



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Notes**

**Genesis**

**Version 71**

[en]

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# **unfoldingWord® Translation Notes**

## **Genesis**

## Introduction to Genesis

### Part 1: General Introduction

#### Outline of Genesis

From the Creation to the Tower of Babel

The account of the creation of the heavens and the earth (1:1–4:26)

The account of Adam (5:1–6:8)

The account of Noah (6:9–11:9)

The account of Shem (11:10–11:26)

The account of Terah (11:27–11:32)

The accounts of the Patriarchs

The account of Abraham (12:1–25:11)

The account of Ishmael (25:12–25:18)

The account of Isaac, focusing on Jacob (25:19–35:29)

The account of Esau (36:1–37:1)

The account of Jacob, focusing on Joseph (37:2–50:26)

#### What is Genesis about?

Genesis begins with the early years of creation. It tells about God creating heaven, earth, and the first humans. It also tells about the first time humans sinned. This caused humans to be separated from God and to eventually die. Genesis 1-11 briefly tells about other important events that occurred over many hundreds of years. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/other/death\]\]](#))

Genesis is also about the beginning of God's people. Genesis 12-50 tells about how God remained faithful to Abraham and his descendants. Abraham's descendants became known as the Hebrews and later as the Israelites. These people would worship Yahweh and be his people.

Genesis ends with Abraham's descendants living in Egypt with the hope of returning one day to the Promised Land. (See: **Promised Land (p.1769)**)

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

"Genesis" means "beginning," so translators should express this idea in their title. Titles such as "The Beginning of Things" may be suitable. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

#### Who wrote Genesis?

The writers of both the Old and New Testaments presented Moses as being very involved with writing the book of Genesis. Since ancient times, both Jews and Christians have thought that Moses wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

### Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

#### What are the covenants mentioned in Genesis?

A covenant is a formal, binding agreement between two parties that one or both parties must fulfill.

God made three covenants in Genesis. In the covenant with Adam, God promised to bless Adam and cause him to prosper. Adam was not allowed to eat fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God promised that Adam would die if he disobeyed what he commanded.

In the covenant with Noah, God promised to never again destroy the world with a flood.

In the covenant with Abraham, God promised to make Abraham's descendants into a great nation. He also promised to protect them and to give them a land of their own.

## What was God's purpose for the book of Genesis?

The book of Genesis says that God created a very good world. However, the world became cursed because human beings began to sin. But Genesis shows that God continues to have complete control over the world.

Genesis also describes the start of God's plan to bless the whole world again. This is shown when God makes a covenant with Abraham. With this covenant, God chose Abraham and his descendants to be his people. God promised to bless the world through Abraham's descendants.

## What was the custom for inheritance as described by Genesis?

There are several passages in Genesis that show the customs of a father who is about to die passing on a blessing to his son. Abraham blessed his son, Isaac, and made him the ancestor of the people of Israel. However, Ishmael, Abraham's other son, did not receive that same divine blessing. Likewise, Isaac's older son Esau did not receive the blessing. Isaac's younger son, Jacob, received it instead. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/bless\]\]](#))

Also, it was the custom for a man to divide among his sons his material wealth and land. All his sons received equal portions except the oldest son. The firstborn son received twice as much. His portion was called a double portion. Esau gave up his right to receive the double portion.

## How does Genesis present sin and evil?

Genesis presents sin as doing things that are against God's word and God's ways. It presents evil as the opposite of good.

Sin and evil have affected all people. This started when Adam disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden.

## Part 3: Important Translation Issues

### What is one way in which Genesis marks the beginning of important sections?

Genesis uses one Hebrew phrase that the ULT translates as "this is the record of," "these were the events concerning," or "these were the descendants of." The information in these sections may have come from sources much older than Moses. These passages are 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2.

If the translator wants to translate in only two ways, we recommend for most passages a phrase such as, "this is the record about" or "this is information about." Some passages will be better translated, however, as "These were the descendants of."

## **Why are the beginnings of some narrative sections in Genesis difficult to translate?**

Often in Genesis, the author first summarizes what is about to happen. Then in the following verses, the author tells the details of what happened. Probable examples of this style occur in Gen. 1:1, 6:22, 18:1, 21:1 and 22:1.

However, in many languages, it is preferred to write summaries at the end of a narrative. In this case, translators may choose a different approach. For example, in Gen. 1:1 (“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”), translators may decide to translate like this: “This is about how God made the heavens and the earth in the beginning.”

## **What is the difference between “people,” “peoples,” and “people groups”?**

The word “people” refers to all the individuals who belong to a group, such as “the people of Israel.” The word “peoples” (used in the ULT) refers to multiple groups of people. Each people group might speak their own language, have their own customs, and worships their own gods. Some different peoples in the ancient Near East were those of Israel, Egypt, Edom, Moab, and Ammon.

The expression “people groups” (used in the UST) means the same thing as “peoples” in the ULT. The translator should use the most equivalent term that is common in the project language.

## **What is the relationship between individuals and peoples that have similar names?**

Many individuals in Genesis eventually had large numbers of descendants who were called after their ancestor’s name. For example, Cush was the name of an individual. But, “Cush” also became the name of nation that his descendants formed. They were called “Cushites.” If possible, when translating these names, the translator should make the individual’s name and the nation’s name similar. Examples of this are “Cush” and “Cushite” or “Moab” and “Moabite.” Otherwise, the translator may say, “the descendants of Cush” or “the descendants of Moab.”

## **What do the phrases “to this day” or “of today” mean?**

These phrases were used by the narrator to refer to the time when he was writing. The translator should be aware that “to this day” and “of today” refer to a time already passed. The translator might decide to say, “to this day, at the time when this is being written,” or, “to this day, at the time of writing.” This Hebrew phrase occurs in Gen. 19:37, 19:38, 22:14, 26:33, 32:32, 35:20, 47:26, 48:18.

# Genesis 1

## Genesis 1 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This chapter presents the first account of God creating the world. There is a pattern to this account: “God said ... God saw that it was good ... This was evening and morning, the first day.” Translators should preserve this pattern in their versions.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### The universe

This account of creation is told within the framework of ancient Hebrew ideas about the universe: the earth was resting with water around it and below it. Over the earth was something like a vast dome, called “an expanse between the waters” (1:6), on top of which was more water. Translators should try to keep these original images in their work, even though readers in their project language might have a completely different idea of what the universe is like.

#### Evening and morning

Genesis 1 presents the ancient Hebrew idea of a day: it begins with sunset, lasts through the night and continues through the daylight hours until the next sunset. This pattern should be preserved in translation, even if readers in the project language define “day” differently.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### “In the beginning”

Some languages and cultures speak of the world as if it has always existed, as if it had no beginning. But “very long ago” is different from “in the beginning,” and you need to be sure that your translation communicates correctly.

#### “God said, ‘Let there be’”

This expression occurs often in this chapter. It can be difficult to translate, because God is not shown as talking to a particular person. If God is talking to a thing, it is something not yet in existence. Translators should find the most natural way in the project language to signal the idea that God spoke things into existence; he created the world and the things in it by simply commanding that they should exist.

## **Genesis 1:1**

### **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth**

“This is about how God made the heavens and the earth in the beginning.” This statement summarizes the rest of the chapter. Some languages translate it as “A very long time ago God created the heavens and the earth.” Translate it in a way that shows this actually happened and is not just a folk story.

### **In the beginning**

This refers to the start of the world and everything in it.

### **the heavens and the earth**

“the sky, the ground, and everything in them”

### **heavens**

This refers here to the sky.

## **Genesis 1:2**

### **without form and empty**

God had not yet put the world in order.

### **the deep**

“the water” or “the deep water” or “the vast water”

### **the surface of the waters**

“the surface of the water” or “the water”

## Genesis 1:3

### Let there be light

This is a command. By commanding that light should exist, God made it exist. (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p. 1665)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**)

## **Genesis 1:4**

### **God saw the light, that it was good**

“God considered the light and was pleased with it.” “Good” here means “pleasing” or “suitable.”

### **divided the light from the darkness**

“separated the light and the darkness” or “made it light at one time and dark at another.” This refers to God creating the daytime and the night time.

## **Genesis 1:5**

### **This was evening and morning, the first day**

God did these things on the first day that the universe existed.

### **evening and morning**

This refers to the whole day. The writer speaks of the whole day as if it were these two parts. In the Jewish culture, a day begins when the sun sets. (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

## Genesis 1:6

### Let there be an expanse & let it divide

These are commands. By commanding that the expanse should exist and that it divide the waters, God made it exist and divide the waters. (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**)

### expanse

large empty space. The Jewish people thought of this space as being shaped like the inside of dome or the inside of a bowl that is turned upside down.

### between the waters

“in the water”

## **Genesis 1:7**

### **God made the expanse and divided the waters**

“In this way God made the expanse and divided the waters.” When God spoke, it happened. This sentence explains what God did when he spoke.

### **It was so**

“It happened like that” or “That is what happened.” What God commanded happened just as he said it should. This phrase appears throughout the chapter and has the same meaning wherever it appears.

## **Genesis 1:8**

### **evening and morning**

This refers to the whole day. The writer speaks of the whole day as if it were these two parts. In the Jewish culture, a day begins when the sun sets. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:5](#). (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

### **the second day**

This refers to the second day that the universe existed. See how you translated “the first day” in [Genesis 1:5](#) and decide if you should translate this the same way.

## Genesis 1:9

### Let the waters & be gathered

This can be translated with an active verb. This is a command. By commanding that the waters gather together, God made them gather together. Alternate translation: “Let the waters ... gather” or “Let the waters ... come together” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-imperative\]\]](#)) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### let the dry land appear

The water had covered the land. Now the water would move aside and some of the land would be uncovered. This is a command. By commanding that dry land should appear, God made it appear. Alternate translation: “let dry land become visible” or “let the dry land become clear” or “let the land be uncovered” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**)

### dry land

This refers to land that is not covered with water. It does not refer to land that is too dry for farming.

### It was so

“It happened like that” or “That is what happened.” What God commanded happened just as he said it should. This phrase appears throughout the chapter and has the same meaning wherever it appears. See how you translated it in [Genesis 1:7](#).

## **Genesis 1:10**

### **the dry land “earth,” and**

“the part that was dry ‘earth,’ and”

### **He saw that it was good**

Here “it” refers to the land and the sea. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:4](#).

## Genesis 1:11

### Let the earth sprout vegetation

This is a command. By commanding that vegetation should sprout on the earth, God made it sprout. Alternate translation: “Let vegetation sprout up on the earth” or “Let vegetation grow on the earth” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**)

### vegetation: plants yielding seed and fruit trees bearing fruit

“vegetation, each plant that bears seed and each tree that bears fruit” or “vegetation. Let them be plants that produce seeds and fruit trees that produce fruit.” Here “vegetation” is used here as a general term that includes all plants and trees.

### plants

These are kinds of vegetation that have soft stems, rather than woody stems.

### fruit trees bearing fruit whose seed is in the fruit

“trees that bear fruit with seeds in them”

### each according to its own kind

The seeds would produce plants and trees that would be like the ones they came from. In this way, the plants and trees would “reproduce themselves” .

### It was so

“It happened like that” or “That is what happened.” What God commanded happened just as he said it should. This phrase appears throughout the chapter and has the same meaning wherever it appears. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:7](#).

## **Genesis 1:12**

### **God saw that it was good**

Here “it” refers to the vegetation, plants, and trees. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:10](#).

## **Genesis 1:13**

### **evening and morning**

This refers to the whole day. The writer speaks of the whole day as if it were these two parts. In the Jewish culture, a day begins when the sun sets. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:5](#). (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

### **the third day**

This refers to the third day that the universe existed. See how you translated “the first day” in [Genesis 1:5](#) and decide if you should translate this the same way.

## Genesis 1:14

### Let there be lights in the sky

This is a command. By commanding that lights should exist, God made them exist. (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**)

### lights in the sky

“things that shine in the sky” or “things that give light in the sky.” This refers to the sun, moon, and stars.

### in the sky

“in the expanse of the sky” or “in the large space of the sky”

### to divide the day from the night

“to separate the day from the night.” This means “to help us tell the difference between day and night.” The sun means it is daytime, and the moon and stars mean it is nighttime.

### let them be as signs

This is a command. By commanding that they should serve as signs, God made them serve as signs. Alternate translation: “Let them serve as signs” or “let them show” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**)

### signs

Here this means something that reveals or points to something.

### for seasons, for days and years

The sun, moon, and stars show the passing of time. This enables us to know when it is time for events that happen each week, month, or year.

### seasons

times that are set aside for festivals and other things that people do

## Genesis 1:15

### Let them be lights in the sky to give light upon the earth

This is a command. By commanding that they should light the earth, God made them light the earth. (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**)

### to give light upon the earth

“to shine light on the earth” or “to brighten the earth.” The earth does not self-shine but it is lit and so reflects light.

### It was so

“It happened like that” or “That is what happened.” What God commanded happened just as he said it should. This phrase appears throughout the chapter and has the same meaning. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:7](#).

## Genesis 1:16

### God made the two great lights

“In this way God made the two great lights.” This sentence explains what God did when he spoke.

### the two great lights

“the two large lights” or “the two bright lights.” The two great lights are the sun and the moon.

### to rule the day

The lights that controlled the day are spoken of as if they were a human ruler that controlled what people do. Alternate translation: “to direct the daytime as a ruler directs a group of people” or “to mark the times of the day” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-personification\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#)) (See: **Personification** (p.1698))

### day

This refers only to the daylight hours.

### the lesser light

“the smaller light” or “the dimmer light”

## **Genesis 1:17**

### **in the sky**

“in the heavens” or “in the open space of the sky”

## **Genesis 1:18**

### **to divide the light from the darkness**

“to separate the light from the darkness” or “to make it light at one time and dark at another.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:4](#).

### **God saw that it was good**

Here “it” refers to the sun, moon, and stars. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:4](#).

## **Genesis 1:19**

### **evening and morning**

This refers to the whole day. The writer speaks of the whole day as if it were these two parts. In the Jewish culture, a day begins when the sun sets. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:5](#). (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

### **the fourth day**

This refers to the fourth day that the universe existed. See how you translated “the first day” in [Genesis 1:5](#) and decide if you should translate this the same way.

## Genesis 1:20

### Let the waters be filled with great numbers of living creatures

This is a command. By commanding that living creatures should fill the waters, God made them exist. Some languages may have one word that refers to all kinds of fish and sea animals. Alternate translation: “Let the waters be full of many living things” or “Let many animals that swim live in the oceans” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**)

### let birds fly

This is a command. By commanding that birds should fly, God made them fly. (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**)

### birds

“animals that fly” or “flying things”

### the expanse of the sky

“the open space of the sky” or “the sky”

## **Genesis 1:21**

### **God created**

“In this way God created”

### **great sea creatures**

“large animals that live in the sea”

### **after its kind**

Living things of the same “kind” are like the ones they came from. See how you translated “kind” in [Genesis 1:11,12](#).

### **every winged bird**

“every flying thing that has wings.” If the word for birds is used, it may be more natural in some languages to simply say “every bird,” since all birds have wings.

### **God saw that it was good**

Here “it” refers to the birds and the fish. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:4](#).

## Genesis 1:22

### blessed them

“blessed the animals that he had made”

### Be fruitful and multiply

This is God’s blessing. He told the sea animals to produce more sea animals like themselves, so that there would be many of them in the seas. The word “multiply” explains how they are to be “fruitful.” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-doublet\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

### multiply

increase greatly in number

### Let birds multiply

This is a command. By commanding that birds should multiply, God made birds multiply. (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**)

### birds

“animals that fly” or “flying things.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:20](#).

## **Genesis 1:23**

### **evening and morning**

This refers to the whole day. The writer speaks of the whole day as if it were these two parts. In the Jewish culture, a day begins when the sun sets. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:5](#). (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

### **the fifth day**

This refers to the fifth day that the universe existed. See how you translated “the first day” in [Genesis 1:5](#) and decide if you should translate this the same way.

## Genesis 1:24

### Let the earth produce living creatures

“Let the earth produce living things” or “Let many living animals live on the earth.” This is a command. By commanding that the earth should produce living creatures, God made the earth produce living creatures. (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**)

### each according to its own kind

“so that each kind of animal will produce more of its own kind”

### livestock, creeping things, and beasts of the earth

This shows that God created all kinds of animals. If your language has another way of grouping all the animals, you can use that, or you can use these groups.

#### livestock

animals that people look after

#### creeping things

“small animals”

#### beasts of the earth

“wild animals” or “dangerous animals”

#### It was so

“It happened like that” or “That is what happened.” What God commanded happened just as he said it should. This phrase appears throughout the chapter and has the same meaning. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:7](#).

## **Genesis 1:25**

### **God made the beasts**

“In this way God made the beasts”

### **He saw that it was good**

Here “it” refers to the living creatures on the earth. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:4](#).

## Genesis 1:26

### Let us make

The word “us” here refers to God. God was saying what he intended to do. The pronoun “us” is plural. Possible reasons for the plural use are (1) the plural form suggests that God is discussing something with the angels that make up his heavenly court or (2) the plural form foreshadows the later New Testament implications that God exists in the form of the Holy Trinity. Some translate it as “Let me make” or “I will make.” If you do this, consider adding a footnote to say that the word is plural. (See: **Pronouns (p.1705)**) (See: **Pronouns (p.1705)**)

### man

human beings

### in our image, after our likeness

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that God made mankind to be like him. This verse does not tell in what ways God made people to be like himself. God does not have a body, so it does not mean that people would look like God. Alternate translation: “to truly be like us” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-doublet\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns\]\]](#)) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

### have dominion over

“rule over” or “have authority over”

## **Genesis 1:27**

### **God created man & he created him**

These two sentences mean the same thing and emphasize that God created people in his own image. (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

### **God created man**

The way that God created man was different from the way he created everything else. Do not specify that he created man by simply speaking, as in the preceding verses.

## Genesis 1:28

### God blessed them

The word “them” refers to the man and woman God had created.

### Be fruitful, and multiply

God told the man and the woman to produce more people like themselves so that there would be many of them. The word “multiply” explains how they are to be “fruitful.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:22](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-doublet\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

### Fill the earth

Fill the earth with people.

## **Genesis 1:29**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 1:30

### General Information:

### General Information:

God continues speaking.

### every bird of the heavens

“all the birds that fly in the sky”

### that has the breath of life

“that breathes.” This phrase emphasizes that these animals had a different kind of life than the plants. Plants do not breathe, and were to be used as food for the animals. Here “life” means physical life.

### It was so

“It happened like that” or “That is what happened.” What God commanded happened just as he said it should. This phrase appears throughout the chapter and has the same meaning. See how you translated it in [Genesis 1:7](#).

## Genesis 1:31

### Behold, it

“This is true and important: it”

### it was very good

Now when God looked at everything he had made, it was “very good.” See how you translated “it was good” in [Genesis 1:10](#).

### evening and morning

This refers to the whole day. The writer speaks of the whole day as if it were these two parts. In the Jewish culture, a day begins when the sun sets. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:5](#). (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

### the sixth day

This refers to the sixth day that the universe existed. See how you translated “the first day” in [Genesis 1:5](#) and decide if you should translate this the same way.

## Genesis 2

### Genesis 2 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Gen. 2:1-3 ends the first creation account, begun in the previous chapter. The second creation account, beginning in 2:4, is very different, using a more natural, story-telling style instead of following a set formula using repeated phrases. Translators should try to imitate this difference in their versions.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### The second creation account in Gen. 2:4-25

Gen. 2:4-25 presents an account of creation from a different viewpoint than the one given in Gen. 1:1-2:3. This second account should be regarded as filling out the first account, not as conflicting with it.

##### Yahweh, the name of God

“Yahweh,” the personal name of God in the Old Testament, appears for the first time in this chapter. Translators must decide how to represent it in their versions. For 2,000 years, it has been traditional for many Christians to represent it with the term “the Lord.” Indeed, it is demanded by Roman Catholics for their Bible versions to continue doing this. Of course, the disadvantage of using “the Lord” is that this is a title for God, not a personal name. (See: **Yahweh (p.1780)**)

Translators who are not producing versions for Roman Catholics can consider transliterating the name “Yahweh,” approximating the name as best as their project languages allow.

Or translators can consider using expressions for the supreme god that might exist in their project languages, such as, “The Great One,” “The Ruler of All,” “The One who Never Sleeps,” etc. Of course, these are descriptive titles, not personal names, so they suffer from the same disadvantages that “the Lord” has.

Translators can also consider pairing a transliteration of “Yahweh” with a meaningful title for the supreme god in the project language. Whatever solution is found should be followed consistently when the name “Yahweh” occurs in the Scriptures.

##### The Garden of Eden

This was not a vegetable garden or cultivated field. Instead, it was probably a large area of land with fruit trees and other plants bearing leaves, etc., that were good to eat. A river flowed out from the Garden of Eden, giving the impression that the Garden was a holy place; in the ancient Near East, temples had gardens and waterways. In Rev. 22:1-2, the throne of God in the New Jerusalem is pictured with a river flowing out from it. (See: **holy, holiness, unholy, sacred (p.1762)**)

## **Genesis 2:1**

### **the heavens**

“the sky” or “the skies”

### **and all the living things that filled them**

“and all the many living things that are in them” or “and all the crowds of living things in them”

### **were finished**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God had finished creating them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 2:2**

### **On the seventh day God came to the end of his work**

God did not work at all on the seventh day.

### **came to the end of**

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "had finished" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **he rested on the seventh day from all his work**

"on that day he did not work"

## **Genesis 2:3**

### **God blessed the seventh day**

Possible meanings are (1) God caused the seventh day to produce good result or (2) God said that the seventh day was good.

### **sanctified it**

“set it apart” or “called it his own”

### **in it he rested from all his work**

“on it he did not work”

## **Genesis 2:4**

### **General Information:**

## **General Information:**

The rest of Genesis 2 tells about how God created people on the sixth day.

### **These were the events concerning the heavens and the earth**

“This is the account of the heavens and the earth” or “This is the story about the heavens and the earth.” Possible meanings are (1) it is a summary of the events described in Genesis 1:1-2:3 or (2) it introduces the events described in Genesis 2. If possible, translate this so that people can understand it either way.

### **they were created**

“Yahweh God created them.” In chapter 1 the writer always speaks of God as “God,” but in chapter 2 he always speaks of God as “Yahweh God.”

### **on the day that Yahweh God made**

“when Yahweh God created.” The word “day” refers to the whole time span of the creation, not to just one particular day.

### **Yahweh**

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

## **Genesis 2:5**

### **No bush of the field**

no shrubs growing in the wild that animals might eat

### **no plant of the field**

no leafy plants like vegetables or greens that both animals and humans can eat

### **to cultivate**

to do everything he needed to do so that the plants would grow well

## **Genesis 2:6**

### **mist**

Possible meanings are (1) something like dew or morning fog or (2) springs from underground streams.

### **the whole surface of the ground**

the entire earth

## **Genesis 2:7**

### **formed man**

“molded man” or “shaped man” or “created man”

### **man & man**

“a human being ... the human” or “a person ... the person” not specifically a male

### **his nostrils**

“his nose”

### **breath of life**

“breath that makes things live.” Here “life” refers to physical life.

## **Genesis 2:8**

### **a garden**

This could have been an orchard of fruit trees or an area with all kinds of trees.

### **eastward**

in the east

## **Genesis 2:9**

### **the tree of life**

“the tree that gives people life”

### **life**

Here this means “eternal life” or life that does not end.

### **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**

“the tree that gives people the ability to understand both good and evil” or “the tree that makes people who eat its fruit able to know good things and bad things”

### **good and evil**

This is a figure of speech that refers to both extremes and everything in between. Alternate translation: “everything, including both good and evil” (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

### **in the midst of the garden**

“in the middle of the garden.” The two trees may not have been in the exact center of the garden.

## **Genesis 2:10**

### **A river went out of Eden to water the garden**

The garden was in Eden. The river continued to flow outside of Eden. "A river flowed through Eden to water the garden"

## Genesis 2:11

### Pishon

This is the only time this river is referred to in the Bible. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### the whole land of Havilah

“the whole land called Havilah.” It was somewhere in the Arabian Desert. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### where there is gold

This phrase gives information about Havilah. Some languages would translate it as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: “There is gold in Havilah” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**)

## Genesis 2:12

### There are also bdellium and the onyx stone

The word “there” is placed first in the sentence for emphasis. Alternate translation: “This is also where people can find bdellium and onyx stones”

#### **bdellium**

This resin comes from a tree and smells nice. A resin is sticky stuff that comes out of some trees and can burn. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1732)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1732)**)

#### **the onyx stone**

“onyx stones.” Onyx is a certain kind of beautiful stone. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1732)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1732)**)

## **Genesis 2:13**

### **Gihon**

This is the only mention of this river in the Bible. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **flows throughout the whole land of Cush**

The river did not cover the whole land, but wound through various parts of the land.

### **the whole land of Cush**

“the entire land called Cush”

## Genesis 2:14

### which flows east of Ashur

“which flows in the land east of the city of Ashur.” The Tigris River flows from north to south. The phrase “which flows east of Ashur” gives information about where the Tigris River is. Some languages would translate it as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: “It flows east of Ashur” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**)

## **Genesis 2:15**

### **the garden of Eden**

“the garden that was in Eden”

### **to work it**

“to cultivate it.” This means to do everything necessary so that the plants will grow well.

### **to maintain it**

to guard against anything bad happening in it

## **Genesis 2:16**

### **From every tree in the garden**

“The fruit of every tree in the garden”

### **you**

This pronoun is singular. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### **may freely eat**

“may eat without restriction”

## **Genesis 2:17**

### **But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat**

These words complete the command that begins with the words “From every tree in the garden you may freely eat” in verse 15. In some languages, it may be more natural to say what is not permitted and to then say what is permitted, as in the UST.

### **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**

“the tree that gives people the ability to understand both good and evil” or “the tree that makes people who eat its fruit able to know good things and bad things.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 2:9](#).

### **you may not eat**

“I will not permit you to eat” or “you must not eat”

## **Genesis 2:18**

**I will make him a helper suitable for him**

“I will make a helper who is just right for him”

## **Genesis 2:19**

### **every animal of the field and every bird of the sky**

The phrases “of the field” and “of the sky” tell where the animals and birds are usually found. Alternate translation: “all kinds of animals and birds”

## **Genesis 2:20**

### **all the livestock**

“all the animals that people look after”

### **there was found no helper suitable for him**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “there was no companion that was right for him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 2:21**

### **caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man**

“caused the man to sleep intensely.” A deep sleep is a time of sleeping in which a person is not easily disturbed or wakened.

### **flesh**

This refers to the soft parts of the body like skin and muscle.

## **Genesis 2:22**

### **With the rib & he made a woman**

“From the rib ... he formed a woman.” The rib was the material God made the woman from.

## **Genesis 2:23**

### **This time, this one is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh**

“Finally, this one’s bones are like my bones, and her flesh is like my flesh.” After looking among all the animals for a partner and not finding one, he finally saw someone who was like him and could be his partner. The man was probably expressing his feeling of relief and joy.

### **She will be called ‘woman,’ because she was taken out of man**

The translator may want to write a footnote saying “The Hebrew word for ‘woman’ sounds like the Hebrew word for ‘man.’”

## **Genesis 2:24**

### **General Information:**

## **General Information:**

What follows is written by the author. The man did not say these things.

### **Therefore a man**

“That is why a man”

### **a man will leave his father and his mother**

“a man will stop living in his father and mother’s home.” This is about men in general. It does not refer to any particular man at any particular time.

### **they will become one flesh**

This idiom speaks of sexual activity as though the bodies that are together become one body. Alternate translation: “their two bodies will become one body” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 2:25**

### **They were both naked**

The word “they” refers to the man and the woman that God had created.

### **naked**

“not wearing clothing”

### **but were not ashamed**

“they were not ashamed about being naked”

## Genesis 3

### Genesis 3 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the second creation account that began in Gen. 2:4. But a new section of this account begins in 3:1. The ULT reads, "Now the serpent was more shrewd than any other beast of the field which Yahweh God had made," because this is how the Scriptures introduce the serpent into the account. However, many languages prefer different ways to introduce new characters or things into stories, for example, "One of the wild animals made by God was the serpent" or "This is about the serpent, one of the wild animals that God had made."

Scholars typically refer to the events of this chapter as "the fall" or "the fall of man" because sin is introduced into creation. (See: **sin, sinful, sinner, sinning (p.1776)**)

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Curses

In this chapter, God curses the man, the woman, and the serpent for their sins. In general, cursing is calling down God's punishment on someone or something. In this chapter, however, it is God himself who is doing the cursing. Of course, he does not call down punishment on the man, the woman, and the serpent from someone else. Instead, he is promising that he himself will punish them. (See: **curse, cursed, cursing (p.1748)**)

##### Serpent

Most scholars believe that the serpent is Satan, even though his name is not used in this chapter. There are other places in Scripture where the serpent is used as an image for Satan. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/satan\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#))

## **Genesis 3:1**

### **Now**

The writer is beginning a new part of the story.

