Go away! Go away! Do not touch us"

Translation Words - ULT

- they shouted
- among the nations

Translation Words - UST

- to
- nation

ULT

¹⁵ "Away! Unclean!" they shouted at them. "Away! Away! Do not touch!" So they fled, even stumbling. They said among the nations, "They shall not prolong the sojourn."

UST

¹⁵ These people shouted at the priests and prophets, saying, "Stay away from us! Do not touch us!" So the priests and prophets have fled from Israel, and they wander around from one country to another, but people in each country keep saying to them, "You cannot stay here!"

Lamentations 4:16

scattered them

Alternate translation: “scattered the prophets and priests”

he does not watch over them anymore

Here “watch over them” represents being concerned about them and helping them. Alternate translation: “he does not care about them anymore” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [The face of](#)
- [The face of](#) (2)
- [Yahweh](#)
- [the priests](#)
- [the elders](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [It is Yahweh himself](#)
- [our priests any longer](#)
- [for the elders](#)
- [face, facial](#)
- [face, facial](#) (2)

ULT

16 [The face of Yahweh](#) scattered them; he will not continue to watch over them. [The face of the priests](#) will no longer rise up; [the elders](#) show no grace.

UST

16 [It is Yahweh himself](#) who has scattered them; he no longer is concerned about them. People do not welcome [our priests any longer](#), and they care nothing [for the elders](#).

Lamentations 4:17

Our eyes failed, looking in vain for help

Their eyes failing represents their seeking and not being able to find what they were looking for. These two phrases together emphasize that they were trying hard to find help. Alternate translation: “We continued looking, but we could not find anyone to help us” (See: [Metonymy](#))

for help

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **help**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form. Alternate translation: “for people to help us” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

in vain

without succeeding

we watched for a nation that could not rescue us

Here “watched” represents hoping. It can be stated clearly that they were hoping that a nation would come and rescue them. Alternate translation: “we hoped for a nation to come and rescue us, but it could not rescue us” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [closed](#)
- [the nations](#)
- [He did...rescue](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [the nations](#)
- [consume, devour](#)
- [deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue](#)

ULT

17 In our waiting, our eyes [closed](#) in vain for our helper. In our watchtowers, we looked to [the nations](#). [He did not rescue](#).

UST

17 We continued to look for someone to help us before it was too late, but it was useless. We continued to watch to see if one of our allies would save us, but none of [the nations](#) that we were waiting for was willing to help us.

Lamentations 4:18

They followed our steps

Here “our steps” represents where they went. Alternate translation: “Our enemies followed us everywhere we went” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Our end was near

Here “near” is a metaphor for “soon.” Alternate translation: “Our end would be soon” or “Our enemies would soon destroy us” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Our end

This could mean: (1) “Our end” refers to the end of living in their own city because their enemies would destroy the city and capture them. Alternate translation: “Our destruction” or “Our capture” or (2) “Our end” refers to the end of their lives. Alternate translation: “Our death” or “The time for us to die” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

our days were numbered

Being numbered represents being so few that they could be easily counted. Alternate translation: “we had very little time” (See: [Metaphor](#))

our end had come

The phrase “had come” means that what they had expected was now happening. Alternate translation: “it was now the end for us” or “our enemies were attacking us” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

18 They tracked our steps, walking in our paths. Our end drew near. Our days were fulfilled, for our end has come.

UST

18 Our enemies were pursuing us, so we could not even walk in our streets because they could take us as prisoners. Our enemies were about to capture us; it was time for them to kill us.

Lamentations 4:19

Our pursuers were swifter than the eagles in the sky

The author compares the speed of their pursuers to the speed of eagles flying. Eagles fly very quickly to catch other animals. Alternate translation: "Those who were chasing us were faster than eagles" (See: [Simile](#))

lay in wait for us

Alternate translation: "waited to attack us"

Translation Words - ULT

- [Our pursuers](#)
- [heaven](#)
- [in the wilderness](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [to](#)
- [heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly](#)
- [desert, wilderness](#)

ULT

¹⁹ [Our pursuers](#) became more swift than eagles of [heaven](#). They set us ablaze on the mountains; they lay in wait for us [in the wilderness](#).

UST

¹⁹ Those who ran after us were faster than eagles flying in the sky. Even if we fled [to](#) the mountains or hid in the desert, they went there ahead of us and waited to attack us.

Lamentations 4:20

he was the one who was captured in their pits

Here “pits” refers to the enemies’ plans to capture him. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “he was the one whom our enemies captured by their plans” or “our enemies made plans to capture our king, and they did capture him” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

of whom it was said

This phrase with the quote following it gives us more information about the king. The quote shows what the people had hoped the king would do for them before he was trapped. It can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: “even though we had said about him” (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Under his shadow we will live among the nations

Here “his shadow” represents him protecting them. Alternate translation: “Under his protection we will live among the nations” or “Though we may have to live in other nations, he will protect us” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [A breath of](#)
- [Yahweh’s](#)
- [we will live](#)
- [among the nations](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Our king, whom Yahweh](#)
- [enabled us to live](#)
- [in the other nations as slaves](#)
- [life, live, living, alive](#)

ULT

²⁰ [A breath of](#) our nostrils, [Yahweh’s](#) anointed was captured in their pits; of whom we said, “In his shadow, [we will live among the nations.](#)”

UST

²⁰ [Our king, whom Yahweh](#) had appointed, the one who [enabled us to live](#), the one whom we trusted to protect us when we had to live [in the other nations as slaves](#)— the enemy captured him, as you would capture an animal in a pit.

Lamentations 4:21

Rejoice and be glad

“Rejoice” and “be glad” mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of gladness. The writer uses these words to mock the people. He knew that the people of Edom would be glad that Jerusalem is being destroyed. Alternate translation: “Be very glad” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Irony](#))

daughter of Edom

The people of the land of Edom are spoken of as if they were a woman. They were Israel's enemy. (See: [Personification](#))

But to you also the cup will be passed

The cup is a metonym for the wine in it. The wine is a metaphor for punishment. Alternate translation: “But Yahweh will also punish you” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [and be glad](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [joy, joyful, rejoice, glad](#)

ULT

²¹ Rejoice [and be glad](#), O Daughter of Edom, who dwells in the land of Uz. Against you also the cup will pass; you will be drunk and go about naked.

UST

²¹ You people of Edom and Uz, you should be happy while you can, but Yahweh will punish you also. You will become so drunk that you will strip off your own clothes.

Lamentations 4:22

Daughter of Zion

The people of Jerusalem are spoken of as if they were a woman. (See: [Personification](#))

your punishment will come to an end

“your punishment will end.” The abstract noun punishment can be expressed with the verb “punish.” Alternate translation: “Yahweh will stop punishing you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

he will not extend your exile

Alternate translation: “Yahweh will not make your time in exile longer” or “Yahweh will not make you stay in exile longer”

he will uncover your sins

Here the sins not being known by others are spoken of as if they are under a cover. Removing the cover represents letting other people know about them. Alternate translation: “he will expose your sins” or “he will cause other people to know how you have sinned” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Zion](#)
- [your guilt](#)
- [your guilt \(2\)](#)
- [He will visit](#)
- [he will uncover](#)
- [your sins](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [of Zion](#)
- [sins](#)
- [sins and he will make known to everyone the wicked things you have done \(2\)](#)
- [command, commandment](#)
- [sin, sinful, sinner, sinning](#)
- [exile, exiled](#)

ULT

22 O Daughter of [Zion](#), [your guilt](#) will finish; he will not extend your exile. [He will visit your guilt](#), O Daughter of Edom; [he will uncover your sins](#).

UST

22 You people [of Zion](#) (whose home is in Jerusalem), the time when Yahweh punishes you for your [sins](#) will come to an end. He will bring an end to the time you must spend in exile. But you people who are from Edom, Yahweh will punish you for your sins and he will make known to everyone the wicked things you have done.

Lamentations 5

Lamentations 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Judah was destroyed for her sin. As slaves, life was very hard. The author wondered if God would be angry forever. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [eternity](#), [everlasting](#), [eternal](#), [forever](#))

Lamentations 5:1

General Information:

A new poem begins. See [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#).

Remember, Yahweh, what has happened to us

“Remember” here is an idiom. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, think about what has happened to us” (See: [Idiom](#))

look and see our disgrace

Alternate translation: “look at the shameful state we are in”

Translation Words - ULT

- [O Yahweh](#)
- [our disgrace](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Yahweh](#)
- [shame, ashamed, disgrace, humiliate, reproach](#)

ULT

¹ Remember, [O Yahweh](#), what has happened to us; look and see [our disgrace](#).

UST

¹ [Yahweh](#), think about what has happened to us. See how no one respects us any longer.

Lamentations 5:2

Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers; our houses to foreigners

The idea of things being turned over to others can be expressed with an active form. Since it is also understood in the second part of the sentence, those words can be repeated there. Alternate translation: “You have turned our inheritance over to strangers; you have turned our houses over to strangers” or “You have allowed strangers to take possession of our inheritance; you have allowed foreigners to take possession of our houses” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Our inheritance](#)
- [our houses](#)

Translation Words - UST

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

ULT

² [Our inheritance](#) has been turned over to strangers; [our houses](#) to foreigners.

UST

² Foreigners have seized our [property](#), and now they live in our homes.

Lamentations 5:3

We have become orphans ... our mothers are like widows

The people of Jerusalem have no one to protect them because the men have either died in battle or have gone into exile. This speaks of the people not having their fathers and husbands present as if they had actually become orphans and widows. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#))

orphans, the fatherless

These two phrases have the same meaning and emphasize that the people no longer have their fathers. Alternate translation: "orphans who have no fathers" (See: [Parallelism](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [father](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [our](#)

ULT

³ We have become orphans, there is no [father](#), and our mothers are like widows.

UST

³ Our enemies have killed our fathers, and caused [our](#) mothers to become widows.

Lamentations 5:4

We must pay silver for the water we drink ... our own wood

This means that their enemies are making them pay money to have the water and wood that they once used for free. Alternate translation: "We have to pay silver to our enemies in order to drink our own water ... our own wood" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

we must pay silver to get our own wood

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "our enemies sell us our own wood" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [with silver](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [silver](#)

ULT

⁴ We drink our water [with silver](#); we bring in our wood with a price.

UST

⁴ Now they make us pay for water to drink, and pay for firewood.

Lamentations 5:5

Those who are coming after us

“Our enemies who are chasing after us.” This refers to the Babylonian army.

we can find no rest

This speaks of being able to rest as if “rest” were an object that could be found. Alternate translation: “we are unable to rest” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [We are pressed](#)
- [there is...rest](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [to rest](#)
- [persecute](#)

ULT

⁵ [We are pressed](#) on our necks. We toil; [there is no rest](#) for us.

UST

⁵ The enemy runs after us and is very close to us; we are exhausted, but they do not allow us [to rest](#).

Lamentations 5:6

We have given ourselves to Egypt and to Assyria to get enough food

This phrase “given ourselves” is an idiom. Alternate translation: “We have made a treaty with Egypt and with Assyria so that we would have food to eat” or “We have surrendered to Egypt and to Assyria to have enough food to remain alive” (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [a hand](#)
- [to Egypt](#)
- [Assyria](#)
- [bread](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [enough food to](#)
- [we begged Egypt and](#)
- [us](#)
- [Assyria, Assyrian, Assyrian Empire](#)

ULT

⁶ We have given [a hand to Egypt, Assyria](#) to satisfy [bread](#).

UST

⁶ In order to get [enough food to](#) remain alive, [we begged Egypt and](#) Assyria to help [us](#).

Lamentations 5:7

they are no more

This refers to them being dead. Alternate translation: “they have died” (See: [Euphemism](#))

we bear their iniquities

Here “iniquities” represents the punishment received because of their ancestors’ sins. Alternate translation: “we bear the punishment for their sins” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Our fathers](#)
- [sinned](#)
- [their iniquities](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Our ancestors](#)
- [sinned, and now they are dead](#)
- [for the sins](#)

ULT

⁷ [Our fathers sinned](#); they are no more.
We ourselves bear [their iniquities](#).

UST

⁷ [Our ancestors sinned, and now they are dead](#), but we are suffering for the [sins](#) that they committed.

Lamentations 5:8

Slaves rule over us

This could mean: (1) "Now the people who rule over us are themselves slaves to their own masters in Babylon" or (2) "People who used to be slaves in Babylon now rule over us." (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

to deliver us from their hand

Here the word "hand" refers to control. Alternate translation: "to rescue us from their control" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Slaves](#)
- [rule](#)
- [from their hand](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [are themselves slaves to their own masters in Babylon](#)
- [dominion](#)
- [hand](#)

ULT

⁸ [Slaves rule](#) over us; there is no one to deliver [from their hand](#).

UST

⁸ Now the people who rule over us [are themselves slaves to their own masters in Babylon](#). There is no one who can rescue us from their power.

Lamentations 5:9

bread

Here “bread” refers to food in general. Alternate translation: “food” (See: [Metonymy](#))

because of the sword in the wilderness

Here robbers with swords are represented by their “swords.” Alternate translation: “because there are robbers in the wilderness who kill others with swords” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [our bread](#)
- [by our lives](#)
- [the sword...of](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [We go far to look for food, but](#)
- [in danger of dying](#)
- [heart](#)

ULT

⁹ We bring in [our bread by our lives](#), from [the sword](#) blade of the wilderness.

UST

⁹ [We go far to look for food, but](#) we are [in danger of dying](#) when we do so, because of the robbers who live in the wilderness.

Lamentations 5:10

Our skin has grown as hot as an oven because of the burning heat of hunger

This speaks of the peoples' bodies being hot and feverish as if their skin was as hot as an oven. The people have fever because of their hunger. Alternate translation: "Our skin has become hot like an oven, and we have a very high fever because we are extremely hungry" (See: [Simile](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [hunger](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [we are extremely hungry](#)

ULT

¹⁰ Our skin grows hot as an oven, from the burning of [hunger](#).

UST

¹⁰ Our skin has become hot like an oven, and we have a very high fever because [we are extremely hungry](#).

Lamentations 5:11

Women are raped in Zion, and virgins in the cities of Judah

These two phrases have similar meaning and emphasize that the women are being violated. The words “are raped” are understood in the second part of this sentence and can be repeated. Alternate translation: “Women are raped in Zion, and virgins are raped in the cities of Judah” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

Women are raped ... and virgins

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “Our enemies have raped the women ... and the virgins” or “Our enemies have violated the women ... and the virgins” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [in Zion](#)
- [virgins](#)
- [Judah](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [of Judea](#)
- [Zion, Mount Zion](#)
- [virgin, virginity](#)

ULT

¹¹ Women are raped [in Zion](#); [virgins](#) in the cities of [Judah](#).

UST

¹¹ Our enemies have violated the women in Jerusalem, and they have done that to the young women in all the towns [of Judea](#).

Lamentations 5:12

Princes are hung up by their own hands

This could mean: (1) the word “their” refers to their enemies.
Alternate translation: “With their own hands, they hung princes” or
(2) they tied each prince’s hands together with one end of a rope and
tied the other end so the prince’s feet could not touch the ground.

no honor is shown to the elders

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can
state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your
language. Alternate translation: “they have shown no honor to the elders” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² Princes are hung by their hands; they show no honor to the face of elders.

UST

¹² Our enemies have hanged our leaders, and they have not respected our elders.

Translation Words - ULT

- Princes
- are hung
- by their hands
- the face of
- elders

Translation Words - UST

- hanged
- elders
- face, facial
- hand
- prince, princess, governors, provincial governors, officials, noblemen, nobility

Lamentations 5:13

Young men are forced

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "They force young men" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

boys stagger under heavy loads of wood

The boys are forced to carry the loads of wood. Alternate translation: "boys stagger because they are forced to carry heavy loads of wood" or "they force the boys to carry heavy loads of wood which make them stagger" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [and boys](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [and young](#)

ULT

¹³ Young men lift the grind stone [and boys](#) stagger with wood.

UST

¹³ They force our young men to grind flour with millstones, [and young](#) boys stagger while they are forced to carry heavy loads of firewood.

Lamentations 5:14

the city gate

This is where the elders would give legal advice, but also where people would meet socially.

the young men have left their music

Playing music was part of the social life at the city gate. This speaks of the men no longer playing their music as if the act of playing music were a place that they left. Alternate translation: "the young men have stopped playing their music" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [The elders](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Our elders](#)

ULT

¹⁴ [The elders](#) cease from the gate, the young men from their songs.

UST

¹⁴ [Our elders](#) no longer sit at the city gates to make important decisions; the young men no longer play their musical instruments.

Lamentations 5:15

The joy of our heart

Here the word "heart" refers to the whole person and emphasizes their emotions. Alternate translation: "Our joy" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Our hearts](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [heart](#)

ULT

¹⁵ [Our hearts](#) cease from joy; our dancing has turned to mourning.

UST

¹⁵ We are no longer joyful; instead of dancing joyfully, we now mourn.

Lamentations 5:16

The crown has fallen from our head

This could mean: (1) "We no longer wear flowers on our heads for celebrations" or (2) The "crown" represents their king and their "head" represents a place of authority over the people. Alternate translation: "We no longer have a king" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [our head](#)
- [we have sinned](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [committed](#)
- [head](#)

ULT

16 The crown of [our head](#) has fallen.
Woe to us, for [we have sinned](#)!

UST

16 The wreaths of flowers have fallen off our heads. Terrible things have happened to us because of the sins that we [committed](#).

Lamentations 5:17

For this our heart has become sick

The “heart” represents a person’s emotions. This speaks of a person being discouraged as if their emotions were sick. Alternate translation: “Because of this we are discouraged” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

for these things our eyes grow dim

This means that they have a hard time seeing because they are crying. Alternate translation: “and we can hardly see because our eyes are full of tears” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [our hearts](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [heart](#)

ULT

¹⁷ On account of this, [our hearts](#) have become sick; on account of these things, our eyes grow dim.

UST

¹⁷ We are tired and discouraged, and we cannot see well because our eyes are full of tears.

Lamentations 5:18

for Mount Zion lies desolate

Here “Mount Zion” refers to Jerusalem. The phrase “lies desolate” means that no one lives there.

jackals

These are fierce wild dogs. See how you translated this in [Lamentations 4:3](#).

Translation Words - ULT

- [Zion](#)
- [tread](#)

Translation Words - UST

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

ULT

¹⁸ On account of Mount [Zion](#), which is desolate, jackals [tread](#) over it.

UST

¹⁸ [Jerusalem](#) has no one living any more in it, and jackals prowl around in it.

Lamentations 5:19

sit upon your throne

Here sitting on the throne represents ruling as king. Alternate translation: “rule as king” (See: [Metonymy](#))

from generation to generation

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “always” (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [O Yahweh](#)
- [upon your throne](#)
- [from generation](#)
- [to generation](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [But Yahweh](#)
- [from one generation](#)
- [to the next generation](#)
- [throne, enthroned](#)

ULT

19 You, [O Yahweh](#), are forever. You will sit [upon your throne from generation to generation](#).

UST

19 [But Yahweh](#), you rule forever! You continue to rule [from one generation to the next generation](#).

Lamentations 5:20

Why do you forget us forever? Why do you forsake us for the length of your days?

The author uses these rhetorical questions to express his feelings that Yahweh has forgotten them. These questions can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "It is as though you will forget us forever or not come back to us for a very long time!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

for the length of your days

Here this idiom refers to the duration of God's life. Since God lives forever, it can also be translated as "forever." Perhaps the writer was using hyperbole and exaggerating the length of time he believed that God was forsaking them. Alternate translation: "for as long as you live" or "forever" (See: [Idiom](#) and [Hyperbole](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [You forsake us](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [forsake, forsaken, leave](#)

ULT

²⁰ Why do you forget us for so long?

[You forsake us](#) for many days?

UST

²⁰ So why have you forgotten us? Will you abandon us for a very long time?

Lamentations 5:21

Restore us to yourself

Alternate translation: "Bring us back to yourself"

Translation Words - ULT

- Return us
- O Yahweh
- and we will be restored

Translation Words - UST

- you
- to prosper as we did
- restore, restoration

ULT

²¹ Return us to yourself, O Yahweh, and we will be restored. Renew our days as long ago—

UST

²¹ Please enable us to return to you, and enable us to prosper as we did previously.

Lamentations 5:22

unless you have utterly rejected us and you are angry with us beyond measure

This could mean: (1) that the writer is afraid that Yahweh might be too angry to restore them or (2) that he is saying that Yahweh is too angry to restore them.

are angry with us beyond measure

This speaks of Yahweh being very angry as if his anger cannot be measured. This is an exaggeration. Alternate translation: "are extremely angry with us" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

²² unless you have utterly rejected us, are angry with us beyond measure.

UST

²² Please do that, or is it really true that you have rejected us forever? Is it really true that you will never stop being extremely angry with us?



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Version 32

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: [Lamentations 1:3](#); [1:5](#); [1:7](#); [1:18](#); [2:5](#); [2:14](#); [3:22](#); [3:27](#); [3:47](#); [3:61](#); [3:65](#); [4:17](#); [4:22](#))

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: [Lamentations 1:1](#); [1:8](#); [1:12](#); [1:14](#); [2:6](#); [2:20](#); [3:48](#); [4:5](#); [4:6](#); [4:8](#); [4:9](#); [4:20](#); [5:2](#); [5:4](#); [5:11](#); [5:12](#); [5:13](#))

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: [Lamentations 2:18; 2:19](#))

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: [Lamentations 1:7](#); [1:9](#); [1:11](#); [1:19](#); [1:20](#); [1:21](#); [1:22](#); [2:1](#); [2:19](#); [2:21](#); [3:37](#); [3:39](#); [3:50](#); [3:51](#); [3:59](#); [3:64](#); [4:7](#); [4:8](#); [4:17](#); [4:18](#); [5:4](#); [5:8](#); [5:13](#); [5:17](#))

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: [Lamentations 4:20](#))

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 ἐν ἧ 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: [Lamentations 2:8](#))

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: [Lamentations 1:2](#); [1:12](#); [3:19](#); [3:42](#); [3:47](#); [3:49](#); [4:12](#); [4:21](#))

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: [Lamentations 5:2; 5:11](#))

Euphemism

Description

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private.

... they found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa.
(1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

This means that Saul and his sons “were dead.” It is a euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

This page answers the question: *What is a euphemism?*

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples From the Bible

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so **he did not say specifically** what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man?**” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

If euphemism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.
- (2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT) — Some languages might use euphemisms like these:

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **dig a hole**”

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **have some time alone**”

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man?**” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **slept with a man?**”

(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

They found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

“They found Saul and his sons **dead** on Mount Gilboa.”

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:21; 5:7](#))

Exclamations

Description

Exclamations are words or sentences that show strong feeling such as surprise, joy, fear, or anger. In the ULT and UST, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end. The mark shows that it is an exclamation. The situation and the meaning of what the people said helps us understand what feelings they were expressing. In the example below from Matthew 8, the speakers were terribly afraid. In the example from Matthew 9, the speakers were amazed, because something happened that they had never seen before.

This page answers the question: *What are ways of translating exclamations?*

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

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

Save us, Lord; we are about to die! (Matthew 8:25b ULT)

When the demon had been driven out, the mute man spoke. The crowds were astonished and said, "This has never been seen before in Israel!" (Matthew 9:33 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages have different ways of showing that a sentence communicates strong emotion.

Examples From the Bible

Some exclamations have a word that shows feeling. The sentences below have "Oh" and "Ah." The word "oh" here shows the speaker's amazement.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33 ULT)

The word "Alas" below shows that Gideon was very frightened.

When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, "**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)

Some exclamations start with a question word such as "how" or "why," even though they are not questions. The sentence below shows that the speaker is amazed at how unsearchable God's judgments are.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

Some exclamations in the Bible do not have a main verb. The exclamation below shows that the speaker is disgusted with the person he is speaking to.

You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is "is" or "are."
- (2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling.
- (3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.
- (4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is “is” or “are.”

You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

“You **are** such a worthless person!”

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

“Oh, the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God **are** so deep!”

(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling. In the first suggested translation below, the word “wow” shows that they were astonished. In the second suggested translation, the expression “Oh no” shows that something terrible or frightening has happened.

They were extremely astonished, saying, “He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” (Mark 7:37 ULT)

“They were extremely astonished, saying, “**Wow!** He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.””

Alas, oh my Lord Yahweh! For because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face! (Judges 6:22b ULT)

“**Oh no,** Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.

“**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)

“Lord Yahweh, **what will happen to me?** For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

“**Help,** Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

“His judgments are **so** unsearchable and his ways are **far** beyond discovering!”

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, “**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)

Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. **He was terrified** and said, “**Alas,** Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

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

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-unknown]]

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see Borrow Words.
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

Saul was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.
- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
- (3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
- (4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
- (5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like ‘drawn out’)**, and she said,
“For out of the water I drew him.”

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?”
Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called “Saul” before Acts 13 and “Paul” after Acts 13. You could translate his name as “Paul” all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** ¹

The footnote would look like:

^[1] Most versions say “Saul” here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called “Paul.”

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write “Saul” where the source text has “Saul” and “Paul” where the source text has “Paul.”

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

[1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-transliterate]]

(Go back to: [Introduction to Lamentations](#))

Hyperbole

Description

A speaker or writer can use exactly the same words to say something that he means as completely true, or as generally true, or as a hyperbole. This is why it can be hard to decide how to understand a statement. For example, the sentence below could mean three different things.

It rains here every night.

The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.

The speaker means this as a **generalization** if he means that it rains here most nights.

The speaker means this as a **hyperbole** if he wants to say that it rains more than it actually does, usually in order to express a strong attitude toward the amount or frequency of rain, such as being annoyed or being happy about it.

This page answers the question: *What are hyperboles? What are generalizations? How can I translate them?*

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

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

Hyperbole

In hyperbole, a figure of speech that uses exaggeration, a speaker deliberately describes something with an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it. He expects people to understand that he is exaggerating.

They will not leave **stone upon stone in you**. (Luke 19:44b ULT)

This is an exaggeration. It means that the enemies will completely destroy Jerusalem.

Moses was educated in **all the wisdom of the Egyptians**. (Acts 7:22a ULT)

This hyperbole means that he had learned everything an Egyptian education could offer.

Generalization

This is a statement that is true most of the time or in most situations that it could apply to.

The one who ignores instruction **will have poverty and shame**, but **honor will come** to him who learns from correction. (Proverbs 13:18)

These generalizations tell about what normally happens to people who ignore instruction and what normally happens to people who learn from correction. There may be some exceptions to these statements, but they are generally true.

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as **the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words**. (Matthew 6:7)

This generalization tells about what Gentiles were known for doing. Many Gentiles did this. It does not matter if a few did not. The point was that the hearers should not join in this well-known practice.

Even though a hyperbole or a generalization may have a strong-sounding word like "all," "always," "none," or "never," it does not necessarily mean **exactly** "all," "always," "none," or "never." It simply means "most," "most of the time," "hardly any," or "rarely."

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.

If readers realize that a statement is not literally true, they need to be able to understand whether it is a hyperbole, a generalization, or a lie. (Though the Bible is completely true, it tells about people who did not always tell the truth.)

Examples From the Bible

Examples of Hyperbole

If your hand causes you to stumble, **cut it off**. It is better for you to enter into life maimed ... (Mark 9:43a ULT)

When Jesus said to cut off your hand, he meant that we should **do whatever extreme things** we need to do in order not to sin. He used this hyperbole to show how extremely important it is to try to stop sinning.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel with 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The bolded phrase is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that the Philistine army was overwhelming in number. It means that there were **many, many** soldiers in the Philistine army.

But as his anointing teaches you **everything** and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27b ULT)

This is a hyperbole. It expresses the assurance that God's Spirit teaches us about **all things that we need to know**. God's Spirit does not teach us about everything that it is possible to know.

When they found him, they also said to him, "**Everyone** is looking for you." (Mark 1:37 ULT)

The disciples probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for Jesus, but that **many people** were looking for him, or that all of Jesus' closest friends there were looking for him. This is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that they and many others were worried about him.

Examples of Generalization

Can **any good thing** come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46b ULT)

This rhetorical question is meant to express the generalization that there is nothing good in Nazareth. The people there had a reputation for being uneducated and not strictly religious. Of course, there were exceptions.

One of them, of their own prophets, has said, "**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies**." (Titus 1:12 ULT)

This is a generalization that means that Cretans had a reputation to be like this because, in general, this is how Cretans behaved. It is possible that there were exceptions.

A lazy hand causes a person to be poor, but the hand of the diligent person gains riches. (Proverbs 10:4 ULT)

This is generally true, and it reflects the experience of most people. It is possible that there are exceptions in some circumstances.

Caution

- Do not assume that something is an exaggeration just because it seems to be impossible. God does miraculous things.

They saw Jesus **walking on the sea** and coming near the boat. (John 6:19b ULT)

This is not hyperbole. Jesus really walked on the water. It is a literal statement.

- Do not assume that the word “all” is always a generalization that means “most.”
 - > Yahweh is righteous in **all** his ways
 - > and gracious in **all** he does. (Psalms 145:17 ULT)

Yahweh is always righteous. This is a completely true statement.

Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole or generalization would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here are other options.

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.
- (4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and **a great number of troops**.

- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”

The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame. (Proverbs 13:18a ULT)

In general, the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame

When you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the **Gentiles do**, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. (Matthew 6:7 ULT)

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles **generally** do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

Almost all the country of Judea and **almost all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him.
or:

Many of the country of Judea and **many** of the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:19](#); [3:14](#); [3:48](#); [5:20](#))

Hypothetical Situations

Consider these phrases: “If the sun stopped shining ...” “What if the sun stopped shining ...” “Suppose the sun stopped shining ...” and “If only the sun had not stopped shining.” We use such expressions to set up hypothetical situations, imagining what might have happened or what could happen in the future but probably will not. We also use them to express regret or wishes. Hypothetical expressions occur often in the Bible. You (the translator) need to translate them in a way that people will know that the event did not actually happen and so that they will understand why the event was imagined.

This page answers the question: *What is a hypothetical situation?*

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

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

Description

Hypothetical situations are situations that are not real. They can be in the past, present, or future. Hypothetical situations in the past and present have not happened, are not happening now, and ones in the future are not expected to happen.

People sometimes tell about conditions and what would happen if those conditions were met, but they know that these things have not happened or probably will not happen. (The conditions comprise a phrase that starts with “if.”)

- If he had lived to be 100 years old, he would have seen his grandson’s grandson. (But he did not.)
- If he lived to be 100 years old, he would still be alive today. (But he is not.)
- If he lives to be 100 years old, he will see his grandson’s grandson. (But he probably will not.)

People sometimes express wishes about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- I wish he had come.
- I wish he were here.
- I wish he would come.

People sometimes express regrets about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- If only he had come.
- If only he were here.
- If only he would come.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to recognize the different kinds of hypothetical situations in the Bible and understand that they are unreal.
- Translators need to know their own language’s ways of talking about different kinds of hypothetical situations.

Examples From the Bible

Hypothetical Situations in the Past

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **If the mighty deeds had been done** in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, **they would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

Here in Matthew 11:21, Jesus said that **if** the people living in the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon had been able to see the miracles that he performed, they would have repented long ago. The people of Tyre and Sidon did not actually see his miracles, and they did not repent. He said this to rebuke the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida who had seen his miracles and yet did not repent.

Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, **if you had been here, my brother would not have died.**” (John 11:21 ULT)

Martha said this to express her wish that Jesus would have come sooner so that her brother would not have died. But Jesus did not come sooner and her brother did die.

Hypothetical Situations in the Present

And no man puts new wine into old wineskins. **But if he did do that, the new wine would burst the wineskins, and it would be spilled out, and the wineskins would be destroyed.** (Luke 5:37 ULT)

Jesus told about what would happen if a person were to put new wine into old wineskins. But no one would do that. He used this imaginary situation as an example to show that there are times when it is unwise to mix new things with old things. He did this so that people could understand why his disciples were not fasting as people traditionally did.

Jesus said to them, “What man would there be among you, who, **if he had just one sheep, and if this sheep fell into a deep hole on the Sabbath, would not grasp hold of it and lift it out?**” (Matthew 12:11 ULT)

Jesus asked the religious leaders what they would do on the Sabbath if one of their sheep fell into a hole. He was not saying that their sheep would fall into a hole. He used this imaginary situation to show them that they were wrong to judge him for healing people on the Sabbath.

Hypothetical Situation in the Future

Unless those days are shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:22 ULT)

Jesus was talking about a future time when very bad things would happen. He told what would happen if those days of trouble were to last a long time. He did this to show how bad those days will be—so bad that if they lasted a long time, no one would be saved. But then he clarified that God will shorten those days of trouble so that the elect (those he has chosen) will be saved.

Expressing Emotion About a Hypothetical Situation

People sometimes talk about hypothetical situations in order to express regrets and wishes. Regrets are about the past and wishes are about the present and future.

The Israelites said to them, “**If only we had died by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt when we were sitting by the pots of meat and were eating bread to the full.** For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill our whole community with hunger.” (Exodus 16:3 ULT)

Here the Israelites were afraid that they would have to suffer and die of hunger in the wilderness, and so they wished that they had stayed in Egypt and died there with full stomachs. They were complaining, expressing regret that this had not happened.

I know what you have done, and that you are neither cold nor hot. **I wish that you were either cold or hot!** (Revelation 3:15 ULT)

Jesus wished that the people were either hot or cold, but they are neither. He was rebuking them, expressing anger at this.

Translation Strategies

Find out how people speaking your language show:

- that something could have happened, but did not.
- that something could be true now, but is not.
- that something could happen in the future, but will not unless something changes.
- that they wish for something, but it does not happen.
- that they regret that something did not happen.

Use your language's ways of showing these kinds of things.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_hypo.

(Go back to: [Lamentations 5:22](#))

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: [Lamentations 1:7; 1:9; 1:10; 1:12; 1:13; 1:14; 1:21; 1:22; 2:1; 2:2; 2:7; 2:11; 2:16; 2:19; 2:22; 3:8; 3:33; 3:51; 5:1; 5:6; 5:19; 5:20](#))

Irony

Description

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work?

Can you find the way back to their houses for them?

**Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then;
the number of your days is so large!** (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:7; 4:21](#))

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: [Lamentations 2:18](#); [2:21](#); [3:63](#))

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: [Lamentations 1:1](#); [1:2](#); [1:9](#); [1:13](#); [1:14](#); [1:15](#); [1:16](#); [1:17](#); [1:20](#); [2:1](#); [2:2](#); [2:3](#); [2:4](#); [2:5](#); [2:8](#); [2:11](#); [2:12](#); [2:16](#); [2:18](#); [2:20](#); [3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:3](#); [3:5](#); [3:6](#); [3:7](#); [3:9](#); [3:13](#); [3:15](#); [3:16](#); [3:19](#); [3:23](#); [3:24](#); [3:25](#); [3:27](#); [3:28](#); [3:30](#); [3:34](#); [3:38](#); [3:40](#); [3:41](#); [3:43](#); [3:44](#); [3:48](#); [3:52](#); [3:54](#); [3:58](#); [3:59](#); [3:62](#); [3:64](#); [4:1](#); [4:2](#); [4:7](#); [4:9](#); [4:11](#); [4:14](#); [4:17](#); [4:18](#); [4:20](#); [4:21](#); [4:22](#); [5:1](#); [5:3](#); [5:5](#); [5:14](#); [5:17](#))

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: [Lamentations 1:2; 1:3; 1:7; 1:8; 1:13; 1:14; 1:17; 1:20; 2:2; 2:3; 2:6; 2:7; 2:8; 2:11; 2:12; 2:17; 2:21; 2:22; 3:1; 3:3; 3:33; 3:35; 3:38; 3:41; 3:51; 3:55; 3:56; 3:57; 3:62; 3:65; 3:66; 4:3; 4:5; 4:6; 4:9; 4:10; 4:11; 4:13; 4:14; 4:16; 4:17; 4:18; 4:21; 5:7; 5:8; 5:9; 5:16; 5:17; 5:19](#))

Nominal Adjectives

Description

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

Blessed are **people who are meek**.

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:21; 3:38](#))

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: [Lamentations 1:1](#); [2:1](#); [3:1](#); [4:1](#); [4:11](#); [4:13](#); [5:1](#); [5:3](#); [5:11](#))

Personification

Description

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

Such as wisdom:

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

Or sin:

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

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

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

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

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

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Apostrophe](#)

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

(Go back to: [Introduction to Lamentations](#); [Lamentations 1:1](#); [1:2](#); [1:3](#); [1:4](#); [1:5](#); [1:6](#); [1:8](#); [1:9](#); [1:10](#); [1:11](#); [1:12](#); [1:13](#); [1:15](#); [1:16](#); [1:17](#); [1:18](#); [1:20](#); [1:21](#); [2:1](#); [2:2](#); [2:4](#); [2:5](#); [2:8](#); [2:10](#); [2:11](#); [2:13](#); [2:15](#); [2:18](#); [3:18](#); [3:49](#); [4:3](#); [4:6](#); [4:10](#); [4:21](#); [4:22](#))

Poetry

Description

Poetry is one of the ways that people use the words and sounds of their language to make their speech and writing more beautiful and to express strong emotion. Through poetry, people can communicate deeper emotion than they can through simple non-poetic forms. Poetry gives more weight and elegance to statements of truth, such as proverbs, and is also easier to remember than ordinary speech.

This page answers the question: *What is poetry and how do I translate it into my language?*

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

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

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

In poetry we commonly find:

- many figures of speech such as [Apostrophe](#)
- arrangements of clauses into particular patterns such as:
 - parallel lines (See [Parallelism](#))
 - acrostics (beginning lines with successive letters of the alphabet)
 - chiasms (in which the first line relates to the last line, the second to the next-to-last line, etc.):
 - > You should not give what is holy to the dogs,
 - >
 - >> and should not throw your pearls in front of the pigs.
 - >>
 - >> Otherwise they will trample them under their feet,
 - >
 - > and having turned, they might tear you to pieces. (Matt 7:6 ULT)

- repetition of some or all of a line:

Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. (Psalm 148:2-3 ULT)

- lines of similar length:

Listen to my call to you,
Yahweh; think about my groanings.
Listen to the sound of my call, my King and my God,
for it is to you that I pray. (Psalm 5:1-2 ULT)

- the same sound used at the end or at the beginning of two or more lines:

“Twinkle, twinkle little **star**. How I wonder what you **are**.” (from an English rhyme)

- the same sound repeated many times:

“Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater” (from an English rhyme)

We also find:

- old words and expressions
- dramatic imagery
- different use of grammar — including:
 - incomplete sentences

- lack of connective words

Some places to look for poetry in your language

Songs, particularly old songs or songs used in children's games
 Religious ceremony or chants of priests or witch doctors
 Prayers, blessings, and curses
 Old legends

Elegant or fancy speech

Elegant or fancy speech is similar to poetry in that it uses beautiful language, but it does not use all of the language's features of poetry, and it does not use them as much as poetry does. Popular speakers in the language often use elegant speech, and this is probably the easiest source of text to study to find out what makes speech elegant in your language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

- Different languages use poetry for different things. If a poetic form would not communicate the same meaning in your language, you may need to write it without the poetry.
- Different languages use different poetic devices. A poetic device that conveys elegance or emotion in a biblical language may be confusing or misunderstood in another language.
- In some languages, using poetry for a particular part of the Bible would make it much more powerful.

Examples From the Bible

The Bible uses poetry for songs, teaching, and prophecy. Almost all of the books of the Old Testament have poetry in them and many of the books are completely made up of poetry.

... for you saw my affliction; you knew the distress of my soul. (Psalm 31:7b ULT)

This example of [Parallelism](#) has two lines that mean the same thing.

Yahweh, judge the nations; vindicate me, Yahweh, because I am righteous and innocent, Most High. (Psalm 7:8 ULT)

This example of parallelism shows the contrast between what David wants God to do to him and what he wants God to do to the unrighteous nations. (See [Parallelism](#).)

Keep your servant also from arrogant sins; let them not rule over me. (Psalm 19:13a ULT)

This example of personification speaks of sins as if they could rule over a person. (See [Personification](#).)

Oh, give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good,
 for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
 Oh, give thanks to the God of gods,
 for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
 Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords,
 for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

(Psalm 136:1-3 ULT)

This example repeats the phrases “give thanks” and “his covenant faithfulness endures forever.”

Translation Strategies

If the style of poetry that is used in the source text would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other ways of translating it.

- (1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry.
- (2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.
- (3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

If you use poetry it may be more beautiful.

If you use ordinary speech it may be more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of mockers. But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2 ULT)

The following are examples of how people might translate Psalm 1:1-2.

- (1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry. (The style in this example has words that sound similar at the end of each line.)

“Happy is the person not encouraged **to sin**, Disrespect for God he will not **begin**, To those who laugh at God he is **no kin**. God is his constant **delight**, He does what God says **is right**, He thinks of it all day **and night**.”

- (2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.

This is the kind of person who is truly blessed: the one who does not follow the advice of wicked people nor stop along the road to speak with sinners nor join the gathering of those who mock God. Rather, he takes great joy in Yahweh’s law, and he meditates on it day and night.

- (3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

The people who do not listen to the advice of bad people are really happy. They do not spend time with people who continually do evil things or join with those who do not respect God. Instead, they love to obey Yahweh’s law, and they think about it all the time.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-symlanguage\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:1](#); [2:1](#); [3:1](#); [4:1](#); [5:1](#))

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: [Lamentations 1:12](#); [2:12](#); [2:13](#); [2:15](#); [2:20](#); [3:37](#); [3:38](#); [3:39](#); [5:20](#))

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: [Lamentations 1:1](#); [1:6](#); [1:8](#); [2:4](#); [2:6](#); [2:12](#); [2:13](#); [2:22](#); [3:6](#); [3:10](#); [3:45](#); [4:3](#); [4:8](#); [4:19](#); [5:3](#); [5:10](#))

Symbolic Action

Description

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their heads up and down to mean “yes” or turn their heads from side to side to mean “no.” Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures. In the Bible, sometimes people perform symbolic actions and sometimes they only refer to the symbolic action.

This page answers the question: *What is a symbolic action and how do I translate it?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-unknown]]

Examples of symbolic actions

- In some cultures people shake hands when they meet to show that they are willing to be friendly.
- In some cultures people bow when they meet to show respect to each other.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

An action may have a meaning in one culture and a different meaning or no meaning at all in another culture. For example, in some cultures raising the eyebrows means “I am surprised” or “What did you say?” In other cultures it means “yes.”

In the Bible, people did things that had certain meanings in their culture. When we read the Bible, we might not understand what someone meant if we interpret the action based on what it means in our own culture today.

You (the translator) need to understand what people in the Bible meant when they used symbolic actions. If an action does not mean the same thing in your own culture, then you need to figure out how to translate what the action meant.

Examples From the Bible

And behold, a man came whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And **falling at the feet of Jesus**, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: He did this to show great respect to Jesus.

Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: When people wanted someone to welcome them into their home, they stood at the door and knocked on it.

Translation Strategies

If people would correctly understand what a symbolic action meant to the people in the Bible, consider using it. If not, here are some strategies for translating it.

- (1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.
- (2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning. Do this only in poetry, parables, and sermons. Do not do this when there actually was a person who did a specific action.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet in order to show that he greatly respected him.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Look, I stand at the door and knock on it, asking you to let me in.

(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Jairus showed Jesus great respect.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Look, I stand at the door and ask you to let me in.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT) — Since Jairus actually did this, you should not substitute an action from your own culture.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT) — Jesus was not standing at a real door. Rather he was speaking about wanting to have a relationship with people. So in cultures where it is polite to clear one's throat when wanting to be let into a house, you could use that.

Look, I stand at the door and clear my throat.

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:17](#); [2:10](#); [2:15](#); [2:16](#); [2:19](#))

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/bit-part2]]

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:10; 1:11; 1:18; 1:20; 1:22; 2:7; 2:8; 2:18; 4:10; 4:11; 5:15](#))



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 35

Adam

Facts:

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

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

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

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

Bible References:

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

Examples from the Bible stories:

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

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0120, G00760

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:36; 3:39](#))

adversary, enemy

Definition:

An “adversary” is a person (or group of people) who is opposed to someone else. The term “enemy” has a similar meaning.

- Your adversary can be a person who tries to oppose or harm another person.
- When two nations fight, each can be called an “adversary” of the other.
- In the Bible, the devil is referred to as an “adversary” and an “enemy.”
- The term “adversary” may be translated as “opponent” or “enemy,” but it suggests a stronger form of opposition.

(See also: Satan)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 5:14
- Isaiah 9:11
- Job 6:23
- Lamentations 4:12
- Luke 12:59
- Matthew 13:25

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0341, H6146, H6887, H6862, H6965, H7790, H7854, H8130, H8324, G04760, G04800, G21890, G21900, G52270

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:5](#); [1:7](#); [1:9](#); [1:10](#); [1:16](#); [1:17](#); [1:21](#); [2:3](#); [2:7](#); [2:16](#); [2:17](#); [2:22](#); [3:46](#); [3:52](#); [4:12](#))

afflict, affliction, distress

Definition:

The term "afflict" means to cause someone distress or suffering. An "affliction" is the disease, emotional grief, or other disaster that results from this.

- Sometimes God afflicted his people with sickness or other hardships with the intention for them to repent of their sins and turn back to him.
- God caused afflictions or plagues to come on the people of Egypt because their king refused to obey God.
- To "be afflicted with" means to suffer from some kind of distress, such as a disease, persecution, or emotional grief.
- In some Old Testament contexts, the idea of "afflicting oneself" or "afflicting one's soul" means to abstain from eating food.

Translation Suggestions:

- To "afflict" someone could be translated as "cause someone to experience troubles" or "cause someone to suffer" or "cause suffering to come."
- A phrase like "afflict someone with leprosy" could be translated as "cause someone to be sick with leprosy."
- When a disease or disaster is sent to "afflict" people or animals, this could be translated as "cause suffering to."
- Depending on the context, the term "affliction" could be translated as "calamity" or "sickness" or "suffering" or "great distress."
- The phrase "afflicted with" could also be translated as "suffering from" or "sick with."

(See also: leprosy, plague, suffer)

Bible References:

- 2 Thessalonians 1:6
- Amos 5:12
- Colossians 1:24
- Exodus 22:22-24
- Genesis 12:17-20
- Genesis 15:12-13
- Genesis 29:32

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H3013, H3905, H3906, H6031, H6039, H6040, H6041, H6862, H6869, H6887, H7451, H7489, G23460, G23470, G38040

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:7](#); [1:9](#); [3:1](#); [3:19](#))

altar

Definition:

An altar was a raised structure on which the Israelites burned animals and grains as offerings to God.

- During Bible times, simple altars were often made by forming a mound of packed-down dirt or by carefully placing large stones to form a stable pile.
- Some special box-shaped altars were made of wood overlaid with metals such as gold, brass, or bronze.
- Other people groups living near the Israelites also built altars to offer sacrifices to their gods.

(See also: altar of incense, [false god](#), grain offering, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- Genesis 8:20
- Genesis 22:9
- James 2:21
- Luke 11:49-51
- Matthew 5:23
- Matthew 23:19

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:14** After Noah got off the boat, he built an **altar** and sacrificed some of each kind of animal which could be used for a sacrifice.
- **5:8** When they reached the place of sacrifice, Abraham tied up his son Isaac and laid him on an **altar**.
- **13:9** A priest would kill the animal and burn it on the **altar**.
- **16:6** He (Gideon) built a new altar dedicated to God near where the **altar** to the idol used to be and made a sacrifice to God on it.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0741, H2025, H4056, H4196, G10410, G23790

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:7](#))

amazed, amazement, astonished, marvel, marveled, marvelous, wonder, dumbfounded

Definition:

All these terms refer to being very surprised because of something extraordinary that happened.

- Some of these words are translations of Greek expressions that mean “struck with amazement” or “standing outside of (oneself).” These expressions show how very surprised or shocked the person was feeling. Other languages might also have ways to express this.
- Usually the event that caused the wonder and amazement was a miracle, something only God could do.
- The meaning of these terms can also include feelings of confusion because what happened was totally unexpected.
- Other ways to translate these words could be “extremely surprised” or “very shocked.”
- Related words include “marvelous” (amazing, wonderful), “amazement,” and “astonishment.”
- In general, these terms are positive and express that the people were happy about what had happened.

(See also: miracle, sign)

Bible References:

- Acts 8:9-11
- Acts 9:20-22
- Galatians 1:6
- Mark 2:10-12
- Matthew 7:28
- Matthew 15:29-31
- Matthew 19:25

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0926, H2865, H3820, H4159, H6313, H6381, H6382, H6383, H6395, H8074, H8429, H8539, H8540, H8541, G06390, G15680, G15690, G16050, G16110, G18390, G22840, G22850, G22960, G22970, G22980, G40230, G45920, G50590

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:4](#); [1:16](#); [4:5](#))

ancestor, father, fathered, forefather, grandfather

Definition:

The term “father” refers to a person’s male parent.

- The terms “father” and “forefather” are often used to refer to a male ancestor(s) of a certain person or people group. This could also be translated a “ancestor” or “ancestral father.”
- The expression “the father of” can figuratively refer to a person who is the leader a group of related people or the source of something. For example, in Genesis 4 “the father of all who live in tents” could mean, “the first clan leader of the first people who ever lived in tents.”
- The apostle Paul figuratively called himself the “father” of those he had helped to become Christians through sharing the gospel with them.

Translation Suggestions

- When talking about a father and his literal son, this term should be translated using the usual term to refer to a father in the language.
- “God the Father” should also be translated using the usual, common word for “father.”
- When referring to forefathers, this term could be translated as “ancestors” or “ancestral fathers.”
- When Paul refers to himself figuratively as a father to believers in Christ, this could be translated as “spiritual father” or “father in Christ.”
- Sometimes the word “father” can be translated as “clan leader,” depending on the context.
- The phrase “father of all lies” could be translated as “source of all lies” or “the one from whom all lies come.”

(See also: God the Father, [son](#), Son of God)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:2
- Acts 7:32
- Acts 7:45
- Acts 22:3
- Genesis 31:30
- Genesis 31:42
- Genesis 31:53
- Hebrews 7:4-6
- John 4:12
- Joshua 24:3-4
- Malachi 3:7
- Mark 10:7-9
- Matthew 1:7
- Matthew 3:9
- Matthew 10:21
- Matthew 18:14
- Romans 4:12

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0001, H0002, H0025, H0369, H0539, H1121, H1730, H1733, H2524, H3205, H3490, H4940, H5971, H7223, G05400, G10800, G37370, G39620, G39640, G39660, G39670, G39700, G39710, G39950, G42450, G42690, G46130

(Go back to: [Lamentations 5:3; 5:7](#))

assembly, assemble, congregation, meeting, gather, community

Definition:

The term "assembly" usually refers to a group of people who come together for some reason, often to discuss problems, give advice, or make decisions. An assembly can be a group that is organized in an official and somewhat permanent way, or it can be a group of people who come together temporarily for a specific purpose or occasion.