### **more shrewd**

“more cunning” or “smarter at getting what he wanted by telling lies”

### **Has God really said, ‘You & garden’?**

The snake is pretending to be surprised that God has made this rule. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “I am surprised that God said, ‘You ... garden.’” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### **You must not eat**

The word “you” is plural and refers to the man and the woman. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p. 1640)**)

## **Genesis 3:2**

### **We may eat**

“We are allowed to eat” or “We have permission to eat”

## **Genesis 3:3**

### **but concerning the fruit & garden, God said, 'You may not eat it, nor may you touch it, or you will die**

These words are the end of Eve's description of God's command to them that begins with the words "We may eat" in verse 2. Eve told the serpent what God had permitted them to do first and then what God had told them not to do. Some languages would say what they were told not to do first and then say what they were allowed to do, as in the UST.

### **You may not & nor may you & you will die**

The word "you" is plural and refers to the man and the woman. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### **You may not eat it**

"You must not eat it" or "Do not eat it"

### **nor may you touch it**

"and you must not touch it" or "and do not touch it"

## Genesis 3:4

### You will & not die

These words refer to the man and the woman and so are dual or plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

## Genesis 3:5

### you & your & you

These words refer to the man and the woman and so are dual or plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### your eyes will be opened

“your eyes will open.” This idiom means “you will become aware of things” or “you will understand new things.” This meaning can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “It will be as though your eyes were opened” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### knowing good and evil

Here “good and evil” is a figure of speech that refers to both extremes and everything in between. See how you translated “knowledge of good and evil” in [Genesis 2:9](#). Alternate translation: “knowing everything, including both good and evil” (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

## **Genesis 3:6**

### **it was a delight to the eyes**

“the tree was delightful to look at” or “it was nice to look at” or “it was very beautiful”

### **that the tree was desirable to make one wise**

“she wanted the tree’s fruit because it could make a person wise” or “she wanted its fruit because it could make her understand what was right and wrong just as God does”

## Genesis 3:7

### The eyes of both of them were opened

“Then their eyes opened” or “They became aware” or “They understood.” See how you translated “your eyes will be opened” in [Genesis 3:5](#).

### sewed

put together, probably using vines as thread

### fig leaves

If people do not know what fig leaves are like, this can be translated as “large leaves from a fig tree” or simply “large leaves.”

### made coverings for themselves

They did this because they were ashamed. This implicit information can be made explicit if needed as in the UST.  
Alternate translation: “clothed themselves with them because they were ashamed” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 3:8**

### **in the cool of the day**

“at the time of day when a cool breeze blows”

### **from the presence of Yahweh God**

“from Yahweh God’s sight” or “so that Yahweh God would not see them” or “from Yahweh God”

## Genesis 3:9

### Where are you?

“Why are you trying to hide from me?” God knew where the man was. When the man answered, he did not say where he was but why he was hiding.

### you

In verses 9 and 11, God was speaking to the man. Languages that have a singular form of “you” would use that here. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

## **Genesis 3:10**

### **I heard you**

“I heard the sound you were making”

## Genesis 3:11

### Who told you

God knew the answer to this question. He asked it in order to force Adam to confess that he had disobeyed God.  
(See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### Have you eaten & from?

Again, God knew this had happened. Translate this question in a form that shows God was accusing Adam of disobedience. The sentence can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You must have eaten ... from."  
(See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## **Genesis 3:12**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 3:13

### What is this you have done?

God already knew what the woman had done. When he asked this question, he was giving her the opportunity to tell him about it, and he was expressing his disappointment with what she had done. Many languages use rhetorical questions for scolding or rebuking. If possible, use a form that expresses this disappointment. It can also be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You have done a terrible thing." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## **Genesis 3:14**

### **cursed are you alone**

“you alone are cursed.” The word “curse” is first in Hebrew in order to emphasize the contrast between God’s blessing on the animals and this curse on the serpent. This is a “curse formula,” or the way that curses were expressed. By saying this curse, God made it happen.

### **all the livestock and all the beasts of the field**

“all domestic animals and all wild animals”

### **It is on your stomach that you will go**

“You will move along the ground on your stomach.” The words “it is upon your stomach” comes first to emphasize the contrast between the way other animals would move along using their legs and the way the serpent would slither along on its stomach. This is also part of the curse formula.

### **it is dust that you will eat**

“you will eat dust.” The words “it is dust” comes first to emphasize the contrast between the plants above the ground that other animals would eat and the dirty food on the ground that the serpent would eat. This is part of the curse formula.

## Genesis 3:15

### hostility between you and the woman

This means that the serpent and the woman would become enemies.

### seed

The word “seed” refers to what a man puts into a woman to cause a baby to grow inside the woman. Like the word “offspring,” it can refer to more than one person. Try to find a word that is singular but can refer to more than one person.

### He will bruise & his heel

The words “he” and “his” refer to the woman’s descendant. If “seed” was translated as plural, this can be translated as “they will bruise ... their heel”; in this case, consider inserting footnotes to say that the “they” and “their” are used to translate a singular pronoun. (See: **Pronouns (p.1705)**) (See: **Pronouns (p.1705)**)

### bruise

“crush” or “strike” or “attack”

## **Genesis 3:16**

### **I will greatly multiply your pain**

“I will make your pain increase much” or “I will make your pain to be very severe”

### **in having children**

“in giving birth to children” or “when you give birth to children”

### **Your desire will be for your husband**

“You will have a strong desire for your husband.” Possible meanings are (1) “You will want very much to be with your husband” or (2) “You will want to control your husband”

### **he will rule over you**

“he will be your master” or “he will control you”

## Genesis 3:17

### Adam

The name Adam is the same as the Hebrew word for “man.” Some translations say “Adam” and some say “the man.” You may use either form as it refers to the same person.

### you have listened to the voice of your wife

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “you have obeyed what your wife said” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### have eaten from the tree

You can say what it was that they ate. Alternate translation: “have eaten the fruit of the tree” or “have eaten some of the fruit of the tree” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### You may not eat from it

“You must not eat from it” or “Do not eat its fruit”

### cursed is the ground

The word “curse” comes first in the sentence to emphasize that the ground, which had been “good” ([Genesis 1:10](#)), was now under God’s curse. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I am cursing the ground” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### through painful work

“by doing hard work”

### you will eat from it

The word “it” refers to the ground and is a metonym for the parts of the plants, which grow in the ground, that people eat. Alternate translation: “you will eat what grows from it” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 3:18**

### **the plants of the field**

Possible meanings are (1) "the plants that you take care of in your fields" or (2) "the wild plants that grow in the open fields."

## **Genesis 3:19**

### **By the sweat of your face**

“By doing hard work that makes your face sweat”

### **you will eat bread**

Here the word “bread” is a synecdoche for food in general. Alternate translation: “you will eat food” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **until you return to the ground**

“until you die and your body is put in the ground.” In some cultures, they put the bodies of people who have died in a hole in the ground. Man’s hard work does not end until the time of his death and burial.

### **For dust you are, and to dust you will return**

“I made you from soil, so your body will become soil again.” Translate both occurrences of “dust” with the same word in order to show that man begins and ends in the same condition.

## **Genesis 3:20**

### **The man**

Some translations say "Adam."

### **called his wife's name Eve**

"gave his wife the name Eve" or "named his wife Eve"

### **Eve**

Translators may write a footnote saying "The name Eve sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'living.'"

### **all the living**

The word "living" refers to people. Alternate translation: "all people" or "all living people" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**)

## **Genesis 3:21**

### **garments of skins**

“clothing made out of animal skins”

## Genesis 3:22

### the man

Possible meanings are (1) God was referring to one human, the man, or (2) God was referring to humans in general, so this would mean the man and his wife. Even if God was speaking about one person, what he said applied to both of them.

### like one of us

“like us.” The pronoun “us” is plural. See how you translated “Let us make” in [Genesis 1:26](#).

### knowing good and evil

Here “good and evil” is a figure of speech that refers to both extremes and everything in between. See how you translated “knowledge of good and evil” in [Genesis 2:9](#). Alternate translation: “knowing everything, including both good and evil” (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

### he must not be allowed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will not allow him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### tree of life

“the tree that gives people life.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 2:9](#).

## **Genesis 3:23**

### **the ground from which he had been taken**

“dirt because he had been taken from dirt.” This does not refer to the particular place on the land that the God took man from.

### **to cultivate**

This means to what is needed so that plants grow well. See how you translated this in [Genesis 2:5](#).

## **Genesis 3:24**

### **So God drove the man out of the garden**

“God forced the man to leave the garden.” This refers to the event in [Genesis 3:23](#), where it says “Yahweh God sent him out of the garden of Eden.” God did not send the man out a second time.

### **in order to guard the way to the tree of life**

“in order to stop people from going to the tree of life”

### **flaming sword**

Possible meanings are (1) a sword that had flames coming from it or (2) a fire that was shaped like a sword. Languages that do not have swords could use another weapon such as a spear or arrow.

## Genesis 4

### Genesis 4 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Most of the text in this chapter is prose, but 4:23-24 is poetry. If the translator should put these two verses into poetic form, or at least into elegant speech, different from the rest of the chapter.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Vengeance

The theme of vengeance is important in this chapter. Ancient Hebrew society allowed for people to seek revenge if a relative was murdered. After Cain murdered his brother Abel, he thought that he would be helpless against this danger because he had been driven away from God's protection. (See: **avenge, avenger, revenge, vengeance (p. 1738)**)

The theme of vengeance continues with the words of Lamech, who had killed someone for injuring him: "I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for bruising me. If Cain is avenged seven times as much, truly Lamech will be avenged seventy-seven times as much" (Gen. 4:23b-24).

## Genesis 4:1

### The man knew Eve

This is a polite way of saying that the man had sexual relations with Eve. You may need to use another euphemism in your language. (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### The man

“the human being” or “Adam”

### I have produced a man

The word for “man” typically describes an adult male, rather than a baby or child. If that would cause confusion, it could be translated as “manchild” or “boy” or “baby boy” or “son.”

### Cain

Translators may want to include a footnote that says “The name Cain sounds like the Hebrew word that means ‘produce.’ Eve named him Cain because she produced him.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 4:2

### Then she gave birth

We do not know how much time passed between the births of Cain and Abel. They may have been twins, or Abel may have been born after Eve became pregnant again. If possible, use an expression that does not tell how much time passed.

### cultivated

This means he did everything he needed to do so that the plants would grow well. See how “cultivate” is translated in [Genesis 2:5](#).

## Genesis 4:3

### It came about that

This phrase is used to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using that method here.

### in the course of time

Possible meanings are (1) "after some time had passed" or (2) "at the right time"

### fruit of the ground

This refers to the food that came from plants he had tended. Alternate translation: "crops" or "harvest" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 4:4

### some of the fat

This refers to the fatty parts of the lambs that he had killed, it was the best part of the animal. Alternate translation: "some of their fat parts" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### accepted

"looked favorably upon" or "was pleased with"

## **Genesis 4:5**

### **did not accept**

“did not look favorably upon” or “was not pleased with”

### **was very angry**

Some languages have an idiom for anger such as “He burned” or “His anger burned.”

### **he scowled**

This means that the expression on his face showed that he was angry or jealous. Some languages have an idiom that describes what a person's face looks like when he is angry. (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 4:6

### Why are you angry and why are you scowling?

God used these rhetorical questions to tell Cain that he was wrong to be angry and scowl. They may also have been intended to give Cain an opportunity to confess that he was wrong. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 4:7

### If you & will you not be accepted?

God used this rhetorical question to remind Cain of something Cain should have already known. Alternate translation: "You know that if you do what is right, I will accept you" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### But if you do not & you must rule over it

God speaks of sin as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "But if you do not do what is right, you will desire to sin even more, and then you will do sinful things. You must refuse to obey it" (See: **Personification (p.1698)**) (See: **Personification (p.1698)**)

### sin crouches & to control you

Here sin is spoken of as a dangerous wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack Cain. Alternate translation: "you will become so angry that you will not be able to stop sin" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### sin

Languages that do not have a noun that means "sin" could translate this as "your desire to sin" or "the bad things you want to do."

### you must rule over it

Yahweh speaks of Cain's desire to sin as if it were a person over whom Cain should rule. Alternate translation: "you must control it so you do not sin" (See: **Personification (p.1698)**) (See: **Personification (p.1698)**)

## Genesis 4:8

### Cain spoke to Abel his brother.

Some early translations tell explicitly what Cain said to his brother. You may want to do the same if it is present in your national version. Alternate translation: "Cain said to Abel his brother, 'Let us go into the fields.'" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-textvariants\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#)) (See: **Textual Variants (p.1730)**)

### brother

Abel was Cain's younger brother. Some languages may need to use the word for "younger brother." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### rose up against

Standing up to fight against a person is an idiom for attacking him. Alternate translation: "attacked" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 4:9

### Where is Abel your brother

God knew that Cain had killed Abel, but he asked Cain this question so that Cain would have to answer. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### Am I my brother's keeper?

Cain used this rhetorical question so that he would not have to tell the truth. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am not my brother's keeper!" or "You know that taking care of my brother is not my job!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 4:10

### What have you done?

God uses a rhetorical question to rebuke Cain. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "What you have done is terrible!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### Your brother's blood is calling out to me

Abel's blood is a metonym for his death, as if it were a person calling out for God to punish Cain. Alternate translation: "Your brother's blood is like a person calling out to me to punish the person who killed him" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 4:11**

### **Now cursed are you from the ground**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am cursing you so that you will not be able to grow food from the ground" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood**

God speaks of the earth as if it were a person who could drink Abel's blood. Alternate translation: "which is soaked with your brother's blood" (See: **Personification (p.1698)**) (See: **Personification (p.1698)**)

### **from your hand**

Here Cain is represented by his "hand," to emphasize that he personally had killed his brother. Alternate translation: "that spilled when you killed him" or "from you" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 4:12

### cultivate

This means to do everything necessary to do so that the plants would grow well. See how “cultivate” is translated in [Genesis 2:5](#).

### it will not yield to you its strength

The ground is personified as if it were a person who loses strength. Alternate translation: “the ground will not produce much food for you” (See: **Personification (p.1698)**) (See: **Personification (p.1698)**)

### A fugitive and a wanderer

You can join these words together. Alternate translation: “A homeless wanderer” (See: **Hendiadys (p.1648)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.1648)**)

## **Genesis 4:13**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 4:14

### I will be hidden from your face

The term “your face” represents God’s presence. Alternate translation: “I will not be able to speak to you” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### a fugitive and a wanderer

See how you translated this in [Genesis 4:12](#)

## Genesis 4:15

### **vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will take vengeance on him seven times" or "I will punish that person seven times as severely as I am punishing you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **would not attack him**

"would not kill Cain"

## Genesis 4:16

### went out from the presence of Yahweh

Even though Yahweh is everywhere, this idiom speaks of Cain as though he went far away. Alternate translation: "went away from where Yahweh spoke to him" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### Nod

Translators may add a footnote saying "The word Nod means 'wandering.'"

## **Genesis 4:17**

### **Cain knew his wife**

This is a polite way of saying that Cain had sexual relations with his wife. You may need to use another euphemism in your language. See how you translated this in [Genesis 4:1](#). (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### **He built a city**

“Cain built a city”

## Genesis 4:18

### To Enoch was born Irad

It is implied that Enoch grew up and married a woman. Alternate translation: “Enoch grew up and married and became the father of a son whom he named Irad” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Irad

This is a man's name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 4:19**

### **Adah & Zillah**

women's names (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 4:20**

### **Adah**

See how you translated this woman's name in [Genesis 4:19](#).

### **He was the father of those who lived in tents**

Possible meanings are (1) "He was the first person to live in a tent" or (2) "He and his descendants lived in tents."

### **who lived in tents who have livestock**

people who both live in tents and also take care of animals

## **Genesis 4:21**

### **He was the father of those who play the harp and pipe**

Possible meanings are (1) "He was the first person to play the harp and pipe" or (2) "He and his descendants played the harp and pipe."

## **Genesis 4:22**

### **Zillah**

See how you translated this woman's name in [Genesis 4:19](#).

### **Tubal-Cain**

the name of a man (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **the forger of tools of bronze and iron**

“who made tools out of bronze and iron”

### **iron**

a very strong metal used to make tools and weapons.

## Genesis 4:23

### Adah & Zillah

See how you translated these women's names in [Genesis 4:19](#).

### listen to my voice & listen to what I say

Lamech said the same thing twice for emphasis. His voice is a synecdoche for his whole person. Alternate translation: "listen carefully to me" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-parallelism\]\]](#)) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche\]\]](#)) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

### a man for wounding me, a young man for bruising me

Lamech killed only one person. These two phrases mean the same thing and are repeated to emphasize the certainty of his action. Alternate translation: "a young man because he hurt me" (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

## **Genesis 4:24**

### **If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech**

Lamech knows that God will avenge Cain seven times. Alternate translation: "Since God will punish anyone who kills Cain seven times, Lamech" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **then Lamech will be avenged seventy-seven times**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whoever kills me, God will punish seventy-seven times" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **seventy-seven**

77 (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 4:25

### Adam knew his wife

This is a polite way of saying that Adam had sexual relations with his wife. You may need to use another euphemism in your language. See how you translated this in [Genesis 4:1](#). (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### said, "God has given me another son

This is the reason that she named him Seth. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "explained, 'God has given me another child'" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Seth

Translators may add a footnote that says "This name sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'has given.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 4:26

### A son was born to Seth

This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Seth's wife bore him a son" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### to call on the name of Yahweh

This is the first time people called God by the name Yahweh. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "to worship God by using the name Yahweh" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 5**

### **Genesis 5 General Notes**

#### **Structure and formatting**

This chapter provides the first of many lists of descendants in the Bible. This is not a simple list, because the author makes comments about each person. Translators should format this text in the way that is clearest in the project language. Many may choose to introduce each new person in a separate paragraph, as the ULT and UST do.

## Genesis 5:1

### General Information:

## General Information:

This is the beginning of the list of Adam's descendants.

### **in his own likeness**

This phrase means that God made mankind to be like him. This verse does not tell in what ways God made people to be like himself. God does not have a body, so it does not mean that people would look like God. See how "after our likeness" is translated in [Genesis 1:26](#). Alternate translation: "to truly be like us" (See: **Pronouns (p.1705)**) (See: **Pronouns (p.1705)**)

## Genesis 5:2

### when they were created

This can be made active. Alternate translation: “when he created them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 5:3

### 130

Translators may write the words “one hundred thirty.” (The ULT and the UST use numerals if the number has three or more words; they use words if a number has only one or two words.) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### he became the father of a son

“he had a son”

### in his own likeness, after his image

These two phrases mean the same thing. They are used as a reminder that God made man in his own image. See how you translated similar phrases in [Genesis 1:26](#).

### Seth

See how you translated this name in [Genesis 4:25](#).

## **Genesis 5:4**

### **eight hundred**

Translators may write the numerals "800." (The ULT and the UST use numerals if the number has three or more words; they use words if a number has only one or two words.) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **He became the father of more sons and daughters**

"He had more sons and daughters"

## **Genesis 5:5**

### **then he died**

This phrase will be repeated throughout the chapter. Use the ordinary word for “died.”

### **Adam lived 930 years**

“Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years.” People used to live a very long time. Use your ordinary word for “years.” Alternate translation: “Adam lived a total of 930 years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 5:6**

### **105 years**

“one hundred and five years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **he became the father of Enosh**

Here “father” means his actual father, not his grandfather. Alternate translation: “he had his son Enosh”

### **Enosh**

This is the name of a person. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 5:7**

### **807 years**

“eight hundred and seven years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **and became the father of more sons and daughters**

“and had more sons and daughters”

## **Genesis 5:8**

### **Seth lived 912 years**

“Seth lived nine hundred and twelve years.” Seth lived a total of 912 years. (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **then he died**

This phrase is repeated throughout the chapter. Use the ordinary word for “died.”

## Genesis 5:9

### General Information:

## General Information:

The records in Genesis 5:6-27 have the same format. Translate them according to the notes in [Genesis 5:6-8](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-names\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-numbers\]\]](#)) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### ninety years

“90 years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 5:10**

### **815 years**

“eight hundred and fifteen years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 5:11**

### **905 years**

“nine hundred and give years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 5:12

### General Information:

## General Information:

The records in Genesis 5:6-27 have the same format. Translate them according to the notes in [Genesis 5:6-8](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-names\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-numbers\]\]](#)) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **seventy years**

“70 years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 5:13**

### **840 years**

“eight hundred and forty years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 5:14**

### **910 years**

“nine hundred and ten years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 5:15

### General Information:

## General Information:

The records in Genesis 5:6-27 have the same format. Translate them according to the notes in [Genesis 5:6-8](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-names\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-numbers\]\]](#)) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 5:16**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 5:17**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 5:18

### General Information:

### General Information:

The records in Genesis 5:6-27 have the same format. Translate them according to the notes in [Genesis 5:6-8](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-names\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-numbers\]\]](#)) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 5:19**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 5:20**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 5:21**

### **he became the father of Methuselah**

“he had his son Methuselah”

### **Methuselah**

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 5:22**

### **Enoch walked with God**

To walk with someone is a metaphor for being in a close relationship with him. Alternate translation: “Enoch had a close relationship with God” or “Enoch lived in union with God” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **He became the father of more sons and daughters**

“He had more sons and daughters”

## **Genesis 5:23**

### **Enoch lived 365 years**

“Enoch lived three hundred and sixty-five years.” Enoch lived a total of 365 years. (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 5:24**

### **then he was gone**

The word “he” refers to Enoch. He was no longer on earth.

### **for God took him**

This means that God took Enoch to be with himself (God).

## Genesis 5:25

### General Information:

## General Information:

The records in Genesis 5:6-27 have the same format. Translate them according to the notes in [Genesis 5:6-8](#). (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/translate-names\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/translate-numbers\]\]](#)) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Lamech

This Lamech is different from the Lamech in [Genesis 4:18](#).

## **Genesis 5:26**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 5:27**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 5:28**

### **182 years**

“one hundred and eighty-two years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **became the father of a son**

“had a son”

## Genesis 5:29

### Noah

Translators may want to add a footnote that says: "This name sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'rest.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **from our work and from the painful labor of our hands**

Lamech says the same thing twice to emphasize how hard the work was. Alternate translation: "from working so hard with our hands" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-doublet\]\]](#)) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche\]\]](#)) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

## **Genesis 5:30**

### **595 years**

“five hundred and ninety-five years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 5:31

### Lamech lived 777 years

“Lamech lived seven hundred seventy-seven years.” Lamech lived a total of 777 years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)  
(See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 5:32**

### **he became the father of**

“he had his sons.” This does not tell us whether the sons were born on the same day or in different years.

### **Shem, Ham, and Japheth**

These sons may not be listed in the order of their birth. There is disagreement about which one was the oldest. Avoid translating this in a way that implies that the list is in the order of their ages.

## **Genesis 6**

### **Genesis 6 General Notes**

#### **Structure and formatting**

Beginning in 6:22, the author gives statements summarizing events he tells about again in the text that follows. In the next chapter, the author sometimes gives summary statements that introduce events for the first time. If these statements, and the surrounding events, are not carefully translated, readers can believe that the same events happened twice or three times instead of only one time. Translators should be careful not to give this impression.

## **Genesis 6:1**

### **It came about**

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

### **daughters were born to them**

This can be active. Alternate translation: "the women bore daughters" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 6:2**

### **sons of God**

Translators could add a footnote saying: "It is not clear whether this refers to heavenly beings or human beings. In either case, they were beings that God created." Some believe these words refer to angels who rebelled against God, that is, evil spirits or demons. Others think this may refer to powerful political rulers, and others think this may refer to the descendants of Seth.

## Genesis 6:3

### My spirit

Here Yahweh is talking about himself and his spirit, which is the Spirit of God.

### flesh

This means that they have physical bodies that will one day die.

### They will live 120 years

“They will live one hundred and twenty years.” Possible meanings are (1) the normal lifespan of people would decrease to 120 years. Alternate translation: “They will not live more than 120 years” or (2) in 120 years everyone would die. Alternate translation: “They will live only 120 years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 6:4**

### **Giants**

very tall, large people

### **This happened when**

“The giants were born because”

### **sons of God**

See how you translated this in [Genesis 6:2](#).

### **These were the mighty men of old**

“These giants were the mighty men who lived long ago” or “These children grew to become the powerful fighters who lived long ago”

### **mighty men**

men who are courageous and victorious in battle

### **men of renown**

“famous men”

## Genesis 6:5

### every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts

“everything their hearts wanted to think about”

### the thoughts of their hearts

The writer speaks of the heart as if it were the part of the body that thinks. Your language may use a word other than “heart” to talk about the part of people that thinks. Alternate translation: “their inner, secret thoughts” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 6:6

### it grieved him to his heart

The writer speaks of the heart as if it were the part of the body that feels sadness. Your language may use a word other than “heart” to talk about the emotions. Alternate translation: “he was very, very sad about it” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 6:7

### **I will wipe away mankind & from the surface of the earth**

The writer speaks of God killing people as if God were wiping dirt off a flat surface. Alternate translation: "I will destroy mankind ... so that there will not be any people on the earth" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **I will wipe away mankind whom I have created**

Some languages would need to translate this as two sentences. Alternate translation: "I created mankind. I will wipe them away" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**)

### **wipe away**

"completely destroy." Here "wipe away" is used in a negative sense, for God is talking about destroying the people because of their sin.

## Genesis 6:8

### Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh

The phrase “found favor” is an idiom which means to be approved of by someone. Also, the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: “Yahweh looked favorably on Noah” or “Yahweh was pleased with Noah” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#)) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 6:9**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

This begins the story of Noah, which continues into chapter 9.

### **These were the events concerning Noah**

“This is the account of Noah”

### **walked with God**

See how you translated this in [Genesis 5:21](#).

## **Genesis 6:10**

### **Noah became the father of three sons**

“Noah had three sons” or “Noah’s wife had three sons”

### **Shem, Ham, and Japheth**

Translators may add the following footnote: “The sons are not listed in the order in which they were born.”

## Genesis 6:11

### The earth

Possible meanings are (1) the people who lived on the earth or (2) "The earth itself." (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### was corrupt

The people doing what is evil is spoken of as if they were food that has become rotten. Alternate translation: "was rotten" or "was completely evil" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### before God

Possible meanings are (1) "in God's sight" or (2) "in the presence of Yahweh" as in [Genesis 4:16](#).

### and it was filled with violence

The writer speaks of violence as if it were something that could be put into a container and of the earth as a container. Alternate translation: "and there were very many violent people on the earth" or "because it was full of people who did evil things to each other" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 6:12

### behold

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

### all flesh

Possible meanings for what “all flesh” represents are (1) all human beings or (2) all physical beings, including humans and animal. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### had corrupted their way

How a person behaves is spoken of as if it were a way or road. Alternate translation: “had stopped living the way God wanted” or “had behaved in an evil way” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 6:13**

### **all flesh**

See how you translated these words in [Genesis 6:12](#).

### **the earth is filled with violence through them**

“people everywhere on earth are violent”

### **I will destroy them with the earth**

“I will destroy both them and the earth” or “I will destroy them when I destroy the earth”

## Genesis 6:14

### an ark

This refers to a very large box that would be able to float on water even in a very bad storm. "a large boat" or "a ship" or "a barge"

### cypress wood

People do not know exactly what kind of tree this was. "wood used for building boats" or "good wood"

### cover it with pitch

The reason for doing this can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "spread pitch on it" or "paint tar on it" or "cover it with pitch to make it waterproof" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### pitch

This is a thick, sticky or oily liquid that people put on the outside of a boat to stop water from going through gaps in the wood into the boat.

## Genesis 6:15

### **cubits**

A cubit was a unit of measure, a little less than half a meter long. (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1608)**) (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1608)**)

### **three hundred cubits**

“138 meters.” You may use the Hebrew measuring units from the ULT or the metric units from the UST or your own culture’s units if you know how they compare to the metric units. You may also write a footnote that says: “Three hundred cubits is about 138 meters.” (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1608)**) (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1608)**)

### **fifty cubits**

“twenty-three meters” (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1608)**) (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1608)**)

### **thirty cubits**

“fourteen meters” (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1608)**) (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1608)**)

## **Genesis 6:16**

### **a roof for the ark**

This was probably a peaked or slanted roof. Its purpose was to protect everything in the ark from the rain.

### **cubit**

A cubit was a little less than half a meter long. See how you translated this in [Genesis 6:15](#). (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1608)**) (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1608)**)

### **a lower, a second, and a third deck**

“a lower deck, a middle deck, and an upper deck” or “three decks inside”

### **deck**

“floor” or “level”

## Genesis 6:17

### Listen

God said this in order to emphasize that he would do what he was about to say. “Pay attention” or “Listen to what I am saying”

### I am about to bring the flood of waters

In some languages it may be better to say “to send” instead of “to bring. It is also possible to avoid the direction and say “to cause.” Alternate translation: “I am about to send a flood of waters” or “I am about to cause a flood” (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

### all flesh

Here “flesh” represents all physical beings, including humans and animals. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### that has in it the breath of life

Here “breath” represents life. Alternate translation: “that lives” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 6:18**

### **establish my covenant with you**

“make a covenant between you and me”

### **with you**

with Noah

### **You will come into the ark**

“You will enter the ark.” Some translations say “You will go into the ark.”

## **Genesis 6:19**

**Of every living creature of all flesh, two of every kind you must bring into the ark**

“You must bring into the ark two of every kind of living creature”

### **creature**

an animal God created

### **all flesh**

See how you translated these words in [Genesis 6:12](#).

## **Genesis 6:20**

### **after their kind**

“of each different kind”

### **creeping thing of the ground**

This refers to small animals that move on the ground .