Old Testament

- In the Old Testament there was a special kind of assembly called a "sacred assembly" in which the people of Israel would gather to worship Yahweh.
- Sometimes the term "assembly" referred to the Israelites in general, as a group.

New Testament

- In the New Testament, an assembly of 70 Jewish leaders in major cities such as Jerusalem would meet to judge legal matters and to settle disputes between people. This assembly was known as the "Sanhedrin" or the "Council."

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, "assembly" could also be translated as "special gathering" or "congregation" or "council" or "army" or "large group."
- When the term "assembly" refers generally to the Israelites as a whole, it could also be translated as "community" or "people of Israel."
- The phrase, "all the assembly" could be translated as "all the people" or "the whole group of Israelites" or "everyone." (See: [hyperbole](#))
- A large gathering of enemy soldiers was sometimes also referred to as an "assembly." This could be translated as "army."

(See also: council)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 8:14
- Acts 7:38
- Ezra 10:12-13
- Hebrews 12:22-24
- Leviticus 4:20-21
- Nehemiah 8:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0622, H1481, H2199, H3259, H4150, H4186, H4744, H5475, H5712, H6116, H6908, H6950, H6951, H6952, G15770, G38310, G48630, G48640, G48710, G49050

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:10](#))

Assyria, Assyrian, Assyrian Empire

Facts:

Assyria was a powerful nation during the time the Israelites were living in the land of Canaan. The Assyrian Empire was a group of nations ruled by an Assyrian king.

- The nation of Assyria was located in a region that is now the northern part of Iraq.
- The Assyrians fought against Israel at different times in their history.
- In the year 722 BC, the Assyrians completely conquered the kingdom of Israel and forced many of the Israelites to move to Assyria.
- The remaining Israelites intermarried with foreigners that the Assyrians had brought into Israel from Samaria. The descendants of those people who intermarried were later called the Samaritans.

(See also: Samaria)

Bible References:

- Genesis 10:11
- Genesis 25:17-18
- Isaiah 7:16-17
- Jeremiah 50:17
- Micah 7:11-13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **20:2** So God punished both kingdoms by allowing their enemies to destroy them. The kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the **Assyrian Empire**, a powerful, cruel nation. The **Assyrians** killed many people in the kingdom of Israel, took away everything of value, and burned much of the country.
- **20:3** The **Assyrians** gathered all the leaders, the rich people, and the people with skills and took them to **Assyria**.
- **20:4** Then the **Assyrians** brought foreigners to live in the land where the kingdom of Israel had been.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0804, H1121

(Go back to: [Lamentations 5:6](#))

blood

Definition:

The term “blood” refers to the red liquid that comes out of a person’s skin when there is an injury or wound. Blood brings life-giving nutrients to a person’s entire body. In the Bible, the term “blood” is often used figuratively to mean “life” and/or several other concepts.

- When people made sacrifices to God, they killed an animal and poured its blood on the altar. This symbolized the sacrifice of the animal’s life to pay for people’s sins.
- The expression “flesh and blood” refers to human beings.
- The expression “own flesh and blood” refers to people who are biologically related.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term should be translated with the term that is used for blood in the target language.
- The expression “flesh and blood” could be translated as “people” or “human beings.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “my own flesh and blood” could be translated as “my own family” or “my own relatives” or “my own people.”
- If there is an expression in the target language that is used with this meaning, that expression could be used to translate “flesh and blood.”

(See also: bloodshed; [flesh](#); [life](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:7
- 1 Samuel 14:32
- Acts 2:20
- Acts 5:28
- Colossians 1:20
- Galatians 1:16
- Genesis 4:11
- Psalms 16:4
- Psalms 105:28-30

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:3** Before Joseph’s brothers returned home, they tore Joseph’s robe and dipped it in goat’s **blood**.
- **10:3** God turned the Nile River into **blood**, but Pharaoh still would not let the Israelites go.
- **11:5** All the houses of the Israelites had **blood** around the doors, so God passed over those houses and everyone inside was safe. They were saved because of the lamb’s **blood**.
- **13:9** The **blood** of the animal that was sacrificed covered the person’s sin and made that person clean in God’s sight.
- **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.”
- **48:10** When anyone believes in Jesus, the **blood** of Jesus takes away that person’s sin, and God’s punishment passes over him.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1818, H5332, G01290, G01300, G01310

(Go back to: [Lamentations 4:13](#))

bread

Definition:

Bread is a food made from flour mixed with water and oil to form a dough. The dough is then shaped into a loaf and baked.

- When the term “loaf” occurs by itself, it means “loaf of bread.”
- Bread dough is usually made with something that makes it rise, such as yeast. However, bread can also be made without yeast so that it does not rise. This is called “unleavened bread” in the Bible. The ancient Israelites ate “unleavened bread” during the passover meal.
- Since bread was the main food for many people in biblical times, this term is also used in the Bible to refer to food in general. (See: [Synecdoche](#)) Many times the term “bread” can be translated more generally as “food.”
- The phrase “bread of the presence” refers to twelve loaves of bread that were placed on a golden table in the tabernacle or temple building as a sacrifice to God. These loaves represented the twelve tribes of Israel and were only for the priests to eat. This could be translated as “bread showing that God lived among them.”
- The term “bread from heaven” refers to the special white food called “manna” that God provided for the Israelites when they were wandering through the desert. Jesus also called himself the “bread that came down from heaven” and the “bread of life.”

(See also: Passover, tabernacle, [temple](#), unleavened bread, yeast)

Bible References:

- Acts 2:46
- Acts 27:35
- Exodus 16:15
- Luke 9:13
- Mark 6:38
- Matthew 4:4
- Matthew 11:18

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2557, H3899, H4635, H4682, G01060, G07400, G42860

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:11](#); [4:4](#); [5:6](#); [5:9](#))

bronze

Definition:

The term “bronze” refers to a kind of metal that is made from melting together the metals, copper and tin. It has a dark brown color, slightly red.

- Bronze resists water corrosion and is a good conductor of heat.
- In ancient times, bronze was used for making tools, weapons, artwork, altars, cooking pots, and soldiers’ armor, among other things.
- Many building materials for the tabernacle and temple were made of bronze.
- Idols of false gods were also often made of bronze metal.
- Bronze objects were made by first melting the bronze metal into a liquid and then pouring it into molds. This process was called “casting.”

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

(See also: [armor](#), [tabernacle](#), [temple](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 7:16
- 1 Samuel 17:37-38
- Daniel 2:44-45
- Exodus 25:3-7
- Revelation 1:15

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5153, H5154, H5174, H5178, G54700, G54740, G54750

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:7](#))

burden, load, heavy, hard work, hard labor, utterances

Definition:

A burden is a heavy load. It literally refers to a physical load such as a work animal would carry. The term “burden” also has several figurative meanings:

- A burden can refer to a difficult duty or important responsibility that a person has to do. He is said to be “bearing” or “carrying” a “heavy burden.”
- A cruel leader may put difficult burdens on the people he is ruling, for example by forcing them to pay large amounts of taxes.
- A person who does not want to be a burden to someone does not want to cause that other person any trouble.
- The guilt of a person’s sin is a burden to him.
- The “burden of the Lord” is a figurative way of referring to a “message from God” that a prophet must deliver to God’s people.
- The term “burden” can be translated by “responsibility” or “duty” or “heavy load” or “message,” depending on the context.

Bible References:

- 2 Thessalonians 3:6-9
- Galatians 6:1-2
- Galatians 6:3
- Genesis 49:15
- Matthew 11:30
- Matthew 23:4

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2960, H3053, H4614, H4853, H4864, H5445, H5447, H5448, H5449, H5450, H6006, G00040, G09160, G09220, G23470, G25990, G26550, G54130

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:8](#); [3:7](#))

call, call out

Definition:

The terms “call” and “call out” usually mean to speak loudly, but the term “call” can also mean to name or summon a person. There are also some other meanings.

- To “call out” to someone means to shout, to announce, or to proclaim. It can also mean to ask someone for help, especially God.
- Often in the Bible, “call” has a meaning of “summon” or “command to come” or “request to come.”
- God calls people to come to him and be his people. This is their “calling.”
- When God “calls” people, it means that God has appointed or chosen people to be his children, to be his servants and proclaimers of his message of salvation through Jesus.
- This term is also used in the context of naming someone. For example, “His name is called John,” means “He is named John” or “His name is John.”
- To be “called by the name of” means that someone is given the name of someone else. God says that he has called his people by his name.
- A different expression, “I have called you by name” means that God has specifically chosen that person.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “call” could be translated by a word that means “summon,” which includes the idea of being intentional or purposeful in calling.
- The expression “call out to you” could be translated as “ask you for help” or “pray to you urgently.”
- When the Bible says that God has “called” us to be his servants, this could be translated as “specially chose us” or “appointed us” to be his servants.
- “You must call his name” can also be translated as “you must name him.”
- “His name is called” could also be translated as “his name is” or “he is named.”
- To “call out” could be translated as “say loudly” or “shout” or “say with a loud voice.” Make sure the translation of this does not sound like the person is angry.
- The expression “your calling” could be translated as “your purpose” or “God’s purpose for you” or “God’s special work for you.”
- To “call on the name of the Lord” could be translated as “seek the Lord and depend on him” or “trust in the Lord and obey him.”
- To “call for” something could be translated by “demand” or “ask for” or “command.”
- The expression “you are called by my name” could be translated as “I have given you my name, showing that you belong to me.”
- When God says, “I have called you by name,” this could be translated as “I know you and have chosen you.”

(See also: [pray](#), [cry](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 18:24
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- 2 Timothy 1:9
- Ephesians 4:1
- Galatians 1:15
- Matthew 2:15
- Philippians 3:14

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0559, H2199, H4744, H6817, H7121, H7123, H7769, H7773, G01540, G03630, G14580, G15280, G19410, G19510, G20280, G20460, G25640, G28210, G28220, G28400, G29190, G30040, G31060, G33330, G33430, G36030, G36860, G36870, G43160, G43410, G43770, G47790, G48670, G54550, G55370, G55810

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:15](#); [1:19](#); [1:21](#); [2:22](#); [3:55](#); [3:57](#); [4:15](#))

captive, captivate, captivity, catch

Definition:

The terms “captive” and “captivity” refer to people who have been captured and forced to live somewhere they do not want to live, such as in a foreign country.

- The Israelites from the kingdom of Judah were held captive in the kingdom of Babylonia for 70 years.
- Captives are often required to work for the people or nation that captured them.
- Daniel and Nehemiah were Israelite captives who worked for the Babylonian king.
- The expression to “take captive” is another way of talking about capturing someone.
- The expression, “carry you away captive” could also be translated as “force you to live as captives” or “take you away to another country as prisoners.”
- In a figurative sense, the apostle Paul tells Christians to “take captive” every thought and make it obedient to Christ.
- He also talks about how a person can be “taken captive” by sin, which means he is “controlled by” sin.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, to be “held captive” could also be translated by, “not allowed to be free” or “kept in prison” or “forced to live in a foreign country.”
- The expression, “led captive” or “taken captive” could be translated as “captured” or “imprisoned” or “forced to go to a foreign land.”
- The term “captives” could also be translated as “people who were captured” or “enslaved people.”
- Depending on the context, “captivity” could also be translated as “imprisonment” or “exile” or “forced stay in a foreign country.”

(See also: Babylon, [exile](#), prison, seize)

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 10:5
- Isaiah 20:4
- Jeremiah 43:3
- Luke 4:18

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1123, H1473, H1540, H1546, H1547, H7617, H7622, H7628, H7633, H7686, G01610, G01620, G01630, G01640, G22210

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:18; 2:14](#))

comfort, comforts, comforter, uncomforted

Definition:

The terms “comfort” and “comforter” refer to helping someone who is suffering physical or emotional pain.

- A person who comforts someone is called a “comforter.”
- In the Old Testament, the term “comfort” is used to describe how God is kind and loving to his people and helps them when they are suffering.
- In the New Testament, it says that God will comfort his people through the Holy Spirit. Those who receive the comfort are then enabled to give the same comfort to others who are suffering.
- The expression “comforter of Israel” referred to the Messiah who would come to rescue his people.
- Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the “Comforter” who helps believers in Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “comfort” could also be translated as “ease the pain of” or “help (someone) overcome grief” or “encourage” or “console.”
- A phrase such as “our comfort” could be translated as “our encouragement” or “our consoling of (someone)” or “our help in times of grieving.”
- The term “comforter” could be translated as “person who comforts” or “someone who helps ease pain” or “person who encourages.”
- When the Holy Spirit is called “the Comforter” this could also be translated as “the Encourager” or “the Helper” or “the One who helps and guides.”
- The phrase “comforter of Israel” could be translated as “the Messiah, who comforts Israel.”
- An expression like, “they have no comforter” could also be translated as “No one has comforted them” or “There is no one to encourage or help them.”

(See also: encourage, Holy Spirit)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11
- 2 Corinthians 1:4
- 2 Samuel 10:1-3
- Acts 20:11-12

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2505, H5150, H5162, H5165, H5564, H8575, G03020, G38700, G38740, G38750, G38880, G38900, G39310

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:2](#); [1:9](#); [1:16](#); [1:17](#); [1:21](#))

command, commandment

Definition:

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

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

Translation Suggestions

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

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

Bible References:

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

Word Data:

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

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:6](#); [1:10](#); [1:17](#); [2:17](#); [3:37](#); [4:22](#))

confess, confession

Definition:

To confess means to admit or assert that something is true. A "confession" is a statement or admission that something is true.

- The term "confess" can refer to boldly stating the truth about God. It can also refer to admitting that we have sinned.
- The Bible says that if people confess their sins to God, he will forgive them.
- James the apostle wrote in his letter that when believers confess their sins to each other, this brings spiritual healing.
- The apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians that someday everyone will confess or declare that Jesus is Lord.
- Paul also said that if people confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from the dead, they will be saved.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate "confess" could include, "admit" or "testify" or "declare" or "acknowledge" or "affirm."
- Different ways to translate "confession" could be, "declaration" or "testimony" or "statement about what we believe" or "admitting sin."

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

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:8-10
- 2 John 1:7-8
- James 5:16
- Leviticus 5:5-6
- Matthew 3:4-6
- Nehemiah 1:6-7
- Philippians 2:9-11
- Psalms 38:17-18

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3034, H8426, G18430, G36700, G36710

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:53](#))

consume, devour

Definition:

The term “consume” literally means to use up something. It has several figurative meanings.

- In the Bible, the word “consume” often refers to destroying things or people.
- A fire is said to consume things, which means it destroys them by burning them up.
- God is described as a “consuming fire,” which is a description of his anger against sin. His anger results in terrible punishment for sinners who do not repent.
- To consume food means to eat or drink something.
- The phrase, “consume the land” could be translated as “destroy the land.”

Translation Suggestions

- In the context of consuming the land or people, this term could be translated as “destroy.”
- When fire is referred to, “consume” could be translated as “burn up.”
- The burning bush that Moses saw “was not consumed” which could be translated as “did not get burned up” or “did not burn up.”
- When referring to eating, “consume” could be translated as “eat” or “devour.”
- If someone’s strength is “consumed,” it means his strength is “used up” or “gone.”
- The expression, “God is a consuming fire” could be translated as “God is like a fire that burns things up” or “God is angry against sin and will destroy sinners like a fire.”

(See also: [devour](#), [wrath](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 18:38-40
- Deuteronomy 7:16
- Jeremiah 3:23-25
- Job 7:9
- Numbers 11:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0398, H0402, H1086, H1104, H1197, H2628, H3615, H3617, H3857, H4529, H5595, H8046, H8552, G03550, G26180, G26540, G27190, G53150

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:11](#); [2:22](#); [3:22](#); [4:11](#); [4:17](#))

covenant faithfulness, covenant loyalty, covenant love

Definition:

In biblical times, the term translated as “covenant faithfulness” was used to describe the kind of faithfulness, loyalty, kindness, and love that was both expected and demonstrated between people who were closely related to one another, either by marriage or by blood. This same term is used often in the Bible to describe the way God relates to his people, especially his commitment to fulfill the promises that he made to them.

- The way this term is translated can depend on how each of the individual terms “covenant” and “faithfulness” are translated.
- Other ways to translate this term might include: “faithful love;” “loyal, committed love;” or “loving dependability.”

(See also: covenant, [faithful](#), grace, [Israel](#), people of God, promise)

Bible References:

- Ezra 3:11
- Numbers 14:18

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2617

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:22](#); [3:32](#))

cry, cry out, outcry

Definition:

The terms “cry” or “cry out” usually mean to say something loudly or urgently. Someone can “cry out” in pain, distress, anger, or fear, often with the intent of asking for help.

- The phrase “cry out” can also mean to shout or to call out with the intent of asking for help.
- It can also mean to pray.
- This term could also be translated as “exclaim loudly” or “urgently ask for help,” depending on the context.
- An expression such as, “I cry out to you” could be translated as “I call to you for help” or “I urgently ask you for help.”

(See also: [call](#), [plead](#), [pray](#))

Bible References:

- Job 27:9
- Mark 5:5-6
- Mark 6:48-50
- Psalm 22:1-2

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1058, H2199, H2201, H6030, H6463, H6670, H6682, H6817, H6818, H6873, H6963, H7121, H7123, H7321, H7440, H7442, H7723, H7737, H7768, H7771, H7775, H8663, G03100, G03490, G08630, G09940, G09950, G19160, G20190, G27990, G28050, G28960, G29050, G29060, G29290, G43770, G54550

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:18](#))

darkness

Definition:

The term "darkness" literally means an absence of light. There are also several figurative meanings of this term:

- As a metaphor, "darkness" means "impurity" or "evil" or "spiritual blindness."
- It also refers to anything related to sin and moral corruption.
- The expression "dominion of darkness" refers to all that is evil and ruled by Satan.
- The term "darkness" can also be used as a metaphor for death. (See: [Metaphor](#))
- People who do not know God are said to be "living in darkness," which means they do not understand or practice righteousness.
- God is light (righteousness) and the darkness (evil) cannot overcome that light.
- The place of punishment for those who reject God is sometimes referred to as "outer darkness."

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term literally, with a word in the project language that refers to the absence of light. This could also be a term that refers to the darkness of a room with no light or to the time of day when there is no light.
- For the figurative uses, it is also important to keep the image of darkness in contrast to light, as a way to describe evil and deception in contrast to goodness and truth.
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this could be, "darkness of night" (as opposed to "light of day") or "not seeing anything, like at night" or "evil, like a dark place".

(See also: corrupt, [dominion](#), [kingdom](#), light, [redeem](#), [righteous](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:6
- 1 John 2:8
- 1 Thessalonians 5:5
- 2 Samuel 22:12
- Colossians 1:13
- Isaiah 5:30
- Jeremiah 13:16
- Joshua 24:7
- Matthew 8:12

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0652, H0653, H2816, H2821, H2822, H2825, H3990, H3991, H4285, H5890, H6205, G22170, G46520, G46530, G46550, G46560

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

decree, decreed

Definition:

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

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

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

Bible References:

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

Word Data:

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

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:54](#))

deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue

Definition:

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

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

Translation Suggestions:

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

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

Bible References:

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

Examples from the Bible stories:

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

Word Data:

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

(Go back to: [Lamentations 4:17](#))

desert, wilderness

Definition:

A desert, or wilderness, is a dry, barren place where very few plants and trees can grow.

- A desert is a land area with a dry climate and few plants or animals.
- Because of the harsh conditions, very few people can live in the desert, so it is also referred to as “wilderness.”
- “Wilderness” conveys the meaning of being remote, desolate and isolated from people.
- This word can also be translated as “deserted place” or “remote place” or “uninhabited place.”

Bible References:

- Acts 13:16-18
- Acts 21:38
- Exodus 4:27-28
- Genesis 37:21-22
- John 3:14
- Luke 1:80
- Luke 9:12-14
- Mark 1:3
- Matthew 4:1
- Matthew 11:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0776, H2723, H3293, H3452, H4057, H6160, H6723, H6728, H6921, H8047, H8414, G20470, G20480

(Go back to: [Lamentations 4:3](#); [4:19](#))

devour

Definition:

The term "devour" means to eat or consume in an aggressive manner.

- Using this word in a figurative sense, Paul warned believers to not devour one another, meaning to not attack or destroy each other with words or actions (Galatians 5:15).
- Also in a figurative sense, the term "devour" is often used with a meaning of "completely destroy" as when talking about nations devouring each other or a fire devouring buildings and people.
- This term could also be translated as "completely consume" or "totally destroy."

(See also: [consume](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 5:8
- Amos 1:10
- Exodus 24:17
- Ezekiel 16:20
- Luke 15:30
- Matthew 23:13-15
- Psalms 21:9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0398, H0399, H0400, H0402, H1104, H1105, H3216, H3615, H3857, H3898, H7462, H7602, G20680, G26660, G27190, G53150

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:3](#); [2:20](#); [4:11](#))

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: [Lamentations 2:20](#); [2:21](#); [3:43](#))

disobey, disobeyed, disobedience, rebellious

Definition:

The term "disobey" means to not obey what someone in authority has commanded or instructed. A person who does this is being "disobedient."

- A person who does something he was told not to do is disobeying.
- To disobey also means to refuse to do something that was commanded.
- The term "disobedient" is also used to describe the character of someone who habitually disobeys or rebels. It means that they are sinful or wicked.
- The term "disobedience" means "the act of not obeying" or "behavior that is against what God wants."
- A "disobedient people" could be translated by "people who keep on disobeying" or "people who do not do what God commands."

(See also: authority, [evil](#), [sin](#), obey)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 13:21
- Acts 26:19
- Colossians 3:7
- Luke 1:17
- Luke 6:49
- Psalms 89:30-32

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:11** God said to the man, "You listened to your wife and **disobeyed** me."
- **13:7** If the people obeyed these laws, God promised that he would bless and protect them. If they **disobeyed** them, God would punish them.
- **16:2** Because the Israelites kept **disobeying** God, he punished them by allowing their enemies to defeat them.
- **35:12** "The older son said to his father, 'All these years I have worked faithfully for you! I never **disobeyed** you, and still you did not give me one small goat so I could celebrate with my friends.'"

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4784, H5674, G05060, G05430, G05440, G05450, G38470, G38760

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:42](#))

dominion

Definition:

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

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

Translation Suggestions:

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

(See also: authority, power)

Bible References:

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

Word Data:

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

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:13](#); [5:8](#))

earth, land

Definition:

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

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

Translation Suggestions:

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

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

Bible References:

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

Word Data:

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

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:1](#); [2:15](#); [3:34](#); [4:12](#))

Egypt, Egyptian

Facts:

Egypt is a country in the northeast part of Africa, to the southwest of the land of Canaan. An Egyptian is a person who is from the country of Egypt.

- In ancient times, Egypt was a powerful and wealthy country.
- Ancient Egypt was divided into two parts, Lower Egypt (northern part where the Nile River flowed downward into the sea) and Upper Egypt (southern part). In the Old Testament, these parts are referred to as "Egypt" and "Pathros" in the original language text.
- Several times when there was little food in Canaan, Israel's patriarchs traveled to Egypt to buy food for their families.
- For several hundred years, the Israelites were slaves in Egypt.
- Joseph and Mary went down to Egypt with the young child Jesus, to escape from Herod the Great.

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

(See also: Herod the Great, Joseph (NT), Nile River, patriarchs)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 4:7-9
- Acts 7:10
- Exodus 3:7
- Genesis 41:29
- Genesis 41:57
- Matthew 2:15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:4** The slave traders took Joseph to **Egypt**. **Egypt** was a large, powerful country located along the Nile River.
- **8:8** Pharaoh was so impressed with Joseph that he appointed him to be the second most powerful man in all of **Egypt**!
- **8:11** So Jacob sent his older sons to *_Egypt_* to buy food.
- **8:14** Even though Jacob was an old man, he moved to **Egypt** with all of his family, and they all lived there.
- **9:1** After Joseph died, all of his relatives stayed in **Egypt**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4713, H4714, G01240, G01250

(Go back to: [Lamentations 5:6](#))

elder, older, old

Definition:

The term “elder” or “older” refers to people (in the Bible, usually men) who have grown old enough to become mature adults and leaders within a community. For example, elders might have gray hair, have adult children, or perhaps even have grandchildren or great-grandchildren.

- The term “elder” came from the fact that elders were originally older men who, because of their age and experience, had greater wisdom.
- In the Old Testament, the elders helped lead the Israelites in matters of justice and the Law of Moses.
- In the New Testament, Jewish “elders” continued to be leaders in their communities and also were judges for the people.
- In the early Christian churches, Christian “elders” gave spiritual leadership to the local assemblies of believers. Elders in these churches sometimes included young men who were spiritually mature.
- This term could be translated as “older men” or “spiritually mature men leading the church.”

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:1-3
- 1 Timothy 3:1-3
- 1 Timothy 4:14
- Acts 5:19-21
- Acts 14:23
- Mark 11:28
- Matthew 21:23-24

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1419, H2205, H7868, G10870, G31870, G42440, G42450, G48500

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:10](#); [4:16](#); [5:12](#); [5:14](#))

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: [Lamentations 5 General 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: [Lamentations 1:21](#); [1:22](#); [3:38](#))

exile, exiled

Definition:

The term "exile" refers to people being forced to live somewhere away from their home country.

- People are usually sent into exile for punishment or for political reasons.
- A conquered people may be taken into exile to the country of the conquering army, in order to work for them.
- The "Babylonian exile" (or "the exile") is a period in Bible history when many Jewish citizens of the region of Judah were taken from their homes and forced to live in Babylon. It lasted 70 years.
- The phrase "the exiles" refers to people who are living in exile, away from their home country.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term to "exile" could also be translated as to "send away" or to "force out" or to "banish."
- The term "the exile" could be translated with a word or phrase that means "the sent away time" or "the time of banishment" or "the time of forced absence" or "banishment."
- Ways to translate "the exiles" could include "the exiled people" or "the people who were banished" or "the people exiled to Babylon."

(See also: Babylon, Judah)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 24:14
- Daniel 2:25-26
- Ezekiel 1:1-3
- Isaiah 20:4
- Jeremiah 29:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1123, H1473, H1540, H1541, H1546, H1547, H3212, H3318, H5080, H6808, H7617, H7622, H8689, G39270

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:3](#); [2:14](#); [4:22](#))

face, facial

Definition:

The word “face” literally refers to the front part of a person’s head. This term also has several figurative meanings in the Bible.

- In the Bible, the term “face” is often used figuratively to mean a person’s presence, the front of an object, or the surface of something.
- When referring to a person, the term “face” is often used figuratively to mean the action of seeing, which can represent that person’s knowledge, perception, notice, attention, or judgment.
- In a physical sense, to “face” someone or something means to look in the direction of that person or thing.
- To “face each other” means to “look directly at each other.”
- Being “face to face” means that two people are seeing each other in person, at a close distance.
- When Jesus “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,” it means that he very firmly decided to go.
- To “set one’s face against” people or a city means to firmly decide to no longer support, or to reject that city or person.
- The expression “face of the land” refers to the surface of the earth and often is a general reference to the whole earth. For example, a “famine covering the face of the earth” refers to a widespread famine affecting many people living on earth.
- The figurative expression “do not hide your face from your people” means “do not reject your people” or “do not desert your people” or “do not stop taking care of your people.”

Translation Suggestions:

- If possible, it is best to keep the expression or use an expression in the project language that has a similar meaning.
- The term to “face” could be translated as to “turn toward” or to “look at directly” or to “look at the face of.”
- The expression “face to face” could be translated as “up close” or “right in front of” or “in the presence of.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “before his face” could be translated as “ahead of him” or “in front of him” or “before him” or “in his presence.”
- The expression “set his face toward” could be translated as “began traveling toward” or “firmly made up his mind to go to.”
- The expression “hide his face from” could be translated as “turn away from” or “stop helping or protecting” or “reject.”
- To “set his face against” a city or people could be translated as “look at with anger and condemn” or “refuse to accept” or “decide to reject” or “condemn and reject” or “pass judgment on.”
- The expression “say it to their face” could be translated as “say it to them directly” or “say it to them in their presence” or “say it to them in person.”
- The expression “on the face of the land” could also be translated as “throughout the land” or “over the whole land” or “living throughout the land.”

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 5:4
- Genesis 33:10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0600, H0639, H5869, H6440, H8389, G37990, G43830, G47500

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:19](#); [3:35](#); [4:16](#); [5:12](#))

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: [Introduction to Lamentations](#))

faithful, faithfulness, trustworthy

Definition:

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

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

Translation Suggestions:

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

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

Bible References:

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

Examples from the Bible stories:

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

Word Data:

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

(Go back to: [Lamentations 4:12](#))

famine

Definition:

The term “famine” refers to an extreme lack of food throughout a country or region, usually due to not enough rain.

- Food crops can fail from natural causes such as lack of rain, crop disease, or insects.
- Food shortages can also be caused by people, such as enemies who destroy crops.
- In the Bible, God sometimes caused famine as a way to punish nations when they sinned against him.
- In Amos 8:11 the term “famine” is used figuratively to refer to a time when God punished his people by not speaking to them. This could be translated with the word for “famine” in your language, or with a phrase such as “extreme lack” or “severe deprivation.”

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 21:11-12
- Acts 7:11
- Genesis 12:10
- Genesis 45:6
- Jeremiah 11:21-23
- Luke 4:25
- Matthew 24:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3720, H7458, H7459, G30420

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:19](#); [4:9](#); [5:10](#))

fear, afraid, frighten

Definition:

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

Translation Suggestions:

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

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

Bible References:

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

Word Data:

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

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:47](#); [3:57](#))

feast, feasting

Definition:

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

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

(See also: festival, banquet)

Bible References:

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

Word Data:

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

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:4](#); [1:15](#); [2:6](#); [2:7](#); [2:22](#))

fire, firebrands, firepans, fireplace, firepot

Definition:

Fire is the heat, light, and flames that are produced when something is burned.

- Burning wood by fire turns the wood into ashes.
- Fire could also refer to lightning in the context of a storm or it being from heaven.
- The term “fire” is also used figuratively, usually referring to judgment or purification.
- The final judgment of unbelievers is in the fire of hell.
- Fire is used to refine gold and other metals. In the Bible, this process is used to explain how God refines people through difficult things that happen in their lives.
- The phrase “baptize with fire” could also be translated as “cause to experience suffering in order to be purified.”

(See also: pure)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 16:18-20
- 2 Kings 1:10
- 2 Thessalonians 1:8
- Acts 7:29-30
- John 15:6
- Luke 3:16
- Matthew 3:12
- Nehemiah 1:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0215, H0217, H0398, H0784, H0800, H0801, H1197, H1200, H1513, H2734, H3341, H3857, H4071, H4168, H5135, H6315, H8316, G04390, G04400, G10670, G27410, G44420, G44430, G44470, G44480, G44510, G53940, G54570

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:13; 4:11](#))

flesh

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “flesh” literally refers to the soft tissue of the physical body of a human being or animal.

- The Bible also uses the term “flesh” in a figurative way to refer to all human beings or all living creatures.
- In the New Testament, the term “flesh” is used to refer to the sinful nature of human beings. This is often used in contrast to their spiritual nature.
- The expression “own flesh and blood” refers to someone who is biologically related to another person, such as a parent, sibling, child, or grandchild.
- The expression “flesh and blood” can also refer to a person’s ancestors or descendants.
- The expression “one flesh” refers to the physical uniting of a man and woman in marriage.

Translation Suggestions:

- In the context of an animal’s body, “flesh” could be translated as “body” or “skin” or “meat.”
- When it is used to refer generally to all living creatures, this term could be translated as “living beings” or “everything that is alive.”
- When referring in general to all people, this term could be translated as “people” or “human beings” or “everyone who lives.”
- The expression “flesh and blood” could also be translated as “relatives” or “family” or “kinfolk” or “family clan.” There may be contexts where it could be translated as “ancestors” or “descendants.”
- Some languages may have an expression that is similar in meaning to “flesh and blood.”
- The expression “become one flesh” could be translated as “unite sexually” or “become as one body” or “become like one person in body and spirit.” The translation of this expression should be checked to make sure it is acceptable in the project language and culture. (See: [euphemism](#)). It should also be understood that this is figurative, and does not mean that a man and a woman who “become one flesh” literally become one person.

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:16
- 2 John 1:7
- Ephesians 6:12
- Galatians 1:16
- Genesis 2:24
- John 1:14
- Matthew 16:17
- Romans 8:8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0829, H1320, H1321, H2878, H3894, H4207, H7607, H7683, G29070, G45590, G45600, G45610

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:4](#))

forsake, forsaken, leave

Definition:

The term “forsake” means to abandon someone or to give up something. Someone who has been “forsaken” has been deserted or abandoned by someone else.

- When people “forsake” God, they are being unfaithful to him by disobeying him.
- When God “forsakes” people, he has stopped helping them and allowed them to experience suffering in order to cause them to turn back to him.
- This term can also mean to forsake things, such as forsaking, or not following, God's teachings.
- The term “forsaken” can be used in the past tense, as in “he has forsaken you” or as in referring to someone who has “been forsaken.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate this term could include “abandon” or “neglect” or “give up” or “go away from” or “leave behind,” depending on the context.
- To “forsake” God's law could be translated “disobey God's law.” This could also be translated as “abandon” or “give up on” or “stop obeying” his teachings or his laws.
- The phrase “be forsaken” can be translated as “be abandoned” or “be deserted.”
- It more clearer to use different words to translate this term, depending on whether the text describes forsaking a thing or a person.

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 6:11-13
- Daniel 11:29-30
- Genesis 24:27
- Joshua 24:16-18
- Matthew 27:45-47
- Proverbs 27:9-10
- Psalms 71:18

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0488, H2308, H5203, H5428, H5800, H5805, H7503, G06460, G06570, G08630, G14590, G26410

(Go back to: [Lamentations 5:20](#))

fruit, fruitful, unfruitful

Definition:

The term “fruit” literally refers to the part of a plant that can be eaten. Something that is “fruitful” has a lot of fruit. These terms are also used figuratively in the Bible.

- The Bible often uses “fruit” to refer to a person’s actions. Just as fruit on a tree shows what kind of tree it is, in the same way a person’s words and actions reveal what his character is like.
- A person can produce good or bad spiritual fruit, but the term “fruitful” always has the positive meaning of producing much good fruit.
- The term “fruitful” is also used figuratively to mean “prosperous.” This often refers to having many children and descendants, as well as having plenty of food and other wealth.
- In general, the expression “fruit of” refers to anything that comes from or that is produced by something else. For example, the “fruit of wisdom” refers to the good things that come from being wise.
- The expression “fruit of the land” refers generally to everything that the land produces for people to eat. This includes not only fruits such as grapes or dates, but also vegetables, nuts, and grains.
- The figurative expression “fruit of the Spirit” refers to godly qualities that the Holy Spirit produces in the lives of people who obey him.
- The expression “fruit of the womb” refers to “what the womb produces”—that is children.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term using the general word for “fruit” that is commonly used in the project language to refer to the edible fruit of a fruit tree. In many languages it may be more natural to use the plural “fruits” whenever it refers to more than one fruit.
- Depending on the context, the term “fruitful” could be translated as “producing much spiritual fruit” or “having many children” or “prosperous.”
- The expression “fruit of the land” could also be translated as “food that the land produces” or “food crops that are growing in that region.”
- When God created animals and people, he commanded them to “be fruitful and multiply,” which refers to having many offspring. This could also be translated as “have many offspring” or “have many children and descendants” or “have many children so that you will have many descendants.”
- The expression “fruit of the womb” could be translated as “what the womb produces” or “children a woman gives birth to” or just “children.” When Elizabeth says to Mary “blessed is the fruit of your womb,” she means “blessed is the child you will give birth to.” The project language may also have a different expression for this.
- Another expression “fruit of the vine,” could be translated as “vine fruit” or “grapes.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “will be more fruitful” could also be translated as “will produce more fruit” or “will have more children” or “will be prosperous.”
- The apostle Paul’s expression “fruitful labor” could be translated as “work that brings very good results” or “efforts that result in many people believing in Jesus.”
- The “fruit of the Spirit” could also be translated as “works that the Holy Spirit produces” or “words and actions that show that the Holy Spirit is working in someone.”

(See also: descendant, [grain](#), grape, Holy Spirit, vine, womb)

Bible References:

- Galatians 5:23
- Genesis 1:11
- Luke 8:15
- Matthew 3:8

- Matthew 7:17

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0004, H1061, H1063, H1069, H2233, H2981, H3581, H3759, H3899, H3978, H4022, H5108, H6509, H6529, H7019, H8393, H8570, G10810, G25900, G25920, G25930, G37030, G50520, G53520

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:20](#))

gate, gate bars, gatekeeper, gateposts, gateway

Definition:

The term "gate" refers to an access point in a fence, wall, or other kind of barrier that surrounds a house, property, city, etc.

- A city gate could be opened to allow people, animals, and cargo to travel in and out of the city.
- To protect the city, its walls and gates were thick and strong. Gates were closed and locked with a metal or wooden bar to prevent enemy soldiers from entering the city.
- A "bar" for a gate refers to a wood or metal bar that can be moved into place so that the doors of the gate cannot be opened from the outside.
- In Bible times, a city gate was often the social center for that town or city. It was a place where news of current events was exchanged between people, where business transactions occurred, and where civil judgments were made.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate "gate" could be "door" or "wall opening" or "barrier" or "entranceway."
- The phrase "bars of the gate" could be translated as "gate bolts" or "wooden beams to lock the gate" or "metal locking rods of the gate."

Bible References:

- Acts 9:24
- Acts 10:18
- Deuteronomy 21:18-19
- Genesis 19:1
- Genesis 24:60
- Matthew 7:13

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1817, H5592, H6607, H8179, G23740, G44390, G44400

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:4](#); [2:9](#); [4:12](#))

generation

Definition:

The term “generation” generally refers to a group of people who are all alive at the same time. They are all born in the same general time period and are therefore about the same age.

- A generation can also refer to a span of time. In Bible times, a generation was usually considered to be about 40 years.
- Parents and their children are from two different generations.
- In the Bible, the term “generation” is also used figuratively to refer generally to people who share common characteristics.

Translation Suggestions

- The phrase “this generation” or “people of this generation” could be translated as “the people living now” or “you people.”
- “This wicked generation” could also be translated as “these wicked people living now.”
- The expression “from generation to generation” or “from one generation to the next” could be translated as “people living now, as well as their children and grandchildren” or “people in every time period” or “people in this time period and future time periods” or “all people and their descendants.”
- “A generation to come will serve him; they will tell the next generation about Yahweh” could also be translated as “Many people in the future will serve Yahweh and will tell their children and grandchildren about him.”

(See also: descendant, [evil](#), [ancestor](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 15:19-21
- Exodus 3:13-15
- Genesis 15:16
- Genesis 17:7
- Mark 8:12
- Matthew 11:16
- Matthew 23:34-36
- Matthew 24:34

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1755, H1859, H8435, G10740

(Go back to: [Lamentations 5:19](#))

gird, girded, wrapped around, tied up, belt, tuck in belt, put belt around

Definition:

The term “gird” means to fasten something around something else. It often refers to using a belt or sash around the waist to keep a robe or tunic in place.

- The common biblical phrase, “gird up the loins” refers to tucking the bottom of a garment into a belt to allow a person to move more freely, usually to do work.
- This phrase can also mean “get ready to work” or to be prepared to do something difficult.
- The expression “gird up the loins” could be translated using an expression in the target language that has the same meaning. Or it could be translated figuratively as “prepare yourself for action” or “get yourself ready.”
- The term “girded with” could be translated as “encircled by” or “wrapped with” or “belted with.”

(See also: loins)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 1:13
- Job 38:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0640, H0247, H2290, H2296, H8151, G03280, G12410, G40240

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

god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry

Definition:

A false god is something that people worship instead of the one true God. The term “goddess” refers specifically to a female false god.

- These false gods or goddesses do not exist. Yahweh is the only God.
- People sometimes make objects into idols to worship as symbols of their false gods.
- In the Bible, God’s people frequently turned away from obeying him in order to worship false gods.
- Demons often deceive people into believing that the false gods and idols they worship have power.
- Baal, Dagon, and Molech were three of the many false gods that were worshiped by people in Bible times.
- Asherah and Artemis (Diana) were two of the goddesses that ancient peoples worshiped.

An idol is an object that people make so they can worship it. Something is described as “idolatrous” if it involves giving honor to something other than the one true God.

- People make idols to represent the false gods that they worship.
- These false gods do not exist; there is no God besides Yahweh.
- Sometimes demons work through an idol to make it seem like it has power, even though it does not.
- Idols are often made of valuable materials like gold, silver, bronze, or expensive wood.
- An “idolatrous kingdom” means a “kingdom of people who worship idols” or a “kingdom of people who worship earthly things.”
- The term “idolatrous figure” is another word for a “carved image” or an “idol.”

Translation Suggestions:

- There may already be a word for “god” or “false god” in the language or in a nearby language.
- The term “idol” could be used to refer to false gods.
- In English, a lower case “g” is used to refer to false gods, and upper case “G” is used to refer to the one true God. Other languages also do that.
- Another option would be to use a completely different word to refer to the false gods.
- Some languages may add a word to specify whether the false god is described as male or female.

(See also: God, Asherah, Baal, Molech, demon, image, [kingdom](#), worship)

Bible References:

- Genesis 35:2
- Exodus 32:1
- Psalms 31:6
- Psalms 81:8-10
- Isaiah 44:20
- Acts 7:41
- Acts 7:43
- Acts 15:20
- Acts 19:27
- Romans 2:22
- Galatians 4:8-9
- Galatians 5:19-21
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **10:2** Through these plagues, God showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's **gods**.
- **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** They (Canaanites) worshiped false **gods** and did many evil things.
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite **gods** instead of Yahweh, the true God.
- **18:13** But most of Judah's kings were evil, corrupt, and they worshiped idols. Some of the kings even sacrificed their children to false **gods**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H0367, H0410, H0426, H0430, H0457, H1322, H1544, H1892, H2553, H3649, H4656, H4906, H5236, H5566, H6089, H6090, H6091, H6456, H6459, H6673, H6736, H6754, H7723, H8163, H8251, H8267, H8441, H8655, G14930, G14940, G14950, G14960, G14970, G22990, G27120

(Go back to: [Introduction to Lamentations](#))

gold, golden

Definition:

Gold is a yellow, high quality metal that was used for making jewelry and religious objects. It was the most valuable metal in ancient times.

- In Bible times, many different kinds of objects were made out of solid gold or were covered with a thin layer of gold.
- These objects included earrings and other jewelry, and idols, altars, and other objects used in the tabernacle or temple, such as the ark of the covenant.
- In Old Testament times, gold was used as a means of exchange in buying and selling. It was weighed on a scale to determine its value.
- Later on, gold and other metals such as silver were used to make coins to use in buying and selling
- When referring to something that is not solid gold, but only has a thin covering of gold, the term “golden” or “gold-covered” or “gold-overlaid” could also be used.
- Sometimes an object is described as “gold-colored,” which means it has the yellow color of gold, but may not actually be made of gold.

(See also: [altar](#), ark of the covenant, [false god](#), [silver](#), tabernacle, [temple](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 1:7
- 1 Timothy 2:8-10
- 2 Chronicles 1:15
- Acts 3:6
- Daniel 2:32

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1220, H1722, H2091, H2742, H3800, H5458, H6884, H6885, G55520, G55530, G55540, G55570

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

good, right, pleasant, better, best

Definition:

The term “good” generally refers to a positive evaluation of the quality of something or someone, often in a moral or emotional sense. However, the term conveys various nuances throughout the Bible depending on the context.

- Something that is “good” could be emotionally pleasant, morally right, excellent, helpful, suitable, or profitable.
- In the Bible, the general meaning of “good” is often contrasted with “evil.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The general term for “good” in the target language should be used wherever this general meaning is accurate and natural, especially in contexts where it is contrasted to evil.
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this term could include “kind” or “excellent” or “pleasing to God” or “righteous” or “morally upright” or “profitable.”
- “Good land” could be translated as “fertile land” or “productive land”; a “good crop” could be translated as a “plentiful harvest” or “large amount of crops.”
- The phrase “do good to” means to do something that benefits others and could be translated as “be kind to” or “help” or “benefit” someone or “cause someone to prosper.”
- To “do good on the Sabbath” means to “do things that help others on the Sabbath.”
- Depending on the context, ways to translate the term “goodness” could include “blessing” or “kindness” or “moral perfection” or “righteousness” or “purity.”

(See also: [righteous](#), prosper, [evil](#))

Bible References:

- Galatians 5:22-24
- Genesis 1:12
- Genesis 2:9
- Genesis 2:17
- James 3:13
- Romans 2:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:4** God saw that what he had created was **good**.
- **1:11** God planted the tree of the knowledge of **good** and evil.
- **1:12** Then God said, “It is not **good** for man to be alone.”
- **2:4** “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand **good** and evil like he does.”
- **8:12** “You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, but God used the evil for **good!**”
- **14:15** Joshua was a **good** leader because he trusted and obeyed God.
- **18:13** Some of these kings were **good** men who ruled justly and worshiped God.
- **28:1** “**Good** teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me ‘**good**?’ There is only one who is **good**, and that is God.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0117, H0145, H0155, H0202, H0239, H0410, H1580, H1926, H1935, H2532, H2617, H2623, H2869, H2895, H2896, H2898, H3190, H3191, H3276, H3474, H3788, H3966, H4261, H4399, H5232, H5750, H6287, H6643, H6743, H7075, H7368, H7399, H7443, H7999, H8231, H8232, H8233, H8389, H8458, G00140, G00150, G00180, G00190, G05150, G07440, G08650, G09790, G13800, G20950, G20970, G21060, G21070, G21080, G21090, G21140, G21150, G21330, G21400, G21620, G21630, G21740, G22930, G25650, G25670, G25700, G25730, G28870, G29860, G31400, G36170, G37760, G41470, G46320, G46740, G48510, G52230, G52240, G53580, G55420, G55430, G55440

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:17](#); [3:25](#); [3:26](#); [3:27](#); [4:1](#); [4:9](#))

grain, grainfields

Definition:

The term “grain” usually refers to the seed of a food plant such as wheat, barley, corn, millet, or rice. It can also refer to the whole plant.

- In the Bible, the main grains that are referred to are wheat and barley.
- A head of grain is the part of the plant that holds the grain.
- Note that some older Bible versions use the word “corn” to refer to grain in general. In modern English however, “corn” only refers to one type of grain.

(See also: [head](#), wheat)

Bible References:

- Genesis 42:3
- Genesis 42:26-28
- Genesis 43:1-2
- Luke 6:2
- Mark 2:24
- Matthew 13:7-9
- Ruth 1:22

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1250, H1430, H1715, H2233, H2591, H3759, H3899, H7054, H7383, H7641, H7668, G02480, G25900, G34500, G46210, G47190

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:12](#))

groan

Definition:

The term to “groan” refers to the uttering of a deep, low sound that is caused by physical or emotional distress. It could also be the sound someone makes without any words.

- A person can groan because of feeling grief.
- Groaning can be caused by feeling a terrible, oppressive burden.
- Other ways to translate “groan” could include, “give a low cry of pain” or “grieve deeply.”
- As a noun, this could be translated as “a low cry of distress” or “a deep murmur of pain.”

(See also: [cry](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 5:2
- Hebrews 13:17
- Job 23:2
- Psalms 32:3-4
- Psalms 102:5-6

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0584, H0585, H0602, H0603, H1901, H1993, H5008, H5009, H5098, H5594, H7581, G47260, G47270, G49590

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:4](#); [1:8](#); [1:11](#); [1:21](#))

hand

Definition:

The word “hand” refers to the part of the body at the end of the arm. This term is often used figuratively to refer to a person’s power, control, or action, whether it be in reference to God or in reference to a human person.

Some of the various uses of the term “hand” include the following:

- The term “hand” can be used figuratively to refer to the position of being “beside” a person, an object, or a location.
- To “lay a hand on” means to “harm.” To “save from the hand of” means to prevent someone from being harmed by another person.
- The position of being “on the right hand” means “on the right side” or “to the right.”
- The expression “by the hand of” someone means “by” or “through” the action of that person. For example, the phrase “by the hand of the Lord” means that God caused something to happen.
- Expressions such as “hand over to” or “deliver into the hands of” refer to causing someone to be under the control or power of someone else.
- The term “laying on of hands” can refer to placing a hand on a person in order to dedicate that person to God’s service, to pray for healing, or to ask God to bless that person.
- When Paul says “written by my hand,” it means that he himself wrote that part of the letter rather than speaking it to someone else to write down.

Translation Suggestions

- These expressions and other figures of speech could be translated using other figurative expressions that have the same meaning. Or the meaning could be translated using direct, literal language (see examples above).
- The expression “handed him the scroll” could also be translated as “gave him the scroll” or “put the scroll in his hand.” It was not given to him permanently, but just for the purpose of using it at that time.
- An expression such as “delivered them into the hands of their enemies” or “handed them over to their enemies,” could be translated as “allowed their enemies to conquer them” or “caused them to be captured by their enemies” or “empowered their enemies to gain control over them.”
- To “die by the hand of” could be translated as “be killed by.”
- The expression “on the right hand of” could be translated as “on the right side of.”
- In regard to Jesus being “seated at the right hand of God,” if this does not communicate in the language that it refers to a position of high honor and equal authority, a different expression with that meaning could be used. Or a short explanation could be added: “on the right side of God, in the position of highest authority.”

(See also: power, right hand, honor, bless)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:25
- Acts 8:17
- Acts 11:21
- Genesis 9:5
- Genesis 14:20
- John 3:35
- Mark 7:32
- Matthew 6:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2026, H2651, H2947, H2948, H3027, H3028, H3225, H3231, H3233, H3709, H7126, H7138, H8040, H8042, H8168, G07100, G11880, G14480, G14510, G21760, G29020, G40840, G44740, G54950, G54960, G54970

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:7](#); [1:10](#); [1:14](#); [1:17](#); [2:7](#); [2:8](#); [2:15](#); [2:19](#); [3:3](#); [3:41](#); [3:64](#); [4:2](#); [4:6](#); [4:10](#); [5:6](#); [5:8](#); [5:12](#))

hang, hung

Definition:

The term “hang” means to suspend something or someone above the ground.