### **two of every sort**

This refers to two of every kind of bird and animal.

### **to you**

This refers to Noah and so is singular. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### **to keep them alive**

“so you can keep them alive”

## **Genesis 6:21**

### **yourself & you**

These refer to Noah and are singular. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### **food that is eaten**

“food that people and animals eat”

## Genesis 6:22

### **So Noah did this. According to all that God commanded him, so he did**

These two sentences mean the same thing. The second sentence explains the first and emphasizes that Noah obeyed God. These parallel sentences can be combined into one. Alternate translation: "So Noah did everything that God commanded him to do" (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

## Genesis 7

### Genesis 7 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

In this chapter, the author continues his pattern of statements that summarize events already described, and of repeating events that have already happened. Again, careful translation is necessary so that readers do not think that the same events happened more than one time in the story. Special attention in this regard should be given to 7:5,10,13, and 17.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Clean animals and birds

Noah sacrificed to Yahweh some of the “clean” animals and birds that he had with him (8:20). These were animals and birds that the Hebrew people would later consider to be fit to eat and to sacrifice to God. (See: **clean, wash (p. 1743)**)

##### Water underneath and over the earth

The flood is presented as occurring because of rain pouring out of the sky and because of seawater rising from under the earth. This is because the ancient Hebrews pictured the earth as resting on top of the sea. They also pictured the sky as containing water above the earth that poured down through windows in the sky when God allowed it to rain. Translators should not try to change this picture in order to suit what readers believe about the world. (See: **heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly (p.1760)**)

## **Genesis 7:1**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

The events in this chapter take place after Noah built the ark, gathered the food, and put it in the ark.

### **Come & into the ark**

“Enter ... into the ark.” Many translations read “Go ... into the ark.” (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

### **you**

The word “you” refers to Noah and is singular. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### **your household**

“your family”

### **righteous before me**

This means that God saw Noah as righteous.

### **in this generation**

This refers to all the people who were living at that time. Alternate translation: “among all the people who are now living”

## **Genesis 7:2**

### **you will bring**

“take.” Many translations read “you will take.” (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

### **clean animal**

This was an animal that God allowed his people to eat and to sacrifice.

### **animals that are not clean**

These were animals that God did not allow people to eat or to sacrifice.

## **Genesis 7:3**

### **to preserve their offspring**

“so that they will have offspring that will live” or “so that, after the flood, animals will continue to live”

## **Genesis 7:4**

### **forty days and forty nights**

This was a full forty days. It was not a total of eighty days. Alternate translation: "forty days and nights"

### **living**

This refers to physical life.

## **Genesis 7:5**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 7:6

### General Information:

## General Information:

Verses 6-12 repeat for a second time and give more detail about how Noah went into the ark with his family and the animals in [Genesis 7:1-5](#). This is not a new event.

### came upon the earth

“happened” or “came on the earth”

## **Genesis 7:7**

### **because of the waters of the flood**

“because of the flood that would come” or “to escape the flood water”

## Genesis 7:8

### General Information:

## General Information:

Verses 6-12 repeat for a second time and give more detail about how Noah went into the ark with his family and the animals in [Genesis 7:1-5](#). This is not a new event.

### clean animals

These were animals that God allowed people to eat and to give to him as sacrifices.

### unclean animals

These were animals that God did not allow people to eat or to give to him as sacrifices.

## **Genesis 7:9**

### **two by two**

The animals entered the boat in pairs of one male and one female.

## **Genesis 7:10**

### **It came about that**

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story: the start of the flood. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

### **after the seven days**

“after seven days” or “seven days later”

### **the waters of the flood came upon the earth**

The implicit information, “it started to rain” can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “it started to rain and the waters of the flood came upon the earth” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 7:11

### General Information:

## General Information:

Verses 6-12 repeat for a second time and give more detail about how Noah went into the ark with his family and the animals in [Genesis 7:1-5](#). This is not a new event.

### In the six hundredth year of Noah's life

"When Noah was 600 years old" (See: [Ordinal Numbers \(p.1693\)](#)) (See: [Ordinal Numbers \(p.1693\)](#))

### the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month

Since Moses wrote this book, it is possible he is referring to the second month of the Hebrew calendar. But this is uncertain. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-hebrewmonths\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-ordinals\]\]](#)) (See: [Hebrew Months \(p.1645\)](#))

### on the same day

This refers to the specific day when the rain began. This phrase emphasizes how all of these major events happened quickly when the time arrived.

### the fountains of the great deep burst open

"water from under the earth rushed up to the earth's surface"

### the great deep

This refers to the sea that was thought to be under the earth.

### the windows of heaven were opened

This refers to rain. It describes the sky as a ceiling that keeps the waters above it from falling down to the earth. When the windows, or doors, in the sky were opened, the water came down through them. Alternate translation: "the sky opened" or "the doors in the sky opened"

## **Genesis 7:12**

### **rain**

If your language has a word for a great amount of rain, it would be appropriate here.

## Genesis 7:13

### General Information:

## General Information:

Verses 13-18 repeat for a third time and give more detail about how Noah went into the ark with his family and the animals in [Genesis 7:1-5](#). This is not a new event.

### On that very same day

“On that exact day.” This refers to the day that the rain started. Verses 13-16 tell what Noah did immediately before the rain began.

## **Genesis 7:14**

### **wild animal & livestock & creeping thing & bird**

These four groups are listed to show that every kind of animal was included. If your language has another way of grouping all the animals, you can use that, or you can use these groups. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:24](#).

### **creeping thing**

This refers to animals that crawl on the ground, like rodents, insects, lizards, and snakes.

### **according to its kind**

“so that each kind of animal will produce more of its own kind.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:24](#).

## Genesis 7:15

### General Information:

## General Information:

Verses 13-18 repeat for a third time and give more detail about how Noah went into the ark with his family and the animals in [Genesis 7:1-5](#). This is not a new event.

### Two of all flesh

Here “flesh” represents animals. (See: [Metonymy \(p.1684\)](#)) (See: [Metonymy \(p.1684\)](#))

### in which was the breath of life

Here “breath” represents life. Alternate translation: “that lived” (See: [Metonymy \(p.1684\)](#)) (See: [Metonymy \(p.1684\)](#))

### came to Noah

The word “came” can be translated as “went.” (See: [Go and Come \(p.1643\)](#)) (See: [Go and Come \(p.1643\)](#))

### of all flesh

Here “flesh” represents animals. Alternate translation: “of every kind of animal” (See: [Synecdoche \(p.1728\)](#)) (See: [Synecdoche \(p.1728\)](#))

## Genesis 7:16

### after them

The full meaning can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “after they entered the ark” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 7:17

### General Information:

## General Information:

Verses 13-18 repeat for a third time and give more detail about how Noah went into the ark with his family and the animals in [Genesis 7:1-5](#). This is not a new event.

### **the water increased**

“the water became very deep.” This happened during the forty days while the water kept coming.

### **lifted the ark**

“it caused the ark to float”

### **raised it above the earth**

“causes the ark to rise up high over the ground” or “he ark floated on top of the deep water”

## **Genesis 7:18**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 7:19**

### **The waters rose greatly on the earth**

“The water totally overwhelmed the earth”

## **Genesis 7:20**

### **fifteen cubits**

“six meters.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 6:15](#).

## **Genesis 7:21**

### **moved upon**

“moved about” or “roamed”

### **all the living creatures that lived in great numbers upon the earth**

This refers to all the animals that move around on the ground in large groups.

## Genesis 7:22

### who breathed the breath of life through their noses

Here “noses” represent the whole animal or human. Alternate translation: “everyone that breathed” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### the breath of life

The words “breath” and “life” represent the power that causes people and animals to be alive. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 7:23**

### **So every living thing & was wiped out**

If necessary, this can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So every living thing ... perished" or "So the flood completely destroyed every living thing" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **They were all destroyed**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God destroyed them all" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **from the earth**

"so they were no longer on the earth"

### **those with him**

"the people and animals that were with him"

### **were left**

"remained" or "lived" or "remained alive"

## **Genesis 7:24**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 8**

### **Genesis 8 General Notes**

#### **Structure and formatting**

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 8:22, which is part of what Yahweh was telling Noah.

#### **Special concepts in this chapter**

##### **Flood waters**

The waters receded after this great flood. Because there was so much water, and it came from God, it is described in a unique way.

##### **The mountains of Ararat**

It is unclear where Ararat was located. Many people believe it is located in the modern country of Turkey.

## Genesis 8:1

### considered Noah

“remembered Noah” or “decided to help Noah”

### ark

This refers to a very large box that would be able to float on water even in a very bad storm. See how you translated this in [Genesis 6:14](#). Alternate translation: “a large boat” or “a ship” or “a barge”

## Genesis 8:2

### The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were closed

“The water stopped coming out of the ground and the rain stopped falling.” This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God closed the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### fountains of the deep

“water from under the earth.” See how this is translated in [Genesis 7:11](#).

### the windows of heaven were closed

This refers to the rain stopping. It describes the sky as a ceiling that keeps the waters above it from falling down to the earth. When the windows, or doors, in the sky were closed, the water stopped coming through them. See how “the windows of heaven” is translated in [Genesis 7:11](#). Alternate translation: “the sky closed” or “the doors in the sky closed”

## **Genesis 8:3**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 8:4**

### **came to rest**

“landed” or “stopped on solid ground”

### **in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month**

Because Moses wrote this book, it is possible he is referring to the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar, but this is uncertain. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-hebrewmonths\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-ordinal\]\]](#))  
(See: **Hebrew Months (p.1645)**)

## Genesis 8:5

### tenth month

Because Moses wrote this book, it is possible he is referring to the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar, but this is uncertain. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-hebrewmonths\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-ordinal\]\]](#)) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.1645)**)

### On the first day of the month

“On the first day of the tenth month”

### appeared

This can be made more explicit: “appeared above the surface of the water.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 8:6

### It came about

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here. Alternate translation: "It happened that"

### It came about & the window of the ark which he had made

The phrase "which he had made" tells about the window. Some languages may need to make this phrase a separate sentence: "Noah had made a window in the boat. It came about after forty days that he opened the window" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**)

## **Genesis 8:7**

### **raven**

a black bird that eats mainly the flesh of dead animals

### **it flew back and forth**

This means that the raven kept leaving the boat and returning.

### **until the waters were dried up**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “until the wind dried up the waters” or “until the waters dried up” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 8:8**

### **he sent out a dove**

If you use masculine pronouns for the word “dove,” you may need to insert Noah’s name here to avoid confusion:  
“Noah sent out a dove.”

## **Genesis 8:9**

### **to rest her foot**

“to land” or “to perch.” It means to land on something in order to rest from flying.

### **her foot & she returned & and brought her**

The word “dove” is feminine in the author’s language. You could translate these phrases with the pronouns “its ... it ... it” or “his ... he ... him,” depending on how your language refers to a dove.

### **he & him**

If you use masculine pronouns for the word “dove,” you may need to insert Noah’s name here to avoid confusion: “Noah sent out a dove,” “Noah stretched forth his hand,” etc.

## **Genesis 8:10**

### **He waited another seven days**

“He again waited for seven days”

## **Genesis 8:11**

### **Look**

“Pay attention” or “This is important”

### **a freshly plucked olive leaf**

“a leaf that she had just plucked from an olive tree”

### **plucked**

“broken off”

## Genesis 8:12

### She did not return again to him

If people would not understand, you could state the reason explicitly: "She did not return again to him because she found a place to land." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 8:13

### It came about

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

### in the six hundred and first year

“when Noah was 601 years old” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1693)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1693)**)

### the first month, on the first day of the month

Since Moses wrote this book it is possible he is referring to the first month of the Hebrew calendar, but this is uncertain. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-hebrewmonths\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-ordinal\]\]](#)) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.1645)**)

### the waters were dried up from off the earth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the waters covering the earth dried up” or “the wind dried up the waters covering the earth” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### the covering of the ark

This refers to a cover that kept the rain water from going into the ark.

### behold

The word “behold” tells us to pay attention to the important information that comes next.

## Genesis 8:14

### In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month

“On the twenty seventh day of the second month.” This may refer to the second month of the Hebrew calendar, but this is uncertain. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-hebrewmonths\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-ordinal\]\]](#)) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.1645)**)

### the earth was dry

“the ground was completely dry”

## **Genesis 8:15**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 8:16

### Go out of

“Leave.” Some translations read “Come out.” (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

## Genesis 8:17

### Take out

“Take.” Some translations read “Bring out.” (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

### every living creature of all flesh

“every kind of living creature.” See how “all flesh” is translated in [Genesis 6:12](#).

### be fruitful and multiply

This is an idiom. See how this is translated in [Genesis 1:28](#). God wanted the humans and animals to reproduce, so there would be many of them. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-doublet\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

## **Genesis 8:18**

### **Noah went out**

Some translations read "Noah came out." (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

## **Genesis 8:19**

### **according to their families**

“in groups of their own kinds”

## **Genesis 8:20**

### **built an altar to Yahweh**

“built an altar dedicated to Yahweh” or “built an altar for worshiping Yahweh.” He may have built it with stones.

### **clean animals & clean birds**

Here “clean” means that God allowed these animals to be used in sacrifice. Some animals were not used for sacrifices and were called “unclean.”

### **offered burnt offerings**

Noah killed the animals and then completely burned them up as an offering to God. Alternate translation: “burned the animals as offerings to Yahweh”

## **Genesis 8:21**

### **pleasing aroma**

This refers to the good smell of the roasted meat.

### **said in his heart**

Here the word "heart" refers to God's thoughts and emotions.

### **curse the ground**

"do very serious harm to the earth"

### **because of mankind**

This can be made more explicit: "because mankind is sinful." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **the intentions of their hearts is evil from childhood**

"from their earliest years they tend to do evil things" or "when they are young, they want to do evil things"

### **the intentions of their hearts**

Here the word "hearts" refers to people's thoughts, emotions, desires, and will. Alternate translation: "their tendency" or "their habit"

### **from childhood**

This refers to an older child. Alternate translation: "from their youth"

## **Genesis 8:22**

### **While the earth remains**

“While the earth lasts” or “As long as the earth exists”

### **seed time**

“the season for planting”

### **cold and heat, summer and winter**

These expressions both refer to two major weather conditions in the year. Translators may use local expressions. (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

### **summer**

the hot, dry time of the year

### **winter**

the cool, wet or snowy time of the year

### **will not cease**

“will not cease to exist” or “will not cease to occur.” This can be expressed in a positive manner. Alternate translation: “will continue” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**)

## Genesis 9

### Genesis 9 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Some translations prefer to set apart extended quotations, prayers or songs. The ULT and many other English translations set the lines of 9:6-7, which is the poetic part of the quotation, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. They also set apart 9:25-27, which contains two quotations.

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 9:6 and 9:25-27.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Man's relationship to animals

There is a noticeable shift in man's relationship with the animals on the earth. Before the flood, there apparently was harmony between man and the animals. After the flood, the animals fear man and man is permitted to eat the animals, something he was not allowed to do previously. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1601)**)

##### Life in the blood

This chapter introduces the concept that there is life in the blood of an animal and in man. In Hebrew thought, blood represents the life present in a living thing. This is an image used throughout Scripture. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/life\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/blood\]\]](#))

##### Covenant with Noah

God made a covenant with Noah. This covenant was an unconditional promise God made to never destroy the whole world with a flood. Rainbows are a perpetual sign of this covenant. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/covenant\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/promise\]\]](#))

##### A father's nakedness

In Noah's culture, it was unacceptable to see a father's nakedness. It was wrong for Ham to show his brothers their father's nakedness. Ham's actions were insulting or disrespectful. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

#### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

##### "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth"

This is a command that God gives. He expects Noah to obey him.

## Genesis 9:1

### Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth

This is God's blessing. He told Noah and his family to produce more humans like themselves, so that there would be many of them. The word "multiply" explains how they are to be "fruitful." See how you translated these commands in [Genesis 1:28](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-doublet\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

## Genesis 9:2

### **The fear of you and the dread of you will be upon every living animal & and upon all the fish of the sea**

The writer speaks of fear and dread as if they were physical objects that could be upon the animals. Alternate translation: "Every living animal ... and all the fish of the sea will be dreadfully afraid of you" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **The fear of you and the dread of you**

The words "fear" and "dread" mean basically the same thing and emphasize how afraid the animals will be of mankind. Alternate translation: "A dreadful fear of you" or "A terrible fear of you" (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

### **every living animal on the earth**

This is the first of the four categories of animals that the writer lists, and not a summary of the rest of the animals that he mentions next.

### **bird**

This is a general term for things that fly. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:21](#).

### **upon everything that goes low on the ground**

This includes all types of small animals. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:25](#).

### **They are given into your hand**

The hand represents control. This can be made active. Alternate translation: "They are given into your control" or "I have put them under your control" (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 9:3**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

God continues speaking to Noah and his sons.

## **Genesis 9:4**

### **life & blood**

Translators may add a footnote such as this: "The blood is a symbol for life." They may also add a footnote that says something like this: "God was commanding people not to eat meat while the blood was still in it. They had to drain out the blood first."

## Genesis 9:5

### General Information:

## General Information:

God continues speaking to Noah and his sons.

### But for your blood

This contrasts man's blood with the blood of animals ([Genesis 9:4](#)).

### for your blood, the life that is in your blood

It is implied that the blood is shed, or poured out, or spilled out. Alternate translation: "if anyone causes your blood to pour out" or "if anyone spills your blood" or "if anyone kills you" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#)) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### life

This refers to physical life.

### I will require payment

This payment refers to the death of the murderer, not to money. Alternate translation: "I will require anyone who kills you to pay"

### from the hand

Here the word "hand" refers to the one who is responsible for something happening. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### From the hand of every animal I will require it

"I will require any animal that takes your life to pay"

### From the hand of any man, that is, from the hand of one who has murdered his brother, I will require an accounting for the life of that man

"I will require anyone who takes the life of another person to pay"

### From the hand of

This phrase refers to the person in a very personal way. Alternate translation: "From that very man" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **brother**

Here “brother” is used as a general reference to relatives, such as members of the same tribe, clan, or people group.

## **Genesis 9:6**

### **Whoever sheds man's blood, by man will his blood be shed**

The shedding of blood is a metaphor for killing someone. This means that if a person murders someone, someone else must kill the murderer. However, "blood" is very significant in this passage and should be used in the translation if possible. Translate "sheds blood" with words that indicate a major loss of blood that causes death. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **for it was in the image of God that he made man**

"because God made people to be like him" or "because I made people in my own image"

## Genesis 9:7

### be fruitful and multiply

This is God's blessing. He told Noah and his family to produce more humans like themselves, so that there would be many of them. The word "multiply" explains how they are to be "fruitful." See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:28](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-doublet\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

## **Genesis 9:8**

### **Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him**

God was already speaking to them. This phrase marks a change in what God was going to speak about. Alternate translation: "God continued speaking to Noah and his sons" or "Then God went on to say"

## **Genesis 9:9**

### **As for me**

This phrase is used in English to mark the change from God talking about what Noah and his sons must do to talking about what God would do.

### **confirm my covenant with you**

“make a covenant between you and me.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 6:18](#).

## **Genesis 9:10**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 9:11

### General Information:

## General Information:

God continues speaking to Noah and his sons.

### I hereby confirm my covenant with you

“By saying this, I make my covenant with you.” See how similar words are translated in [Genesis 6:18](#).

### all flesh

Possible meanings for what “all flesh” represents are (1) all human beings or (2) all physical beings, including humans and animal. See how this is translated in [Genesis 6:12](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### Never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth

“There will never again be a flood that destroys the earth.” There would be floods, but they would not destroy the whole earth.

## **Genesis 9:12**

### **sign**

This means a reminder of something that was promised.

### **covenant & for all future generations**

The covenant applies to Noah and his family and also to all generations that follow.

## **Genesis 9:13**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 9:14

### General Information:

## General Information:

God continues speaking to Noah and his sons.

### It will come about when

“Whenever.” It is something that would happen many times.

### the rainbow is seen

It is not clear who will see the rainbow, but because the covenant is between Yahweh and people, if you need to say who it is who will see the rainbow, it would be best to name both Yahweh and people. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “people and I see the rainbow” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### rainbow

the colorful strip of light that appears in the rain when the sun shines from behind the viewer

## **Genesis 9:15**

### **I will call to mind my covenant**

This does not mean that God would first forget. Alternate translation: "I will think about my covenant"

### **me and you**

The word "you" is plural. God was speaking to Noah and Noah's sons.

### **every living creature of all flesh**

"every kind of living being"

### **all flesh**

Possible meanings for what "all flesh" represents are (1) all human beings or (2) all physical beings, including humans and animal. See how this is translated in [Genesis 6:12](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 9:16**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

God continues speaking to Noah and his sons.

#### **in order to remember**

“so that I will remember” or “so that I will think about”

#### **between God and every living creature**

God is speaking here. Alternate translation: “between me and every living creature”

#### **every living creature of all flesh**

“every kind of living being.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 9:15](#).

## **Genesis 9:17**

### **Then God said to Noah**

God was already talking to Noah. This phrase marks the final part of what God was saying. Alternate translation: "God finished by saying to Noah" or "So God said to Noah"

## **Genesis 9:18**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

Verses 18-19 introduce the three sons of Noah, who will be an important part of the next story.

### **father**

Ham was Canaan's true father.

## **Genesis 9:19**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 9:20**

### **farmer**

person who raises plants for food

## **Genesis 9:21**

### **became drunk**

“drank too much wine”

### **uncovered**

The text does not specify how much of Noah's body was uncovered as he lay drunk. His sons' reactions show us that it was shameful.

## **Genesis 9:22**

### **his father**

This refers to Noah.

## **Genesis 9:23**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 9:24**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

In verses 25-27 Noah pronounced a curse on Ham's son and blessings on Ham's brothers. What Noah said about them also applied to their descendants, as shown in the UST. Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in Noah's curse and blessings in verses 25-27.

### **awoke from his wine**

He awoke after drinking wine and becoming drunk. He "became sober."

### **his youngest son**

This refers to Ham. Alternate translation: "his youngest son, Ham"

## **Genesis 9:25**

### **Cursed be Canaan**

“I curse Canaan” or “May bad things happen to Canaan”

### **Canaan**

This was one of Ham’s sons. Alternate translation: “Ham’s son Canaan”

### **a servant to his brothers’ servants**

“the lowest servant of his brothers” or “the least important servant of his brothers”

### **his brothers**

This could refer either to Canaan’s brothers or to his relatives in general.

## **Genesis 9:26**

### **General Information:**

## **General Information:**

If you can, format these verses as they are formatted here to show your readers that this is poetry.

### **May Yahweh, the God of Shem, be blessed**

“Praised be Yahweh, the God of Shem,” or “Yahweh, the God of Shem, is worthy of praise” or “I praise Yahweh, the God of Shem”

## **Genesis 9:27**

### **May Canaan be his servant**

“And let Canaan be Shem’s servant.” This includes Canaan’s and Shem’s descendants.

### **May God extend the territory of Japheth**

Possible meanings are (1) “May God make Japheth’s territory larger” or (2) “May God cause Japheth to have many descendants.”

### **let him make his home in the tents of Shem**

“let him leave peacefully with Shem.” This includes Japheth’s and Shem’s descendants.

### **May Canaan be his servant**

“Let Canaan be Japheth’s servant.” This includes Canaan’s and Japheth’s descendants.

## **Genesis 9:28**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 9:29**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10**

### **Genesis 10 General Notes**

#### **Structure and formatting**

This chapter begins a genealogical record. It also records the location of ancient people groups.

#### **Special concepts in this chapter**

##### **Assyria and Nineveh**

While these places may be located in the same area as the Assyria mentioned later in Scripture, they are not the same kingdom.

#### **Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter**

##### **“Sons were born to”**

This is an unusual phrase meaning “were sons of.” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 10:1**

### **These were the descendants of the sons of Noah**

“This is the account of Noah’s sons.” This sentence introduces the account of Noah’s descendants in Genesis 10:1-11:9.

## **Genesis 10:2**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:3**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:4**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:5**

### **From these the coastland peoples separated and went into their lands**

“Javan’s sons and descendants separated and moved to the coastlands and islands”

#### **coastland peoples**

This refers to people who lived along the coast and on the islands.

#### **their lands**

“their homelands.” These are the places that the people moved to and lived in.

#### **every one with its own language**

“Each people group spoke its own language” or “The people groups divided themselves according to their languages”

## **Genesis 10:6**

### **Mizraim**

Mizraim is the Hebrew name for "Egypt."

## **Genesis 10:7**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:8**

### **conqueror**

Possible meanings are (1) "mighty warrior" or (2) "mighty man" or (3) "powerful ruler."

## **Genesis 10:9**

### **before Yahweh**

Possible meanings are (1) "in Yahweh's sight" or (2) "with Yahweh's help"

### **That is why it is said**

This introduces a proverb. Your language may introduce proverbs and sayings in a different way. Alternate translation: "This is the reason people say" (See: **Proverbs (p.1707)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1707)**)

## **Genesis 10:10**

### **The first centers**

Possible meanings are (1) the first centers he developed or (2) the important cities.

## **Genesis 10:11**

### **he went to Assyria**

“Nimrod went into Assyria”

## **Genesis 10:12**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:13**

### **Mizraim became**

The list of Noah's descendants continues.

### **Mizraim**

Mizraim was one of Ham's sons. His descendants became the people of Egypt. Mizraim is the Hebrew name for Egypt.

## **Genesis 10:14**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:15**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:16**

### **Jebusites & Amorites & Girdashites**

These names refer to larger groups of people that descended from Canaan.

## **Genesis 10:17**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:18**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:19**

### **border**

line between one person's land and another person's land

### **from Sidon, in the direction of Gerar, as far as Gaza**

The direction south can be stated explicitly if needed. Alternate translation: "from Sidon city in the north as far south as Gaza town, which is near Gerar" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **as one goes toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboyim, as far as Lasha**

The direction "east" or "inland" can be stated explicitly if needed. Alternate translation: "then east toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboyim towns, as far as Lasha" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 10:20**

### **These were the sons of Ham**

The word “these” refers to the people and people groups who were listed in verses [Genesis 6-19](#).

### **by their languages**

“broken up according to their different languages”

### **in their lands**

“in their homelands”

## **Genesis 10:21**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:22**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:23**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:24**

### **Arphaxad**

Arphaxad was one of Shem's sons.

## Genesis 10:25

### Peleg

Translators may add a footnote note that says: "The name Peleg means 'division.'"

### the earth was divided

This can be made active. Alternate translation: "the people of the earth divided themselves" or "the people of the earth separated from one another" or "God divided the people of the earth" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 10:26

### Joktan

Joktan was one of Eber's sons. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 10:27**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:28**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 10:29**

### **All these**

“These” here refers to the sons of Joktan.

## **Genesis 10:30**

### **Their territory**

“The land they controlled” or “The land they lived in”

## **Genesis 10:31**

### **These were the sons of Shem**

The word “these” refers to the descendants of Shem ([Genesis 10:21-29](#)).

## **Genesis 10:32**

### **These were the clans**

This refers back to all the people listed in [Genesis 10:1-31](#).

### **according to**

“listed by”

### **From these the nations separated and went over the earth**

“From these clans the nations divided and spread over the earth” or “These clans divided from each other and formed the nations of the earth”

### **after the flood**

This can be stated clearly or more explicitly. Alternate translation: “after the flood destroyed the earth” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

# Genesis 11

## Genesis 11 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This chapter is a story traditionally referred to as the “Tower of Babel.”

This chapter seeks to answer the questions: why do people speak different languages? how did people become so dispersed across the earth? God’s punishment described in this chapter may also explain why the world has racial and ethnic divisions.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Age of people when they die

After the flood, people began to live shorter lives. This chapter begins to record the shortening of the average lifespan.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Personification

The statement “Yahweh came down to see” is a type of personification. Yahweh always knows what happens on earth. This statement indicates that Yahweh is about to bring judgment on mankind. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-personification\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/judge\]\]](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### “Let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top will reach to the sky”

The people were very full of pride and rebelled against God in this action. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 11:1**

### **Now**

This word shows that the writer is beginning a new part of the story.

### **the whole earth**

This represents all the people on the earth. Alternate translation: “all the people on the earth” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **used one language and had the same words**

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that all people spoke the same language. (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

## **Genesis 11:2**

### **they journeyed**

“they moved around”

### **in the east**

Possible meanings are (1) “in the east” or (2) “from the east” or (3) “to the east.” The preferred choice is “in the east” because Shinar is to the east of where scholars believe the ark came to rest.

### **settled**

stopped moving from one place to another and began to live at one location

## **Genesis 11:3**

### **Come**

If your language has a way of urging or commanding people to begin work, like the English “Come on!” you might use it here.

### **bake them thoroughly**

People make bricks out of clay and heat them in a very hot oven to make them hard and strong.

### **tar**

a thick, sticky, black liquid that comes up from the ground

### **mortar**

This is a thick substance made of lime powder, clay, sand, and water used to make stones or bricks stick together.

## **Genesis 11:4**

### **let us make a name for ourselves**

“let us make our reputation great”

#### **name**

reputation

### **we will be scattered**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “we will separate from each other and live in different places” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 11:5**

### **the descendants of Adam**

“the people”

### **came down**

The information about where he came down from can be made explicit: “came down from heaven.” This does not tell how he came down. Use a general word meaning “came down.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **to see**

“to observe” or “to look more closely”

## **Genesis 11:6**

### **one people with the same language**

All the people were one big group and they all spoke the same language.

### **they are beginning to do this**

Possible meanings are (1) "they have begun to do this," meaning that they have begun to build the tower but it is not finished, or (2) "this is just the first thing they have done," meaning that in future they will do greater things.

### **nothing that they intend to do will be impossible for them**

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "anything they intend to do will be possible for them" (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**)

## Genesis 11:7

### Come

If your language has a way of urging or commanding people to begin work, like the English “Come on!” you might use it here. See how this is translated in [Genesis 11:3](#).

### let us go down

The word “us” is plural even though it refers to God. Some translate it as “let me go down” or “I will go down.” If you do this, consider adding a footnote to say that the pronoun is plural. See the note on “Let us make” in [Genesis 1:26](#). (See: [Pronouns \(p.1705\)](#)) (See: [Pronouns \(p.1705\)](#))

### confuse their language

This means that Yahweh would cause the people all over the earth to stop speaking the same language. Alternate translation: “mix up their language” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information \(p.1601\)](#)) (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information \(p.1601\)](#))

### so that they may not understand each other

This was the purpose of confusing their language. Alternate translation: “so that they will not be able to understand what each other is saying” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information \(p.1601\)](#)) (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information \(p.1601\)](#))

## **Genesis 11:8**

### **from there**

“from the city”

## **Genesis 11:9**

### **its name was called Babel, because there Yahweh confused**

The name "Babel" sounds like the word that means "confused." Translators may want to add a footnote about this.

### **confused the language of the whole earth**

It means that Yahweh caused the people all over the earth to no longer speak the same language. Alternate translation: "mixed up the language of the whole earth" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 11:10

### General Information:

## General Information:

The rest of this chapter lists the line of Shem's descendants down to Abram.

### These were the descendants of Shem

This sentence begins the list of Shem's descendants.

### flood

This is the flood from Noah's time when people had become so evil that God sent a worldwide flood to cover the earth.

### became the father of Arphaxad

"had his son Arphaxad" or "his son Arphaxad was born"

### Arphaxad

a man's name (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### a hundred & two

Translators may write the words or the numerals "100" and "2." (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 11:11**

### **five hundred**

Translators may write the words or the numeral "500." (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 11:12**

### **he became the father of Shelah**

“his son Shelah was born”

### **Shelah**

This is a man's name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 11:13

### 403 years

“four hundred and three years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 11:14

### General Information:

### General Information:

The records in Genesis 11:12-25 have the same format. See how you translated them in [Genesis 11:12-13](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-names\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-numbers\]\]](#)) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 11:15**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 11:16

### General Information:

## General Information:

The records in Genesis 11:12-25 have the same format. See how you translated them [Genesis 11:12-13](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-names\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-numbers\]\]](#)) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 11:17**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 11:18

### General Information:

### General Information:

The records in Genesis 11:12-25 have the same format. See how you translated them in [Genesis 11:12-13](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-names\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-numbers\]\]](#)) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 11:19**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 11:20

### General Information:

## General Information:

The records in Genesis 11:12-25 have the same format. See how you translated them in [Genesis 11:12-13](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-names\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-numbers\]\]](#)) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 11:21**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 11:22

### General Information:

### General Information:

The records in Genesis 11:12-25 have the same format. See how you translated them in [Genesis 11:12-13](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-names\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-numbers\]\]](#)) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 11:23**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 11:24

### General Information:

## General Information:

The records in Genesis 11:12-25 have the same format. See how you translated them in [Genesis 11:12-13](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-names\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-numbers\]\]](#)) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 11:25**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 11:26**

### **Abram, Nahor, and Haran**

We do not know the birth order of his sons.

## Genesis 11:27

### Now these were the descendants of Terah

This sentence introduces the account of Terah's descendants. Genesis 11:27-25:11 tells about Terah's descendants, particularly his son Abraham. Alternate translation: "This is the account of Terah's descendants" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 11:28

### Haran died in the presence of his father Terah

This means that Haran died while his father was still living. Alternate translation: "Haran died while his father, Terah, was with him" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 11:29**

### **took wives**

“married wives”

### **Iskah**

This is a female name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 11:30

### Now

This word is used to introduce new information about Sarai that will become important in later chapters.

### barren

This term describes a woman who is physically unable to conceive or bear a child. (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## **Genesis 11:31**

### **his**

Here the word "his" refers to Terah.

### **Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife**

"his daughter-in-law Sarai, who was the wife of his son Abram"

### **Haran & Haran**

These are two different names and they are spelled differently in Hebrew. One refers to a person and the other refers to a city. (The "h" sound in the city's name is louder than the "h" sound in the person's name.) You might choose to spell them differently in your language to show this.

## Genesis 11:32

### 205 years

“two hundred and five years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 12

### Genesis 12 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Abram

When God said, "Go from your country, and from your relatives," he established several new people groups. These groups descended from Abram.

#### God's covenant with Abraham

God made a covenant with Abram. This covenant was not conditioned upon anything that Abraham needed to do, but the fulfillment of its promises is conditioned upon the actions of each generation of his descendants. It has not yet been fulfilled in its entirety. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/covenant\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/fulfill\]\]](#) and **promise, promised (p.1768)**)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### "They will kill me"

Abram was afraid the Egyptians would see him as a foreigner and upon seeing his beautiful wife, they would try to kill him. This would free Sarai to marry someone else. Apparently, it would have been easy for them to kill a foreigner without punishment. If she was Abram's sister, they would have shown favor to him. (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/favor\]\]](#))

## **Genesis 12:1**

### **Now**

This word is used to mark a new part of the story.

### **Go from your country, and from your relatives**

“Go from your land, from your family”

## Genesis 12:2

### I will make of you a great nation

Here “you” is singular and refers to Abram, but Abram represents his descendants. Alternate translation: “I will start a great nation through you” or “I will make your descendants become a great nation” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### make your name great

The word “name” represents the person’s reputation. Alternate translation: “make you famous” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### you will be a blessing

The words “to other people” are understood. Alternate translation: “you will be a blessing to other people” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

## **Genesis 12:3**

### **whoever dishonors you I will curse**

“I will curse whoever treats you in a shameful way” or “if anyone treats you as worthless, I will curse him”

### **Through you will all the families of the earth be blessed**

This can be made active. Alternate translation: “I will bless all the families of the earth through you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **Through you**

“Because of you” or “Because I have blessed you”

## **Genesis 12:4**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 12:5**

### **possessions**

This includes animals and non-living property.

### **the people that they had acquired**

Possible meanings are (1) "slaves that they had accumulated" or (2) "the people whom they had gathered to be with them."

## Genesis 12:6

### Abram passed through the land

Only Abram's name is mentioned because he was the head of the family. God had given him the command to take his family and go there. Alternate translation: "So Abram and his family went through the land" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### the land

"the land of Canaan"

### the oak of Moreh

Moreh was probably the name of a place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 12:7**

### **Yahweh, who had appeared to him**

“Yahweh, because he had appeared to him”

## **Genesis 12:8**

### **he pitched his tent**

Abram had many people with him as he traveled. People who moved from place to place lived in tents. Alternate translation: "they set up their tents"

### **called on the name of Yahweh**

"prayed in the name of Yahweh" or "worshiped Yahweh"

## **Genesis 12:9**

### **Then Abram continued journeying**

You may need to make explicit that he took his tent with him. "Then Abram took his tent and continued journeying." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **toward the Negev**

"toward the Negev region" or "toward the south" or "south to the Negev desert"

## **Genesis 12:10**

### **There was a famine**

The crops did not grow well that season. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "There was a shortage of food" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **in the land**

"in the area" or "in the land where Abram was living"

### **went down into**

Possible meanings are (1) "went further south" or (2) "went away from Canaan into." It would be best to translate this using your usual words for going from a higher place to a lower place.

## **Genesis 12:11**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 12:12

### they will kill me & you alive

The reason they would kill Abram can be made explicit: “they will kill me so that they can marry you” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 12:13

### so that my life will be spared because of you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that, because of you, they will not kill me" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 12:14**

### **It came about that**

Possible meanings are (1) This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts, and if your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here, or (2) "And that was what happened" .

## Genesis 12:15

### The princes of Pharaoh saw her

“Pharaoh’s officials saw Sarai” or “the king’s officials saw her”

### the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s household

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Pharaoh took her into his household” or “Pharaoh had his soldiers take her into his household” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### the woman

Sarai

### Pharaoh’s household

Possible meanings are (1) “Pharaoh’s family,” that is, as a wife, or (2) “Pharaoh’s house” or “Pharaoh’s palace,” a euphemism for Pharaoh making her one of his wives. (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## **Genesis 12:16**

### **for her sake**

“for Sarai’s sake” or “because of her”

## Genesis 12:17

### because of Sarai, Abram's wife

This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: "because Pharaoh intended to take Sarai, Abram's wife, to be his own wife" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 12:18

### Pharaoh summoned Abram

“Pharaoh called Abram” or “Pharaoh ordered Abram to come to him”

### What is this that you have done to me?

Pharaoh used this rhetorical question to show how angry he was about what Abram had done to him. It can also be stated as an exclamation. Alternate translation: “You have done a terrible thing to me!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## **Genesis 12:19**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 12:20**

### **Then Pharaoh gave orders to his men concerning him**

“Then Pharaoh directed his officials concerning Abram”

### **they sent him away, along with his wife and all that he had**

“the officials sent Abram away from Pharaoh, with his wife and all his possessions”

## Genesis 13

### Genesis 13 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Abram's faith

Since the land could not support both Lot's and Abraham's family, they each went their own way. Even though good land was not plentiful, Abraham allowed Lot to choose the better land because he trusted in God to fulfill his promises. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/trust\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/fulfill\]\]](#) and **promise, promised (p.1768)**)

#### God's covenant with Abram

God made a covenant with Abram. This covenant was not conditioned upon anything that Abraham needed to do, but the fulfillment of its promises is conditioned upon the actions of each generation of his descendants. It has not yet been fulfilled in its entirety. This chapter continues the covenant which began in the previous chapter. (See: **covenant (p.1745)**)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Built an altar

Abram would have built an altar in order to offer sacrifices to Yahweh. There is an implicit understanding that building an altar was an act of worship. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 13:1

### went up from

“left” or “departed from”

### went into the Negev

The Negev was a desert region in southern Canaan, west of Egypt. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “went back to the Negev desert” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 13:2**

### **Abram was very rich in animals, in silver, and in gold**

“Abram had many animals, much silver, and much gold”

#### **animals**

“livestock” or “cattle”

## Genesis 13:3

### He continued on his journey

Abram and his family traveled by stages, going from place to place. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "They continued on their journey" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### to the place where his tent had been before

Translators may add a footnote that says "See Genesis 12:8." The time of his travel can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "to the place where he had set up his tent before he went to Egypt" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 13:4**

### **called on the name of Yahweh**

“prayed in the name of Yahweh” or “worshipped Yahweh.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 12:8](#).

## Genesis 13:5

### Now

This word is used to show what follows is background information to help the reader understand the events that follow. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

## **Genesis 13:6**

### **The land was not able to support them**

There was not enough grazing land and water for all their animals.

### **their possessions**

This includes livestock, which need pasture and water.

### **could not stay together**

“could not live together”

## **Genesis 13:7**

### **The Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the land at that time**

This is another reason that the land could not support them all.

## **Genesis 13:8**

### **Let there be no strife between you and me**

“Let’s not quarrel”

#### **strife**

arguments or fights

### **between your herdsmen and my herdsmen**

“let’s stop the men who take care of our animals from quarreling”

### **after all, we are family**

“because we are family”

#### **family**

“kinsmen” or “relatives.” Lot was Abraham’s nephew.

## **Genesis 13:9**

### **Is not the whole land before you?**

This rhetorical question can be translated as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "The whole land is available for you to use." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### **Go ahead and separate yourself from me**

Abraham was speaking kindly to Lot and encouraging him to do something that would help them both. "Let's separate."

### **If you go to the left, then I will go to the right**

Possible meanings are (1) "If you go one way, then I will go the other" or (2) "If you go to the north, I will go to the south." Abram let Lot choose the part of the land he wanted, and Abram would take what remained.

## **Genesis 13:10**

### **the whole plain of the Jordan**

This refers to the general region of the Jordan River.

### **was well watered**

“had much water”

### **like the garden of Yahweh, like the land of Egypt**

“like the garden of Yahweh or like the land of Egypt.” These were two different places.

### **the garden of Yahweh**

This is another name for the garden of Eden.

### **garden**

Use the same word for “garden” as you used in [Genesis 2:8](#).

### **This was before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah**

This anticipates something that would happen later. It is important here because it explains why Lot settled in a region that later was not fertile.

## **Genesis 13:11**

### **the relatives**

“the kinsmen” or “the families.” This refers to Lot and Abram with their households.

## **Genesis 13:12**

### **Abram lived**

“Abram made his home” or “Abram stayed”

### **the land of Canaan**

“the land of the Canaanites”

### **He set up his tents as far away as Sodom**

Possible meanings are (1) “He set up his tents near Sodom” or (2) “He moved his tents around in an area that reached all the way to Sodom.”

## **Genesis 13:13**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 13:14**

**after Lot had departed from him**

“after Lot left Abraham”

## **Genesis 13:15**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 13:16**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 13:17**

### **walk through the length and breadth of the land**

“walk around all over the whole land”

## **Genesis 13:18**

### **Mamre**

This was the name of the man who owned the oak trees. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Hebron**

This is the name of a place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **an altar to Yahweh**

“an altar for worshiping Yahweh”

## Genesis 14

### Genesis 14 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 14:19-20.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Names of places

Sometimes the names of places in Scripture are referred to by the name used during the time of the writer. For example, the location referred to as Dan was not yet known by that name because Dan had not yet come to live there. Moses, the author of Genesis, would have known this location as Dan.

##### Melchizedek

Melchizedek was both a priest and a king. Because of this, he parallels the roles of Jesus. Melchizedek is an important figure in the book of Hebrews. (See: **priest, priesthood (p.1766)**)

#### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

##### God Most High

Melchizedek worshiped the God Most High. This is probably a reference to the true and only God who created the heavens and the earth and came to be known as Yahweh. (See: **heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly (p.1760)**)

## Genesis 14:1

### It came about

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

### in the days of

“in the time of”

### Amraphel & Arioch & Kedorlaomer & Tidal

These are names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.1651\)](#)) (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.1651\)](#))

### Shinar & Ellasar & Elam & Goiim

These are names of places. See how you translated “Shinar” in [Genesis 10:10](#) (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.1651\)](#)) (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.1651\)](#))

## **Genesis 14:2**

### **they made war**

“they went to war” or “they started a war” or “they prepared for war”

## Genesis 14:3

### These latter five kings joined together

The information that their armies were with them can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “These latter five kings and their armies joined together” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 14:4**

### **Twelve years they had served**

The events in verses 4-7 happened before verse 3. Your language may have a way of showing this.

### **they had served Kedorlaomer**

They probably had to pay him taxes and serve in his army. Alternate translation: “they had been under the control of Kedorlaomer” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **they rebelled**

“they refused to serve him” or “they stopped serving him”

## **Genesis 14:5**

### **came and attacked**

They did this because the other kings rebelled.

### **the Rephaim & the Zuzites & the Emites**

These are the names of people groups. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Ashteroth Karnaim & Ham & Shaveh Kiriathaim**

These are the names of places. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Ham**

This name in Hebrew is different from the name of Noah's son, which is spelled the same way in English.

## **Genesis 14:6**

### **the Horites**

This is the name of a people group. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Seir & El Paran**

These are the names of places. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **El Paran, which is near the desert**

This phrase helps readers understand where El Paran was. It can be translated as a separate sentence if necessary. Alternate translation: "El Paran. El Paran is near the desert" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**)

## Genesis 14:7

### General Information:

## General Information:

Verses 8 and 9 repeats what was said in [Genesis 14:3](#) and continues to tell what happened when the kings came together to fight.

### they turned and came

The word “they” refers to the four foreign kings who were attacking the region of Canaan. Their names were Amraphel, Arioch, Chedorlaomer, and Tidal. Alternate translation: “they turned and went” (See: **Go and Come (p. 1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

### the Amorites who lived in Hazezon Tamar

This phrase tells which Amorite people were defeated. There were other Amorite people who lived in other places.

## Genesis 14:8

### the king of Bela (also called Zoar)

The city of Bela was also called Zoar. This information could also be put at the end of the sentence. "the king of Bela went out and prepared for battle. Bela is also called Zoar."

### prepared for battle

"joined battle" or "drew up battle lines." Some translators may need to also say that the armies fought, as the UST does in verse 9. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 14:9**

### **four kings against the five**

Since the five kings were listed first, some languages might prefer to translate this as “five kings against four.”

## Genesis 14:10

### Now

This word introduces background information about the valley of Siddim. Your language may have another way of introducing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### was full of tar pits

“had many tar pits.” These were holes in the ground that had tar in them.

### tar

a thick, sticky, black liquid that comes up from the ground. See how this is translated in [Genesis 11:3](#).

### the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah

Here the kings represent themselves and their armies. Alternate translation: the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and their armies” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### they fell in there

Possible meanings are (1) some of their soldiers fell in the tar pits or (2) the kings themselves fell in the tar pits. Since [Genesis 14:17](#) says that the king of Sodom went to meet Abram, the first meaning is more likely correct. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### Those who were left

“Those who did not die in battle and did not fall in the pits”

## **Genesis 14:11**

### **the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah**

The words "Sodom" and "Gomorrah" are metonyms for the people who lived in those cities. Alternate translation: "the wealth of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah" or "the property of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **their provisions**

"their food and drink"

### **went their way**

"they went away"

## Genesis 14:12

**they also took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son, who was living in Sodom, along with all his possessions**

The phrases “Abram’s brother’s son” and “who was living in Sodom” remind the reader of things that were written earlier about Lot. Alternate translation: “they also took Lot, along with all his possessions. Lot was Abram’s brother’s son and was living in Sodom at that time” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p. 1623)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**)

## **Genesis 14:13**

### **One who had escaped came**

“A man escaped from the battle and came”

### **He was living**

“Abram was living.” This introduces background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### **were all allies of Abram**

“were treaty-partners with Abram” or “had a peace agreement with Abram”

## **Genesis 14:14**

### **his relative**

This is a reference to Abram's nephew Lot.

### **318 trained men**

"three hundred and eighteen trained men" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **trained men**

"men who were trained to fight"

### **men who had been born in his house**

"men who were born in Abram's household." They were children of Abram's servants.

### **pursued them**

"chased them"

### **Dan**

This is a city in the far north of Canaan, far from Abram's camp.

## **Genesis 14:15**

### **He divided his men against them at night and attacked them**

This probably refers to a battle strategy. "Abram divided the men into several groups, and they attacked their enemies from various directions"

## **Genesis 14:16**

### **all the possessions**

This refers to the things that the enemies had stolen from the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

### **his goods**

“Lot’s property that the enemies had stolen from Lot”

### **as well as the women and the other people**

“as well as the women and other people that the four kings had captured”

## Genesis 14:17

### returned

The implied information about where he was returning to can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “returned to where he was living” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 14:18**

### **Melchizedek, king of Salem**

This is the first time this king is mentioned.

### **bread and wine**

People commonly ate bread and wine. See how you translated “bread” in [Genesis 3:19](#) and “wine” in [Genesis 9:21](#).

## **Genesis 14:19**

### **He blessed him**

King Melchizedek blessed Abram.

### **Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May God Most High, the Creator of heaven and earth, bless Abram" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **heaven**

This refers to the place where God lives.

## **Genesis 14:20**

### **God Most High, who has given**

“God Most High, because he has given.” The phrase starting with “who has given” tells us something more about God Most High.

### **Blessed be God Most High**

This is a way of praising God. See how you translated “blessed be” in [Genesis 9:26](#).

### **into your hand**

“into your control” or “into your power”

## **Genesis 14:21**

### **Give me the people**

The phrase “the people” may refer to the people of Sodom that the enemies had captured. Abram rescued them when he rescued Lot.

## **Genesis 14:22**

### **I have lifted up my hand**

This means "I have taken an oath" or "I have made a promise."

## **Genesis 14:23**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 14:24

### I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten

"I take from you only what my young men have already eaten." Abram was refusing to accept anything for himself, but acknowledged that the soldiers had eaten some of the supplies during the journey back to Sodom after the battle.

### the share of the men that went with me

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the share of the recovered property that belongs to the men who helped me get it back" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre

These are the allies of Abram ([Genesis 14:13](#)). Because they were Abram's allies they fought battles alongside him. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "my allies Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 15

### Genesis 15 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Inheritance

In the ancient Near East, a person's children inherited the property and land of their parents. Abraham doubted the fulfillment of God's covenant because he did not have any children to whom to give his land. This showed a lack of faith. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/fulfill\]\]](#),[\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/covenant\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/faith\]\]](#))

#### Fulfilling a promise

In the ancient Near East, two people performed a similar sacrifice by dividing animals in half. It was a way to say to the other person, "may this happen to me if I do not fulfill my promise." The event recorded here indicates that God will fulfill his promise and only he is responsible for bringing it about. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/fulfill\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/promise\]\]](#))

#### God's covenant with Abraham

God made a covenant with Abram. This covenant was not conditioned upon anything that Abraham needed to do, but the fulfillment of its promises is conditioned upon the actions of each generation of his descendants. This covenant has not yet been fulfilled in its entirety.

## Genesis 15:1

### After these things

“These things” refers to when the kings fought and Abram rescued Lot.

### the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Fear

The idiom “the word of Yahweh came to” is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Abram in a vision. He said, ‘Fear” or “Yahweh spoke this message to Abram in a vision: ‘Fear” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### shield & reward

God used these two metaphors to tell Abram about his character and his relationship to Abram. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### I am your shield

Soldiers use a shield to protect themselves from their enemies. Alternate translation: “I will protect you like shield” or “I am your shield to protect you” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### I am & your very great reward

Possible meanings are (1) “I myself will be all that you need” or (2) “I will give you all you need.”

### reward

the result of a person’s actions. This seems to be a metonym for the gracious blessing God would give Abram. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 15:2**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 15:3**

### **Abram said, "Since you have given me**

"Abram continued speaking and said, 'Since you have given me'"

## Genesis 15:4

### Then, behold

The word “behold” emphasizes the fact that the word of Yahweh came to Abraham again.

### the word of Yahweh came to him, saying, “This

The idiom “The word of Yahweh came to” is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated this idiom in [Genesis 15:1](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave him a message. He said, ‘This’ or “Yahweh spoke this message to him: ‘This’ (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### This man

This refers to Eliezer of Damascus.

### the one who will come from your own body

“the one that you will father” or “your very own son.” Abram’s own son would become his heir.

## **Genesis 15:5**

### **number the stars**

“count the stars”

### **So will your descendants be**

Just as Abram would not be able to count all the stars, he would not be able to count all his descendants because there would be so many.

## **Genesis 15:6**

### **He believed Yahweh**

This means he accepted and trusted what Yahweh said was true.

### **he counted it to him as righteousness**

“Yahweh counted Abram’s belief as righteousness” or “Yahweh considered Abram righteous because Abram believed him”

## **Genesis 15:7**

### **I am Yahweh, who brought you out of Ur**

Yahweh was reminding Abraham of what he had already done so that Abraham would know that Yahweh had the power to give Abram what he promised him.

### **to inherit it**

“to receive it” or “so that you will possess it”

## **Genesis 15:8**

### **how will I know**

Abram was asking for more proof that Yahweh would give him the land.

## **Genesis 15:9**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 15:10**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 15:11**

### **the carcasses**

“the dead bodies of the animals and birds”

### **Abram drove them away**

“Abram chased the birds away.” He made sure the birds did not eat the dead animals.

## **Genesis 15:12**

### **Abram fell sound asleep**

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "Abraham slept deeply" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **a deep and terrifying darkness**

"an extreme darkness that terrified him"

### **overwhelmed him**

"surrounded him"

## **Genesis 15:13**

### **strangers**

people who are at home in one place but have to live in another place

### **will be enslaved and oppressed**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the owners of that land will enslave your descendants and oppress them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 15:14

### General Information:

## General Information:

Yahweh continued to speak to Abram while Abram dreamed.

### I will judge

Here “judge” is a metonym for what will happen after God makes the judgment. Alternate translation: “I will punish” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### that they will serve

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “that your descendants will serve” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### abundant possessions

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “many possessions” or “great wealth” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 15:15**

### **you will go to your fathers**

This is a polite way of saying “you will die.” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### **fathers**

The word “fathers” is a synecdoche for all ancestors. Alternate translation: “ancestors” or “ancestral fathers” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **you will be buried in a good old age**

“you will be very old when you die and your family buries your body”

## **Genesis 15:16**

### **In the fourth generation**

Here one generation refers to a lifespan of 100 years. "After four hundred years"

### **they will come here again**

"your descendants will come back here." Abraham's descendants would come to the land where Abram was then living, the land that Yahweh had promised to give to him.

### **has not yet reached its limit**

"is not yet complete" or "will get much worse before I punish them"

## **Genesis 15:17**

### **behold**

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

### **a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between the pieces**

God did this to show Abram that he was making a covenant with him.

### **passed between the pieces**

“passed through between the two rows of animal pieces”

## **Genesis 15:18**

### **covenant**

In this covenant God promises to bless Abram, and he will continue to bless him as long as Abram follows him.

### **I hereby give this land**

By saying this, God was giving the land to Abram's descendants. God was doing this then, but the descendants would not go into the land until many years later.

## **Genesis 15:19**

### **the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites**

These are the names of groups of people who lived in that land. God would allow Abraham's descendants to conquer these people and take their land. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 15:20**

### **the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaites**

These are the names of groups of people who lived in that land. God would allow Abraham's descendants to conquer these people and take their land. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 15:21**

### **the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites**

These are the names of groups of people who lived in that land. God would allow Abraham's descendants to conquer these people and take their land. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 16

### Genesis 16 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 16:11-12.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Plural marriage

Abram married Hagar while he was also married to Sarai. Even though Abram had his wife's permission, this was an immoral and sinful action. It also showed a lack of faith in God. Sarai quickly became jealous of Hagar. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#), [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/faith\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/jealous\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#))

## Genesis 16:1

### Now

This word is used in English to introduce a new part of the story and background information about Sarai. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### female servant

“slave-girl.” This type of slave would serve the woman of the household.

## **Genesis 16:2**

### **from having children**

“from giving birth to children”

### **I will have children by her**

“I will build my family through her”

### **Abram listened to the voice of Sarai**

“Abram did what Sarai said”

## **Genesis 16:3**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 16:4**

### **she looked with contempt on her mistress**

“she despised her mistress” or “she thought that she was more valuable than her mistress”

### **her mistress**

Here this refers to Sarai. A mistress has authority over her slave. Alternate translation: “her owner” or “Sarai”

## **Genesis 16:5**

### **This wrong on me**

“This injustice against me”

### **is because of you**

“is your responsibility” or “is your fault”

### **I gave my servant woman into your embrace**

Sarai used the word “embrace” here to refer to him sleeping with her. Alternate translation: “I gave you my servant so that you would sleep with her” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### **I was despised in her eyes**

This can be active. Alternate translation: “she hated me” or “she began to hate me” or “she thought she was better than me” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **Let Yahweh judge between me and you**

“I want Yahweh to say whether this is my fault or your fault” or “I want Yahweh to decide which one of us is right.” The phrase “to judge between” means to decide which person is right in a dispute between them.

## **Genesis 16:6**

### **See here**

“Listen to me” or “Pay attention”

### **in your power**

“under your authority”

### **Sarai dealt harshly with her**

“Sarai treated Hagar very badly”

### **she fled from her**

“Hagar fled from Sarai”

## **Genesis 16:7**

### **The angel of Yahweh**

Possible meanings are (1) Yahweh made himself look like an angel or (2) this was one of Yahweh's angels or (3) this was a special messenger from God (some scholars think it was Jesus). Since the phrase is not well understood, it is best to simply translate it as "the angel of Yahweh" using the normal word that you use for "angel."

### **wilderness**

The wilderness area she went to was a desert. Alternate translation: "desert"

### **Shur**

This was the name of a place south of Canaan and east of Egypt.

## Genesis 16:8

### my mistress

Here this refers to Sarai. A mistress has authority over her slave. See how “her mistress” is translated in [Genesis 16:4](#). Alternate translation: “my owner”

## **Genesis 16:9**

### **The angel of Yahweh said to her**

“The angel of Yahweh said to Hagar”

### **your mistress**

Sarai. See how “her mistress” is translated in [Genesis 16:4](#).

## **Genesis 16:10**

### **the angel of Yahweh**

See the note about this phrase in [Genesis 16:7](#).

### **the angel of Yahweh said to her, “I**

When he said “I,” he was referring to Yahweh. When translating what is in the quote, do it as the angel of Yahweh did and use the word “I” when referring to Yahweh.

### **I will greatly multiply your descendants**

“I will give you very many descendants”

### **too numerous to count**

“so many that no one will be able to count them”

## **Genesis 16:11**

### **The angel of Yahweh**

See the note about this phrase in [Genesis 16:7](#).

### **Behold**

“Look” or “Listen” or “Pay attention”

### **bear a son**

“give birth to a son”

### **you will call his name**

“you will name him.” The word “you” refers to Hagar.