- In modern times, death by hanging is usually done by tying a rope around a person’s neck and suspending him from an elevated object until he dies. This elevated object can be any number of things, such as a tree or a gallows, that is, a platform built specifically for the purpose of hanging a person in order to kill him.
- In biblical times, however, ancient cultures may not have killed people by hanging in precisely the same way. For example, Jesus died while hanging on a wooden cross (sometimes called a “tree”), but there was nothing around his neck. The soldiers suspended him by nailing his hands (or wrists) and his feet to the cross.
- Some ancient cultures “hung” a person by impaling him on a wooden pole in such a way that he was suspended above the ground so that he could not escape. The person would be left there until he died.
- For many references to death by “hanging” in the Bible, the specific means of death is unknown.

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 17:23
- Acts 10:39
- Galatians 3:13
- Genesis 40:22
- Matthew 27:3-5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2614, H3363, H8518, G05190

(Go back to: [Lamentations 5:12](#))

head

Definition:

The word “head” refers to the uppermost body part of a human body, above the neck. This term is often used figuratively to mean many different things, including “top,” “first,” “beginning,” “source,” and other concepts.

Some examples of various uses of the term “head” include:

- The expression “no razor will ever touch his head” means that he should never cut or shave his hair.
- The expression “let their blood be on his own head” means that the man is responsible for their deaths and will receive the punishment for that.
- The expression “heads of grain” refers to the top part of wheat or barley plants that contains the seeds. Similarly, the expression “head of a mountain” refers to the top part of the mountain.
- The term “head” can also refer to the beginning or source of something, or the first in a series of things (can be objects or people).
- Often the term “head” refers to the most important person in a group or to a person who is in authority over others. For example, the phrase “You have made me the head over nations” means “You have made me the ruler...” or “You have given me authority over....”

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, the term “head” could be translated as “authority” or “ruler” or “the one who is responsible for.”
- The expression “will be on his own head” could be translated as “will be on him” or “he will be punished for” or “he will be held responsible for” or “he will be considered guilty for.”
- Depending on the context, some other ways to translate this term might include “top” or “beginning” or “source” or “leader.”

(See also: chief, [grain](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 1:51-54
- 1 Kings 8:1-2
- 1 Samuel 9:22
- Colossians 2:10
- Colossians 2:19
- Numbers 1:4

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0441, H1270, H1538, H3852, H4425, H4761, H4763, H5110, H5324, H6285, H6287, H6797, H6915, H6936, H7139, H7144, H7146, H7217, H7226, H7218, H7541, H7636, H7641, H7872, G03460, G07550, G27750, G27760, G47190

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:10](#); [2:15](#); [2:19](#); [3:54](#); [4:1](#); [5:16](#))

heart

Definition:

The term "heart" refers to the internal bodily organ that pumps blood throughout the body in people and animals. However, in the Bible the term "heart" is often used figuratively to refer to a person's thoughts, emotions, desires, or will.

- To have a "hard heart" is a common expression that means a person stubbornly refuses to obey God.
- The expressions "with all my heart" or "with my whole heart" mean to do something with complete sincerity, commitment, or willingness, holding nothing back.
- The expression "take it to heart" means to treat something seriously and apply it to one's life.
- The term "brokenhearted" describes a person who is very sad. That person has been deeply hurt emotionally.

Translation Suggestions

- Some languages use a different body part such as "stomach" or "liver" to refer to these ideas.
- Other languages may use one word to express some of these concepts and another word to express others.
- If "heart" or other body part does not have this meaning, some languages may need to express this literally with terms such as "thoughts" or "emotions" or "desires."
- Depending on the context, "with all my heart" or "with my whole heart" could be translated as "with all my energy" or "with complete dedication" or "completely" or "with total commitment."
- The expression "take it to heart" could be translated as "treat it seriously" or "carefully think about it."
- The expression "hard-hearted" could also be translated as "stubbornly rebellious" or "refusing to obey" or "continually disobeying God."
- Ways to translate "brokenhearted" could include "very sad" or "feeling deeply hurt."

(See also: hard)

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:17
- 1 Thessalonians 2:4
- 2 Thessalonians 3:13-15
- Acts 8:22
- Acts 15:9
- Luke 8:15
- Mark 2:6
- Matthew 5:8
- Matthew 22:37

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1079, H2436, H2504, H2910, H3519, H3629, H3820, H3821, H3823, H3824, H3825, H3826, H4578, H5315, H5640, H7130, H7307, H7356, H7907, G06740, G12820, G12710, G21330, G25880, G25890, G46410, G46980, G55900

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:20](#); [2:18](#); [2:19](#); [3:21](#); [3:33](#); [3:41](#); [3:65](#); [5:9](#); [5:15](#); [5:17](#))

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: [Lamentations 2:1](#); [3:41](#); [3:50](#); [3:66](#); [4:19](#))

holy, holiness, unholy, sacred

Definition:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Suggestions:

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

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

Bible References:

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

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

Examples from the Bible stories:

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

Word Data:

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

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

hope, hoped

Definition:

Hope is strongly desiring something to happen. Hope can imply either certainty or uncertainty regarding a future event.

- In the Bible, the term “hope” also has the meaning of “trust,” as in “my hope is in the Lord.” It refers to a sure expectation of receiving what God has promised his people.
- Sometimes the ULT translates the term in the original language as “confidence.” This happens mostly in the New Testament in situations where people who believe in Jesus as their Savior have the assurance (or confidence or hope) of receiving what God has promised.
- To have “no hope” means to have no expectation of something good happening. It means that it is actually very certain that it will not happen.

Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, the term to “hope” could also be translated as to “wish” or to “desire” or to “expect.”
- The expression “nothing to hope for” could be translated as “nothing to trust in” or “no expectation of anything good”
- To “have no hope” could be translated as “have no expectation of anything good” or “have no security” or “be sure that nothing good will happen.”
- The expression “have set your hopes on” could also be translated as “have put your confidence in” or “have been trusting in.”
- The phrase “I find hope in your Word” could also be translated as “I am confident that your Word is true” or “Your Word helps me trust in you” or “When I obey your Word, I am certain to be blessed.”
- Phrases such as “hope in” God could also be translated as, “trust in God” or “know for sure that God will do what he has promised” or “be certain that God is faithful.”

(See also: bless, confidence, [good](#), obey, trust, word of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 29:14-15
- 1 Thessalonians 2:19
- Acts 24:14-16
- Acts 26:6
- Acts 27:20
- Colossians 1:5
- Job 11:20

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0982, H0983, H0986, H2620, H2976, H3175, H3176, H3689, H4009, H4268, H4723, H7663, H7664, H8431, H8615, G00910, G05600, G16790, G16800, G20700

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:29](#))

house, household

Definition:

The term “house” refers to a small building, shelter, or tent, usually the place where a family sleeps. The term is often used figuratively in the Bible to mean various concepts such as “household” or “descendants,” etc.

- Sometimes the term “house” means “household,” referring to all the people who live together in one house or multi-structure home compound (whether buildings or tents), including family members and all their servants.
- Sometimes the term “house” means “family” or “descendants,” referring to all the people related to or descended from a particular person. For example, the phrase “house of David” refers to all the descendants of King David.
- The terms “house of God” and “house of Yahweh” refer to the tabernacle or temple. These expressions can also refer generally to a central place where Yahweh was worshipped.
- The phrase “house of Israel” can refer generally to the entire nation of Israel or more specifically to the tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, “house” could be translated as “household” or “people” or “family” or “descendants” or “temple” or “dwelling place.”
- The phrase “house of David” could be translated as “clan of David” or “family of David” or “descendants of David.” Related expressions could be translated in a similar way.
- Different ways to translate “house of Israel” could include “people of Israel” or “Israel’s descendants” or “Israelites.”
- The phrase “house of Yahweh” could be translated as “Yahweh’s temple” or “place where Yahweh is worshiped” or “place where Yahweh meets with his people” or “where Yahweh dwells.” The phrase “house of God” could be translated in a similar way.

(See also: descendant, house of God, tabernacle, [temple](#), house of David, kingdom of Israel)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:42
- Acts 7:49
- Genesis 39:4
- Genesis 41:40
- Luke 8:39
- Matthew 10:6
- Matthew 15:24

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1004, H1005, G36090, G36130, G36140, G36240

(Go back to: [Lamentations 5:2](#))

household

Definition:

The term “household” refers to all the people who live together in a house, including family members and all their servants.

- Managing a household would involves directing the servants and also taking care of the property.
- Sometimes “household” can refer figuratively to the whole family line of someone, especially his descendants.

(See also: [house](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 7:10
- Galatians 6:10
- Genesis 7:1
- Genesis 34:19
- John 4:53
- Matthew 10:25
- Matthew 10:36
- Philippians 4:22

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1004, H5657, G23220, G36090, G36140, G36150, G36160, G36230, G36240

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:27](#))

inherit, inheritance, heir

Definition:

The term “inherit” refers to receiving something valuable from a parent after a parent dies. The term can also refer to receiving something valuable from some other person because of a special relationship with that person. An “inheritance” is the things that are received, and an “heir” is a person who receives an inheritance.

- A physical inheritance that is received may be money, land, or other kinds of property.
- God promised Abraham and his descendants that they would inherit the land of Canaan, that it would belong to them forever.

Translation Suggestions:

- As always, consider first whether there are already terms in the target language for the concept of an heir or an inheritance, and use those terms.
- Depending on the context, other ways that the term “inherit” could be translated might include “receive” or “possess” or “come into possession of.”
- Ways to translate “inheritance” could include “promised gift” or “secure possession.”
- The term “heir” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “privileged child who receives the father’s possessions.”
- The term “heritage” could be translated as “inherited blessings.”

(See also: heir, Canaan, Promised Land, possess)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- 1 Peter 1:4
- 2 Samuel 21:3
- Acts 7:4-5
- Deuteronomy 20:16
- Galatians 5:21
- Genesis 15:7
- Hebrews 9:15
- Jeremiah 2:7
- Luke 15:11
- Matthew 19:29
- Psalm 79:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:6** When Abram arrived in Canaan God said, “Look all around you. I will give to you and your descendants all the land that you can see as an **inheritance**.”
- **27:1** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to **inherit** eternal life?”
- **35:3** “There was a man who had two sons. The younger son told his father, ‘Father, I want my **inheritance** now!’ So the father divided his property between the two sons.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2490, H2506, H3423, H3425, H4181, H5157, H5159, G28160, G28170, G28190, G28200

(Go back to: [Lamentations 5:2](#))

iniquity

Definition:

The term “iniquity” is a word that is very similar in meaning to the term “sin,” but may more specifically refer to conscious acts of wrongdoing or great wickedness.

- The word “iniquity” literally means a twisting or distorting (of the law). It refers to major injustice.
- Iniquity could be described as deliberate, harmful actions against other people.
- Other definitions of iniquity include “perversity” and “depravity,” which are both words that describe conditions of terrible sin.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “iniquity” could be translated as “wickedness” or “perverse actions” or “harmful acts.”
- Often, “iniquity” occurs in the same text as the word “sin” and “transgression” so it is important to have different ways of translating these terms.

(See also: [sin](#), transgress, trespass)

Bible References:

- Daniel 9:13
- Exodus 34:5-7
- Genesis 15:14-16
- Genesis 44:16
- Habakkuk 2:12
- Matthew 13:41
- Matthew 23:27-28
- Micah 3:10

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H1942, H5753, H5758, H5766, H5771, H5932, H5999, H7562, G00920, G00930, G04580, G38920, G41890

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:14](#); [4:6](#); [4:13](#); [4:22](#); [5:7](#))

Israel, Israelites

Facts:

The term "Israel" is the name that God gave to Jacob. Often it refers to the nation that is descended from him.

- The name Israel probably means "He struggles with God."
- The descendants of Jacob became known as the "sons of Israel" or the "people of Israel" or the "nation of Israel" or the "Israelites."
- God formed his covenant with the people of Israel. They were his chosen people.
- The nation of Israel consisted of twelve tribes.
- Soon after King Solomon died, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the southern kingdom, called "Judah," and the northern kingdom, called "Israel."
- Often the term "Israel" can be translated as "the people of Israel" or "the nation of Israel," depending on the context.

(See also: [Jacob](#), kingdom of Israel, Judah, [nation](#), twelve tribes of Israel)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 10:1
- 1 Kings 8:2
- Acts 2:36
- Acts 7:24
- Acts 13:23
- John 1:49-51
- Luke 24:21
- Mark 12:29
- Matthew 2:6
- Matthew 27:9
- Philippians 3:4-5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:15** The descendants of the twelve sons became the twelve tribes of **Israel**.
- **9:3** The Egyptians forced the **Israelites** to build many buildings and even whole cities.
- **9:5** A certain **Israelite** woman gave birth to a baby boy.
- **10:1** They said, "This is what the God of **Israel** says, 'Let my people go!'"
- **14:12** But despite all this, the people of *_Israel_* complained and grumbled against God and against Moses.
- **15:9** God fought for **Israel** that day. He caused the Amorites to be confused and he sent large hailstones that killed many of the Amorites.
- **15:12** After this battle, God gave each tribe of **Israel** *its own section of the Promised Land. Then God gave _Israel_ peace along all its borders.*
- **16:16** So God punished *_Israel_* again for worshipping idols.
- **43:6** "Men of **Israel**, Jesus was a man who did many mighty signs and wonders by the power of God, as you have seen and already know."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3478, H3479, H3481, H3482, G09350, G24740, G24750

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:1](#); [2:3](#); [2:5](#))

Jacob, Israel

Facts:

Jacob was the younger twin son of Isaac by Rebekah. God changed his name to "Israel." His descendants became the nation of Israel.

- Jacob is the last of the three patriarchs of the Israelite nation: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The descendants of Jacob's twelve sons became the twelve tribes of Israel.
- The name Jacob is similar to the Hebrew word meaning "heel." As Jacob was being born, he was holding onto the heel of his twin brother Esau. In the Old Testament times, the heel was a body part associated both with attack and with the rear part of a person's body. The Hebrew name Jacob was probably associated with the idea of attacking someone from behind.
- Many years later, God changed Jacob's name to "Israel," which probably means "He struggles with God."
- Jacob married Laban's two daughters, Leah and Rachel, as well as each of their servants, Zilpah and Bilhah. These four women mothered the twelve sons who became the ancestral fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel.
- In the New Testament, a different man named Jacob is listed as being Joseph's father in Matthew's genealogy.

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

(See also: [Israel](#), twelve tribes of Israel, Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, Bilhah, deceive, Esau, Isaac, Rebekah, Laban)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:11
- Acts 7:46
- Genesis 25:26
- Genesis 29:1-3
- Genesis 32:1-2
- John 4:4-5
- Matthew 8:11-13
- Matthew 22:32

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **7:1** As the boys grew up, Rebekah loved **Jacob**, but Isaac loved Esau. **Jacob** loved to stay at home, but Esau loved to hunt.
- **7:7** **Jacob** lived there for many years, and during that time he married and had twelve sons and a daughter. God made him very wealthy.
- **7:8** After twenty years away from his home in Canaan, **Jacob** returned there with his family, his servants, and all his herds of animals.
- **7:10** The covenant promises God had promised to Abraham and then to Isaac now passed on to **Jacob**.
- **8:1** Many years later, when **Jacob** was an old man, he sent his favorite son, Joseph, to check on his brothers who were taking care of the herds.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3290, G23840

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:17](#); [2:2](#); [2:3](#))

Jerusalem

Facts:

Jerusalem was originally an ancient Canaanite city that later became the most important city in Israel. It is located about 34 kilometers west of the Salt Sea and just north of Bethlehem. It is still the capital city of Israel today.

- The name "Jerusalem" is first mentioned in the book of Joshua. Other Old Testament names for this city include "Salem" "city of Jebus," and "Zion." Both "Jerusalem" and "Salem," have the root meaning of "peace."
- Jerusalem was originally a Jebusite fortress called "Zion" which King David captured and made into his capital city.
- It was in Jerusalem that David's son Solomon built the first temple in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, which was the mountain where Abraham had offered his son Isaac to God. The temple was rebuilt there after it was destroyed by the Babylonians.
- Because the temple was in Jerusalem, the major Jewish festivals were celebrated there.
- People normally referred to going "up" to Jerusalem since it is located in the mountains.

(See also: Babylon, Christ, David, Jebusites, Jesus, Solomon, [temple](#), [Zion](#))

Bible References:

- Galatians 4:26-27
- John 2:13
- Luke 4:9-11
- Luke 13:5
- Mark 3:7-8
- Mark 3:20-22
- Matthew 3:6
- Matthew 4:23-25
- Matthew 20:17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:5** David conquered **Jerusalem** and made it his capital city.
- **18:2** In **Jerusalem**, Solomon built the Temple for which his father David had planned and gathered materials.
- **20:7** They (Babylonians) captured the city of **Jerusalem**, destroyed the Temple, and took away all the treasures of the city and the Temple.
- **20:12** So, after seventy years in exile, a small group of Jews returned to the city of **Jerusalem** in Judah.
- **38:1** About three years after Jesus first began preaching and teaching publicly, Jesus told his disciples that he wanted to celebrate this Passover with them in **Jerusalem**, and that he would be killed there.
- **38:2** After Jesus and the disciples arrived in **Jerusalem**, Judas went to the Jewish leaders and offered to betray Jesus to them in exchange for money.
- **42:8** "It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to receive forgiveness for their sins. They will do this starting in **Jerusalem**, and then go to all people groups everywhere."
- **42:11** Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he told his disciples, "Stay in **Jerusalem** until you receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3389, H3390, G24140, G24150, G24190

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:7](#); [1:8](#); [1:17](#); [2:10](#); [2:13](#); [2:15](#); [4:12](#))

joy, joyful, rejoice, glad

Definition:

joy

The term “joy” refers to a feeling of delight or deep satisfaction. The related term “joyful” describes a person who feels very glad and is full of deep happiness.

- A person feels joy when he has a deep sense that what he is experiencing is very good.
- God is the one who gives true joy to people.
- Having joy does not depend on pleasant circumstances. God can give people joy even when very difficult things are happening in their lives.
- Sometimes places are described as joyful, such as houses or cities. This means that the people who live there are joyful.

rejoice

The term “rejoice” means to be full of joy and gladness.

- This term often refers to being very happy about the good things that God has done.
- It could be translated as “be very happy” or “be very glad” or “be full of joy.”
- When Mary said “my soul rejoices in God my Savior,” she meant “God my Savior has made me very happy” or “I feel so joyful because of what God my Savior has done for me.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “joy” could also be translated as “gladness” or “delight” or “great happiness.”
- The phrase, “be joyful” could be translated as “rejoice” or “be very glad” or it could be translated “be very happy in God’s goodness.”
- A person who is joyful could be described as “very happy” or “delighted” or “deeply glad.”
- A phrase such as “make a joyful shout” could be translated as “shout in a way that shows you are very happy.”
- A “joyful city” or “joyful house” could be translated as “city where joyful people live” or “house full of joyful people” or “city whose people are very happy.” (See: [metonymy](#))

Bible References:

- Nehemiah 8:10
- Psalm 48:2
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Jeremiah 15:15-16
- Matthew 2:9-10
- Luke 15:7
- Luke 19:37-38
- John 3:29
- Acts 16:32-34
- Romans 5:1-2
- Romans 15:30-32
- Galatians 5:23
- Philippians 4:10-13

- 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16
- Philemon 1:4-7
- James 1:2
- 3 John 1:1-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **33:7** "The rocky ground is a person who hears God's word and accepts it with **joy**."
- **34:4** "The kingdom of God is also like hidden treasure that someone hid in a field.. Another man found the treasure and then buried it again. He was so filled with **joy**, that he went and sold everything he had and used the money to buy that field."
- **41:7** The women were full of fear and great **joy**. They ran to tell the disciples the good news.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1523, H1524, H1525, H2302, H2304, H2305, H2654, H2898, H4885, H5937, H5947, H5965, H5970, H6342, H6670, H7440, H7442, H7444, H7445, H7797, H7832, H8055, H8056, H8057, H8342, H8643, G00200, G00210, G21650, G21670, G27440, G46400, G47960, G49130, G54630, G54790

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:17](#); [4:21](#))

Judea, Judah

Facts:

The term “Judea” refers to an area of land in ancient Israel. It is sometimes used in a narrow sense and other times in a broad sense.

- Sometimes “Judea” is used in a narrow sense to refer only to the province located in the southern part of ancient Israel just west of the Dead Sea. Some translations call this province “Judah.”
- Other times “Judea” has a broad sense and refers to all the provinces of ancient Israel, including Galilee, Samaria, Perea, Idumea and Judea (Judah).
- If translators want to make the distinction clear, the broad sense of Judea could be translated as “Judea Country” and the narrow sense could be translated as “Judea Province,” or “Judah Province” since this is the part of ancient Israel where the tribe of Judah had originally lived.

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

(See also: Galilee, Edom, Judah, Judah, Samaria)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14
- Acts 2:9
- Acts 9:32
- Acts 12:19
- John 3:22-24
- Luke 1:5
- Luke 4:44
- Luke 5:17
- Mark 10:1-4
- Matthew 2:1
- Matthew 2:5
- Matthew 2:22-23
- Matthew 3:1-3
- Matthew 19:1

Word Data:

- Strong's: G24530

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:3](#); [1:15](#); [2:2](#); [2:5](#); [5:11](#))

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: [Lamentations 3:35](#); [3:59](#))

king, kingship

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “king” refers to a man who is the supreme ruler of a particular group of people or a particular region of land (or both).

- In biblical times, a king was usually chosen to rule on the basis of family relation to the previous king(s). When a king died, usually his oldest son became the next king.
- The Bible often refers to God as a king who rules over the entire universe (in a general sense) and over his people (in a specific sense).
- The New Testament refers to Jesus as a king in various ways, including: “king of the Jews;” “king of Israel;” and “king of kings.”
- Depending on the context, the term “king” might also be translated as “supreme chief” or “sovereign ruler.”
- The phrase “king of kings” might be translated as “king who rules over all other kings” or “supreme ruler who has authority over all other rulers.”

(See also: authority, Herod Antipas, [kingdom](#), kingdom of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 6:15-16
- 2 Kings 5:18
- 2 Samuel 5:3
- Acts 7:9-10
- Acts 13:22
- John 1:49-51
- Luke 1:5
- Luke 22:24-25
- Matthew 5:35
- Matthew 14:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:6** One night, the Pharaoh, which is what the Egyptians called their kings, had two dreams that disturbed him greatly.
- **16:1** The Israelites had no **king**, so everyone did what they thought was right for them.
- **16:18** Finally, the people asked God for a **king** like all the other nations had.
- **17:5** Eventually, Saul died in battle, and David became **king** of Israel. He was a good **king**, and the people loved him.
- **21:6** God’s prophets also said that the Messiah would be a prophet, a priest, and a **king**.
- **48:14** David was the **king** of Israel, but Jesus is the **king** of the entire universe!

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4427, H4428, H4430, G09350, G09360

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:6](#); [2:9](#); [4:12](#))

kingdom

Definition:

A kingdom is a group of people ruled by a king. It also refers to the realm or political regions over which a king or other ruler has control and authority.

- A kingdom can be of any geographical size. A king might govern a nation or country or only one city.
- The term “kingdom” can also refer to a spiritual reign or authority, as in the term “kingdom of God.”
- God is the ruler of all creation, but the term “kingdom of God” especially refers to his reign and authority over the people who have believed in Jesus and who have submitted to his authority.
- The Bible also talks about Satan having a “kingdom” in which he temporarily rules over many things on this earth. His kingdom is evil and is referred to as “darkness.”

Translation Suggestions:

- When referring to a physical region that is ruled over by a king, the term “kingdom” could be translated as “country (ruled by a king)” or “king’s territory” or “region ruled by a king.”
- In a spiritual sense, “kingdom” could be translated as “ruling” or “reigning” or “controlling” or “governing.”
- One way to translate “kingdom of priests” might be “spiritual priests who are ruled by God.”
- The phrase “kingdom of light” could be translated as “God’s reign that is good like light” or “when God, who is light, rules people” or “the light and goodness of God’s kingdom.” It is best to keep the word “light” in this expression since that is a very important term in the Bible.
- Note that the term “kingdom” is different from an empire, in which an emperor rules over several countries.

(See also: authority, [king](#), kingdom of God, kingdom of Israel, Judah, Judah, [priest](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:12
- 2 Timothy 4:17-18
- Colossians 1:13-14
- John 18:36
- Mark 3:24
- Matthew 4:7-9
- Matthew 13:19
- Matthew 16:28
- Revelation 1:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:2** God said to Moses and the people of Israel, “If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my prized possession, a **kingdom** of priests, and a holy nation.”
- **18:4** God was angry with Solomon and, as a punishment for Solomon’s unfaithfulness, he promised to divide the nation of Israel in two **kingdoms** after Solomon’s death.
- **18:7** Ten of the tribes of the nation of Israel rebelled against Rehoboam. Only two tribes remained faithful to him. These two tribes became the **kingdom** of Judah.
- **18:8** The other ten tribes of the nation of Israel that rebelled against Rehoboam appointed a man named Jeroboam to be their king. They set up their **kingdom** in the northern part of the land and were called the **kingdom** of Israel.
- **21:8** A king is someone who rules over a **kingdom** and judges the people.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4410, H4437, H4438, H4467, H4468, H4474, H4475, G09320

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:2](#))

know, knowledge, unknown, distinguish

Definition:

The term “know” and “knowledge” means generally to understand something or someone. It can also mean to be aware of a fact or to be familiar with a person. The expression “to make known” means to tell information.

- The term “knowledge” refers to information that people know. It can apply to knowing physical concepts or abstract concepts.
- To “know about” God means to understand facts about him because of what he has revealed to us.
- To “know” God means to have a relationship with him. This also applies to knowing people.
- To know God’s will means to be aware of what he has commanded, or to understand what he wants a person to do.
- To “know the Law” means to be aware of what God has commanded or to understand what God has instructed in the laws he gave to Moses.
- Sometimes “knowledge” is used as a synonym for “wisdom,” which includes living in a way that is pleasing to God.
- The “knowledge of God” is sometimes used as a synonym for the “fear of Yahweh.”
- When used of a man and a woman to “know” is often an euphemism that refers to having sexual intercourse.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “know” could include “understand” or “be familiar with” or “be aware of” or “be acquainted with” or “be in relationship with.”
- In the context of understanding the difference between two things, the term is usually translated as “distinguish.” When used in this way, the term is often followed by the preposition “between.”
- Some languages have two different words for “know,” one for knowing facts and one for knowing a person and having a relationship with him.
- The term “make known” could be translated as “cause people to know” or “reveal” or “tell about” or “explain.”
- To “know about” something could be translated as “be aware of” or “be familiar with.”
- The expression “know how to” means to understand the process or method of getting something done. It could also be translated as “be able to” or “have the skill to.”
- The term “knowledge” could also be translated as “what is known” or “wisdom” or “understanding,” depending on the context.

(See also: [law](#), reveal, understand, wise)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 2:12-13
- 1 Samuel 17:46
- 2 Corinthians 2:15
- 2 Peter 1:3-4
- Deuteronomy 4:39-40
- Genesis 19:5
- Luke 1:77

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1843, H1844, H1847, H1875, H3045, H3046, H4093, H4486, H5046, H5234, H5475, H5869, G00500, G00560, G10970, G11070, G11080, G14920, G19210, G19220, G19870, G24670, G25890, G42670, G48940

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:7](#); [3:38](#))

law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God

Definition:

Most simply, the term “law” refers to a rule or instruction that should be followed. In the Bible, the term “law” is often used generally to refer to anything and everything God wants his people to obey and do. The specific term “law of Moses” refers to the commandments and instructions that God gave Moses for the Israelites to obey.

- Depending on the context, the “law” can refer to:
 - the Ten Commandments that God wrote on stone tablets for the Israelites
 - all the laws given to Moses
 - the first five books of the Old Testament
 - the entire Old Testament (also referred to as “scriptures” in the New Testament).
 - all of God’s instructions and will
- The phrase “the Law and the Prophets” is used in the New Testament to refer to the Hebrew scriptures (or “Old Testament”)

Translation Suggestions:

- These terms could be translated using the plural, “laws,” since they refer to many instructions.
- The term “law of Moses” could be translated as “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Depending on the context, “the law of Moses” could also be translated as “the law that God told to Moses” or “God’s laws that Moses wrote down” or “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Ways to translate “the law” or “law of God” or “God’s laws” could include “laws from God” or “God’s commands” or “laws that God gave” or “everything that God commands” or “all of God’s instructions.”
- The phrase “law of Yahweh” could also be translated as “Yahweh’s laws” or “laws that Yahweh said to obey” or “laws from Yahweh” or “things Yahweh commanded.”

(See also: instruct, Moses, Ten Commandments, lawful, [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 15:6
- Daniel 9:13
- Exodus 28:42-43
- Ezra 7:25-26
- Galatians 2:15
- Luke 24:44
- Matthew 5:18
- Nehemiah 10:29
- Romans 3:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:7** God also gave many other **laws** and rules to follow. If the people obeyed these **laws**, God promised that he would bless and protect them. If they disobeyed them, God would punish them.
- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed **God’s law** could bring an animal to the altar in front of the Tent of Meeting as a sacrifice to God.
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the covenant that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai. The people promised to remain faithful to God and follow **his laws**.
- **16:1** After Joshua died, the Israelites disobeyed God and did not drive out the rest of the Canaanites or obey **God’s laws**.

- **21:5** In the New Covenant, God would write **his law** on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would forgive their sins.
- **27:1** Jesus answered, "What is written in **God's law**?"
- **28:1** Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me 'good?' There is only one who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have eternal life, obey **God's laws**."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H1881, H1882, H2706, H2710, H3068, H4687, H4872, H4941, H8451, G23160, G35510, G35650

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:9](#))

life, live, living, alive

Definition:

The term “life” refers to being physically alive as opposed to being physically dead.

1. Physical life

- A “life” can also refer to an individual person as in “a life was saved”.
- Sometimes the word “life” refers to the experience of living as in, “his life was enjoyable.”
- It can also refer to a person’s lifespan, as in the expression, “the end of his life.”
- The term “living” may refer to being physically alive, as in “my mother is still living.” It may also refer to dwelling somewhere as in, “they were living in the city.”
- In the Bible, the concept of “life” is often contrasted with the concept of “death.”

2. Eternal life

- A person has eternal life when he believes in Jesus. God gives that person a transformed life with the Holy Spirit living in him.
- The opposite of eternal life is eternal death, which means being separated from God and experiencing eternal punishment.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “life” can be translated as “existence” or “person” or “soul” or “being” or “experience.”
- The term “live” could be translated by “dwell” or “reside” or “exist.”
- The expression “end of his life” could be translated as “when he stopped living.”
- The expression “spared their lives” could be translated as “allowed them to live” or “did not kill them.”
- The expression “they risked their lives” could be translated as “they put themselves in danger” or “they did something that could have killed them.”
- When the Bible text talks about eternal life, the term “life” could be translated in the following ways: “eternal life” or “God making us alive in our spirits” or “new life by God’s Spirit” or “being made alive in our inner self.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “give life” could also be translated as “cause to live” or “give eternal life” or “cause to live eternally.”

(See also: [death](#), [everlasting](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 1:3
- Acts 10:42
- Genesis 2:7
- Genesis 7:22
- Hebrews 10:20
- Jeremiah 44:2
- John 1:4
- Judges 2:18
- Luke 12:23
- Matthew 7:14

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:10** So God took some dirt, formed it into a man, and breathed **life** into him.
- **3:1** After a long time, many people were *_living_* in the world.
- **8:13** When Joseph's brothers returned home and told their father, Jacob, that Joseph was still **alive**, he was very happy.
- **17:9** However, toward the end of his [David's] **life** he sinned terribly before God.
- **27:1** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal **life**?"
- **35:5** Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection and the **Life**."
- **44:5** "You are the ones who told the Roman governor to kill Jesus. You killed the author of **life**, but God raised him from the dead."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1934, H2416, H2417, H2421, H2425, H5315, G01980, G02220, G02270, G08060, G05900

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:11](#); [1:16](#); [1:19](#); [2:12](#); [2:19](#); [3:17](#); [3:20](#); [3:24](#); [3:39](#); [3:58](#); [4:20](#))

lord, Lord, master, sir

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “lord” generally refers to someone who has ownership or authority over other people. In the Bible, however, the term is used to address many different kinds of people, including God.

- This word is sometimes translated as “master” when addressing Jesus or when referring to someone who owns slaves.
- Some English versions translate this as “sir” in contexts where someone is politely addressing someone of higher status.

When “Lord” is capitalized, it is a title that refers to God. (Note, however, that when it is used as a form of addressing someone or it occurs at the beginning of a sentence it may be capitalized and have the meaning of “sir” or “master.”)

- In the Old Testament, this term is also used in expressions such as “Lord God Almighty” or “Lord Yahweh” or “Yahweh our Lord.”
- In the New Testament, the apostles used this term in expressions such as “Lord Jesus” and “Lord Jesus Christ,” which communicate that Jesus is God.
- The term “Lord” in the New Testament is also used alone as a direct reference to God, especially in quotations from the Old Testament. For example, the Old Testament text has “Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh” and the New Testament text has “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”
- In the ULT and UST, the title “Lord” is only used to translate the actual Hebrew and Greek words that mean “Lord.” It is never used as a translation of God’s name (Yahweh), as is done in many translations.
- Some languages translate “Lord” as “Master” or “Ruler” or some other term that communicates ownership or supreme rule.
- In the appropriate contexts, many translations capitalize the first letter of this term to make it clear to the reader that this is a title referring to God.
- For places in the New Testament where there is a quote from the Old Testament, the term “Lord God” could be used to make it clear that this is a reference to God.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term can be translated with the equivalent of “master” when it refers to a person who owns slaves. It can also be used by a servant to address the person he works for.
- When it refers to Jesus, if the context shows that the speaker sees him as a religious teacher, it can be translated with a respectful address for a religious teacher, such as “master.”
- If the person addressing Jesus does not know him, “lord” could be translated with a respectful form of address such as “sir.” This translation would also be used for other contexts in which a polite form of address to a man is called for.
- When referring to God the Father or to Jesus, this term is considered a title, written as “Lord” (capitalized) in English.

(See also: God, Jesus, ruler, [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 39:2
- Joshua 3:9-11
- Psalms 86:15-17
- Jeremiah 27:4
- Lamentations 2:2

- Ezekiel 18:29
- Daniel 9:9
- Daniel 9:17-19
- Malachi 3:1
- Matthew 7:21-23
- Luke 1:30-33
- Luke 16:13
- Romans 6:23
- Ephesians 6:9
- Philippians 2:9-11
- Colossians 3:23
- Hebrews 12:14
- James 2:1
- 1 Peter 1:3
- Jude 1:5
- Revelation 15:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **25:5** But Jesus replied to Satan by quoting from the Scriptures. He said, "In God's word, he commands his people, 'Do not test the **Lord** your God.'"
- **25:7** Jesus replied, "Get away from me, Satan! In God's word he commands his people, 'Worship only the **Lord** your God and only serve him.'"
- **26:3** This is the year of the **Lord's** favor.
- **27:2** The law expert replied that God's law says, "Love the **Lord** your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind."
- **31:5** Then Peter said to Jesus, "**Master**, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water"
- **43:9** "But know for certain that God has caused Jesus to become both **Lord** and Messiah!"
- **47:3** By means of this demon she predicted the future for people, she made a lot of money for her **masters** as a fortuneteller.
- **47:11** Paul answered, "Believe in Jesus, the **Master**, and you and your family will be saved."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0113, H0136, H1167, H1376, H4756, H7980, H8323, G02030, G06340, G09620, G12030, G29620

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:14](#); [1:15](#); [2:1](#); [2:2](#); [2:5](#); [2:7](#); [2:18](#); [2:19](#); [2:20](#); [3:31](#); [3:36](#); [3:37](#); [3:58](#))

love, beloved

Definition:

To love another person is to care for that person and do things that will benefit him. There are different meanings for "love" some languages may express using different words:

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on the good of others even when it doesn't benefit oneself. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do. God himself is love and is the source of true love.

- Jesus showed this kind of love by sacrificing his life in order to rescue us from sin and death. He also taught his followers to love others sacrificially.
- When people love others with this kind of love, they act in ways that show they are thinking of what will cause the others to thrive. This kind of love especially includes forgiving others.
- In the ULT, the word "love" refers to this kind of sacrificial love, unless a Translation Note indicates a different meaning.

Another word in the New Testament refers to brotherly love, or love for a friend or family member.

- This term refers to natural human love between friends or relatives.
- The term can also be used in such contexts as, "They love to sit in the most important seats at a banquet." This means that they "like very much" or "greatly desire" to do that.

The word "love" can also refer to romantic love between a man and a woman.

Translation Suggestions:

- Unless indicated otherwise in a Translation Note, the word "love" in the ULT refers to the kind of sacrificial love that comes from God.
- Some languages may have a special word for the kind of unselfish, sacrificial love that God has. Ways to translate this might include, "devoted, faithful caring" or "care for unselfishly" or "love from God." Make sure that the word used to translate God's love can include giving up one's own interests to benefit others and loving others no matter what they do.
- Sometimes the English word "love" describes the deep caring that people have for friends and family members. Some languages might translate this with a word or phrase that means "like very much" or "care for" or "have strong affection for."
- In contexts where the word "love" is used to express a strong preference for something, this could be translated by "strongly prefer" or "like very much" or "greatly desire."
- Some languages may also have a separate word that refers to romantic or sexual love between a husband and wife.
- Many languages must express "love" as an action. So for example, they might translate "love is patient, love is kind" as, "when a person loves someone, he is patient with him and kind to him."

(See also: covenant, [death](#), sacrifice, save, [sin](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 13:7
- 1 John 3:2
- 1 Thessalonians 4:10
- Galatians 5:23
- Genesis 29:18
- Isaiah 56:6
- Jeremiah 2:2

- John 3:16
- Matthew 10:37
- Nehemiah 9:32-34
- Philippians 1:9
- Song of Songs 1:2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:2** The law expert replied that God's law says, "**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. And **love** your neighbor as yourself."
- **33:8** "The thorny ground is a person who hears God's word, but, as time passes, the cares, riches, and pleasures of life choke out his **love** for God."
- **36:5** As Peter was talking, a bright cloud came down on top of them and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son whom I **love**."
- **39:10** "Everyone who **loves** the truth listens to me."
- **47:1** She (Lydia) **loved** and worshiped God.
- **48:1** When God created the world, everything was perfect. There was no sin. Adam and Eve **loved** each other, and they **loved** God.
- **49:3** He (Jesus) taught that you need to **love** other people the same way you love yourself.
- **49:4** He (Jesus) also taught that you need to **love** God more than you **love** anything else, including your wealth.
- **49:7** Jesus taught that God **loves** sinners very much.
- **49:9** But God **loved** everyone in the world so much that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be punished for his sins, but will live with God forever.
- **49:13** God **loves** you and wants you to believe in Jesus so he can have a close relationship with you.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0157, H0158, H0159, H0160, H2245, H2617, H2836, H3039, H4261, H5689, H5690, H5691, H7355, H7356, H7453, H7474, G00250, G00260, G53600, G53610, G53620, G53630, G53650, G53670, G53680, G53690, G53770, G53810, G53820, G53830, G53880

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:2](#); [1:19](#))

mourn, mourner, weeping

Facts:

The terms “mourn” and “mourning” refer to expressing deep grief, usually in response to the death of someone.

- In many cultures, mourning includes specific outward behaviors that show this sadness and grief.
- The Israelites and other people groups in ancient times expressed mourning through loud wailing and lamenting. They also wore rough clothing made of sackcloth and put ashes on themselves.
- Hired mourners, usually women, would loudly weep and wail from the time of death until well after the body was put in the tomb.
- The typical period of mourning was seven days, but could last as long as thirty days (as for Moses and Aaron) or seventy days (as for Jacob).
- The Bible also uses the term figuratively to talk about “mourning” because of sin. This refers to feeling deeply grieved because sin hurts God and people.

(See also: [sackcloth](#), [sin](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 15:34-35
- 2 Samuel 1:11
- Genesis 23:2
- Luke 7:31-32
- Matthew 11:17

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0056, H0057, H0060, H0205, H0578, H0584, H0585, H1058, H1065, H1068, H1671, H1897, H1899, H4553, H4798, H5092, H5098, H5110, H5594, H6937, H6941, H8386, G23540, G28750, G36020, G39960, G39970

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:8](#))

name

Definition:

The term “name” refers to the word by which a specific person or thing is called. In the Bible, however, the term “name” is used in several different ways to refer to several different concepts.

- In some contexts, “name” could refer to a person’s reputation, as in “let us make a name for ourselves.”
- The term “name” could also refer to the memory of something. For example, “cut off the names of the idols” means to destroy those idols so that they are no longer remembered or worshiped.
- Speaking “in the name of God” meant speaking with his power and authority, or as his representative.
- The “name” of someone could refer to the entire person, as in “there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.” (See: [metonymy](#))

Translation Suggestions:

- An expression like “his good name” could be translated as “his good reputation.”
- Doing something “in the name of” could be translated as “with the authority of” or “with the permission of” or “as the representative of” that person.
- The expression “make a name for ourselves” could be translated “cause many people to know about us” or “make people think we are very important.”
- The expression “call his name” could be translated as “name him” or “give him the name.”
- The expression “those who love your name” could be translated as “those who love you.”
- The expression “cut off the names of idols” could be translated as “get rid of pagan idols so that they are not even remembered” or “cause people to stop worshiping false gods” or “completely destroy all idols so that people no longer even think about them.”

(See also: [call](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:12
- 2 Timothy 2:19
- Acts 4:7
- Acts 4:12
- Acts 9:27
- Genesis 12:2
- Genesis 35:10
- Matthew 18:5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5344, H7121, H7761, H8034, H8036, G25640, G36860, G36870, G51220

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:55](#))

nation

Definition:

A nation is a large group of people ruled by some form of government. The people of a nation often have the same ancestors and share a common ethnicity.

- A “nation” usually has a well-defined culture and territorial boundaries.
- In the Bible, a “nation” could be a country (like Egypt or Ethiopia), but often it is more general and refers to a people group, especially when used in the plural. It is important to check the context.
- Nations in the Bible included the Israelites, the Philistines, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Canaanites, the Romans, and the Greeks, among many others.
- Sometimes the word “nation” was used figuratively to refer to the ancestor of a certain people group, as when Rebekah was told by God that her unborn sons were “nations” that would fight against each other. This could be translated as “the founders of two nations” or the “ancestors of two people groups.”
- The word translated as “nation” was also sometimes used to refer to “Gentiles” or to people who do not worship Yahweh. The context usually makes the meaning clear.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the word “nation” could also be translated as “people group” or “people” or “country.”
- If a language has a term for “nation” that is distinct from these other terms, then that term can be used wherever it occurs in the Bible text, as long as it is natural and accurate in each context.
- The plural term “nations” can often be translated as “people groups.”
- In certain contexts, this term could also be translated as “Gentiles” or “nonJews.”

(See also: [Assyria](#), [Babylon](#), [Canaan](#), [Gentile](#), [Greek](#), [people group](#), [Philistines](#), [Rome](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 14:15-17
- 2 Chronicles 15:6
- 2 Kings 17:11-12
- Acts 2:5
- Acts 13:19
- Acts 17:26
- Acts 26:4
- Daniel 3:4
- Genesis 10:2-5
- Genesis 27:29
- Genesis 35:11
- Genesis 49:10
- Luke 7:5
- Mark 13:7-8
- Matthew 21:43
- Romans 4:16-17

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0523, H0524, H0776, H1471, H3816, H4940, H5971, G02460, G10740, G10850, G14840

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:1](#); [1:3](#); [1:10](#); [2:9](#); [4:15](#); [4:17](#); [4:20](#))

people, people group

Definition:

The terms “people” and “people group” refer to some group of people that shares a common language and culture. The term “the people” often refers to a gathering of people in a certain place or at a specific event.

- In Bible times, the members of a people group usually had the same ancestors and lived together in a particular country or area of land.
- Depending on the context, the term “people” can refer to a “people group” or “family” or “relatives” or “army.”
- In plural form, the term “peoples” often refers to all people groups on the earth. Sometimes it refers more specifically to people who are not Israelites or who do not serve Yahweh. In some English Bible translations, the term “nations” is also used in this way.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “people group” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “large family group” or “clan” or “ethnic group.”
- A phrase such as “my people” could be translated as “my relatives” or “my fellow Israelites” or “my family” or “my people group,” depending on the context.
- The expression “scatter you among the peoples” could also be translated as “cause you to go live with many different people groups” or “cause you to separate from each other and go live in many different regions of the world.”
- The term “the peoples” or “the people” could also be translated as “the people in the world” or “people groups,” depending on the context.
- The phrase “the people of” could be translated as “the people living in” or “the people descended from” or “the family of,” depending on whether it is followed by the name of a place or a person.
- “All the peoples of the earth” could be translated as “everyone living on earth” or “every person in the world” or “all people.”
- The phrase “a people” could also be translated as “a group of people” or “certain people” or “a community of people” or “a family of people.”

(See also: descendant, [nation](#), tribe, world)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 8:51-53
- 1 Samuel 8:7
- Deuteronomy 28:9
- Genesis 49:16
- Ruth 1:16

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **14:2** God had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that he would give the Promised Land to their descendants, but now there were many **people groups** living there.
- **21:2** God promised Abraham that through him all **people groups** of the world would receive a blessing. This blessing would be that the Messiah would come sometime in the future and provide the way of salvation for people from all the **people groups** of the world.

- **42:8** "It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to receive forgiveness for their sins. They will do this starting in Jerusalem, and then go to all **people groups** everywhere."
- **42:10** "So go, make disciples of all **people groups** by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."
- **48:11** Because of this New Covenant, anyone from any **people group** can become part of God's people by believing in Jesus.
- **50:3** He (Jesus) said, "Go and make disciples of all **people groups!**" and, "The fields are ripe for harvest!"

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0249, H0523, H0524, H0776, H1121, H1471, H3816, H5712, H5971, H5972, H6153, G10740, G10850, G12180, G14840, G25600, G29920, G37930

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:1](#); [1:7](#); [1:11](#); [1:18](#); [2:11](#); [3:14](#); [3:45](#); [3:48](#); [4:3](#); [4:6](#); [4:10](#))

perish

Definition:

The term “perish” means to die or be destroyed, usually as the result of violence or disaster. In the New Testament, it often has the spiritual meaning of being lost or separated from the people of God.

Spiritual Meaning of “Perish:”

- People who are “perishing” are those who have refused to trust in Jesus for their salvation.
- Those who “perish” will not live eternally with God in heaven. Instead, they will live eternally in hell under God’s punishment.
- Everyone will die physically, but only those who do not trust in Jesus for their salvation will perish eternally.
- When “perish” is used in a spiritual sense, make sure that your translation expresses this differently than dying physically.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate this term could include “be lost from God’s people,” “die eternally,” “be punished in hell,” or “be destroyed.”
- Try to use a term or expression that does not only mean “die physically” or “cease to exist.”

(See also: [death](#), [everlasting](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 1:23
- 2 Corinthians 2:16-17
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10
- Jeremiah 18:18
- Psalms 49:18-20
- Zechariah 9:5-7
- Zechariah 13:8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0006, H0007, H0008, H1478, H1820, H1826, H5486, H5595, H6544, H8045, G05990, G06220, G06840, G08530, G13110, G27040, G48810, G53560

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:9](#); [3:18](#))

persecute

Definition:

The terms “persecute” and “persecution” refer to continually treating a person or a certain group of people in a harsh way that causes harm to them.

- Persecution can be against one person or many people and usually involves repeated, persistent attacks.
- The Israelites were persecuted by many different people groups Who attacked them, captured them, and stole things from them.
- People often persecute other people who have different religious beliefs or who are weaker.
- The Jewish religious leaders persecuted Jesus because they did not like what he was teaching.
- After Jesus went back to heaven, the Jewish religious leaders and the Roman government persecuted his followers.
- The term “persecute” could also be translated as “keep oppressing” or “treat harshly” or “continually mistreat.”
- Ways to translate “persecution” could include, “harsh mistreatment” or “oppression” or “persistent hurtful treatment”

(See also: Christian, church, oppress, Rome)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:52
- Acts 13:50
- Galatians 1:13-14
- John 5:16-18
- Mark 10:30
- Matthew 5:10
- Matthew 5:43-45
- Matthew 10:22
- Matthew 13:20-21
- Philippians 3:6

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **33:7** “The rocky ground is a person who hears God’s word and accepts it with joy. But when he experiences hardship or **persecution**, he falls away.”
- **45:6** That day many people in Jerusalem started **persecuting** the followers of Jesus, so the believers fled to other places.
- **46:2** Saul heard someone say, “Saul! Saul! Why do you **persecute** me?” Saul asked, “Who are you, Master?” Jesus replied to him, “I am Jesus. You are **persecuting** me!”
- **46:4** But Ananias said, “Master, I have heard how this man has **persecuted** the believers.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1814, H7291, H7852, G13750, G13760, G13770, G15590, G23470

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:3](#); [1:6](#); [3:66](#); [4:19](#); [5:5](#))

pray, prayer

Definition:

The terms “pray” and “prayer” refer to talking with God. These terms are also used to refer to people trying to talk to a false god.

- People can pray silently, talking to God with their thoughts, or they can pray aloud, speaking to God with their voice. Sometimes prayers are written down, such as when David wrote his prayers in the Book of Psalms.
- Prayer can include asking God for mercy, for help with a problem, and for wisdom in making decisions.
- Often people ask God to heal people who are sick or who need his help in other ways.
- People also thank and praise God when they are praying to him.
- Praying includes confessing our sins to God and asking him to forgive us.
- Talking to God is sometimes called “communing” with him as our spirit communicates with his spirit, sharing our emotions and enjoying his presence.
- This term could be translated as “talking to God” or “communicating with God.” The translation of this term should be able to include praying that is silent.

(See also: [false god](#), forgive, praise)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 3:9
- Acts 8:24
- Acts 14:26
- Colossians 4:4
- John 17:9
- Luke 11:1
- Matthew 5:43-45
- Matthew 14:22-24

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **6:5** Isaac **prayed** for Rebekah, and God allowed her to get pregnant with twins.
- **13:12** But Moses **prayed** for them, and God listened to his **prayer** and did not destroy them.
- **19:8** Then the prophets of Baal **prayed** to Baal, “Hear us, O Baal!”
- **21:7** Priests also **prayed** to God for the people.
- **38:11** Jesus told his disciples to **pray** that they would not enter into temptation.
- **43:13** The disciples continually listened to the teaching of the apostles, spent time together, ate together, and **prayed** with each other.
- **49:18** God tells you to **pray**, to study his word, to worship him with other Christians, and to tell others what he has done for you.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0559, H0577, H1156, H2470, H3863, H3908, H4994, H6279, H6293, H6419, H6739, H7592, H7878, H7879, H7881, H8034, H8605, G01540, G11620, G11890, G17830, G20650, G21710, G21720, G38700, G43350, G43360

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:8](#); [3:44](#))

priest, priesthood

Definition:

In the Bible, a priest was someone who was chosen to offer sacrifices to God on behalf of God's people. The "priesthood" was the name for the office or condition of being a priest.