### **Ishmael, because Yahweh has heard**

Translators may add a footnote that says “The name ‘Ishmael’ means ‘God has heard.’”

### **affliction**

She has been afflicted by distress and suffering.

## **Genesis 16:12**

### **He will be a wild donkey of a man**

This was not an insult. It may mean that Ishmael would be independent and strong like a wild donkey. Alternate translation: "He will be like a wild donkey among men" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **He will be hostile against every man**

"He will be every man's enemy"

### **every man will be hostile to him**

"everyone will be his enemy"

### **he will live apart from**

This can also mean "he will live in hostility with."

### **his brothers**

"his relatives" or "the other members of his family"

## Genesis 16:13

### Yahweh who spoke to her

“Yahweh, because he spoke to her”

### Do I really continue to see, & me?

Hagar used this rhetorical question to express her amazement that she was still alive even after she met God. People expected that if they met God, they would die. Here seeing represents living. Alternate translation: “I am surprised that I am still alive, ... me.” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-rquestion\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#)) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 16:14

### Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi

Translators may add a footnote that says “Beer Lahai Roi means ‘the well of the living one who sees me.’” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered

The word “behold” here draws attention to the fact that the well was in a place that the author and his readers knew. Alternate translation: “in fact, it is between Kadesh and Bered” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 16:15**

### **Hagar gave birth**

Hagar's return to Sarai and Abram is implicit. You can make this more explicit. Alternate translation: "So Hagar went back and gave birth" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **named his son, whom Hagar bore**

"named his son by Hagar" or "named his and Hagar's son"

## Genesis 16:16

### Abram was

This introduces background information about Abram's age when these things happened. Your language may have a special way to mark background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### bore Ishmael to Abram

This means "gave birth to Abram's son, Ishmael." The focus is on Abram having a son.

## Genesis 17

### Genesis 17 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### “The father of a multitude of nations”

Abram came to have many descendants. He had so many descendants that many of his immediate descendants became large people groups and nations.

#### God's covenant with Abraham

God made a covenant with Abram. This covenant was not conditioned upon anything that Abraham needed to do, but the fulfillment of its promises is conditioned upon the actions of each generation of his descendants. It has not yet been fulfilled in its entirety. It is important to note in this chapter that Isaac is the son who receives the promises associated with the covenant and not Ishmael. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/covenant\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/fulfill\]\]](#) and **promise, promised (p.1768)**)

#### Circumcision

Circumcision was an unusual practice in the ancient Near East. It served to separate the Hebrew people from the rest of the world. This chapter records the beginning of this practice among Abraham and his descendants. (See: **circumcise, circumcised, circumcision, uncircumcised, uncircumcision (p.1741)**)

#### Name change

In Scripture, a change in name always occurs at a highly significant point in a person's life. The beginning of the practice of circumcision was a significant event in the history of the Hebrew people.

## Genesis 17:1

### When Abram was ninety-nine years old

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

### God Almighty

“the all-powerful God” or “the God who has all power”

### Walk before me

Walking is a metaphor for living, and “before me” or “in my presence” here is a metaphor for obedience. Alternate translation: “Live the way I want you to” or “Obey me” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 17:2**

### **Then I will confirm**

“If you do this, then I will confirm”

### **I will confirm my covenant**

“I will give my covenant” or “I will make my covenant”

### **covenant**

In this covenant God promises to bless Abram, but he also requires Abram to obey him.

### **multiply you exceedingly**

Here “multiply you” is an idiom that means he will give him more descendants. Alternate translation: “greatly increase the number of your descendants” or “give you very many descendants” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 17:3**

### **Abram bowed low with his face to the ground**

“Abram threw himself face down on the ground” or “Abraham immediately lay down with his face to the ground.”  
He did this to show that he respected God and would obey him.

## **Genesis 17:4**

### **As for me**

God used this phrase to introduce what he would do for Abram as part of his covenant with Abram.

### **behold, my covenant is with you**

The word “behold” here says that what comes next is certain: “my covenant is certainly with you.”

### **the father of a multitude of nations**

“the father of a great number of nations” or “the one after whom many nations name themselves”

## **Genesis 17:5**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 17:6**

### **I will make you exceedingly fruitful**

“I will cause you to have very many descendants”

### **I will make nations of you**

“I will cause your descendants to become nations”

### **kings will descend from you**

“among your descendants there will be kings” or “some of your descendants will be kings”

## **Genesis 17:7**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

God continues speaking to Abraham.

**throughout their generations**

“for each generation”

**for an everlasting covenant**

“as a covenant that will last forever”

**to be God to you and to your descendants after you**

“to be your God and your descendants’ God” or “covenant”

## **Genesis 17:8**

### **Canaan, for an everlasting possession**

“Canaan, as an everlasting possession” or “Canaan, to possess forever”

## **Genesis 17:9**

### **As for you**

God uses this phrase to introduce what Abram would have to do as part of God's covenant with him.

### **keep my covenant**

“observe my covenant” or “honor my covenant” or “obey my covenant”

## **Genesis 17:10**

### **This is my covenant**

“This is a requirement of my covenant” or “This is part of my covenant.” This sentence introduces the part of the covenant that Abram must do.

### **Every male among you must be circumcised**

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: “You must circumcise every male among you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **Every male**

This refers to human males.

## Genesis 17:11

### You must be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin

Some communities may prefer a less descriptive expression such as “You must be circumcised.” If your translation of “be circumcised” already includes the word for “foreskin”, you do not need to repeat it. This can be made active. Alternate translation: “You must circumcise every male among you” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-euphemism\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### the sign of the covenant

“the sign that shows that the covenant exists”

### the sign

Possible meanings are (1) “the sign” or (2) “a sign.” The first means that there was one sign, and the second means that there may have been more than one sign. Here the word “sign” means a reminder of something that God had promised.

## **Genesis 17:12**

### **General Information:**

## **General Information:**

God continues speaking to Abraham.

### **Every male**

“Every human male”

### **throughout your people’s generations**

“in every generation”

### **him who is bought with money**

This refers to slaves. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “any male that you buy” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 17:13**

### **my covenant will be in your flesh**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you will mark my covenant in your flesh” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **for an everlasting covenant**

“as a permanent covenant.” Because it was marked in flesh, no one could easily erase it.

## Genesis 17:14

### uncircumcised male who is not circumcised

This can be stated in active form, and you may leave out words that will give wrong meaning in your language. Alternate translation: "male whom you have not circumcised" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### Any uncircumcised male & foreskin will be cut off from his people

Possible meanings are (1) "I will cut off any uncircumcised male ... foreskin from his people" or (2) "I want you to cut off any uncircumcised male ... foreskin from his people."

### cut off from his people

Possible meanings are (1) "killed" or (2) "sent away from the community." (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### He has broken my covenant

"He has not obeyed the rules of my covenant." This is the reason that he would be cut off from his people.

## **Genesis 17:15**

### **As for Sarai**

The words "As for" introduce the next person God talks about.

## **Genesis 17:16**

### **I will give you a son by her**

“I will make her bear a son for you”

### **she will become the mother of nations**

“she will be the ancestor of many nations” or “her descendants will become nations”

### **Kings of peoples will come from her**

“Kings of peoples will descend from her” or “Some of her descendants will be kings of peoples”

## Genesis 17:17

### said in his heart

“thought to himself” or “said to himself silently”

### Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old?

Abraham used this rhetorical question because he did not believe that this could happen. Alternate translation: “Surely a man who is a hundred years old cannot father a child!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### How can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a son?

Again Abraham used a rhetorical question because he did not believe this could happen. The phrase “who is ninety years old” tells why Abraham did not believe that Sarah could bear a son. Alternate translation: “Sarah is ninety years old. Could she bear a son?” or “Sarah is ninety years old. Surely she could not bear a son!” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-rquestion\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-distinguish\]\]](#)) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## **Genesis 17:18**

### **Oh that Ishmael might live before you**

“Please let Ishmael inherit the covenant that you have made with me” or “Perhaps Ishmael could receive your covenant blessing.” Abraham suggested something that he believed really could happen.

## **Genesis 17:19**

### **No, but Sarah your wife will bear**

God said this to correct Abraham's belief that Sarah could not have a son.

### **you must name him**

The word "you" refers to Abraham.

## **Genesis 17:20**

### **As for Ishmael**

The words "As for" show that God is switching from talking about the baby that would be born to talking about Ishmael.

### **Behold**

"Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

### **will make him fruitful**

This is an idiom that means "will cause him to have many children." (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **will multiply him abundantly**

"I will cause him to have many descendants"

### **princes**

"chiefs" or "rulers." Ishmael's twelve sons are different from the twelve sons of Jacob who were the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel.

## **Genesis 17:21**

### **But my covenant I will establish with Isaac**

God returns to talking about his covenant with Abraham and emphasizes that he would fulfill his promise with Isaac, not with Ishmael.

## **Genesis 17:22**

### **When he had finished talking with him**

“When God had finished talking with Abraham”

### **God went up from Abraham**

“God left Abraham”

## **Genesis 17:23**

### **every male among the men of Abraham's household**

“every human male in Abraham's household” or “every male person in Abraham's household.” It refers to human males of all ages: babies, boys, and men.

## **Genesis 17:24**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 17:25**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 17:26**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 17:27**

### **including those born into the household and those bought with money from a foreigner**

“This includes those who were born in his household and those he had bought from foreigners”

### **those bought with money from a foreigner**

This refers to servants or slaves.

### **those bought**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom he had bought” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 18

### Genesis 18 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Three men

The three men who visited Abraham were probably angels. This is evident from Abraham's reaction to them. Also, it appears Abraham knew that he was speaking directly to Yahweh through these men. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/angel\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#))

#### Disbelief

When Sarah heard the news that she was going to have a baby, she laughed in disbelief because she was considered too old to have a baby. She also asked a rhetorical question in order to further show her disbelief. This would have been considered an insult to God. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/believe\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-rquestion\]\]](#))

In his exchange with God, Abraham did not show any sign of unbelief. Instead, he is asking God for mercy because he trusted in the character of God. He does not question God's power to accomplish things as Sarah had done. (See: **trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness (p.1779)**)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Sarah's age

It should be apparent that Sarah was physically no longer able to have children because of her age. There is a natural period in a woman's life when she stops being able to have children. The text assumes the reader understands that Sarah has already experienced this event. In English, this is called "menopause." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 18:1**

### **Mamre**

This was the name of the man who owned the oak trees.

### **in the tent doorway**

“at the opening of the tent” or “at the entrance of the tent”

### **heat of the day**

“hottest time of day”

## **Genesis 18:2**

### **He looked up and, behold, he saw three men standing**

“He looked up and saw, and behold, three men were standing”

### **behold, he saw**

“he was surprised because he saw”

### **across from him**

“nearby” or “there.” They were near him, but far enough away for him to run to them.

### **bowed**

This means to bend over to humbly express respect and honor toward someone.

## Genesis 18:3

### Lord

This is a title of respect. Possible meanings are (1) Abraham knew that one of these men was God or (2) Abraham knew that these men came on behalf of God.

### if I have found favor in your sight

Here “found favor” is an idiom that means be approved of or that the Lord is pleased with him, and “your sight” is a metaphor representing the Lord’s evaluation. Alternate translation: “if you have evaluated me and approve” or “if you are pleased with me” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#)) and **Metaphor (p.1678)** (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### in your sight

Abraham is speaking to one of the men. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### do not pass by

“please do not keep on going past”

### your servant

“me.” Abraham refers to himself this way in order to show respect to his guest.

## **Genesis 18:4**

### **Let a little water be brought**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Let me bring you some water" or "My servant will bring you some water" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **a little water**

"some water." Saying "little" was a polite way of showing generosity. Abraham would give them more than enough water.

### **wash your feet**

This custom helped tired travelers to refresh themselves after walking long distances.

## **Genesis 18:5**

### **a little food**

“some food.” Saying “little” was a polite way of showing generosity. Abraham would give them more than enough food.

### **your & you**

Abraham speaks to all three of the men, so “you” and “your” are plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

## **Genesis 18:6**

### **three seahs**

about 22 liters (See: **Biblical Volume (p.1611)**) (See: **Biblical Volume (p.1611)**)

### **bread**

This bread was probably cooked quickly on a hot stone. It may have been flat or round like small loaves or rolls.

## **Genesis 18:7**

### **he hurried**

“the servant hurried”

### **to prepare it**

“to cut it up and roast it”

## **Genesis 18:8**

### **curds**

This refers to the solid part of fermented milk. It may have been yogurt or cheese.

### **the calf that had been prepared**

“the roasted calf”

### **before them**

“before the three visitors”

## **Genesis 18:9**

### **They said to him**

“Then they said to Abraham”

## **Genesis 18:10**

### **He said, “I will certainly return to you**

The word “He” refers to the man whom Abraham called “Lord” in [Genesis 18:3](#).

### **in the springtime**

“when this same season comes next year” or “about this time next year”

### **see**

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

### **in the tent doorway**

“at the opening of the tent” or “at the entrance of the tent”

## **Genesis 18:11**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 18:12**

### **After I am worn-out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?**

You may want to add “of having a baby.” Sarah used this rhetorical question because she did not believe that she could have a child. Alternate translation: “I cannot believe that I will experience the joy of having a child. My master is also too old” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### **my master is old**

This means “since my husband is also old.”

### **my master**

This is a title of respect that Sarah gave to her husband Abraham.

## Genesis 18:13

### Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really bear a child, when I am old'?

God used this rhetorical question to show that he knew what Sarah was thinking and that he was not pleased with it. He repeats Sarah's rhetorical question ([Genesis 18:12](#)) using different words. Alternate translation: "Sarah was wrong to laugh and say, 'I will not bear a child because I am too old!'"(See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 18:14

### Is anything too hard for Yahweh?

“Is there anything that Yahweh cannot do?” Yahweh speaks of himself as if he were speaking of someone else to remind Abraham that he, Yahweh, is great and can do anything. Alternate translation: “There is nothing that I, Yahweh, cannot do!” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-rquestion\]\]](#)) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### At the time appointed by me, in the spring

“At the time I have appointed, which is in the spring”

## **Genesis 18:15**

### **Then Sarah denied it and said**

“The Sarah denied it by saying”

### **He replied**

“Yahweh replied”

### **No, you did laugh**

“Yes, you did laugh.” This means “No, that is not true; you did in fact laugh.”

## **Genesis 18:16**

### **to see them on their way**

“to send them on their way” or “to say ‘Farewell’ to them.” It was polite to go some distance with guests as they were leaving.

## Genesis 18:17

### Should I hide from Abraham what I am about to do

God used this rhetorical question to say that he was going to talk to Abraham about something very important and that it was best for him to do so. Alternate translation: "I should not and will not hide from Abraham what I am about to do" or "I should and will tell Abraham what I am about to do" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 18:18

The rhetorical question that begins with the words “Should I hide” in verse 17 ends here. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### since Abraham & in him?

The rhetorical question that begins with the words “Should I hide” in verse 17 ends here. God uses this rhetorical question to say that he was going to talk to Abraham about something very important and that it was best for him to do so. “I should not and will not hide ... since Abraham in him.” or “I should and will tell ... since Abraham in him” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### since & him?

“This is because ... him”

### all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will bless all the nations of the earth through Abraham” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### will be blessed in him

“will be blessed because of Abraham” or “will be blessed because I have blessed Abraham.” For translating “in him” see how you translated “through you” in [Genesis 12:3](#).

## **Genesis 18:19**

### **that he may instruct**

“that he will direct” or “so that he will command”

### **to keep the way of Yahweh & Yahweh may bring & he has said**

Yahweh is speaking about himself as if he were another person. Alternate translation: “to obey what I, Yahweh, require ... I, Yahweh, may bring ... I have said” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### **to keep the way of Yahweh**

“to obey the commands of Yahweh”

### **to do righteousness and justice**

“by doing righteousness and justice.” This tells how to keep the way of Yahweh.

### **so that Yahweh may bring upon Abraham what he has said to him**

“so that Yahweh may bless Abraham just as he said he would.” This refers to the covenant promise to bless Abraham and make him a great nation.

## **Genesis 18:20**

### **the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great**

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "outcry" is expressed as the verb "accuse." Alternate translation: "so many people have been accusing the people of Sodom and Gomorrah of doing evil things" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### **their sin is so serious**

"they have sinned so much"

## **Genesis 18:21**

### **I will now go down there**

"I will now go down to Sodom and Gomorrah"

### **go down there and see**

"go down there to find out" or "go down there to decide"

### **see the outcry & that has come to me**

Yahweh speaks as if he knew about this matter because he had heard the cries and accusations coming from the people who had suffered. This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "outcry" is expressed as the verb "accuse." Alternate translation: "as wicked as those who are accusing them say that they are" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### **If not**

"If they are not as wicked as the outcry suggests"

## **Genesis 18:22**

### **turned from there**

“went out from Abraham’s camp”

### **Abraham remained standing before Yahweh**

“Abraham and Yahweh remained together”

## **Genesis 18:23**

### **approached and said**

“approached Yahweh and said” or “stepped closer to Yahweh and said”

### **sweep away**

Abraham speaks of destroying people as if it were sweeping dirt with a broom. Alternate translation: “destroy” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **the righteous with the wicked**

“the righteous people with the wicked people”

## Genesis 18:24

### General Information:

## General Information:

Abraham continues talking to Yahweh.

### Perhaps there are

“Suppose there are”

### Will you sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous that are there?

Abraham was hoping that Yahweh would say, “I will not sweep it away.” Alternate translation: “I think you would not sweep it away. Instead, you would spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous that are there” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### sweep it away

“destroy it.” Abraham speaks of destroying people as if it were sweeping dirt with a broom. Alternate translation: “destroy the people who live there” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous that are there?

Abraham was hoping that God would say “I will spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people there.”

### spare the place

“let the people live”

### for the sake of

“because of”

## Genesis 18:25

### Far be it from you to do such a thing

Here “Far be it from you” is an idiom that means the person should never do something like that. Alternate translation: “I would never want you to do something like that” or “You should not want to do something like that” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### such a thing, killing

“such a thing as killing” or “such a thing, that is, killing”

### the righteous should be treated the same as the wicked

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you should treat the righteous the same way you treat the wicked” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### Will not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?

Abraham used this rhetorical question to say what he expected God to do. Alternate translation: “The Judge of all the earth will certainly do what is just!” or “Since you are the Judge of all the earth, you will surely do what is right!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Judge

God is often referred to as a judge because he is the one perfect judge who makes the final decisions about what is right or wrong.

## **Genesis 18:26**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 18:27

### Look

The phrase “Look” here draws attention to the surprising information that follows.

### I have undertaken to speak

“Pardon me for being so bold as to speak to you” or “Excuse me for daring to speak”

### to my Lord

Abraham shows his respect to Yahweh by speaking to Yahweh as if he were speaking to someone else. Alternate translation: “to you, my Lord” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### only dust and ashes

This metaphor describes Abraham as a human being, who will die and whose body will turn into to dust and ashes. Alternate translation: “only a mortal man” or “as unimportant as dust and ashes” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 18:28**

### **five less than fifty righteous**

“only forty-five righteous people”

### **for lack of five**

“if there are five fewer righteous people”

### **I will not destroy it**

“I will not destroy Sodom”

## Genesis 18:29

### He spoke to him

"Abraham spoke to Yahweh"

### if there are forty found there

This can be translated in active form. You may have to fill in the ellipsis, "righteous people." Alternate translation: "if you find forty righteous people there" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-ellipsis\]\]](#)) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### for the forty's sake

"for the sake of the forty" or "if I find forty there." You may have to fill in the ellipsis, "righteous people." Alternate translation: "for the sake of the forty righteous people" or "if I find forty righteous people there" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

### He replied

"Yahweh answered"

### I will not do it for the forty's sake

"I will not destroy the cities if I find forty righteous people there"

## Genesis 18:30

### thirty will be found there

This can be translated in active form. You may have to fill in the ellipsis, "righteous people." Alternate translation: "you will find thirty righteous people there" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-ellipsis\]\]](#)) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 18:31

### Look

The phrase “Look” here draws attention to the surprising information that follows.

### I have undertaken to speak

“Pardon me for being so bold as to speak to you” or “Excuse me for daring to speak.” See how this is translated in [Genesis 18:27](#).

### twenty will be found there

This can be translated in active form. You may have to fill in the ellipsis, “righteous people.” Alternate translation: “you will find twenty righteous people there” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-ellipsis\]\]](#)) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### for the twenty’s sake

“for the sake of the twenty” or “if I find twenty there.” You may have to fill in the ellipsis, “righteous people.” Alternate translation: “for the sake of the twenty righteous people” or “if I find twenty righteous people there” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

## **Genesis 18:32**

### **Perhaps ten will be found there**

“Perhaps you will find ten righteous people there”

### **Perhaps ten**

“Perhaps ten righteous people” or “ten good people”

### **Then he said**

“And Yahweh answered”

### **for the ten’s sake**

“if I find ten righteous people there”

## Genesis 18:33

### Yahweh went on his way

Here “went on his way” is an idiom that means he left, or he continued his journey. Yahweh appeared to Abraham in human form as a traveler. Alternate translation: “Yahweh departed” or “Yahweh continued on his journey” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 19

### Genesis 19 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### The evil desires of the Sodomites

The men of Sodom desired to forcibly have sexual relations with the angels who came to the city appearing as men. Such action is known as “rape.” Their desire was viewed as especially evil because Lot was obligated to protect his guests at all costs, even that of sacrificing his own children for his guests. (See: **evil, wicked, unpleasant (p. 1750)**)

#### Hospitality

Hospitality, or being kind to a visitor, was very important in the Ancient Near East. Lot showed his guests loyalty by doing his utmost to protect them from the people of Sodom.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Contrasts

It is probable that Abraham's faith and actions in chapter 18 are intended to contrast with the actions of the worldly Sodomites. (See: **faith (p.1752)**)

## **Genesis 19:1**

### **The two angels**

The two men who have gone to Sodom ([Genesis 18:22](#)) are really angels.

### **the gate of Sodom**

“the entrance to the city of Sodom.” The city had a wall around it, and people had to go through a gate to get into it. This was a very important place in a city. Important people often spent time there.

### **bowed down with his face to the ground**

He put his knees on the ground then touched his forehead and nose to the ground.

## **Genesis 19:2**

### **my masters**

This was a term of respect Lot used for the angels.

### **I urge you to turn aside into your servant's house**

"Please come and stay in your servant's house"

### **your servant's house**

Lot refers to himself as their servant in order to show them respect. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)  
(See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### **wash your feet**

People liked to wash their feet after traveling.

### **rise up early**

"wake up early"

### **we will spend the night**

When the two angels said this, they were referring only to themselves, not to Lot. The two of them planned to spend the night in the square. Some languages would use the exclusive form of "we" here. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**)

### **town square**

This is a public, outdoor place in the town.

## **Genesis 19:3**

### **they went with him**

“they turned and went with him”

## **Genesis 19:4**

### **before they lay down**

“before the people in Lot’s house lay down to go to sleep”

### **the men of the city, the men of Sodom**

“the men of the city, that is, the men of Sodom” or just “the men of the city of Sodom”

### **the house**

“Lot’s house”

### **both young and old**

“from the youngest to the oldest.” This means “men of all ages” and refers to the men of Sodom who were surrounding Lot’s house.

## **Genesis 19:5**

### **that came in to you**

“that went into your house”

### **we may know them**

These words literally mean “we may know who they are,” but the men meant them as a euphemism for “we may have sexual relations with them” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## **Genesis 19:6**

### **after himself**

“behind him” or “after he went through”

## **Genesis 19:7**

### **I beg you, my brothers**

"I plead with you, my brothers"

### **my brothers**

Lot spoke in a friendly way to the men of the city hoping that they would listen to him. Alternate translation: "my friends" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **do not act so wickedly**

"do not do something so wicked" or "do not do such a wicked thing"

## Genesis 19:8

### Look

“Pay attention” or “Look here”

### who have not known any man

This is a polite way of saying that the daughters had not had sexual relations with any man. You may need to use another euphemism in your language. See how you translated similar words in [Genesis 4:1](#). (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### whatever is good in your eyes

“whatever you desire” or “whatever you think is right”

### under the shadow of my roof

The two men were guests in Lot’s home, so he needed to protect them. The word “roof” is a synecdoche for the whole house and a metaphor for Lot protecting them. Alternate translation: “into my house, and God expects me to protect them” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#)) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 19:9

### Stand back!

“Step aside!” or “Get out of our way!”

### This one came here to live as a foreigner

“This one came here as an outsider” or “This foreigner came to live here”

### This one

“Lot.” The men are speaking to each other. If this would be unclear in your language, you may have the men speak to Lot here, as in UST.

### and now

The speaker would not expect a foreigner to judge the people of that land. Alternate translation: “but even though he has no good reason to” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### he has become our judge

Here “has become our judge” is an idiom that means Lot is acting as if he can tell the men what actions are right or wrong. Alternate translation: “he acts as if he has the authority to tell us what is right and what is wrong” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### Now we

“Because you are telling us that what we are doing is wrong, we”

### we will deal worse with you than with them

The men are angry that Lot said, “Do not act so wickedly” (**Genesis 19:7**), so they are threatening to act more wickedly than Lot had feared at first. Alternate translation: “we will act more wickedly with you than we will with them” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### They pressed hard against the man, against Lot, and came near to break down the door

Possible meanings are (1) “They kept coming closer to the man, to Lot, until they were close enough to break down the door” or (2) they physically pushed Lot up against the wall or door of the house and were about to break the door down.

### the man & Lot

This is two ways of referring to Lot.

## Genesis 19:10

### But the men

“But Lot’s two guests” or “But the two angels”

### **the men reached out their hands and brought & them and shut**

Your language may need to add that the men opened the door first. Alternate translation: “the men opened the door far enough so they could reach out their hands and pull ... them, and then they shut” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 19:11

### Lot's visitors struck with blindness the men

The phrase "struck with blindness" is a metaphor; the visitors did not physically hit the men. Alternate translation: "Lot's visitors blinded the men" or "they took away their sight" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### both young and old

"men of all ages." This merism emphasizes that the visitors blinded all the men. This could indicate social standing rather than age. Alternate translation: "both small and great" (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

## **Genesis 19:12**

### **Then the men said**

“Then the two men said” or “Then the angels said”

### **Do you have anyone else here?**

“Are there any other members of your family in the city?” or “Do you have any other family members in this place?”

### **whoever you have in the city**

“any other members of your family living in this city”

## Genesis 19:13

### **we are about to destroy**

The word “we” here is exclusive. Only the two angels would destroy the city; Lot would not destroy it. If your language has an exclusive form of “we,” use it here. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

### **the accusations against it before Yahweh have become so loud**

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun “accusations” is expressed as a verb. See how similar words are translated in [Genesis 18:20](#). Alternate translation: “so many people have been telling Yahweh that the people of this city are doing evil things” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

## **Genesis 19:14**

### **Lot went out**

“So Lot left the house”

### **his sons-in-law, the men who had promised to marry his daughters**

The phrase “the men who had promised to marry his daughters” explains what “sons-in-law” means here. Alternate translation: “the men who were going to marry his daughters” or “his daughters’ fiancés” (See: **Parallelism (p. 1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

## **Genesis 19:15**

### **When the morning dawned**

“Just before the sun came up”

### **Get going**

“Go now”

### **you are not swept away in the punishment of the city**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “so Yahweh does not also destroy you when he punishes the people of this city” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **not swept away in the punishment**

God destroying the people of the city is spoken of as if a person were sweeping away dust. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **of the city**

Here “city” stands for the people. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 19:16**

### **But he lingered**

“But Lot hesitated” or “But Lot did not start to leave”

### **So the men grabbed**

“So the two men grabbed” or “So the angels grabbed”

### **was merciful to him**

“had compassion on Lot.” Yahweh is described as being “merciful” because he was sparing the lives of Lot and his family instead of destroying them when he destroyed the people of Sodom for the wrong they had done.

## Genesis 19:17

### When they had brought them out

“When the two men had brought Lot’s family out”

### Run for your lives!

This is a way of telling them to run so that they do not die. Alternate translation: “Run away and save your lives!” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### Do not look back

The phrase “at the city” is understood. Alternate translation: “Do not look back at the city” or “Do not look back at Sodom” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

### on the plain

This means the plain of the Jordan River. This refers to the general region of the Jordan River.

### so you are not swept away

It is understood that they would be swept away with the people of the city. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “or else God will destroy you along with the people of the city” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-ellipsis\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

### not swept away

God destroying the people of the city is spoken of as if a person were sweeping away dust. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 19:18**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 19:19

### Your servant has found favor in your eyes

The phrase “found favor” is an idiom which means to be approved of by someone. Here “eyes” are a metonym for sight, and sight is a metaphor representing his evaluation. Alternate translation: “You have been pleased with me” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### Your servant has

Lot was showing respect by referring to himself as “your servant.” Alternate translation: “I, your servant, have” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### you have shown me great kindness in saving my life

The abstract noun “kindness” can be stated as “kind.” Alternate translation: “you have been very kind to me by saving my life” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### I cannot escape to the mountains, because the disaster will overtake me, and I will die

Being unable to get far enough away from Sodom when God destroys the city is spoken of as if “disaster” is a person that will chase and catch up with Lot. Alternate translation: “My family and I will certainly die when God destroys the people of Sodom, because the mountains are too far away for us to get there safely” (See: **Personification (p.1698)**) (See: **Personification (p.1698)**)

### my life & I cannot escape & overtake me, and I will die

It is implied that Lot’s family would die along with him. Alternate translation: “our lives ... we cannot escape ... overtake us, and we will die” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 19:20

### let me escape there (is it not a little one?), and my life will be saved

Lot used this rhetorical question to get the angels to notice that the city really is a small one. Alternate translation: "let me escape there. You can see how small it is. If you let us go there we will live" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### let me escape there

Lot's full request can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "instead of destroying that city, let me escape there" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### my life will be saved

It is implied that the lives of Lot's family will be saved along with his. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that we will live" or "so that we will survive" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 19:21**

### **I am granting this request also**

"I will do what you have asked"

## Genesis 19:22

### cannot do anything

This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: “cannot destroy the other cities” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Zoar

Translators may add a footnote that says “The name Zoar sounds like the Hebrew word that means ‘little.’ Lot called this town ‘little’ in Genesis 19:20.”