- In the Old Testament, God chose Aaron and his descendants to be his priests for the people of Israel.
- The "priesthood" was a right and a responsibility that was passed down from father to son in the Levite clan.
- The Israelite priests had the responsibility of offering the people's sacrifices to God, along with other duties in the temple.
- Priests also offered regular prayers to God on behalf of his people and performed other religious rites.
- The priests pronounced formal blessings on people and taught them God's laws.
- In Jesus' time, there were different levels of priests, including the chief priests and the high priest.
- Jesus is our "great high priest" who intercedes for us in God's presence. He offered himself as the ultimate sacrifice for sin. This means that the sacrifices made by human priests are no longer needed.
- In the New Testament, every believer in Jesus is called a "priest" who can come directly to God in prayer to intercede for himself and other people.
- In ancient times, there were also pagan priests who presented offerings to false gods such as Baal.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term "priest" could be translated as "sacrifice person" or "God's intermediary" or "sacrificial mediator" or "person God appoints to represent him."
- The translation of "priest" should be different from the translation of "mediator."
- Some translations may prefer to always say something like "Israelite priest" or "Jewish priest" or "Yahweh's priest" or "priest of Baal" to make it clear that this does not refer to a modern-day type of priest.
- The term used to translate "priest" should be different from the terms for "chief priest" and "high priest" and "Levite" and "prophet."

(See also: Aaron, high priest, mediator, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 6:41
- Genesis 14:17-18
- Genesis 47:22
- John 1:19-21
- Luke 10:31
- Mark 1:44
- Mark 2:25-26
- Matthew 8:4
- Matthew 12:4
- Micah 3:9-11
- Nehemiah 10:28-29
- Nehemiah 10:34-36
- Revelation 1:6

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:7** "Melchizedek, the **priest** of God Most High"

- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed God's law could bring an animal to the altar in front of the Tent of Meeting as a sacrifice to God. A **priest** would kill the animal and burn it on the altar. The blood of the animal that was sacrificed covered the person's sin and made that person clean in God's sight. God chose Moses' brother, Aaron, and Aaron's descendants to be his **priests**.
- **19:7** So the **priests** of Baal prepared a sacrifice but did not light the fire.
- **21:7** An Israelite **priest** was someone who made sacrifices to God on behalf of the people as a substitute for the punishment of their sins. **Priests** also prayed to God for the people.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3547, H3548, H3549, H3550, G07480, G07490, G24050, G24060, G24070, G24090, G24200

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:4](#); [1:19](#); [2:20](#); [Notes](#); [4:13](#); [4:16](#))

prince, princess, governors, provincial governors, officials, noblemen, nobility

Definition:

A "prince" is the son of a king. A "princess" is a daughter of a king.

- The term "prince" is often used figuratively to refer to a leader, ruler, or other powerful person.
- Because of Abraham's wealth and importance, he was referred to as a "prince" by the Hittites he was living among.
- In the book of Daniel, the term "prince" is used in the expressions "prince of Persia" and "prince of Greece," which in those contexts probably refer to powerful evil spirits who had authority over those regions.
- The archangel Michael is also referred to as a "prince" in the book of Daniel.
- Sometimes in the Bible Satan is referred to as "the prince of this world."
- Jesus is called the "Prince of Peace" and the "Prince of Life."
- In Acts 2:36, Jesus is referred to as "Lord and Christ" and in Acts 5:31 he is referred to as "Prince and Savior," showing the parallel meaning of "Lord" and "Prince."

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate "prince" could include, "king's son" or "ruler" or "leader" or "chieftain" or "captain."
- When referring to angels, this could also be translated as "spirit ruler" or "leading angel."
- When referring to Satan or other evil spirits, this term could also be translated as "evil spirit ruler" or "powerful spirit leader" or "ruling spirit," depending on the context.

(See also: [angel](#), [authority](#), [Christ](#), [demon](#), [lord](#), [power](#), [ruler](#), [Satan](#), [Savior](#), [spirit](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 5:29-32
- Genesis 12:15
- Genesis 49:26
- Luke 1:52

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0001, H0117, H0324, H2831, H3548, H4502, H5057, H5081, H5139, H5257, H5387, H5633, H5993, H6579, H7261, H7333, H7786, H8269, H8282, H8323, G07470, G07580, G14130, G31750

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:6](#); [2:2](#); [2:9](#); [5:12](#))

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: [Lamentations 2:9](#); [2:14](#); [4:13](#))

proud, pride, prideful

Definition:

The terms “proud” and “prideful” refer to a person thinking too highly of himself, and especially, thinking that he is better than other people.

- A proud person often does not admit his own faults. He is not humble.
- Pride can lead to disobeying God in other ways.
- The terms “proud” and “pride” can also be used in a positive sense, such as being “proud of” what someone else has achieved and being “proud of” your children. The expression “take pride in your work” means to find joy in doing your work well.
- Someone can be proud of what he has done without being prideful about it. Some languages have different words for these two different meanings of “pride.”
- The term “prideful” is always negative, with the meaning of being “arrogant” or “conceited” or “self-important.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The noun “pride” could be translated as “arrogance” or “conceit” or “self-importance.”
- In other contexts, “pride” could be translated as “joy” or “satisfaction” or “pleasure.”
- To be “proud of” could also be translated as “happy with” or “satisfied with” or “joyful about (the accomplishments of).”
- The phrase “take pride in your work” could be translated as “find satisfaction in doing your work well.”
- The expression “take pride in Yahweh” could also be translated as “be delighted about all the wonderful things Yahweh has done” or “be happy about how amazing Yahweh is.”

(See also: arrogant, humble, [joy](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 3:6-7
- 2 Corinthians 1:12
- Galatians 6:3-5
- Isaiah 13:19
- Luke 1:51

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:2** They were very **proud**, and they did not care about what God said.
- **34:10** Then Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, God heard the tax collector’s prayer and declared him to be righteous. But he did not like the prayer of the religious leader. God will humble everyone who is **proud**, and he will lift up whoever humbles himself.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1341, H1343, H1344, H1346, H1347, H1348, H1349, H1361, H1362, H1363, H1364, H1396, H1466, H1467, H1984, H2086, H2087, H3093, H3238, H3513, H4062, H1431, H4791, H5965, H7295, H7312, H7342, H7311, H7830, H8597, G13910, G13920, G27440, G27450, G27460, G31730, G51870, G52290, G52430, G52440, G53080, G53090, G54260

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:9](#))

province, provincial

Definition:

The term “province” refers to a large area into which a nation or empire might be divided for the purposes of government. The term “provincial” describes something that is related to a province, such as a provincial governor.

- For example, the ancient Persian Empire was divided up into provinces such as Media, Persia, Syria, and Egypt.
- During the time of the New Testament, the Roman Empire was divided up into provinces such as Macedonia, Asia, Syria, Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and Galatia.
- Each province had its own ruling authority, who was subject to the king or ruler of the empire. This ruler was sometimes called a “provincial official” or “provincial governor.”
- The terms “province” and “provincial” could also be translated as “region” and “regional.”

(See also: Asia, [Egypt](#), Esther, Galatia, Galilee, [Judea](#), Macedonia, Medes, Rome, Samaria, Syria)

Bible References:

- Acts 19:30
- Daniel 3:2
- Daniel 6:2
- Ecclesiastes 2:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4082, H4083, H5675, H5676, G18850

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:1](#))

rebel, rebellion, rebellious, rebelliousness

Definition:

The term “rebel” means to refuse to submit to someone’s authority. A “rebellious” person often disobeys and does evil things. This kind of person is called “a rebel.”

- A person is rebelling when he does something the authorities over him have told him not to do.
- A person can also rebel by refusing to do what the authorities have commanded him to do.
- Sometimes people rebel against their government or leader who is ruling over them.
- The term to “rebel” could also be translated as to “disobey” or to “revolt,” depending on the context.
- “Rebellious” could also be translated as “continually disobedient” or “refusing to obey.”
- The term “rebellion” means “refusal to obey” or “disobedience” or “law-breaking.”
- The phrase “the rebellion” or “a rebellion” can also refer to an organized group of people who publicly rebel against ruling authorities by breaking the law and attacking leaders and other people. Often they try to get other people to join them in rebelling.

(See also: authority, governor)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 12:18-19
- 1 Samuel 12:14
- 1 Timothy 1:9-11
- 2 Chronicles 10:17-19
- Acts 21:38
- Luke 23:19

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **14:14** After the Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for forty years, all of them who had **rebelled** against God were dead.
- **18:7** Ten of the tribes of the nation of Israel **rebelled** against Rehoboam.
- **18:9** Jeroboam **rebelled** against God and caused the people to sin.
- **18:13** Most of the people of Judah also **rebelled** against God and worshiped other gods.
- **20:7** But after a few years, the king of Judah **rebelled** against Babylon.
- **45:3** Then he (Stephen) said, “You stubborn and **rebellious** people always reject the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors always rejected God and killed his prophets.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4775, H4776, H4777, H4779, H4780, H4784, H4805, H5327, H5627, H5637, H6586, H6588, H7846, G38930, G49550

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:18](#); [1:20](#))

redeem, redeemer, redemption

Definition:

The term “redeem” refers to buying back something or someone that has been previously owned or held captive. A “redeemer” is someone who redeems something or someone.

- God gave laws to the Israelites about how to redeem people or things. For example, someone could redeem a person who was in slavery by paying the price so that the slave could go free. The word “ransom” also refers to this practice.
- If someone’s land had been sold, a relative of that person could “redeem” or “buy back” that land so that it would stay in the family.
- These practices show how God redeems people who are in slavery to sin. When he died on the cross, Jesus paid the full price for people’s sins and redeemed all those who trust in him for salvation. People who have been redeemed by God are set free from sin and its punishment.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “redeem” could also be translated as “buy back” or “pay to free (someone)” or “ransom.”
- The term “redemption” could be translated as “ransom” or “freedom payment” or “buying back.”
- The words “ransom” and “redeem” have basically the same meaning, so some languages may have only one term to translate both these words. The word “ransom,” however, can also mean the payment necessary to “redeem” something or someone. The term “redeem” never refers to the actual payment itself.

(See also: free, ransom)

Bible References:

- Colossians 1:13-14
- Ephesians 1:7-8
- Ephesians 5:16
- Galatians 3:13-14
- Galatians 4:5
- Luke 2:38
- Ruth 2:20

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1350, H1353, H6299, H6302, H6304, H6306, H6561, H7069, G00590, G06290, G18050, G30840, G30850

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:58](#))

rest, rested, restless

Definition:

The term “rest” generally means to stop working in order to relax or regain strength. However, the term can refer to various kinds of rest besides only rest from working. For example, a person might rest from fighting, rest from speaking, or rest from moving, etc.

- An object can be said to be “resting” somewhere, which means it is “standing” or “sitting” there.
- Something that “comes to rest” somewhere has “stopped” there.
- When a person or animals rest, they are sitting or lying down in order to refresh themselves.
- God commanded the Israelites to rest on the seventh day of the week. This day of not working was called the “Sabbath” day.
- To rest an object on something means to “place” or “put” it there.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, to “rest (oneself)” could also be translated as to “stop working” or to “refresh himself” or to “stop carrying burdens.”
- To “rest” an object on something could be translated as to “place” or “put” or “set” that object on something.
- When Jesus said, “I will give you rest,” this could also be translated as “I will cause you to stop carrying your burden” or “I will help you be at peace” or “I will empower you to relax and trust in me.”
- God said, “they will not enter my rest,” and this statement could be translated as “they will not experience my blessings of rest” or “they will not experience the joy and peace that comes from trusting in me.”
- The term “the rest” could be translated as “those that remain” or “all the other people” or “everything that is left.”

(See also: remnant, [Sabbath](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 6:41
- Genesis 2:3
- Jeremiah 6:16-19
- Matthew 11:29
- Revelation 14:11

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0014, H1824, H1826, H2308, H3498, H3499, H4494, H4496, H4771, H5117, H5118, H5183, H5564, H6314, H7258, H7280, H7599, H7604, H7605, H7606, H7611, H7673, H7677, H7901, H7931, H7954, H8058, H8172, H8252, H8300, G03720, G03730, G04250, G15150, G18790, G19540, G19810, G22700, G26630, G26640, G26810, G28380, G30620, G45200

(Go back to: [Lamentations 5:5](#))

restore, restoration

Definition:

The terms “restore” and “restoration” refer to causing something to return to its original place or condition.

- When a diseased body part is restored, this means it has been “healed.”
- A broken relationship that is restored has been “reconciled.” God restores sinful people and brings them back to himself.
- If people have been restored to their home country, they have been “brought back” or “returned” to that country.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “restore” could include “renew” or “repay” or “return” or “heal” or “bring back.”
- Other expressions for this term could be “make new” or “make like new again.”
- When property is “restored,” it has been “repaired” or “replaced” or “given back” to its owner.
- Depending on the context, “restoration” could be translated as “renewal” or “healing” or “reconciliation.”

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 5:10
- Acts 3:21
- Acts 15:15-18
- Isaiah 49:5-6
- Jeremiah 15:19-21
- Lamentations 5:22
- Leviticus 6:5-7
- Luke 19:8
- Matthew 12:13
- Psalm 80:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7725, H7999, H8421, G06000, G26750

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:11](#); [1:13](#); [1:16](#); [2:3](#); [2:8](#); [2:14](#); [3:21](#); [3:64](#); [5:21](#))

return, turn back

Definition:

The term “return” means to go back or to give something back.

- To “return to” something means to start doing that activity again. To “return to” a place or person means to go back to that place or person again.
- When the Israelites returned to their worship of idols, they were starting to worship them again.
- When they returned to Yahweh, they repented and were worshiping Yahweh again.
- To return land or things that were taken or received from someone else means to give that property back to the person it belongs to.

(See also: turn)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5437, H7725, H7729, H8421, H8666, G03440, G03600, G03900, G18770, G18800, G19940, G52900

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:8](#); [1:19](#); [3:40](#); [5:21](#))

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: [Lamentations 1:18; 4:13](#))

Sabbath

Definition:

The term “Sabbath” refers to the seventh day of the week, which God commanded the Israelites to set apart as a day of rest and doing no work.

- After God finished creating the world in six days, he rested on the seventh day. In the same way, God commanded the Israelites to set aside the seventh day as a special day to rest and worship him.
- The command to “keep the Sabbath holy” is one of the ten commandments that God wrote on the stone tablets that he gave Moses for the Israelites.
- Following the Jewish system of counting days, the Sabbath begins on Friday at sundown and lasts until Saturday at sundown.
- Sometimes in the Bible the Sabbath is called “Sabbath day” rather than only the Sabbath.

Translation Suggestions:

- This could also be translated as “resting day” or “day for resting” or “day of not working” or “God’s day of rest.”
- Some translations capitalize this term to show that it is a special day, as in “Sabbath Day” or “Resting Day.”
- Consider how this term is translated in a local or national language.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: [rest](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 31:2-3
- Acts 13:26-27
- Exodus 31:14
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Lamentations 2:6
- Leviticus 19:3
- Luke 13:14
- Mark 2:27
- Matthew 12:2
- Nehemiah 10:32-33

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:5** “Always be sure to keep the **Sabbath day** holy. That is, do all your work in six days, for the seventh day is a day for you to rest and to honor me.”
- **26:2** Jesus went to the town of Nazareth where he had lived during his childhood. On the **Sabbath**, he went to the place of worship.
- **41:3** The day after Jesus was buried was a **Sabbath** day, and the Jews were not permitted to go to the tomb on that day.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4868, H7676, H7677, G43150, G45210

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:6](#))

sackcloth

Definition:

Sackcloth was a coarse, scratchy type of cloth that was made from goat hair or camel hair.

- A person who wore clothing made from it would be uncomfortable. Sackcloth was worn to show mourning, grief, or humble repentance.
- The phrase “sackcloth and ashes” was a common term referring to a traditional expression of grief and repentance.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could also be translated as “coarse cloth from animal hair” or “clothes made of goat hair” or “rough, scratchy clothing.”
- Another way to translate this term could be “rough, scratchy mourning clothes.”
- The phrase “sit in sackcloth and ashes” could be translated as “show mourning and humility by wearing scratchy cloth and sitting in ashes.”

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

(See also: [ash](#), [camel](#), [goat](#), [humble](#), [mourn](#), [repent](#), [sign](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 3:31
- Genesis 37:34
- Joel 1:8-10
- Jonah 3:5
- Luke 10:13
- Matthew 11:21

Word Data:

- Strong's: H8242, G45260

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

sanctuary

Definition:

The term "sanctuary" literally means "holy place" and refers to a place that God has made sacred and holy. It also can refer to a place that provides protection and safety.

- In the Old Testament, the term "sanctuary" was often used to refer to the tabernacle or temple building where the "holy place" and "most holy place" were located.
- God referred to the sanctuary as the place where he lived among his people, the Israelites.
- He also called himself a "sanctuary" or safe place for his people where they can find protection.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term has a basic meaning of "holy place" or "place that is set apart."
- Depending on the context, the term "sanctuary" could be translated as "holy place" or "sacred building" or "God's holy dwelling place" or "holy place of protection" or "sacred place of safety."
- The phrase "shekel of the sanctuary" could be translated as "kind of shekel given for the tabernacle" or "shekel used in paying the tax to take care of the temple."
- Note: Be careful that the translation of this term does not refer to a worship room in a modern-day church.

(See also: [holy](#), Holy Spirit, [holy](#), set apart, tabernacle, tax, [temple](#))

Bible References:

- Amos 7:13
- Exodus 25:3-7
- Ezekiel 25:3
- Hebrews 8:1-2
- Luke 11:49-51
- Numbers 18:1
- Psalms 78:69

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4720, H6944, G00400

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:10](#); [2:7](#); [2:20](#))

seek, search, look for

Definition:

The term “seek” means to look for something or someone. In the past tense, the verb is “sought.” This term is sometimes used figuratively, meaning to “attempt” or “make an effort” to do something or to ask for something.

- To “seek” or “look for” an opportunity to do something can mean to “try to find a time” to do it.
- To “seek Yahweh” means to “spend time and energy getting to know Yahweh and learning to obey him.”
- To “seek protection” means to “try to find a person or place that will protect you from danger.”
- To “seek justice” means to “make an effort to see that people are treated justly or fairly.”
- To “seek the truth” means to “make an effort to find out what the truth is.”
- To “seek favor” means to “urgently ask for favor” or to “do things to cause someone to help you.”

(See also: just, true)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 10:14
- Acts 17:26-27
- Hebrews 11:6
- Luke 11:9
- Psalms 27:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0579, H1156, H1239, H1243, H1245, H1556, H1875, H2470, H2603, H2658, H2664, H3289, H7125, H7592, H7836, H8446, G03270, G15670, G19340, G20520, G22120

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:11](#); [1:19](#); [3:25](#))

servant, serve, slave, young man, young women

Definition:

A “servant” or “slave” refers to a person who works for (or obeys) another person, either by choice or by force. A servant was under his master's control. In the Bible, “servant” and “slave” are mostly interchangeable terms. The term “serve” generally means to do work for someone, and the concept can be applied in a wide variety of contexts.

- A slave was a kind of servant who was the property of the person he worked for. The person who bought a slave was called his “owner” or “master.” Some masters treated their slaves cruelly. Other masters treated their slaves well, like a valued member of the household. The term “slavery” means the state of being a slave.
- A person could be a slave temporarily, for instance while working to repay a debt to his owner.
- The words “young man” or “young woman” often mean “servant” or “slave.” This meaning will be discerned from context. One indicator of this situation is if the possessive is used, eg. “her young women” could be translated as “her servants” or “her slaves.”
- The term “enslave” means “to cause to be a slave” (usually by force).
- The New Testament speaks of human beings as “slaves of sin” until Jesus frees them from its control and power. When a person receives new life in Christ, he stops being a slave to sin and becomes a slave to righteousness.

Translation Suggestions

- The term “serve” can also be translated as “minister to” or “work for” or “take care of” or “obey,” depending on the context.
- The term “enslave” could be translated as “cause to not be free” or “force to serve others” or “put under the control of others.”
- The phrase “enslaved to” or “in bondage to” could be translated as “forced to be a slave of” or “forced to serve” or “under the control of.”
- To “serve God” can be translated as to “worship and obey God” or to “do the work that God has commanded.”
- In the Old Testament, God’s prophets and other people who worshiped God were often called his “servants.”
- In the New Testament, people who obeyed God through faith in Christ were often called his “servants.”
- To “serve tables” means to bring food to people who are sitting at tables, or more generally, to “distribute food.”
- In the context of a person serving guests, this term means “care for” or “serve food to” or “provide food for.” When Jesus told the disciples to “serve” the fish to the people, this could be translated as, “distribute” or “hand out” or “give.”
- People who teach others about God are said to serve both God and the ones they are teaching.
- The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians about how they used to “serve” the old covenant. This refers to obeying the laws of Moses. Now they “serve” the new covenant. That is, because of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, believers in Jesus are enabled by the Holy Spirit to please God and live holy lives.
- Paul talks about their actions in terms of their “service” to either the old or new covenant. This could be translated as “serving” or “obeying” or “devotion to.”
- Often, when a person referred to himself as “your servant” he was showing respect to the person addressed. That person may have had higher social status, or the speaker may be showing humility. It did not mean that the person speaking was an actual servant.

(See also: bondage, works, obey, [house](#), [lord](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 15:13
- Genesis 21:10-11
- Genesis 25:23
- Deuteronomy 24:7
- Jeremiah 30:8-9
- Matthew 4:10-11
- Matthew 6:24
- Matthew 10:24-25
- Matthew 13:27-28
- Mark 8:7-10
- Mark 9:33-35
- Luke 4:8
- Luke 12:37-38
- Luke 12:47-48
- Luke 22:26-27
- Acts 4:29-31
- Acts 6:2-4
- Acts 10:7-8
- Galatians 4:3
- Galatians 4:24-25
- Colossians 1:7-8
- Colossians 3:22-25
- 2 Timothy 2:3-5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **6:1** When Abraham was very old and his son, Isaac, had grown to be a man, Abraham sent one of his **servants** back to the land where his relatives lived to find a wife for his son, Isaac.
- **8:4** The **slave** traders sold Joseph as a **slave** to a wealthy government official.
- **9:13** "I (God) will send you (Moses) to Pharaoh so that you can bring the Israelites out of their **slavery** in Egypt."
- **19:10** Then Elijah prayed, "O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, show us today that you are the God of Israel and that I am your **servant**."
- **29:3** "Since the **servant** could not pay the debt, the king said, 'Sell this man and his family as **slaves** to make payment on his debt.'"
- **35:6** "All my father's **servants** have plenty to eat, and yet here I am starving."
- **47:4** The **slave** girl kept yelling as they walked, "These men are servants of the Most High God."
- **50:4** Jesus also said, "A **servant** is not greater than his master."

Word Data:

- (Servant) Strong's: H0519, H5288, H5647, H5649, H5650, H5657, H7916, H8198, H8334, G12490, G14010, G14020, G23240, G34070, G34110, G36100, G38160, G49830, G52570
- (Serve) H3547, H4929, H4931, H5647, H5656, H5673, H5975, H6213, H6399, H6402, H6440, H6633, H6635, H7272, H8104, H8120, H8199, H8278, H8334, G12470, G12480, G13980, G14020, G14380, G19830, G20640, G22120, G23230, G29990, G30000, G30090, G43370, G43420, G47540, G50870, G52560
- (Enslave) H3533, G26150

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:21](#); [5:8](#); [5:13](#))

shame, ashamed, disgrace, humiliate, reproach

Definition:

The term “shame” refers to the painful feeling of being disgraced or humiliated that a person feels when they do something that others consider dishonorable or improper.

- Something that is “shameful” is “improper” or “dishonorable.”
- The term “ashamed” describes how a person feels when he has done something improper or dishonorable.
- The term “humiliate” means to cause someone to feel shamed or disgraced, usually publicly. The act of shaming someone is called “humiliation.”
- To “reproach” someone means to criticize or disapprove of that person’s character or behavior.
- The phrase “put to shame” means to defeat people or expose their actions so that they feel ashamed of themselves. The prophet Isaiah said that those who make and worship idols will be put to shame.
- The term “disgraceful” can be used to describe a sinful act or the person who did it. When a person does something sinful, it can cause him to be in a state of disgrace or dishonor.
- Sometimes a person who is doing good things is treated in a way that causes him disgrace or shame. For example, when Jesus was killed on a cross, this was a disgraceful way to die. Jesus had done nothing wrong to deserve this disgrace.
- When God humbles someone, it means that he is causing a prideful person to experience failure to help him overcome his pride. This is different from humiliating someone, which is often done in order to hurt that person.
- Saying that a person is “above reproach” or “beyond reproach” or “without reproach” means that this person behaves in a God-honoring way and there is little or nothing that could be said in criticism of him.

Translation Suggestions

- Ways to translate “disgrace” could include “shame” or “dishonor.”
- Ways to translate “disgraceful” could include “shameful” or “dishonoring.”
- To “humiliate” could also be translated as to “shame” or to “cause to feel shame” or to “embarrass.”
- Depending on the context, ways to translate “humiliation” could include “shame” or “degrading” or “disgrace.”
- The word “reproach” could also be translated as “accusation” or “shame” or “disgrace.”
- To “reproach” could also be translated as to “rebuke” or to “accuse” or to “criticize,” depending on the context.