## Genesis 19:23

### The sun had risen upon the earth

“The sun had risen over the earth.” The phrase “upon the earth” can be left implicit as it is in the UST where it is not translated. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### when Lot reached Zoar

It is implied that Lot’s family is with him. Alternate translation: “when Lot and his family arrived at Zoar” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 19:24

### Yahweh rained down upon Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from Yahweh out of the sky

The phrase “from Yahweh” stands for God’s power to cause the sulfur and fire to fall on the city. Alternate translation: “Yahweh caused sulfur and fire to fall from the sky onto Sodom and Gomorrah” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### sulfur and fire

These two words are used together to describe one object. Alternate translation: “burning sulfur” or “fiery rain” (See: **Hendiadys (p.1648)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.1648)**)

## **Genesis 19:25**

### **those cities**

This refers primarily to Sodom and Gomorrah, but also to three other towns.

### **the inhabitants of the cities**

“the people who lived in the cities”

## **Genesis 19:26**

### **she became a pillar of salt**

“she became like a statue of salt” or “her body became like a tall stone of salt.” Because she disobeyed the angel who told them not to look back at the city, God caused her to become something like a statue made out of rock salt.

## **Genesis 19:27**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 19:28**

### **behold**

The word “behold” draws attention to the surprising information that follows.

### **like the smoke of a furnace**

This shows that it was a very large amount of smoke. Alternate translation: “like the smoke from a very large fire”  
(See: **Simile (p.1721)**) (See: **Simile (p.1721)**)

## **Genesis 19:29**

### **General Information:**

## **General Information:**

Verse 29 is a summary of this chapter.

### **God called Abraham to mind**

This tells why God rescued Lot. To “call to mind” is a way of saying “remember.” This does not imply that God forgot about Abraham. It means he considered Abraham and had mercy on him. Alternate translation: “God thought about Abraham and had mercy on him” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **out of the midst of the destruction**

“away from the destruction” or “away from danger”

## **Genesis 19:30**

### **Lot went up from Zoar to live in the mountains**

The phrase “went up from” is used because Lot went to a higher elevation in the mountains.

## Genesis 19:31

### The firstborn & the younger

Here “firstborn” and “younger” are nominal adjectives that refer to Lot’s two daughters according to their birth order. Alternate translation: “Lot’s first daughter ... Lot’s last daughter” or “The older daughter ... the younger daughter” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**)

### to lie with us

These words are a euphemism for sexual relations. (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### according to the way of all the world

Here “the world” stands for the people. Alternate translation: “as people everywhere do” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 19:32

### drink wine

It can be made explicit that their goal was to get him drunk. Alternate translation: “drink wine until he gets drunk” or “get drunk with wine” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### we will lie with him

To “lie with” someone is a euphemism for having sexual relations with that person. Alternate translation: “we will have sexual relations with him” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### so that we may extend our father’s line

This speaks about giving Lot descendants as if his family were a line that they are making longer. Alternate translation: “so that we can bear children who will be our father’s descendants” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 19:33

### lay with her father

This is probably a euphemism for sexual activity. Alternate translation: "had sexual relations with her father" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### when she lay down

Possible meanings are (1) these words are literal, a complement to "when she got up," or (2) they are a euphemism for sexual relations. Alternate translation: "when she had sexual relations with him" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## Genesis 19:34

### Let us make him drink wine & father's line

See how you translated these phrases in [Genesis 19:32](#).

#### drink wine

It can be made explicit that their goal was to get him drunk. Alternate translation: "drink wine until he gets drunk" or "get drunk with wine" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

#### so that we may extend our father's line

This speaks about giving Lot descendants as if his family were a line that they are making longer. Alternate translation: "so that we can bear children who will be our father's descendants" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 19:35

### So they made & or when she got up

See how you translated similar phrases in [Genesis 19:33](#).

### lay with him

This is probably a euphemism for sexual activity. Alternate translation: "had sexual relations with him" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### when she lay down

Possible meanings are (1) these words are literal, a complement to "when she got up," or (2) they are a euphemism for sexual relations. See how these words are translated in [Genesis 19:33](#). Alternate translation: "when she had sexual relations with him" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## **Genesis 19:36**

### **were pregnant by their father**

“became pregnant by their father” or “conceived children with their father”

## **Genesis 19:37**

### **He became**

“He is”

### **the Moabites of today**

“the Moab people who are now living”

### **of today**

The word “today” refers to the time when the author of Genesis was living. The author was born and wrote this many years after Lot’s family lived and died.

## **Genesis 19:38**

### **Ben-Ammi**

This is a male name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **the people of Ammon**

“the descendants of Ammon” or “the Ammon people”

## Genesis 20

### Genesis 20 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### “She is my sister”

Abraham was afraid the people of Gerar would see him as a foreigner and upon seeing his beautiful wife, they would try to kill him. This would free Sarah to marry someone else. Apparently, it would have been easy for them to kill a foreigner without punishment. If she was Abraham's sister, they would have shown favor to him. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/favor\]\]](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Irony

Abraham believed that the people of Gerar did not fear Yahweh, but when confronted by Yahweh, the king showed that he feared Yahweh. Instead, it was Abraham who did not show any fear of Yahweh when he sinned. This is irony. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/fear\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#))

## Genesis 20:1

### Shur

This is a desert region on the eastern border of Egypt. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 20:2**

### **sent for Sarah and took her**

“made his men go get Sarah and bring her to him”

## **Genesis 20:3**

### **God came to Abimelech**

“God appeared to Abimelech”

### **Behold**

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

### **you are a dead man**

This is a strong way of saying the king will die. Alternate translation: “you will certainly die soon” or “I will kill you”  
(See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **a man's wife**

“a married woman”

## Genesis 20:4

### Now & her

This word is used here to mark a change from the story to information about Abimelech. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### Abimelech had not come near her

This is a polite way of saying he did not have sex with her. Alternate translation: "Abimelech had not slept with Sarah" or "Abimelech had not touched Sarah" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### even a righteous nation

Here "nation" stands for the people. Abimelech is worried that God will punish not only him, but his people also. Alternate translation: "even a people who are innocent" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 20:5

### Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister?' Even she herself said, 'He is my brother.'

This has quotations within a quotation. They can be stated as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "Did he himself not tell me that she is his sister? Even she herself told me that he is her brother." (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister?'

Abimelech used this rhetorical question to remind God of something God already knew. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Abraham himself told me, 'She is my sister.'" or "Abraham said that she is his sister." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### Did he not himself say & Even she herself

The words "he himself" and "she herself" are used for emphasis to bring attention to Abraham and Sarah and to blame them for what happened. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1713)**) (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1713)**)

### I have done this in the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands

Here "heart" stands for his thoughts or intentions. Also "hands" stands for his actions. Alternate translation: "I have done this with good intentions and actions" or "I have done this with no evil thoughts or actions" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 20:6

### God said to him

“God said to Abimelech”

### in the integrity of your heart you did this

Here “heart” stands for his thoughts or intentions. Alternate translation: “you did this with good intentions” or “you did this without evil intentions” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### to touch her

This is a euphemism for having sex with Sarah. Alternate translation: “to sleep with her” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## **Genesis 20:7**

### **the man's wife**

"Abraham's wife"

### **you will live**

"I will let you live"

### **all who are yours**

"all of your people"

## **Genesis 20:8**

### **He told all these things to them**

“He told them everything that God had told him”

## Genesis 20:9

### What have you done to us?

Abimelech used this rhetorical question to accuse Abraham. Alternate translation: "You have done something bad to us!" or "Look what you have done to us!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### to us

The word "us" here is exclusive and does not include Abraham and Sarah. If your language uses an exclusive form of "we" or "us," use it here. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**)

### How have I sinned against you, that you have brought & sin?

Abimelech used this rhetorical question to remind Abraham that he had not sinned against Abraham. Alternate translation: "I have done nothing against you to cause you to bring ... sin." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin

To cause someone to be guilty of sinning is spoken of as if "sin" was a thing that could be placed on a person. Alternate translation: "that you should make me and my kingdom guilty of such a terrible sin" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### on my kingdom

Here "kingdom" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "on the people of my kingdom" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### You have done to me that which ought not to be done

"You should not have done this to me"

## Genesis 20:10

### What prompted you to do this thing?

“What caused you to do this?” or “Why did you do this?” What Abraham did can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “Why did you tell me that Sarah is your sister?” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 20:11

**Because I thought, 'Surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.'**

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Because I thought that since no one here fears God, someone may kill me so they can take my wife." (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

**no fear of God in this place**

Here "place" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "no one here in Gerar fears God" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

**fear of God**

This means to deeply respect God and show that respect by obeying him.

## **Genesis 20:12**

### **Besides, she is indeed my sister**

“Also, it is true that Sarah is my sister” or “Also, Sarah really is my sister”

### **the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother**

“we have the same father, but we have different mothers”

## Genesis 20:13

### General Information:

## General Information:

Verse 13 is a continuation of Abraham's answer to Abimelech.

### my father's house

Here "house" stands for Abraham's family. Alternate translation: "my father and the rest of my family" or "my father's household" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **I said to her, 'You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, "He is my brother."'**

This has quotations within quotations. They can be stated as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "I said to Sarah that I wanted her to be faithful to me by telling people everywhere we go that I am her brother" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p. 1710)**)

## **Genesis 20:14**

### **Abimelech took**

“Abimelech brought some”

## **Genesis 20:15**

### **Abimelech said**

“Abimelech said to Abraham”

### **Look**

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

### **my land is before you**

This is a way of saying “I make all of my land available to you” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **Settle wherever it pleases you**

“Live wherever you want”

## Genesis 20:16

### a thousand

“1,000” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### It is to cover any offense against you in the eyes of all who are with you

Giving money to prove to others that Sarah is innocent is spoken of as if he is placing a cover over an offense so no one can see it. Alternate translation: “I am giving this to him, so that those who are with you will know that you have done nothing wrong” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### in the eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: “in the opinion” or “in the judgement” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### before everyone, you are completely made right

The passive phrase “made right” can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “everyone will know that you are innocent” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 20:17**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 20:18**

### **completely infertile**

“totally unable to have children”

### **because of Sarah, Abraham’s wife**

The full meaning can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “because Abimelech had taken Abraham’s wife Sarah” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 21

### Genesis 21 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Sarah's anger

After Sarah was able to have her own child, and he survived infancy, she began to get angry with Abraham's other son, Ishmael. He would have been a constant reminder of her own sin. God blessed Ishmael, but he was not able to inherit the promises given to Abraham. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#), [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/promise\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/bless\]\]](#))

#### Abandoning Ishmael

According to the law at this time, Hagar was able to gain her freedom from slavery by abandoning any claim to receive an inheritance. This is why Hagar would have abandoned her son under the tree. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

#### Treaty

The Gentile king, Abimelech, made a covenant or treaty with Abraham. It is possible that he did this because he recognized the power of Abraham's God, but his exact reasons are unknown. (See: **covenant (p.1745)**)

## Genesis 21:1

### Yahweh paid attention to Sarah

Here the phrase “paid attention to” refers to Yahweh helping Sarah have a baby. Alternate translation: “Yahweh helped Sarah” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 21:2**

### **bore a son to Abraham**

“gave birth to Abraham’s son”

### **in his old age**

“when Abraham was very old”

### **at the set time of which God had spoken to him**

“at the exact time that God had told him it would happen”

## **Genesis 21:3**

**Abraham named his son, the one who had been born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac**

“Abraham named his newborn son, the one Sarah gave birth to, Isaac” or “Abraham named their newborn son Isaac”

## **Genesis 21:4**

### **Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old**

“When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him”

#### **eight days**

“8 days” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

#### **had commanded him**

“had commanded Abraham to do”

## **Genesis 21:5**

### **one hundred**

“100” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 21:6

### God has made me laugh

Sarah was laughing because she was surprised and happy. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "God has caused me to laugh joyfully" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### every one who hears

What people would hear can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "everyone who hears about what God has done for me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 21:7

### Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “No one would have ever said to Abraham that Sarah will nurse children” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### nurse children

This is a polite way of referring to breast-feeding babies. Alternate translation: “feed a baby her own milk” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## Genesis 21:8

### The child grew and Isaac was weaned

“Wean” here is a polite way of saying the child was finished with breast feeding. Alternate translation: “Isaac grew, and when he no longer needed his mother’s milk, Abraham had a large feast” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## Genesis 21:9

### the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham

The name of Hagar's son can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "Ishmael, the son of Hagar the Egyptian and Abraham" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### mocking

It can be stated explicitly that he was jeering or laughing at Isaac. Alternate translation: "laughing at Isaac" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 21:10**

### **she said to Abraham**

“Sarah said to Abraham”

### **Drive out**

“send away” or “get rid of”

### **this slave woman and her son**

This refers to Hagar and Ishmael. Sarah probably did not refer to them by name because she was angry with them.

### **with my son, with Isaac**

“with my son Isaac”

## **Genesis 21:11**

### **This thing was very grievous to Abraham**

“Abraham was very unhappy about what Sarah said”

### **because of his son**

“because it was about his son.” It is implied that this means his son, Ishmael. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 21:12**

### **Do not be grieved because of the lad, and because of your servant woman**

“Do not be upset about the boy and your handmaid”

### **Listen to her words in all she says to you about this matter**

“Do everything that Sarah says to you about them”

### **it is through Isaac that your descendants will be named**

The phrase “will be named” means those born through Isaac are the ones God considers to be the descendants that he promised Abraham. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Isaac is the one who will be the forefather of the descendants I promised to give you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1598)**)

## Genesis 21:13

### **I will also make the son of the servant woman into a nation**

The word "nation" means God will give him many descendants so that they become a great nation of people.  
Alternate translation: "I will make the servant woman's son also become the father of a great nation" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 21:14**

### **took bread**

Possible meanings are (1) this refers to food in general or (2) this refers to bread specifically. (See: **Synecdoche (p. 1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **a skin of water**

“a bag of water.” The water container was made out of animal skin.

## **Genesis 21:15**

### **When the water in the waterskin was gone**

“When the water bag was empty” or “When they had drank all of the water”

## **Genesis 21:16**

### **about the distance of a bowshot away**

This refers to the distance that a person could shoot an arrow with a bow. This is about 100 meters.

### **Let me not look upon the death of the child**

The abstract noun “death” can be stated as “die.” Alternate translation: “I do not want to watch the boy die” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### **she lifted up her voice and wept**

Here “voice” stands for the sound of her crying. To “life up her voice” means to cry loudly. Alternate translation: “she cried out loudly and wept” or “she wept loudly” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 21:17**

### **the voice of the lad**

“the boy’s voice.” Here “voice” stands for the sound of the boy crying or speaking. Alternate translation: “the sound of Ishmael” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **the angel of God**

“a messenger from God” or “God’s messenger”

### **out of heaven**

Here “heaven” means the place where God lives.

### **What troubles you**

“What is wrong” or “Why are you crying”

### **the voice of the lad where he is**

Here “voice” stands for the sound of the boy crying or speaking. Alternate translation: “the sound of the boy lying over there” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 21:18**

### **raise up the lad**

“help the boy stand up”

### **I will make him into a great nation**

To make Ishmael into a great nation means God will give him many descendants who will become a great nation.  
Alternate translation: “I will make his descendants become a great nation” or “I will make him become the ancestor of a great nation” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 21:19**

### **God opened her eyes, and she saw**

God making Hagar aware of the well is spoken of as if he literally opened her eyes. Alternate translation: "God caused Hagar to see" or "God showed her" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **the skin**

"the container made of skin" or "the bag"

### **the lad**

"the boy" or "Ishmael"

## **Genesis 21:20**

### **God was with the lad**

Here the phrase “was with” is an idiom that means God helped or blessed the boy. Alternate translation: “God guided the boy” or “God blessed the boy” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **became an archer**

“became very skilled at using a bow and arrows”

## **Genesis 21:21**

**got a wife**

“found a wife”

## Genesis 21:22

### It came about at that time

This phrase marks the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### Phicol

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### captain of his army

“commander of his army”

### his army

The word “his” refers to Abimelech.

### God is with you in all that you do

Here the phrase “is with you” is an idiom that means God helps or blesses Abraham. Alternate translation: “God blesses everything you do” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 21:23

### Now therefore

The word “Now” does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows. Alternate translation: “Therefore” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### swear to me here by God

This is an idiom meaning to make a solemn oath witnessed by a higher authority, in this instance, God. Alternate translation: “promise me with God as your witness” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### that you will not deal falsely with me

“that you will not lie to me”

### will not deal falsely & with my descendants

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “will deal honestly with me and my descendants” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**)

### Show to me & covenant faithfulness that I have shown to you

The two men had made a covenant with each other. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be stated as “faithful” or “loyal.” Alternate translation: “Be as faithful to me and to the land as I have been to you” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### to the land

Here “land” stands for the people. Alternate translation: “to the people of the land” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 21:24

### I swear

This can be stated with the understood information. Alternate translation: "I swear to be as faithful to you and your people as you have been to me" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

## **Genesis 21:25**

### **Abraham also complained to Abimelech**

Possible meanings are (1) Abraham was complaining about what happened or (2) "Abraham also rebuked Abimelech"

### **concerning a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized from him**

"because Abimelech's servants had taken one of Abraham's wells"

### **seized from him**

"taken from Abraham" or "had taken control of"

## **Genesis 21:26**

### **I have not heard of it until today**

“This is the first time I have heard about it”

## Genesis 21:27

### Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech

This is a sign of friendship and that Abraham agrees to make covenant with Abimelech. (See: **Symbolic Action (p. 1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## **Genesis 21:28**

### **Abraham set seven female lambs of the flock by themselves**

“Abraham separated seven female lambs from the flock”

## **Genesis 21:29**

**What is the meaning of these seven female lambs that you have set by themselves?**

“Why have you separated these seven lambs from the flock?”

## **Genesis 21:30**

### **you will receive**

“you will take”

### **from my hand**

Here “hand” stands for Abraham. Alternate translation: “from me” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **it may be a witness**

The word “it” refers to the gift of seven lambs.

### **so that it may be a witness for me**

The abstract noun “witness” can be stated as “to prove.” Alternate translation: “to prove to everyone” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

## **Genesis 21:31**

### **he called that place**

“Abraham called that place”

### **Beersheba**

Translators may add a footnote saying “Beersheba can mean either “well of the oath” or “well of seven.”

### **they both**

“Abraham and Abimelech”

## Genesis 21:32

### Phicol

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 21:22](#).

## **Genesis 21:33**

### **a tamarisk tree**

This is an evergreen tree that can grow in the desert. It can be stated more generally. Alternate translation: "a tree"  
(See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1732)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1732)**)

### **the eternal God**

"the God who lives forever"

## **Genesis 21:34**

**many days**

“for a long time”

## Genesis 22

### Genesis 22 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Sacrificing his son

Although Isaac was not Abraham's only son, he was the son who was to inherit Abraham's promised blessings. It is possible this parallels God's actual sacrifice of his son, Jesus, for the sins of man. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/promise\]\]](#) and **sin, sinful, sinner, sinning (p.1776)**)

#### Covenant affirmation

After important events, it is common for Scripture to affirm the tenants of a covenant. This serves as a reminder of the covenant and affirms it. (See: **covenant (p.1745)**)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### God tests Abraham

Extra care should be taken when translating "testing." It is best to avoid using the same word used for "tempting" even though they overlap in meaning. This is because Scripture also says God does not tempt anyone. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/test\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/tempt\]\]](#) and James 2:13)

## Genesis 22:1

### It came about

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### after these things

This phrase refers to the events in chapter 21.

### God tested Abraham

It is implied that God tests Abraham to learn if Abraham will be faithful to him. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "God tested Abraham's faithfulness" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Here I am

"Yes, I am listening" or "Yes, what is it?"

## Genesis 22:2

### **your only son**

It is implied that God knows that Abraham has another son, Ishmael. This emphasizes that Isaac is the son that God promised to give Abraham. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “your only son whom I have promised” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **whom you love**

This emphasizes Abraham’s love for his son, Isaac.

### **the land of Moriah**

“the land called Moriah” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 22:3**

### **saddled his donkey**

“loaded his donkey” or “put on his donkey what he needed for the journey”

### **young men**

“servants”

### **set out on his journey**

“started his journey” or “started traveling”

## **Genesis 22:4**

### **On the third day**

The word "third" is the ordinal number for three. Alternate translation: "After traveling for three days" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1693)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1693)**)

### **saw the place afar off**

"saw far away the place that God had spoken of"

## **Genesis 22:5**

### **young men**

“servants”

### **We will worship**

The word “we” refers only to Abraham and Isaac, but not to the young men. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p. 1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

### **come again to you**

“return to you”

## **Genesis 22:6**

### **put it on Isaac his son**

“had Isaac, his son, carry it”

### **He took in his own hand**

Here “his own hand” emphasizes that Abraham himself carried these things. Alternate translation: “Abraham himself carried” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **the fire**

Here “fire” stands for a pan containing burning coals or a torch or lamp. Alternate translation: “something for starting a fire” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **they went both of them together**

“they left together” or “the two of them went together”

## **Genesis 22:7**

### **My father**

This is a loving way for a son to speak to his father.

### **Here I am**

“Yes, I am listening” or “Yes, what is it?” See how you translated this in [Genesis 22:1](#).

### **my son**

This is a loving way for a father to speak to his son.

### **the fire**

Here “fire” stands for a pan containing burning coals or a torch or lamp. See how you translated this in [Genesis 22:6](#). (See: [Synecdoche \(p.1728\)](#)) (See: [Synecdoche \(p.1728\)](#))

### **the lamb for the burnt offering**

“the lamb that you will give as a burnt offering”

## Genesis 22:8

### God himself

Here “himself” emphasizes that it is God who will provide the lamb. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1713)**) (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1713)**)

### will provide

“will give us”

## **Genesis 22:9**

### **When they came to the place**

“When Abraham and Isaac arrived at the place”

### **he bound**

“he tied up”

### **on the altar, on top of the wood**

“on top of the wood that was on the altar”

## **Genesis 22:10**

**reached out with his hand and took up the knife**

“picked up the knife”

## **Genesis 22:11**

### **the angel of Yahweh**

Possible meanings are (1) Yahweh made himself look like an angel or (2) this was one of Yahweh's angels or (3) this was a special messenger from God (some scholars think it was Jesus). Since the phrase is not well understood, it is best to simply translate it as "the angel of Yahweh" using the normal word that you use for "angel." See the note about this phrase in [Genesis 16:7](#).

### **from heaven**

This refers to the place where God lives.

### **Here I am**

"Yes, I am listening" or "Yes, what is it?" See how you translated this in [Genesis 22:1](#).

## Genesis 22:12

### Do not lay your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to harm him

The phrase “Do not lay your hand upon” is a way of saying “do not harm.” God said basically the same thing twice to emphasize that Abraham should not hurt Isaac. Alternate translation: “Do not hurt the boy in any way” (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-parallelism\]\]](#)) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### now I know & from me

The words “I” and “me” refer to Yahweh. When translating what is in the quote, do it as the angel of Yahweh did and use the words “I” and “me” when referring to Yahweh.

### you fear God

This refers to deeply respecting God and showing that respect by obeying him.

### seeing that

“because I see that”

### you have not withheld your son & from me

“you have not held back your son ... from me.” This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “you were willing to offer your son ... to me” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**)

### your son, your only son

It is implied that God knows that Abraham has another son, Ishmael. This emphasizes that Isaac is the son that God promised to give Abraham. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 22:2](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 22:13**

### **behold**

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

### **was a ram caught in the bushes by his horns**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “was a ram whose horns were stuck in the bushes” or “was a ram stuck in the bushes” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **went and took the ram**

“Abraham went over to the ram and took it”

## **Genesis 22:14**

### **will provide & will be provided**

Use the same word for “provide” as you used in [Genesis 22:8](#).

### **to this day**

“even now.” This means even to the time that the author was writing this book.

### **it will be provided**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he will provide” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 22:15

### The angel of Yahweh

Possible meanings are (1) Yahweh made himself look like an angel or (2) this was one of Yahweh's angels or (3) this was a special messenger from God (some scholars think it was Jesus). Since the phrase is not well understood, it is best to simply translate it as "The angel of Yahweh" using the normal word that you use for "angel." See the note about this phrase in [Genesis 16:7](#).

### a second time

The word "second" is the ordinal number for two. Alternate translation: "again" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1693)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1693)**)

### from heaven

Here the word "heaven" refers to the place where God lives.

## Genesis 22:16

### said—this is Yahweh's declaration

“spoke this message from Yahweh” or “declared these words of Yahweh.” This is a formal way of saying that the words that follow come directly from Yahweh.

### by myself I have sworn

“I have promised and I am my witness.” To swear means to use the name of something or someone as the basis or power on which the oath is made. There is nothing more powerful for Yahweh to swear by than himself.

### you have done this thing

“you obeyed me”

### have not withheld your son

“have not kept back your son.” This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “were willing to offer your son to me” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**)

### your son, your only son

It is implied that God knows that Abraham has another son, Ishmael. This emphasizes that Isaac is the son that God promised to give Abraham. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 22:2](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 22:17

### surely bless

“certainly bless”

### I will greatly multiply your descendants

“I will cause your descendants to increase again and again” or “I will cause your descendants to be very many”

### as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore

God compared Abraham's descendants to the stars and the sand. Just as people cannot count the huge number of stars or the grains of sand, so there would be so many of Abraham's descendants that people would not be able to count them. Alternate translation: “beyond what you can count” (See: **Simile (p.1721)**) (See: **Simile (p.1721)**)

### as the stars of the heavens

Here the word “heavens” refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars.

### will possess the gate of their enemies

Here “gate” represents the whole city. To “possess the gate of their enemies” means destroying their enemies. Alternate translation: “will completely triumph over their enemies” (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#)) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 22:18

### General Information:

## General Information:

The angel of Yahweh continues speaking to Abraham.

### **all the nations of the earth will be blessed**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I, the Lord, will bless all the people living everywhere" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **nations of the earth**

Here "nations" stands for the people of the nations. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **you have obeyed my voice**

Here "voice" stands for what God said. Alternate translation: "you have obeyed what I said" or "you have obeyed me" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 22:19

### Abraham returned

Only Abraham was named because he was the father, but it was implied that his son went with him. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Abraham and his son went back" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### young men

"servants"

### they departed

"they left that place"

### he lived at Beersheba

Only Abraham was mentioned because he was the leader of his family and servants, but it was implied that they were with him. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Abraham and his people stayed in Beersheba" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 22:20

### It came about after these things

“After these events.” The phrase “these things” refers to the events of Genesis 22:1-19. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### Abraham was told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “someone told Abraham” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### Milkah has borne children, as well

“Milkah has also borne children”

### Milkah

This is the name of a woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 22:21**

### **They were Uz his firstborn, Buz his brother**

“The name of his firstborn was Uz, and the names of the rest of his children were Buz his brother”

### **Uz & Buz & Kemuel & Aram**

These are all names of men. Translate this so that it is clear that all of these except Aram are the sons of Nahor and Milkah. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 22:22**

### **Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel**

These are all names of men. Translate this so that it is clear that all of these are the sons of Nahor and Milkah. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 22:23**

### **Bethuel became the father of Rebekah**

“Later Bethel became the father of Rebekah”

### **These were the eight children that Milkah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother**

“These were the eight children of Milkah and Nahor, Abraham’s brother.” This refers to the children that were listed in [Genesis 22:21-22](#).

## **Genesis 22:24**

### **His concubine**

“Nahor’s concubine”

### **Reumah**

This is the name of a woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **also bore**

“also gave birth to”

### **Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah**

These are all names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 23

### Genesis 23 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Abraham's character

Abraham's interaction with the people show that he was greatly respected. This would have been unusual for a foreigner and indicates that Abraham was a man of great character. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

#### Burial

Burial was a common practice when Abraham lived, but only the wealthy were able to bury their dead relatives in this way.

## **Genesis 23:1**

### **Sarah lived a hundred and twenty-seven years**

“Sarah lived 127 years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **These were the years of the life of Sarah**

Some translations do not include this sentence. (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

## **Genesis 23:2**

### **Kiriath Arba**

This is the name of a city. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Abraham mourned and wept for Sarah**

“Abraham was very sad and cried because Sarah died”

## **Genesis 23:3**

### **rose up and went from his dead wife**

“got up and left his wife's body”

### **the sons of Heth**

Here “sons” stands for those who descended from Heth. Alternate translation: “the descendants of Heth” or “the Hittites” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 23:4**

### **among you**

This idea may be expressed in terms of location. "in your country" or "here"

### **Please grant me a property**

"Sell me some land" or "Allow me to buy a piece of land"

### **my dead**

The nominal adjective "dead" can be stated as an adjective or a verb. Alternate translation: "my dead wife" or "my wife who has died" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**)

## Genesis 23:5

### The sons of Heth

Here “sons” stands for those who descended from Heth. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:3](#). Alternate translation: “The descendants of Heth” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1651)**)

## **Genesis 23:6**

### **my master**

This phrase is used to show respect to Abraham.

### **a prince of God**

This is an idiom. This probably means “a powerful man” or “a mighty leader.” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **your dead**

The nominal adjective “dead” can be stated as a verb or simply as “wife.” Alternate translation: “your wife who has died” or “your wife” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**)

### **the choicest of our tombs**

“the best of our burial places”

### **refuse you his tomb**

“withhold his burial place from you” or “refuse to give to you his tomb”

## Genesis 23:7

### **bowed down**

This means to bend over or kneel down very low to humbly express respect and honor toward someone. (See: **Symbolic Language (p.1726)**) (See: **Symbolic Language (p.1726)**)

### **to the people of the land, to the sons of Heth**

“to the sons of Heth who lived in the area”

### **the sons of Heth**

Here “sons” stands for those who descended from Heth. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:3](#). Alternate translation: “the descendants of Heth” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 23:8

### my dead

The nominal adjective “dead” can be stated as a verb or simply as “wife.” Alternate translation: “my wife who has died” or “my wife” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**)

### Ephron & Zohar

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 23:9**

### **the cave of Machpelah, which he owns, which is at the end of his field**

“his cave that is at the end of his field in Machpelah”

### **the cave of Machpelah**

“the cave in Machpela.” Machpela was the name of an area or region. Ephron owned a field in Machpela and the cave that was in the field. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **which he owns**

This tells something about the cave. Ephron owned the cave. (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**)

### **which is at the end of his field**

This also tells something about the cave. The cave was at the end of Ephron’s field. (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**)

### **sell it to me publicly**

“sell it to me in front of you all” or “sell it to me in your presence”

### **as a property**

“as a piece of land that I may own and use”

## Genesis 23:10

### Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth

Here “Now” is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Ephron. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### Ephron

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:8](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### the sons of Heth

Here “sons” stands for those who descended from Heth. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:3](#). Alternate translation: “the descendants of Heth” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### in the hearing of the sons of Heth

The abstract noun “the hearing” can be stated as “hear” or “listening.” Alternate translation: “so that all the sons of Heth could hear him” or “while all the sons of Heth were listening” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### all those who had come into the gate of his city

This tells which sons of Heth were listening. Alternate translation: “all those who had gathered at the gate of his city” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**)

### gate of his city

The city gate was where the leaders of the city would meet to make important decisions.

### his city

“the city where he lived.” This phrase shows that Ephron belonged to that city. It does not mean that he owned it.

## **Genesis 23:11**

### **my master**

This phrase is used to show respect to Abraham.

### **in the presence of the sons of my people**

Here “presence” stands for the people serving as witnesses. Alternate translation: “with my fellow countrymen as my witnesses” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **sons of my people**

This means “my fellow countrymen” or “my fellow Hittites”

### **my people**

This phrase shows that Ephron was part of that group of people. It does not mean that he was their leader.

### **I give it to you to bury your dead**

“I give it to you. Bury your dead”

### **your dead**

The nominal adjective “dead” can be stated as a verb or simply as “wife.” Alternate translation: “your wife who has died” or “your wife” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**)

## **Genesis 23:12**

### **bowed himself down**

This means to bend over or kneel down very low to humbly express respect and honor toward someone. (See: **Symbolic Language (p.1726)**) (See: **Symbolic Language (p.1726)**)

### **people of the land**

“people who lived in that area”

## Genesis 23:13

### in the hearing of the people of the land

The abstract noun “the hearing” can be stated as “hear” or “listening” Alternate translation: “so that the people who lived in the area could hear” or “while the people who lived in the area were listening” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### But if you are willing

The word “but” shows a contrast. Ephron wanted to give the field to Abraham; Abraham wanted to pay for it. Alternate translation: “No, but if you are willing” or “No, but if you agree with this”

### I will pay for the field

“I will give you money for the field”

### my dead

The nominal adjective “dead” can be stated as a verb or simply as “wife.” Alternate translation: “my wife who has died” or “my wife” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**)

## Genesis 23:14

### Ephron

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:8](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)  
(See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 23:15

### Please, my master, listen to me

“Hear me, my master” or “Listen to me, kind sir”

### my master

This phrase is used to show respect to Abraham.

### A piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and you?

Ephron meant that since he and Abraham were both so wealthy, 400 pieces of silver was a small amount. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “The piece of land is worth only four hundred shekels of silver. For you and me, that is nothing.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### four hundred shekels of silver

This is about 4.5 kilograms of silver. (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1615)**) (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1615)**)

### four hundred

“400” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### Bury your dead

The nominal adjective “dead” can be stated as a verb or simply as “wife.” Alternate translation: “Go bury your wife who has died” or “Go bury your wife” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1686)**)

## Genesis 23:16

### Abraham weighed out to Ephron the amount of silver

“Abraham weighed the silver and gave Ephron the amount” or “Abraham counted out to Ephron the amount of silver”

### the amount of silver that he had spoken

“the amount of silver that Ephron had said”

### in the hearing of the sons of Heth

The abstract noun “the hearing” can be stated as “hear” or “listening.” Alternate translation: “so that all the sons of Heth could hear him” or “while all the sons of Heth were listening” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### the sons of Heth

Here “sons” stands for those who descended from Heth. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:3](#). Alternate translation: “the descendants of Heth” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### according to the standard measurement of the merchants

“using the standard measurement of weight that merchants used.” This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: “He weighed the silver the same way that the merchants used to weigh it”

## Genesis 23:17

### Machpelah

Machpela was the name of an area or region. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:9](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Mamre

This was another name for the city of Hebron. It may have been named after Mamre, the friend of Abraham who lived there. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### that is, the field, the cave that was in it, and all the trees

This phrase explains what the author meant when he wrote “the field of Ephron.” It was not only the field, but also the cave and trees in the field.

### passed

“became property that belonged”

## Genesis 23:18

### to Abraham by purchase

These words complete the idea that begins with the word “passed” in verse 17. “became Abraham’s possession when he purchased it” or “belonged to Abraham after he bought it”

### in the presence of the sons of Heth

Here “presence” stands for the people serving as witnesses. Alternate translation: “with the people of Heth watching as witnesses” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### the sons of Heth

Here “sons” stands for those who descended from Heth. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:3](#). Alternate translation: “the descendants of Heth” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### all those who had come into the gate of his city

This tells which sons of Heth saw Abraham buy the property. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:10](#). (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.1623)**)

### gate of his city

The city gate was where the leaders of the city would meet to make important decisions.

### his city

“the city where he lived.” This phrase shows that Ephron belonged to that city. It does not mean that he owned it.

## **Genesis 23:19**

### **After this**

“After he bought the field”

### **the cave of the field**

“the cave in the field”

### **the field of Machpelah**

“the field in Machpelah”

### **that is, Hebron**

Possible meanings are (1) Mamre was another name for Hebron or (2) Hebron was formerly called Mamre or (3) Mamre was very near the larger city of Hebron, so people usually called it Hebron.

## Genesis 23:20

### passed to Abraham as a property for a burial place from the sons of Heth

“became Abraham’s property for a burial ground when he bought it from the sons of Heth”

### the sons of Heth

Here “sons” stands for those who descended from Heth. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:3](#). Alternate translation: “the descendants of Heth” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1651)**)

## Genesis 24

### Genesis 24 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 24:60.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Intermarriage

Abraham would not allow his son to marry anyone from the people of Canaan. This is because it would cause his son to worship other gods. Intermarriage and worshiping false gods are things that frequently caused Abraham's descendants to struggle. (See: **god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry (p.1758)**)

#### Abraham's wealth

There are many instances recorded in this chapter which highlight Abraham's significant wealth. He owned more than 10 camels and had large amounts of gold.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### “Put your hand under my thigh”

Many scholars believe this is a euphemism. Putting one's hand on a man's genitals was a way to make an important oath. It represented power and progeny. (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## **Genesis 24:1**

### **Now**

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here the author starts to tell a new part of the story.

## Genesis 24:2

### Put your hand under my thigh

Abraham was about to ask the servant to swear to do something. Putting his hand under Abraham's thigh would show that he would certainly do what he would swear to do. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## Genesis 24:3

### I will make you swear

This can be expressed as a command. Alternate translation: “swear” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**)

### swear by Yahweh

The term “swear by” means to use the name of something or someone as the basis or power on which the oath is made. “promise me with Yahweh as your witness”

### the God of heaven and the God of the earth

“the God of heaven and earth.” The words “heaven” and “earth” are used together to mean every thing that God created. Alternate translation: “the God of everything in heaven and earth” (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

### heaven

This refers to the place where God lives.

### from the daughters of the Canaanites

“from the Canaanite women” or “from the Canaanites.” This refers to Canaanite females.

### among whom I make my home

“among whom I live.” Here, “I” stands for Abraham and all of his family and servants. Alternate translation: “among whom we live” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 24:4

### But you will go

This can be stated as a command. Alternate translation: “Swear that you will go” or “But go” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1665)**)

### my relatives

“my family”

## **Genesis 24:5**

### **What if**

“What should I do if”

### **will not be willing to follow me**

“will not follow me” or “refuses to come back with me”

### **Must I take your son back to the land from which you came**

“Should I take you son to live in the land from which you came”

## **Genesis 24:6**

### **Make sure that you do not take my son back there**

The phrase “Make sure” emphasizes the command that follows. “Be careful not to take my son back there” or “You definitely must not take my son there”

## Genesis 24:7

### who took me from my father's house

Here "house" stands for the people in his family. Alternate translation: "who took me from my father and the rest of my family" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### promised me with a solemn oath

"swore an oath to me"

### saying, 'To your offspring I will give this land,'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "saying that he would give this land to my offspring" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### he will send his angel

The words "he" and "his" refer to Yahweh.

## Genesis 24:8

### General Information:

## General Information:

Verse 8 is a continuation of the instructions Abraham gave his servant.

### **But if the woman is not willing to follow you**

“But if the woman refuses to come with you.” Abraham was answering the servant’s question from [Genesis 24:5](#). (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**)

### **you will be free from this oath of mine**

“you will be released from the oath you made to me.” Not having to fulfill an oath is spoken of as if the person is free from an object to which he was bound. Alternate translation: “you will not have to do what you swore to me that you would do” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 24:9**

### **put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master**

This was to show that he would certainly do what he was swearing to do. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

### **swore to him**

“made an oath to him”

### **concerning this matter**

“concerning Abraham’s request” or “that he would do what Abraham said”

## **Genesis 24:10**

### **departed. He also took**

The sentence starting with “He also took” gives additional information about what the servant took with him on the journey. He gathered them before he departed.

### **He also took with him all kinds of gifts from his master**

This means he also took many good things that his master wanted to give to the woman’s family.

### **departed and went**

“set out and went” or “he left and went”

### **the city of Nahor**

Possible meanings are (1) “the city where Nahor lived” or (2) “the city called Nahor.” If you can translate it without choosing a meaning, do so. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 24:11**

### **He made the camels kneel down**

Camels are tall animals with long legs. He made them bend their legs and lower their bodies to the ground. "He made the camels lie down"

### **well of water**

"water well" or "well"

### **draw water**

"get water"

## Genesis 24:12

### Then he said

"Then the servant said"

### **grant me success today and show covenant faithfulness to my master Abraham**

You can state this with the connecting word "by." This makes clear how the servant wants God to show covenant faithfulness. Alternate translation: "Show covenant faithfulness to my master Abraham by granting me success today" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1617)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1617)**)

### **grant me success**

"give me success." The servant wanted to find a good wife for Abraham's son. The abstract noun "success" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "help me to succeed" or "make me able to do what I have come here to do" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### **show covenant faithfulness to my master Abraham**

The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as "faithful." Alternate translation: "be faithful to the covenant you have with my master Abraham" or "be faithful to my master Abraham" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

## **Genesis 24:13**

### **Look, here I am standing**

“You can see me standing here”

### **the spring of water**

“the spring” or “the well”

### **the daughters of the men of the city**

“the young women of the city”

## Genesis 24:14

### Let it happen like this

“Let it happen this way” or “Make this happen”

### When I say to a young woman, ‘Please lower your pitcher so that I may drink,’

This is a quotation within a quotation. This can be expressed with an indirect quote. Alternate translation: “When I ask a young woman to let me have a drink of water from her jar” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### Please lower your pitcher

The women carried the pitchers on their shoulder. She would have to lower it to give the man a drink.

### pitcher

a medium-size jar made of clay used for holding and pouring liquids

### that you have shown covenant faithfulness to my master

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be stated as “been faithful.” Alternate translation: “that you have been faithful to the covenant you have with my master Abraham” or “you have been faithful to my master Abraham” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

## Genesis 24:15

### It came about that

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

### behold

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

### pitcher

This is a medium-size jar made of clay used for holding and pouring liquids. See how you translated this in [Genesis 24:14](#).

### Rebekah was born to Bethuel son of Milkah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother

“Rebekah’s father was Bethuel. Bethuel’s parents were Milkah and Nahor. Nahor was Abraham’s brother”

### Bethuel

Bethuel was Rebekah’s father. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 22:22](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Nahor

This is the name of a man. See how you translated his name in [Genesis 11:22](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Milkah

Milkah was Nahor’s wife and Bethuel’s mother. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 11:29](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 24:16**

### **She went down to the spring & and came up**

The spring was somewhere lower in elevation than where the servant was standing.

## **Genesis 24:17**

### **to meet her**

“to meet the young woman”

### **a little drink of water**

“a little water”

### **pitcher**

This is a medium-size jar made of clay used for holding and pouring liquids. See how you translated this in [Genesis 24:14](#).

## **Genesis 24:18**

### **my master**

“sir.” Here the woman uses this term of respect to refer to the man, though she is not his slave.

### **she quickly let down her pitcher on her hand**

“she quickly lowered her pitcher.” She was carrying the pitcher on her shoulder. She had to lower it to get water for the servant.

## **Genesis 24:19**

### **I will draw water**

"I will get water"

## **Genesis 24:20**

### **So she hurried and emptied her pitcher**

“So she quickly emptied her pitcher”

### **the trough**

“the animals’ water trough.” A trough is a long open container for holding water for animals to drink.

## Genesis 24:21

### The man

"The servant"

### watched her

"watched Rebekah" or "watched the young woman"

### to see

Learning something is often spoken of as if it were seeing. Alternate translation: "to know" or "to determine" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### had prospered his journey

"had fulfilled the purpose of his journey" or "had made his journey successful." You can make explicit what specifically the servant was trying to determine. Alternate translation: "was showing him the woman who would become Isaac's wife" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### or not

You can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: "or not prospered his journey" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

## **Genesis 24:22**

### **a gold nose ring weighing half a shekel**

“a gold nose ring that weighed six grams.” The weight indicates the value of the ring. Alternate translation: “an expensive gold nose ring” (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1615)**) (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1615)**)

### **two gold bracelets for her arms weighing ten shekels**

“two gold bracelets for her arms that weighed 110 grams.” The weight shows their size and value. Alternate translation: “two large gold bracelets for her arms” (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1615)**) (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1615)**)

## **Genesis 24:23**

### **Whose daughter are you**

“Who is your father”

### **is there room in your father’s house**

“is there a place in your father’s house”

### **for us**

Apparently other men went on this journey with Abraham’s servant. Here “us” refers to the servant and those traveling with him, but not to those to whom he was speaking. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

### **to spend the night**

“to stay tonight” or “to stay for the night”

## **Genesis 24:24**

### **She said**

“Rebekah said” or “the young woman said”

### **to him**

“to the servant”

### **I am the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, whom she bore to Nahor**

“Bethuel is my father, and his parents are Milkah and Nahor”

## **Genesis 24:25**

### **We have plenty of both straw and feed**

It is understood that the straw and feed are for the camels. You can make clear this understood information.  
Alternate translation: "We have plenty of straw and feed for the camels" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

### **for you to spend the night**

"for you to stay tonight" or "where you can stay for the night"

### **for you**

Here "you" refers to the servant and those traveling with him. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

## **Genesis 24:26**

### **the man**

“the servant”

### **bowed down**

This is a sign of humility before God. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## **Genesis 24:27**

### **has not forsaken his covenant faithfulness and his trustworthiness toward my master**

“has not stopped showing his covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness to my master.” The abstract nouns “faithfulness” and “trustworthiness” can be stated as “to be faithful and trustworthy.” Alternate translation: “has not stopped being faithful to his covenant and trustworthy toward my master” or “has not stopped being faithful and trustworthy to my master” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### **has not forsaken**

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “continues to show” (See: **Litotes (p.1674)**) (See: **Litotes (p.1674)**)

### **my master’s relatives**

“my master’s family” or “my master’s clan”

## **Genesis 24:28**

### **ran and told her mother's household**

Here "household" stands for all the people living in her mother's house. Alternate translation: "ran to the house and told her mother and everyone there" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **all of these things**

"everything that had just happened"

## Genesis 24:29

### Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here the author tells background information about Rebekah. The author introduces her brother, Laban, to the story. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/writing-background\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/writing-participants\]\]](#)) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

## **Genesis 24:30**

### **When he had seen the nose ring & and when he had heard the words of Rebekah his sister**

These things happened before he ran out to the man. This tells why Laban ran out to the man. (See: **Order of Events (p.1691)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.1691)**)

### **when he had heard the words of Rebekah his sister, “This is what the man said to me,”**

This can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “when he had heard his sister Rebekah tell what the man had said to her” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1621)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1621)**)

### **behold, he**

The word “behold” here adds emphasis to what follows. “it was just as she had said: he”

## **Genesis 24:31**

### **Come, you**

“Come in, you” or “Enter, you”

### **you blessed of Yahweh**

“you whom Yahweh has blessed”

### **you**

Here the word “you” refers to Abraham’s servant. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### **Why are you standing outside?**

Laban used this question to invite Abraham’s servant into his house. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You do not need to stay outside.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## **Genesis 24:32**

### **So the man came to the house**

The word “came” can be translated as “went.” (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

### **he unloaded the camels**

It is not clear who did this work. This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Laban’s servants unloaded the camels” or “the camels were unloaded” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **The camels were given straw and feed, and water was provided**

This does not say who did the work. If you state this in active form use “Laban’s servants” as the subject. Alternate translation: “Laban’s servants gave straw and feed to the camels, and they provided water” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **to wash his feet & him**

“for Abraham’s servant and the men who were with him to wash their feet”

## **Genesis 24:33**

### **They set**

Here, the word “they” refers to Laban’s family members or to the household servants.

### **set food before him**

“gave food to the servant”

### **said what I have to say**

“spoken my words” or “told you why I am here”

## **Genesis 24:34**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 24:35**

### **he has become great**

Here the word "he" refers to Abraham.

### **become great**

"become very wealthy"

### **He has given**

The word "he" refers to Yahweh.

## Genesis 24:36

### General Information:

### General Information:

Abraham's servant continues speaking to Rebekah's family.

#### **bore a son to my master**

"gave birth to a son"

#### **he has given & to him**

"my master has given ... to his son"

## **Genesis 24:37**

### **My master made me swear, saying**

“My master made me swear that I would do what he told me to do. He said”

### **from the daughters of the Canaanites**

This refers to Canaanite females. Alternate translation: “from the Canaanite women” or “from the Canaanites”

### **in whose land I make my home**

“among whom I live.” Here, “I” stands for Abraham and all of his family and servants. Alternate translation: “among whom we live” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 24:38**

### **to my relatives**

“to my own clan”

## **Genesis 24:39**

### **General Information:**

## **General Information:**

Abraham's servant continues speaking to Rebekah's family.

### **Perhaps the woman will not follow me.**

This is something that could possibly happen. Alternate translation: "What if the woman will not come back with me?" or "What should I do if the woman will not come back with me?" (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**)  
(See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**)

## **Genesis 24:40**

### **before whom I walk**

Serving Yahweh is spoken of as if Abraham were walking in Yahweh's presence. Alternate translation: "whom I serve" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **he will prosper your way**

"he will make your journey successful"

### **family line**

"family"

## Genesis 24:41

### **But you will be free from my oath if you come to my relatives and they will not give her to you. Then you will be free from my oath**

This is a hypothetical situation that Abraham did not think was likely to happen. Possible meanings are (1) "There is only one way for you to be free from my oath: if you come to my relatives and they will not give her to you, then you will be free from my oath" or, (2) building on verse 40, "If you go to my father's family and ask for a girl, you will have done what I told you to do. If they will not give her to you, then you will be free from the oath you swore to me." (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**)

### **you will be free from my oath**

"you will be released from the oath you made to me." Not having to fulfill an oath is spoken of as if the person is free from an object to which he was bound. Alternate translation: "you will not have to do what you swore to me that you would do" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **if you come to my relatives**

Languages use the words come and go differently. Alternate translation: "if you arrive at my relatives' home" or "if you go to my relatives" (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

## **Genesis 24:42**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

Abraham's servant continues speaking to Rebekah's family.

### **the spring**

"the well"

## **Genesis 24:43**

### **let the young woman who comes & the woman to whom I say**

The servant goes back to stating his request. These are the first two things he has to say about the woman whom he hopes will come.

### **to draw water**

“to get water”

### **pitcher**

This is a medium-size jar made of clay used for holding and pouring liquids. See how you translated this in [Genesis 24:14](#).

## **Genesis 24:44**

### **the woman who says to me, “Drink & camels”**

The thought that begins with the words “let the young woman who comes” in verse 43 ends here. This is the third of the three things the servant has to say about the woman whom he hopes will come.

### **let her be the woman**

The servant finishes his request.

## Genesis 24:45

### General Information:

## General Information:

Abraham's servant continues speaking to Rebekah's family.

### speaking in my heart

To pray silently in one's mind is spoken of as if he were speaking in his heart. The word "heart" refers to his thoughts and his mind. Alternate translation: "praying" or "praying quietly" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#)) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### behold, Rebekah came

"suddenly Rebekah came" or "I was surprised because I saw Rebekah coming"

### pitcher

This is a medium-size jar made of clay used for holding and pouring liquids. See how you translated this in [Genesis 24:14](#).

### she went down to the spring

The phrase "went down" is used because the spring was somewhere lower than where the servant was standing.

### spring

opening in the ground from which fresh water comes

## **Genesis 24:46**

### **watered the camels**

“gave water to the camels”

## **Genesis 24:47**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

Abraham's servant continues speaking to Rebekah's family.

### **The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milkah bore to him**

"My father is Bethuel. His parents are Nahor and Milkah"

### **ring & bracelets**

In this story, all of these items were made of gold. See how you translated these in [Genesis 24:22](#).

## **Genesis 24:48**

### **I bowed down**

This is a sign of humility before God. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

### **led me by the right way**

“brought me here”

### **who had led me**

The connecting word “because” can be used to show this is why the servant worshiped God. Alternate translation: “because Yahweh led me” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1617)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1617)**)

### **my master’s relative**

This refers to Bethuel, the son of Abraham’s brother Nahor.

## Genesis 24:49

### General Information:

## General Information:

Abraham's servant continues speaking to Rebekah's family.

### Now therefore

"Now." Here "Now" does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

### if you are prepared to show covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness to my master, tell me

How they could show the covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "tell me if you will be faithful and trustworthy to my master by giving Rebekah to be his son's wife" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### you

The word "you" refers to Laban and Bethuel. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### faithfulness and trustworthiness

These abstract nouns can be stated as "faithful and trustworthy." (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### But if not

The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "But if you are not prepared to treat my master with family faithfulness and trustworthiness" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

### so that I may turn to the right hand or to the left

Possible meanings are (1) deciding what to do is spoken of as if the person will physically turn one direction or another. Alternate translation: "so that I will know what do" or (2) the servant wants to know if he needs to travel somewhere else. Alternate translation: "so that I may continue on my journey" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 24:50**

### **Bethuel**

This was the father of Laban and Rebekah.

### **The thing has come from Yahweh**

“Yahweh has caused all of this to happen”

### **we cannot speak to you either bad or good**

They are saying they do not have the authority to decide whether what God has done is good or bad. Alternate translation: “we dare not judge what Yahweh is doing” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 24:51**

### **Look, Rebekah is**

“You can see Rebekah here”

### **Rebekah is before you**

“Here is Rebekah”

## **Genesis 24:52**

### **their words**

“what Laban and Bethuel said”

### **he bowed himself down**

Bowing down before God is an expression of worship to him. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## **Genesis 24:53**

### **articles of silver and articles of gold**

“silver and gold items” or “things made of silver and gold”

### **precious gifts**

“expensive gifts” or “valuable gifts”

## **Genesis 24:54**

**he and the men who were with him**

“Abraham’s servant and his men”

**stayed there overnight**

“slept there that night”

**arose in the morning**

“got up the next morning”

**Send me away**

“Let me leave and return”

## **Genesis 24:55**

**a few more days, at least ten**

“at least ten more days”

**After that**

“Then”

## **Genesis 24:56**

### **he said**

“Abraham’s servant said”

### **to them**

“to Rebekah’s brother and mother”

### **Do not hinder me**

“Do not delay me” or “Do not make me wait”

### **Yahweh has prospered my way**

Here “way” stands for a journey. Alternate translation: “Yahweh has caused me to succeed in the purpose my journey” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **Send me on my way**

“Allow me to leave”

## **Genesis 24:57**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 24:58**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 24:59**

### **So they sent their sister Rebekah**

“So the family sent Rebekah”

#### **their sister**

Rebekah was Laban’s sister. Alternate translation: “their relative” or “Laban’s sister”

#### **her female servant**

This refers to the female servant who had fed Rebekah when she was a baby, cared for her when she was a child, and still served her.

## **Genesis 24:60**

### **Our sister**

Rebekah was not the sister to everyone in her family. But they called her this to show that they loved her. Alternate translation: "Our dear Rebekah"

### **may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands**

Here "mother" stands for ancestor. Alternate translation: "may you be the ancestor of millions of people" or "may you have very many descendants"

### **thousands of ten thousands**

This means a very large number or an uncountable number. (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them**

Armies would break through the gate of their enemies' cities and conquer the people. Alternate translation: "may your descendants completely defeat those who hate them" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 24:61**

**Then Rebekah arose, and she and her servant girls mounted the camels**

“Then Rebekah and her servant girls went and got on the camels”

**Thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way**

“In this way Abraham’s servant took Rebekah with him and returned to where he had come from”

## Genesis 24:62

### Now

This word marks a change in the story. It was telling about the servant finding a wife, and now it will tell about Isaac.

### Beer Lahai Roi

This is the name of a water well in the Negev. See how you translated it in [Genesis 16:14](#).

## **Genesis 24:63**

### **Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening**

“One evening Isaac went out to the field to think.” This must have been a long time after the servant and Rebekah left her home since they had to travel a long distance.

### **When he looked up and saw, behold, there were camels coming!**

The word “behold” here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows. “When he looked up he was surprised to see camels coming”

## **Genesis 24:64**

### **Rebekah looked**

“Rebekah looked up”

### **she jumped down from the camel**

“she quickly got off the camel”

## Genesis 24:65

### So she took her veil, and covered herself

“So she covered her face with her veil.” This is a sign of respect and modesty towards the man she will marry. The full meaning of this can be made explicit. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-symaction\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#)) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

### veil

a piece of cloth used to cover a person’s head, shoulders and face

## **Genesis 24:66**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 24:67**

### **took Rebekah, and she became his wife**

Both of these phrases mean that Isaac married Rebekah. Alternate translation: “married Rebekah” or “took her as his wife” (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

### **So Isaac was comforted**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “So Rebekah comforted Isaac” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 25

### Genesis 25 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 25:23.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Polygamy

Abraham married another wife. This was sinful of him. Many other Hebrew leaders came to marry multiple wives. This is known as “polygamy.” It has never been an acceptable practice. (See: **sin, sinful, sinner, sinning (p.1776)**)

#### Inheritance

In the ancient Near East, inheritance was passed on through the eldest son. Even though Esau and Jacob were twins, it is very important that Esau was born first. It was his birthright to receive his inheritance, but he foolishly gave it up. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/birthright\]\]](#) and **fool, foolish, folly (p.1755)**)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### God fulfill's his promise

God begins to fulfill the promise he gave to Abraham about making his descendants numerous. Many of these children through his concubines would become large people groups. This may not be easy to understand without the remainder of the Old Testament and the history it records. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 25:1**

### **General Information:**

## **General Information:**

See **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 25:2**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 25:3**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 25:4**

### **All these**

This refers to the people named in verses 2-4.

## **Genesis 25:5**

### **Abraham gave all that he owned to Isaac**

“Isaac inherited all that Abraham owned.” It was normal for the father to divide his wealth when he was old and not leave that for others to do after he died.