(See also: dishonor, accuse, rebuke, [false god](#), humble, Isaiah, worship)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 3:15-17
- 2 Kings 2:17
- 2 Samuel 13:13
- Luke 20:11
- Mark 8:38
- Mark 12:4-5
- 1 Timothy 3:7
- Genesis 34:7
- Hebrews 11:26
- Lamentations 2:1-2
- Psalms 22:6
- Deuteronomy 21:14
- Ezra 9:5

- Proverbs 25:7-8
- Psalms 6:8-10
- Psalms 123:3
- 1 Timothy 5:7-8
- 1 Timothy 6:13-14
- Jeremiah 15:15-16
- Job 16:9-10
- Proverbs 18:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0937, H0954, H0955, H1317, H1322, H1421, H1442, H1984, H2490, H2616, H2617, H2659, H2778, H2781, H2865, H3001, H3637, H3639, H3640, H3971, H5007, H5034, H5039, H6030, H6031, H6172, H6256, H7022, H7034, H7036, H7043, H7511, H7817, H8103, H8213, H8216, H8217, H8589, G01520, G01530, G04100, G04220, G04230, G08080, G08180, G08190, G08210, G17880, G17910, G18700, G26170, G30590, G36790, G36800, G36810, G38560, G50140, G51950, G51960, G54840

(Go back to: [Lamentations 3:61](#); [5:1](#))

silver

Definition:

Silver is a shiny, gray precious metal used to make coins, jewelry, containers, and ornaments.

- The various containers that are made include silver cups and bowls, and other things used for cooking, eating, or serving.
- Silver and gold were used in the building of the tabernacle and the temple. The temple in Jerusalem had containers made of silver.
- In Bible times, a shekel was a unit of weight, and a purchase was often priced at a certain number of shekels of silver. By New Testament times there were silver coins of various weights that were measured in shekels.
- Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave for twenty shekels of silver.
- Judas was paid thirty silver coins for betraying Jesus.

(See also: tabernacle, [temple](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 18:9-11
- 1 Samuel 2:36
- 2 Kings 25:13-15
- Acts 3:6
- Matthew 26:15

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3701, H3702, H7192, G06930, G06940, G06950, G06960, G14060

(Go back to: [Lamentations 5:4](#))

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: [Introduction to Lamentations](#); [Lamentations 1 General Notes](#); [1:8](#); [4:22](#); [Notes](#); [5:7](#); [5:16](#))

Sodom

Definition:

Sodom was a city in the southern part of Canaan where Abraham's nephew Lot lived with his wife and children.

- The land of the region surrounding Sodom was very well watered and fertile, so Lot chose to live there when he first settled in Canaan.
- The exact location of this city is not known because Sodom and the nearby city of Gomorrah were completely destroyed by God as punishment for the evil things the people there were doing.
- The most significant sin that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were practicing was homosexuality.

(See also: Canaan, Gomorrah)

Bible References:

- Genesis 10:19
- Genesis 13:12
- Matthew 10:15
- Matthew 11:24

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5467, G46700

(Go back to: [Lamentations 4:6](#))

son

Definition:

The male offspring of a man and a woman is called their “son” for his entire life. He is also called a son of that man and a son of that woman. An “adopted son” is a male who has been legally placed into the position of being a son.

- The phrase “son of” can be used to identify a person’s father, mother, or an ancestor from some previous generation. This phrase is used in genealogies and many other places.
- The “sons of Israel” are usually the Israelite nation (after Genesis).
- Using “son of” to give the name of the father frequently helps distinguish people who have the same name. For example, “Azariah son of Zadok” and “Azariah son of Nathan” in 1 Kings 4, and “Azariah son of Amaziah” in 2 Kings 15 are three different men.
- The phrase “son of” can be used to associate the person with whatever person or concept comes next. The meaning is then greatly determined by context. It can be positive (eg. 2 Kings 2:16: “sons of ability”), negative (eg. 2 Samuel 7:10: “sons of wickedness”), denote membership in a group, express contempt by not naming the person (eg. “you sons of Zeruiah”), etc.

Translation Suggestions:

- In most occurrences of this term, it is best to translate “son” by the literal term in the language that is used to refer to a son.
- When translating the term “Son of God,” the project language’s common term for “son” should be used.
- Sometimes “sons” can be translated as “children,” when both males and females are being referred to. For example, “sons of God” could be translated as “children of God” since this expression also includes girls and women.

(See also: descendant, [ancestor](#), Son of God, sons of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 18:15
- 1 Kings 13:2
- 1 Thessalonians 5:5
- Galatians 4:7
- Hosea 11:1
- Isaiah 9:6
- Matthew 3:17
- Matthew 5:9
- Matthew 8:12
- Nehemiah 10:28

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:8** God spoke to Abram and promised again that he would have a **son** and as many descendants as the stars in the sky.
- **4:9** God said, “I will give you a **son** from your own body.”
- **5:5** About a year later, when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90, Sarah gave birth to Abraham’s **son**.
- **5:8** When they reached the place of sacrifice, Abraham tied up his **son** Isaac and laid him on an altar. He was about to kill his **son** when God said, “Stop! Do not hurt the boy! Now I know that you fear me because you did not keep your only **son** from me.”

- **9:7** When she saw the baby, she took him as her own **son**.
- **11:6** God killed every one of the Egyptians' firstborn **sons**.
- **18:1** After many years, David died, and his **son** Solomon began to rule.
- **26:4** "Is this the **son** of Joseph?" they said.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1060, H1121, H1123, H1248, H3173, H3206, H3211, H4497, H5209, H5220, G38160, G50430, G52070

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:16](#); [3:13](#); [3:33](#); [4:2](#))

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: [Lamentations 4:20](#))

strength, strengthen, strong

Facts:

The term “strength” refers to physical, emotional, or spiritual power. To “strengthen” someone or something means to make that person or object stronger.

- “Strength” can also refer to the power to withstand some kind of opposing force.
- A person has “strength of will” if he is able to avoid sinning when tempted.
- One writer of the Psalms called Yahweh his “strength” because God helped him to be strong.
- If a physical structure like a wall or building is being “strengthened,” people are rebuilding the structure, reinforcing it with more stones or brick so that it can withstand an attack.

Translation Suggestions

- In general, the term “strengthen” can be translated as “cause to be strong” or “make more powerful.”
- In a spiritual sense, the phrase “strengthen your brothers” could also be translated as “encourage your brothers” or “help your brothers to persevere.”
- The following examples show the meaning of these terms, and therefore how they can be translated, when they are included in longer expressions.
 - “puts strength on me like a belt” means “causes me to be completely strong, like a belt that completely surrounds my waist.”
 - “in quietness and trust will be your strength” means “acting calmly and trusting in God will make you spiritually strong.”
 - “will renew their strength” means “will become stronger again.”
 - “by my strength and by my wisdom I acted” means “I have done all this because I am so strong and wise.”
 - “strengthen the wall” means “reinforce the wall” or “rebuild the wall.”
 - “I will strengthen you” means “I will cause you to be strong”
 - “in Yahweh alone are salvation and strength” means “Yahweh is the only one who saves us and strengthens us.”
 - “the rock of your strength” means “the faithful one who makes you strong”
 - “with the saving strength of his right hand” means “he strongly rescues you from trouble like someone who holds you safely with his strong hand.”
 - “of little strength” means “not very strong” or “weak.”
 - “with all my strength” means “using my best efforts” or “strongly and completely.”

(See also: [faithful](#), persevere, right hand, save)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 18:19-21
- 2 Peter 2:11
- Luke 10:27
- Psalm 21:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0193, H0202, H0353, H0360, H0386, H0410, H0553, H0556, H1369, H1396, H2220, H2388, H2391, H2392, H2393, H2428, H3027, H3028, H3559, H3581, H3811, H3955, H4581, H5326, H5331, H5582, H5797, H5807, H5810, H5934, H5975, H6106, H6109, H6697, H6965, H7292, H7307, H8003, H8443, H8632, H8633,

G04610, G09500, G14110, G14120, G17430, G17650, G18400, G19910, G24790, G24800, G29010, G29040,
G36190, G37560, G45990, G47320, G47330, G47410

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:6](#); [1:14](#))

sword, swordsmen

Definition:

A sword is a flat-bladed metal weapon used to cut or stab. It has a handle and a long, pointed blade with a very sharp cutting edge.

- In ancient times the length of a sword's blade was about 60 to 91 centimeters.
- Some swords have two sharp edges and are called "double-edged" or "two-edged" swords.
- Jesus' disciples had swords for self defense. With his sword, Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.
- Both John the Baptist and the apostle James were beheaded with swords.

Translation Suggestions

- A sword is used as a metaphor for God's word. God's teachings in the Bible exposed people's innermost thoughts and convicted them of their sin. In a similar way, a sword cuts deeply, causing pain. (See: [Metaphor](#))
- One way to translate this figurative use would be, "God's word is like a sword, which cuts deeply and exposes sin."
- Another figurative use of this term occurred in the book of Psalms, where the tongue or speech of a person was compared to a sword, which can injure people. This could be translated as "the tongue is like a sword that can badly injure someone."
- If swords are not known in your culture, this word could be translated with the name of another long-bladed weapon that is used to cut or stab.
- A sword could also be described as a "sharp weapon" or "long knife." Some translations could include a picture of a sword.

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

(See also: [James \(brother of Jesus\)](#), [John \(the Baptist\)](#), [tongue](#), [word of God](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 12:2
- Genesis 27:40
- Genesis 34:25
- Luke 2:33-35
- Luke 21:24
- Matthew 10:34
- Matthew 26:55
- Revelation 1:16

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0019, H1300, H2719, H4380, H6609, H7524, H7973, G31620, G45010

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:20](#); [2:21](#); [4:9](#); [5:9](#))

temple, house, house of God

Facts:

The temple was a building surrounded by walled courtyards where the Israelites came to pray and to offer sacrifices to God. It was located on Mount Moriah in the city of Jerusalem.

- Often the term “temple” referred to the whole temple complex, including the courtyards that surrounded the main building. Sometimes it referred only to the building.
- The temple building had two rooms, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.
- God referred to the temple as his dwelling place.
- King Solomon built the Temple during his reign. It was supposed to be the permanent place of worship in Jerusalem.
- In the New Testament, the term “temple of the Holy Spirit” is used to refer to believers in Jesus as a group, because the Holy Spirit lives in them.

Translation Suggestions:

- Usually when the text says that people were “in the temple,” it is referring to the courtyards outside the building. This could be translated as “in the temple courtyards” or “in the temple complex.”
- Where it refers specifically to the building itself, some translations translate “temple” as “temple building,” to make it the reference clear.
- Ways to translate “temple” could include, “God’s holy house” or “sacred worship place.”
- Often in the Bible, the temple is referred to as “the house of Yahweh” or “the house of God.”

(See also: sacrifice, Solomon, Babylon, Holy Spirit, tabernacle, courtyard, [Zion](#), [house](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 3:2
- Acts 3:8
- Ezekiel 45:18-20
- Luke 19:46
- Nehemiah 10:28
- Psalm 79:1-3

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:6** David wanted to build a **temple** where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him sacrifices.
- **18:2** In Jerusalem, Solomon built the **Temple** for which his father David had planned and gathered materials. Instead of at the Tent of Meeting, people now worshiped God and offered sacrifices to him at the **Temple**. God came and was present in the **Temple**, and he lived there with his people.
- **20:7** They (Babylonians) captured the city of Jerusalem, destroyed the **Temple**, and took away all the treasures.
- **20:13** When the people arrived in Jerusalem, they rebuilt the **Temple** and the wall around the city of the city and the **Temple**.
- **25:4** Then Satan took Jesus to the highest point on the **Temple** and said, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘God will command his angels to carry you so your foot does not hit a stone.’”
- **40:7** When he died, there was an earthquake and the large curtain that separated the people from the presence of God in the **Temple** was torn in two, from the top to the bottom.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1004, H1964, H1965, G14930, G24110, G34850

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1 General Notes; 1:20; 2:7](#))

testimony, testify, witness, eyewitness, evidence

Definition:

When a person gives “testimony” he makes a statement about something he knows, claiming that the statement is true. To “testify” is to give “testimony.”

- In some places in the Old Testament, “Testimony” refers specifically to the tablets of stone on which Yahweh wrote his ten commandments. From that use it came to refer to God’s law more broadly.
- Often a person “testifies” about something he has experienced directly.
- A witness who gives “false testimony” does not tell the truth about what happened.
- Sometimes the term “testimony” refers to a prophecy that a prophet has stated.
- In the New Testament, this term was often used to refer to how Jesus’ followers testified about the events of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

The term “witness” refers to a person who has personally experienced something that happened. Usually a witness is also someone who testifies about what they know is true. The term “eyewitness” emphasizes that the person was actually there and saw what happened.

- To “witness” something means to see it happen.
- At a trial, a witness “gives witness” or “bears witness.” This has the same meaning as “testify.”
- Witnesses are expected to tell the truth about what they have seen or heard.
- A witness who does not tell the truth about what happened is called a “false witness.” He is said to “give false witness” or to “bear false witness.”
- The expression “be a witness between” means that something or someone will be evidence that a contract has been made. The witness will make sure each person does what he has promised to do.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “testify” or “give testimony” could also be translated as “tell the facts” or “tell what was seen or heard” or “tell from personal experience” or “give evidence” or “tell what happened.”
- Ways to translate “testimony” could include, “report of what happened” or “statement of what is true” or “evidence” or “what has been said” or “prophecy.”
- Ways to translate “Testimony” could include, “the stone slabs on which I wrote my commands” or “God’s law” or “God’s commands” or “the record of the agreement between Yahweh and Israel.”
- The phrase, “as a testimony to them” could be translated as to “show them what is true” or to “prove to them what is true.”
- The phrase, “as a testimony against them” could be translated as “which will show them their sin” or “exposing their hypocrisy” or “which will prove that they are wrong.”
- To “give false testimony” could be translated as “say false things about” or “state things that are not true.”
- The term “witness” or “eyewitness” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person seeing it” or “the one who saw it happen” or “those who saw and heard (those things).”
- Something that is “a witness” could be translated as “guarantee” or “sign of our promise” or “something that testifies that this is true.”
- The phrase “you will be my witnesses” could also be translated as “you will tell other people about me” or “you will teach people the truth that I taught you” or “you will tell people what you have seen me do and heard me teach.”
- To “witness to” could be translated as to “tell what was seen” or to “testify” or to “state what happened.”
- To “witness” something could be translated as to “see something” or to “experience something happen.”

(See also: ark of the covenant, guilt, [judge](#), [prophet](#), true)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 31:28
- Micah 6:3
- Matthew 26:60
- Mark 1:44
- John 1:7
- John 3:33
- Acts 4:32-33
- Acts 7:44
- Acts 13:31
- Romans 1:9
- 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12
- 1 Timothy 5:19-20
- 2 Timothy 1:8
- 2 Peter 1:16-18
- 1 John 5:6-8
- 3 John 1:12
- Revelation 12:11

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **39:2** Inside the house, the Jewish leaders put Jesus on trial. They brought many **false witnesses** who lied about him.
- **39:4** The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted, "We do not need any more **witnesses**. You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your judgment?"
- **42:8** "It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to receive forgiveness for their sins. They will do this starting in Jerusalem, and then go to all people groups everywhere. You are **witnesses** of these things."
- **43:7** "We are **witnesses** to the fact that God raised Jesus to life again."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5707, H5713, H5715, H5749, H6030, H8584, G02670, G12630, G19570, G26490, G31400, G31410, G31420, G31430, G31440, G43030, G48280, G49010, G55750, G55760, G55770, G60200

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:13](#))

throne, enthroned

Definition:

A throne is a specially-designed chair where a ruler sits when he decides important matters and listens to requests from his people.

- A throne is also a symbol of the authority and power that a ruler has.
- The word “throne” can also be used to refer to the ruler, his reign, or his power.
- In the Bible, God was often portrayed as a king who sits on his throne. Jesus was described as sitting on a throne at the right hand of God the Father.
- Jesus said that heaven is God’s throne. One way to translate this could be, “where God reigns as king.”

(See also: authority, power, [king](#), reign)

Bible References:

- Colossians 1:15-17
- Genesis 41:40
- Luke 1:32
- Luke 22:30
- Matthew 5:34
- Matthew 19:28
- Revelation 1:4-6

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3427, H3676, H3678, H3764, H7675, G09680, G23620

(Go back to: [Lamentations 5:19](#))

virgin, virginity

Definition:

A virgin is a woman who has never had sexual relations.

- The prophet Isaiah said that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- Mary was a virgin when she was pregnant with Jesus. He did not have a human father.
- Some languages may have a term that is a polite way of referring to a virgin. (See: [Euphemism](#))

(See also: Christ, Isaiah, Jesus, Mary)

Bible References:

- Genesis 24:15-16
- Luke 1:27
- Luke 1:35
- Matthew 1:23
- Matthew 25:2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **21:9** The prophet Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be born from a **virgin**.
- **22:4** She (Mary) was a **virgin** and was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph.
- **22:5** Mary replied, "How can this be, since I am a **virgin**?"
- **49:1** An angel told a **virgin** named Mary that she would give birth to God's Son. So while she was still a **virgin**, she gave birth to a son and named him Jesus.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1330, H1331, G39320, G39330

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:4](#); [1:18](#); [2:10](#); [2:13](#); [2:21](#); [5:11](#))

walk, walked

Definition:

The term “walk” is often used in a figurative sense to mean “live.”

- “Enoch walked with God” means that Enoch lived in a close relationship with God.
- To “walk by the Spirit” means to be guided by the Holy Spirit so that we do things that please and honor God.
- To “walk in” God’s commands or God’s ways means to “live in obedience to” his commands, that is, to “obey his commands” or “do his will.”
- When God says he will “walk among” his people, it means that he is living among them or closely interacting with them.
- To “walk contrary to” means to live or behave in a way that is against something or someone.
- To “walk after” means to seek or pursue someone or something. It can also mean to act in the same way as someone else.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate “walk” literally, as long as the correct meaning will be understood.
- Otherwise, figurative uses of “walk” could also be translated by “live” or “act” or “behave.”
- The phrase “walk by the Spirit” could be translated by, “live in obedience to the Holy Spirit” or “behave in a way that is pleasing to the Holy Spirit” or “do things that are pleasing to God as the Holy Spirit guides you.”
- To “walk in God’s commands” could be translated by “live by God’s commands” or “obey God’s commands.”
- The phrase “walked with God” could be translated as “lived in close relationship with God by obeying and honoring him.”

(See also: Holy Spirit, honor)

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:7
- 1 Kings 2:4
- Colossians 2:7
- Galatians 5:25
- Genesis 17:1
- Isaiah 2:5
- Jeremiah 13:10
- Micah 4:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1869, H1980, H1981, H3212, H4108, G17040, G40430, G41980, G47480

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:5](#); [1:18](#); [5:18](#))

wine, wineskin, new wine

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “wine” refers to a kind of fermented drink made from the juice of a fruit called grapes. Wine was stored in “wineskins,” which were containers made out of animal skin.

- The term “new wine” referred to grape juice that had just been taken from the grape and was not fermented yet. Sometimes the term “wine” also referred to unfermented grape juice.
- To make wine, grapes are crushed in a winepress so that the juice comes out. The juice eventually ferments and alcohol forms in it.
- In Bible times, wine was the normal drink with meals. It did not have as much alcohol as present-day wine has.
- Before wine was served for a meal, it was often mixed with water.
- A wineskin that was old and brittle would get cracks in it, which allowed the wine to leak out. New wineskins were soft and flexible, which meant they did not tear easily and could store the wine safely.
- If wine is unknown in your culture, it could be translated as “fermented grape juice” or “fermented drink made from a fruit called grapes” or “fermented fruit juice.” (See: How to Translate Unknowns)
- Ways to translate “wineskin” could include “bag for wine” or “animal skin wine bag” or “animal skin container for wine.”

(See also: [grape](#), [vine](#), [vineyard](#), [winepress](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 5:23
- Genesis 9:21
- Genesis 49:12
- John 2:3-5
- John 2:10
- Matthew 9:17
- Matthew 11:18

smashed

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2561, H2562, H3196, H4469, H4997, H5435, H6025, H6071, H8492, G10980, G36310, G38200, G39430

(Go back to: [Lamentations 2:12](#))

winepress

Definition:

During Bible times, a “winepress” was a large container or open place where the juice of grapes was extracted in order to make wine.

- In Israel, winepresses were usually large, wide basins that were dug out of solid rock. Clusters of grapes were put on the flat bottom of the hole and people trampled the grapes with their feet to get the grape juice to flow out.
- Usually a winepress had two levels, with the grapes being trampled in the top level so that the juice would run down into the lower level where it could be collected.
- The term “winepress” is also used figuratively in the Bible as a picture of God’s wrath being poured out on wicked people. (See: [Metaphor](#))

(See also: [grape](#), [wrath](#))

Bible References:

- Isaiah 63:2
- Mark 12:1
- Matthew 21:33
- Revelation 14:20

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1660, H3342, H6333, G30250, G52760

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

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: [Lamentations 2:4](#); [4:11](#))

Yahweh

Facts:

The term “Yahweh” is God’s personal name in the Old Testament. The specific origin of this name is unknown, but it is probably derived from the Hebrew verb meaning, “to be.”

- Following tradition, many Bible versions use the term “LORD” or “the LORD” to represent “Yahweh.” This tradition resulted from the fact that historically, the Jewish people became afraid of mispronouncing Yahweh’s name and started saying “Lord” every time the term “Yahweh” appeared in the text. Modern Bibles write “LORD” with all capital letters to show respect for God’s personal name and to distinguish it from “Lord” which is a different Hebrew word.
- The ULT and UST texts always translate this term as, “Yahweh,” in agreement with the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.
- The term “Yahweh” never occurs in the original text of the New Testament; only the Greek term for “Lord” is used, even when quoting the Old Testament.
- In the Old Testament, when God spoke about himself, he would often use his name instead of a pronoun.

Translation Suggestions:

- “Yahweh” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “I am” or “living one” or “the one who is” or “he who is alive.”
- This term could also be written in a way that is similar to how “Yahweh” is spelled.
- Some church denominations prefer not to use the term “Yahweh” and instead use the traditional rendering, “LORD.” An important consideration is that this may be confusing when read aloud because it will sound the same as the title “Lord.” Some languages may have an affix or other grammatical marker that could be added to distinguish “LORD” as a name (Yahweh) from “Lord” as a title.
- It is best if possible to keep the name Yahweh where it literally occurs in the text, but some translations may decide to use only a pronoun in some places, to make the text more natural and clear.
- Introduce the quote with something like, “This is what Yahweh says.”

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

(See also: God, [Lord](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 21:20
- 1 Samuel 16:7
- Daniel 9:3
- Ezekiel 17:24
- Genesis 2:4
- Genesis 4:3-5
- Genesis 28:13
- Hosea 11:12
- Isaiah 10:4
- Isaiah 38:8
- Job 12:10
- Joshua 1:9
- Lamentations 1:5
- Leviticus 25:35
- Malachi 3:4
- Micah 2:5

- Micah 6:5
- Numbers 8:11
- Psalm 124:3
- Ruth 1:21
- Zechariah 14:5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:14** God said, "I AM WHO I AM. Tell them, 'I AM has sent me to you.' Also tell them, 'I am **Yahweh**, the God of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is my name forever.'"
- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, "I am **Yahweh**, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other gods."
- **13:5** "Do not make idols or worship them, for I, **Yahweh**, am a jealous God."
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of **Yahweh**, the true God.
- **19:10** Then Elijah prayed, "O **Yahweh**, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, show us today that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3050, H3068, H3069

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:5](#); [1:9](#); [1:11](#); [1:12](#); [1:17](#); [1:18](#); [1:20](#); [2:6](#); [2:7](#); [2:8](#); [2:17](#); [2:20](#); [2:22](#); [3:22](#); [3:24](#); [3:25](#); [3:26](#); [3:40](#); [3:50](#); [3:55](#); [3:59](#); [3:61](#); [3:64](#); [3:66](#); [4:11](#); [4:16](#); [4:20](#); [5:1](#); [5:19](#); [5:21](#))

Zion, Mount Zion

Definition:

Originally, the term “Zion” or “Mount Zion” referred to a stronghold or fortress that King David captured from the Jebusites. Both these terms became other ways of referring to Jerusalem.

- Mount Zion and Mount Moriah were two of the hills that the city of Jerusalem was located on. Later, “Zion” and “Mount Zion” became used as general terms to refer to both of these mountains and to the city of Jerusalem. Sometimes they also referred to the temple that was located in Jerusalem. (See: [metonymy](#))
- David named Zion, or Jerusalem, the “City of David.” This is different from David’s hometown, Bethlehem, which was also called the City of David.
- The term “Zion” is used in other figurative ways, to refer to Israel or to God’s spiritual kingdom or to the new, heavenly Jerusalem that God will create.

(See also: Abraham, David, [Jerusalem](#), Bethlehem, Jebusites)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:5
- Amos 1:2
- Jeremiah 51:35
- Psalm 76:1-3
- Romans 11:26

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6726

(Go back to: [Lamentations 1:4](#); [1:6](#); [1:17](#); [2:1](#); [2:4](#); [2:6](#); [2:8](#); [2:10](#); [2:13](#); [2:18](#); [4:2](#); [4:11](#); [4:22](#); [5:11](#); [5:18](#))

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