## **Genesis 25:6**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 25:7**

**These were the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, 175 years**

"These were ... he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years." Abraham lived 175 years. (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)  
(See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 25:8

### Abraham breathed his last and died

“Abraham took his last breath and died.” The phrases “breathed his last” and “died” mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: “Abraham died” (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

### breathed his last

This is a polite way of saying a person died. (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### at a good old age, an old man with a full life

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Abraham lived a very long time. Alternate translation: “when he had lived a very long time and was very old” (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

### an old man with a full life

Living a long life is spoken of as if life were a container that becomes full. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### he was gathered to his people

This means that after Abraham died, his soul went to the same place as his relatives who died before him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he joined his family members who had already died” (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 25:9

### the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron

Ephron owned a field in Machpelah and the cave that was in that field. Abraham bought the field from Ephron.

### Machpelah

Machpelah was the name of an area or region. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:9](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Ephron & Zohar

These are names of men. See how you translated these men's names in [Genesis 23:8](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### which is near Mamre

Machpela was near Mamre.

### Mamre

This was another name for the city of Hebron. It may have been named after Mamre, the friend of Abraham who lived there. See how you translated this place name in [Genesis 23:17](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 25:10**

### **This field Abraham had bought**

“Abraham had bought this field”

### **sons of Heth**

“the descendants of Heth” or “the Hittites.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:5](#).

### **Abraham was buried**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “They buried Abraham” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)  
(See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 25:11

### Beer Lahai Roi

This name means “the well of the living one who sees me.” See how you translated this place name in [Genesis 16:14](#). (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.1651\)](#)) (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.1651\)](#))

## **Genesis 25:12**

### **Now**

This word is used in English to introduce a new part of the story and information about Ishmael.

## **Genesis 25:13**

### **General Information:**

## **General Information:**

See **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 25:14**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 25:15**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 25:16

**These were Ishmael's sons, and these were their names, by their villages, and by their encampments; twelve princes according to their tribes**

This can be stated as two sentences. "These were the names of Ishmael's twelve sons. They led tribes that were named after them, and they each had their own villages and campsites"

### **twelve**

"12" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **princes**

Here the word "princes" means that the men were leaders or rules of the tribes; it does not mean that they were the sons of a king.

## Genesis 25:17

### These were the years of the life of Ishmael, 137 years

"These were ... Ishmael, one hundred and thirty-seven years." Ishmael lived 137 years. (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### breathed his last and died

The terms "breathed his last" and "died" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "died" (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

### was gathered to his people

This means that after Ishmael died, his soul went to the same place as his relatives who died before him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he joined his family members who had already died" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 25:18**

### **They lived**

“His descendants settled”

### **from Havilah to Ashhur**

“between Havilah and Ashhur”

### **Havilah**

Havilah was located somewhere in the Arabian Desert. See how you translated this in [Genesis 2:11](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **as one goes toward**

“in the direction of”

### **They lived in hostility with each other**

Possible meanings are (1) “they did not live in peace together;” or (2) “they lived away from their other relatives.”

## Genesis 25:19

### These were the events concerning Isaac, Abraham's son

This sentence introduces the account of Isaac's descendants in Genesis 25:19-35:29. Alternate translation: "This is the account of the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 25:20**

### **forty years old**

“40 years old” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **when he took as his wife Rebekah**

“when he married Rebekah”

### **Bethuel**

Bethuel was Rebekah’s father. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 22:22](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Paddan Aram**

This was another name for the region of Mesopotamia, which about the same location as modern Iraq. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 25:21**

### **she was childless**

“she was unable to become pregnant”

### **Rebekah his wife conceived**

It can be made explicit that Rebekah was pregnant with two babies at the same time: “Rebekah, his wife, became pregnant with twins” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 25:22**

### **The children struggled together within her**

“the babies inside her kept bumping against each other” or “The babies pushed against each other within her”

### **The children & within her**

Rebekah was pregnant with twins. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **She went to ask Yahweh about this**

“She went and asked Yahweh about this.” It is not clear where she went. She may have gone somewhere private to pray, or she may have gone somewhere to offer a sacrifice.

## Genesis 25:23

### said to her

“said to Rebekah”

### Two nations & serve the younger

This is poetic language. If your language has a way to indicate poetry, you could use it here. (See: **Poetry (p.1700)**) (See: **Poetry (p.1700)**)

### Two nations are in your womb

Here “two nations” stands for the two children. Each child will be the father of a nation. Alternate translation: “Two nations will come from the twins within you” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### two peoples will be separated from within you

Here “two peoples” stands for the two children. Each child will be the father of a people. This can be translated with an active verb. Alternate translation: “when you give birth to these two children they will be rivals” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### the older will serve the younger

Possible meanings are (1) “the older son will serve the younger son” or (2) “the descendants of the older son will serve the descendants of the younger son.” If possible, translate it so that people could understand either meaning.

## **Genesis 25:24**

### **behold, there**

“she was surprised to learn that there”

## Genesis 25:25

### red all over like a hairy garment

Possible meanings are (1) his skin was red and he had a lot of hair on his body or (2) he had a lot of red hair on his body. Alternate translation: "red and hairy like a garment made of animal hair" (See: **Simile (p.1721)**) (See: **Simile (p.1721)**)

### Esau

Translators may add a footnote that says "The name Esau sounds like the word 'hairy.'"

## **Genesis 25:26**

### **grasping Esau's heel**

"holding the back part of Esau's foot"

### **Jacob**

Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Jacob means 'he grasps the heel.'"

### **sixty years old**

"60 years old" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 25:27**

### **became a skillful hunter**

“became good at hunting and killing animals for food”

### **a quiet man**

“a peaceful man” or “a less active man”

### **who spent his time in the tents**

This speaks about time as if it were a commodity that someone could spend. Alternate translation: “who remained in the tents much of the time” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 25:28**

### **Now**

This word is used to mark a change in focus, shifting from the story to background information about Isaac and Rebekah. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### **Isaac loved**

Here the word "loved" means "favored" or "preferred."

### **because he ate the animals that he had hunted**

"because he ate the animals that Esau had hunted" or "because he enjoyed eating the wild animal meat that Esau caught"

## **Genesis 25:29**

### **Jacob cooked**

Since this is the beginning of a story about something that happened one time, some translators may want to start it with a phrase like “One day, Jacob cooked” in a similar manner to the UST.

### **cooked some stew**

“boiled some food” or “cooked some soup.” This stew was made of boiled lentils ([Genesis 25:34](#)).

### **he was weak from hunger**

“he was weak because he was very hungry” or “he was very hungry”

## **Genesis 25:30**

### **I am exhausted**

“I am weak from hunger” or “I am very hungry”

### **Edom**

Translators may add a footnote that says “The name Edom means ‘red.’”

## **Genesis 25:31**

### **birthright**

right as firstborn to inherit most of the father's wealth

## Genesis 25:32

### I am about to die

Esau was exaggerating to emphasize how hungry he was. Alternate translation: "I am so hungry I feel like I could die" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1655)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1655)**)

### What good is the birthright to me?

Esau used a question to emphasize that eating was more important than a birthright. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "My inheritance is no good to me if I die of hunger!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 25:33

### First swear to me

What Jacob wanted Esau to swear can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "First swear to me that you will sell me your birthright" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 25:34

### lentils

These are like beans, but their seeds are very small, round, and somewhat flat. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1732)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1732)**)

### Esau despised his birthright

“Esau showed that he did not value his birthright”

## Genesis 26

### Genesis 26 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Trust

When things in the land were bad, Isaac did not trust in Yahweh. Instead, he ran to the safety of Egypt. Even when Abraham's descendants did not trust in Yahweh's faithfulness to fulfill his covenant, Yahweh remained faithful to his covenant and blessed Isaac. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/trust\]\]](#), [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/faithful\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/fulfill\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/covenant\]\]](#))

#### Wells

In the ancient Near East, wells were very important strategically. Therefore, they were a sign of power and a sign of God's blessing being upon Isaac.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### “She is my sister”

Isaac was afraid the Egyptians would see him as a foreigner and upon seeing his beautiful wife, they would try to kill him. This would free Rebekah to marry someone else. Apparently, it would have been easy for them to kill a foreigner without punishment. If she was Isaac's sister, they would have shown favor to him. This is the same thing his father, Abraham, did. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/favor\]\]](#))

## **Genesis 26:1**

### **Now**

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

### **a famine happened**

“there was a famine” or “there was another famine”

### **in the land**

You can state explicitly the land to which this refers. Alternate translation: “in the land where Isaac and his family lived” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **that had been in the days of Abraham**

“that had happened during Abraham’s life” or “that had happened while Abraham was alive”

## Genesis 26:2

### General Information:

## General Information:

Yahweh begins to speak to Isaac.

### appeared to him

“appeared to Isaac”

### Do not go down to Egypt

It was common to speak of leaving the promised land as “going down” to another place. (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)  
(See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 26:3**

**for to you and to your descendants, I will give all these lands**

“for I will give all these lands to you and your descendants”

**I will fulfill the oath that I swore to Abraham your father**

“I will do what I promised Abraham your father I would do”

## Genesis 26:4

### General Information:

## General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Isaac.

### **I will multiply your descendants**

"I will cause you to have very many descendants."

### **like the stars of heaven**

This speaks about the number of Isaac's descendants as if they were the same as the number of stars. See how you translated this in [Genesis 22:17](#). (See: **Simile (p.1721)**) (See: **Simile (p.1721)**)

### **heaven**

This refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars.

### **all the nations of the earth will be blessed**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will bless all the nations of the earth" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 26:5

### **Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my instructions, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws**

The phrases “obeyed my voice” and “kept my instructions, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: “Abraham obeyed me and did everything I commanded him to do” (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

### **obeyed my voice**

Here “voice” stands for Yahweh. Alternate translation: “obeyed me” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 26:6

### So Isaac settled in Gerar

Only Isaac is mentioned because he is the leader of the family, but his whole family was with him. Alternate translation: "So Isaac and his family settled in Gerar" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 26:7**

### **He feared to say**

Here “fear” refers to the unpleasant feeling a person has when there is a threat of harm to himself or others. “He was afraid to say”

### **to get Rebekah**

“in order to take Rebekah”

## **Genesis 26:8**

### **He saw, behold, Isaac**

The word “behold” shows that what Abimelech saw surprised him. Alternate translation: “And he was surprised to see that Isaac”

### **was caressing Rebekah**

Possible meanings are (1) he was touching her the way a husband touches his wife or (2) he was laughing and talking with her the way a husband talks with his wife.

## Genesis 26:9

### Abimelech called Isaac to him

Abimelech probably sent someone to tell Isaac that Abimelech wanted to see him. Alternate translation: "Abimelech sent someone to bring Isaac to him" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### Why did you say, 'She is my sister'?

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Why did you say that she is your sister?" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### to get her

"so he could take her"

## Genesis 26:10

### What is this you have done to us?

Abimelech used this question to scold Isaac. Alternate translation: "You should not have done this to us!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### might easily have lain with your wife

The word "lain" here is a euphemism for "had sexual relations." (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### you would have brought guilt upon us

This speaks about causing someone to be guilty as if "guilt" were an object that is placed on someone. Alternate translation: "you would have caused us to be guilty of taking a man's wife" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### upon us

Here "us" refers to Abimelech and his people. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**)

## Genesis 26:11

### Whoever touches this man

Here “touches” means to touch in a harmful way. Alternate translation: “Whoever harms this man” (See: **Idiom (p. 1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### will surely be put to death

Abimelech may have intended to tell someone to kill anyone who might harm Isaac or Rebekah. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will put him to death” or “I will order my men to kill him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 26:12

### General Information:

## General Information:

This begins a new part of the story. It changes from telling about Isaac calling Rebekah his sister, and it starts to tell about how Isaac became very rich and the Philistines were jealous of him.

### in that land

“in Gerar”

### a hundredfold

This means “one hundred times as much as he planted.” It can be translated more generally as “a very large crop.” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 26:13**

### **The man became rich**

“Isaac became rich” or “He became rich”

### **grew more and more until he became very great**

“he gained more and more until he became very wealthy”

## Genesis 26:14

### sheep

This may also include goats. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### a large household

Here “household” stands for workers or servants. Alternate translation: “many servants” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### The Philistines envied him

“The Philistines were jealous of him”

## Genesis 26:15

### Now

Here this word does not mean “at this moment.” It is indicating where the action in the story begins. It can be translated with the connecting word “So” to show that this is a result of what happened in [Genesis 26:12-14](#). (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1617)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1617)**)

### in the days of Abraham his father

The phrase “in the days of” stands for a person’s lifetime. Alternate translation: “when Abraham, his father, was living” or “during his father Abraham’s lifetime”

## Genesis 26:16

### Abimelech said

Possible meanings are (1) this is another action to force Isaac and his people to leave. Alternate translation: "Then Abimelech said" or "Finally Abimelech said" or (2) Abimelech made this decision because he saw that his people were jealous and acting in a hostile way towards Isaac. Alternate translation: "Therefore Abimelech said" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1617)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1617)**)

### much mightier than we

"much stronger than we are"

## Genesis 26:17

### So Isaac departed

Only Isaac is mentioned because he is the leader, but his family and servants went with him. Alternate translation: "So Isaac and his household left" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 26:18**

### **Isaac dug out**

Here "Isaac" stands for Isaac and his servants. Alternate translation: "Isaac and his servants dug out" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **which they had dug**

"which Abraham's servants had dug"

### **in the days of Abraham his father**

"during his father Abraham's lifetime" or "when Abraham, his father, was living"

### **The Philistines had stopped them up**

This was the reason that Isaac dug them out. Possible ways to translate this are: (1) Since this happened first, this sentence can come before the sentence about Isaac digging them out, as in the UST. or (2) This sentence can start with "Isaac did this because the Philistines had stopped them up." (See: **Order of Events (p.1691)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.1691)**)

### **had stopped them up**

"had filled them with earth"

## Genesis 26:19

### flowing water

This phrase refers to a natural spring they uncovered when they were digging a new well. It provided a continuous flow of fresh drinking water. Alternate translation: "fresh water" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 26:20

### herdsmen

men who tended livestock

### This water is ours

Here "ours" refers to the herdsmen of Gerar. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**)

### Esek

Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Esek means 'quarrel' or 'argue.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 26:21**

### **Then they dug**

“Then Isaac’s servants dug”

### **they quarreled**

“the herdsmen of Gerar argued with Isaac’s herdsmen”

### **so he gave it**

“so Isaac gave it”

### **Sitnah**

Translators may add a footnote that says “The name Sitnah means ‘oppose’ or ‘accuse.’” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 26:22

### Rehoboth

Translators may add a footnote that says "The name Rehoboth means 'make room for' or 'empty place.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### us & we

Isaac was speaking about himself and his household.

## **Genesis 26:23**

### **Isaac went up from there to Beersheba**

Here “went up” is probably a reference to going north. Say that he departed in the most natural way for your language. Alternate translation: “Isaac left there and went to Beersheba”

## **Genesis 26:24**

### **multiply your descendants**

“will cause your descendants to increase greatly” or “will cause your descendants to be very many”

### **for my servant Abraham’s sake**

“for my servant Abraham” or you can make the full meaning explicit. Alternate translation: “because I promised my servant Abraham that I would do this” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 26:25

### Isaac built an altar there

You can make explicit why Isaac built an altar. Alternate translation: "Isaac built an altar there to sacrifice to Yahweh" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### called on the name of Yahweh

To "call on" means to pray or to worship. Here "name" stands for Yahweh. Alternate translation: "prayed to Yahweh" or "worshipped Yahweh" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 26:26**

### **went to him**

“went to Isaac”

### **Ahuzzath**

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **his friend**

Possible meanings are (1) “Abimelech’s friend” or (2) “Abimelech’s advisor.”

### **Phicol**

This is the name of a man. See how you translated his name in [Genesis 21:22](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 26:27**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 26:28**

### **they said**

This refers to Abimelech, Ahuzzath, and Phicol. One of them spoke and the other two agreed with what he said. It does not mean they all spoke at the same time. Alternate translation: "one of them said"

### **We have clearly seen**

"We know" or "We are certain"

### **So let us make a covenant**

"So we want to make a covenant"

## **Genesis 26:29**

### **and as we have treated you well**

This can also be translated as the beginning of a new sentence. "We have done only good to you"

### **you are blessed by Yahweh**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has blessed you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)  
(See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 26:30**

### **Isaac made a feast for them, and they ate and drank**

Eating a meal together was a part of making a covenant with one another. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

#### **for them**

Here “them” refers to “Abimelech, Ahuzzath, and Phicol”

#### **they ate**

Here “they” refers to Isaac, Abimelech, Ahuzzath, and Phicol. Alternate translation: “they all ate”

## **Genesis 26:31**

### **They rose early**

“They awoke early”

## **Genesis 26:32**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 26:33

### He called the well Shibah

“So he called the well Shibah.” Translators may add a footnote that says “The name Shibah sounds like the word that means ‘oath.’” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Beersheba

Translators may add a footnote saying “Beersheba can mean either “well of the oath” or “well of seven.” (See note on [Genesis 21:32](#))

## Genesis 26:34

### General Information:

## General Information:

Most of Genesis 26 was about Isaac. These verses are about his older son Esau.

### forty

“40” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### he took a wife

“he married.” You can state explicitly that he married two women. Alternate translation: “he took two wives” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Judith & Basemath

These are the names of Esau’s wives. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Beeri & Elon

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### the Hittite

“the descendant of Heth” or “a descendant of Heth.” The Hittite people were the descendants of Heth. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 26:35

### They brought sorrow to Isaac and Rebekah

Here “they” refers to Judith and Basemath. To make someone sorrowful or miserable is spoken of as if “sorrow” were an object that a person could bring to another person. Alternate translation: “They made Isaac and Rebekah sorrowful” or “Isaac and Rebekah were miserable because of them” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 27

### Genesis 27 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 27:27-29 and in 27:39-40.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Blessing

In the ancient Near East, a father's blessing was very important. This spoken blessing was legally binding. Jacob previously received the birthright from Esau and was guaranteed the double portion of land money that was supposed to be inherited by the older son, Esau. In this chapter, Jacob tricks Isaac into giving him Esau's blessing. This means that he is to inherit the promises of the covenant Yahweh made with Abraham. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/bless\]\]](#), [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/birthright\]\]](#), [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/promise\]\]](#) and [covenant \(p.1745\)](#))

## Genesis 27:1

### his eyes were dim

This speaks about being nearly blind as if the eyes were a lamp and the light has nearly gone out. Alternate translation: "he was nearly blind" or "he was almost blind" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### Here I am

"I am here" or "I am listening." See how you translated this in [Genesis 22:1](#).

## Genesis 27:2

### See here

The phrase “see here” adds emphasis to what follows. Alternate translation: “Listen carefully” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### I do not know the day of my death

It is implied that Isaac knows he will die soon. Alternate translation: “I may die any day now” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### death

This refers to physical death.

## Genesis 27:3

### General Information:

## General Information:

Isaac continues giving instructions to his older son Isaac.

### **your weapons**

“your hunting equipment”

### **your quiver**

A quiver is a case for holding arrows. Alternate translation: “your quiver of arrows” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **hunt game for me**

“hunt a wild animal for me”

## Genesis 27:4

### Make delicious food for me, the sort that I love

The word “delicious” refers to something that tastes very good. Alternate translation: “Cook for me the tasty meat that I love” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### bless you

In Bible times, a father would often pronounce a formal blessing on his children.

## Genesis 27:5

This verse is background information for the description of the events that follow. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### Now

This verse is background information for the description of the events that follow. The word “now” shows that the author is going to begin to talk about Rebekah and Jacob. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### Rebekah heard it when Isaac spoke to Esau his son

“Rebekah heard Isaac speaking to his son Esau”

### to Esau his son

Esau was the son of both Isaac and Rebekah. The author calls Esau “his son” to emphasize that Isaac preferred Esau over Isaac.

## Genesis 27:6

This verse continues the background information that begins with the words “Now Rebekah heard” in verse 5. It is background information for the description of the events that follow. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### Rebekah spoke to Jacob

This verse continues the background information that begins with the words “Esau went ... bring it back” in verse 5. It is background information for the description of the events that follow. After Esau leaves, Rebekah speaks to Jacob because of what she has heard. “So when Esau went ... bring it back, Rebekah spoke to Jacob” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/grammar-connect-words-phrases\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/writing-background\]\]](#)) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1617)**)

### to Jacob her son

Jacob was the son of both Isaac and Rebekah. The author calls Jacob “her son” here to emphasize that Rebekah preferred Jacob over Esau.

### See here

The phrase “see here” adds emphasis to what follows. Alternate translation: “Listen carefully”

## Genesis 27:7

**'Bring me game and make me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of Yahweh before my death.'**

These are the words that the author introduces with the words "He said" in verse 6. This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. "He told Esau to hunt a wild animal, and to make the tasty meat that he loves. Then before he dies, your father will bless Esau in the presence of Yahweh." (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### **Bring me game**

"Bring me a wild animal that you hunt and kill"

### **make me delicious food**

"cook for me the tasty meat that I love." See how this was translated in [Genesis 27:4](#).

### **bless you in the presence of Yahweh**

"bless you before Yahweh"

### **before my death**

"before I die"

## Genesis 27:8

### General Information:

## General Information:

Rebekah continues to speak to her younger son Jacob.

### Now

This does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

### **obey my voice as I command you**

Rebekah said “my voice” to refer to what she was saying. Alternate translation: “obey me and do what I tell you” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 27:9

**I will make delicious food from them for your father, just like he loves**

The word “delicious” refers to something that tastes very good. See how a similar sentence was translated in [Genesis 27:4](#).

## **Genesis 27:10**

### **You will take it to your father**

“Then take it to your father”

### **so that he may eat it, so that he may bless you**

“and after he eats it, he will bless you”

### **he may bless you**

The word “bless” refers to the formal blessing a father pronounces on his children.

### **before his death**

“before he dies”

## **Genesis 27:11**

### **I am a smooth man**

"I am a man with smooth skin" or "I am not hairy"

## **Genesis 27:12**

### **I will seem to him as a deceiver**

“he will think that I am a liar” or “he will know that I am deceiving him”

### **I will bring a curse upon me and not a blessing**

Being cursed or blessed is spoken of as if a curse and a blessing are objects that are placed on a person. Alternate translation: “Then because of this, he will curse me and not bless me” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p. 1678)**)

## Genesis 27:13

### My son, let any curse fall on me

“let your curse be on me, my son.” Being cursed is spoken of as if the curse were on object that is placed on the person. Alternate translation: “let your father curse me instead of you, my son” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### obey my voice

Rebekah said “my voice” to refer to what she was saying. Alternate translation: “obey what I tell you” or “obey me” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### bring them to me

“bring me the young goats”

## **Genesis 27:14**

### **made delicious food, just like his father loved**

The word “delicious” refers to something that tastes very good. See how a similar sentence was translated in [Genesis 27:4](#).

## **Genesis 27:15**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 27:16**

### **She put the skins of the young goats on his hands**

The goat skins still had the hair on them.

## **Genesis 27:17**

**She put the delicious food and the bread that she had prepared into the hand of her son Jacob**

“She gave to her son Jacob the delicious food and bread which she had prepared”

## Genesis 27:18

### Here I am

“Yes, I am listening” or “Yes, what is it?” See how you translated this in [Genesis 22:1](#).

## **Genesis 27:19**

### **I have done as you said to me**

“I have done what you told me to do”

### **some of my game**

The word “game” refers to wild animals that someone hunts and kills. See how “game” was translated in [Genesis 27:3](#).

## Genesis 27:20

### He said

“Jacob replied”

### brought it to me

This is an idiom meaning that God caused it to happen. Alternate translation: “helped me to succeed while hunting”  
(See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 27:21**

**whether you are my true son Esau or not**

“if you are really my son Esau”

## **Genesis 27:22**

### **Jacob went over to Isaac his father**

“Jacob approached Isaac his father”

### **The voice is Jacob’s voice**

Here Issac speaks of Jacob’s voice as representing Jacob. Alternate translation: “You sound like Jacob” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **but the hands are the hands of Esau**

Here Issac speaks of Esau’s hands as representing Esau. Alternate translation: “but your hands feel like Esau’s hands” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 27:23**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 27:24

### He said

Isaac asks this question before blessing his son. Alternate translation: "But first Isaac asked" (See: **Order of Events (p.1691)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.1691)**)

## **Genesis 27:25**

### **eat of your game**

The word “game” refers to a wild animal that people hunt and kill. See how “game” was translated in [Genesis 27:7](#).

### **he drank**

“Isaac drank it”

## **Genesis 27:26**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 27:27

### he smelled the smell of his clothes and blessed him

It can be made explicit that the clothes smelled like Esau's clothes. Alternate translation: "he smelled his clothes and they smelled like Esau's clothes, so Isaac blessed him" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### he smelled

"Isaac smelled"

### the smell

"the scent"

### blessed him

"then he blessed him." This refers to the formal blessing a father pronounces on his children.

### See, the smell of my son

The word "see" is used as an emphatic figure of speech to mean "it is true." Alternate translation: "Truly, the smell of my son"

### that Yahweh has blessed

Here the word "blessed" means that Yahweh has caused good things to happen to the field and it has become fruitful. Alternate translation: "that Yahweh has caused to be very productive" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 27:28

### General Information:

## General Information:

This is Isaac's blessing. He thought he was speaking to Esau, but he was speaking to Jacob.

### give you

Here "you" is singular and refers to Jacob. But the blessing would also apply to Jacob's descendants. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-you\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche\]\]](#)) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### dew of heaven

"Dew" is drops of water that form on the plants during the night. This can be made explicit in the translation. Alternate translation: "night mist from heaven to water your crops" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### fatness of the earth

Having fertile land is spoken of as if the earth were fat or rich. Alternate translation: "good soil for producing crops" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### plenty of grain and new wine

If "grain" and "wine" are unknown, this can be stated more generally. Alternate translation: "plenty of food and drink" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 27:29

### you & your

Here these pronouns are singular and refer to Jacob. But the blessing also applies to Jacob's descendants. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-you\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche\]\]](#)) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### nations bow down

Here "nations" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "people from all nations bow down" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### bow down

This means to bend over to humbly express respect and honor toward someone. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

### Be master over your brothers

"Become a master over your brothers"

### your brothers & your mother's sons

Isaac is speaking this blessing directly to Jacob. But, it also applies to Jacob's descendants who will rule over the descendants of Esau and the descendants of any other of Jacob's brothers that he may have. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### may your mother's sons bow down to you

"your mother's sons will bow down to you"

### May every one who curses you be cursed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May God curse everyone who curses you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### may every one who blesses you be blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May God bless everyone who blesses you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 27:30**

**had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father**

“had just left the tent of Isaac his father”

## **Genesis 27:31**

### **delicious food**

“tasty meat that I love.” See how this was translated in [Genesis 27:3](#).

### **some of your son’s game**

Here “your son’s” was a polite way of Esau referring to his own food he prepared. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### **your son’s game**

The word “game” refers to wild animals that people hunt to eat. See how “game” was translated in [Genesis 27:7](#).

### **bless me**

This refers to the formal blessing a father pronounces on his children.

## **Genesis 27:32**

**said to him**

“said to Esau”

## **Genesis 27:33**

### **Isaac trembled**

“Isaac began to shake”

### **hunted this game**

Game refers to a wild animal that people hunt and kill. See how “game” was translated in [Genesis 27:7](#).

## Genesis 27:34

### he cried with a very great and bitter cry

Esau's anguish was similar to the taste of something bitter. Alternate translation: "he cried loudly" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 27:35**

### **has taken away your blessing**

This is a figure of speech meaning Jacob took what was Esau's. Alternate translation: "I have blessed him instead of you" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 27:36

### Is he not rightly named Jacob?

Esau uses a question to emphasize his anger at Jacob. Alternate translation: "Jacob is certainly the right name for my brother!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### Jacob

Translators may also add a footnote that says: "The name Jacob means 'he grasps the heel.' In the original language the name 'Jacob' also sounds like the word for 'he deceives.'"

### He took away my birthright

This speaks about a birthright as if it were an object that a person could take away. Alternate translation: "What was once my birthright is now his because he tricked me" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### now he has taken away my blessing

This speaks about a blessing as if it were an object that person could take away. Alternate translation: "now he has tricked you into blessing him instead of me" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### Have you not reserved a blessing for me

Esau knows that his father cannot bless him with the same things that he blessed Jacob. Esau is asking if there is anything left to say to him that Isaac did not say while blessing Jacob.

## Genesis 27:37

### What more can I do for you, my son?

Isaac uses a question to emphasize that there is nothing else he can do. Alternate translation: "There is nothing else I can do for you!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## **Genesis 27:38**

### **Have you not even one blessing for me, my father**

This can be stated in positive form. "My father, do you have one more blessing for me"

## Genesis 27:39

### said to him

“said to Esau”

### Look, the place

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

### far from the richness of the earth

This is a figure of speech referring to the earth’s fertility. Alternate translation: “far from the fertile soil” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### dew of the sky above

“Dew” is drops of water that form on the plants during the night. This can be made explicit in the translation. Alternate translation: “the night mist from the sky to water your crops” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 27:40

### your & you

In 27:39-40 these pronouns are singular and refer to Esau, but what Isaac says also applies to Esau's descendants (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### By your sword you will live

Here "sword" stands for violence. Alternate translation: "You will rob and kill people in order to get what you need to live" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### you will shake his yoke from off your neck

This speaks about someone having a master as if the master's control over the person were a yoke that the person had to carry. Alternate translation: "you will free yourself from his control" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 27:41**

### **Esau said in his heart**

Here "heart" stands for Esau himself. Alternate translation: "Esau said to himself" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **days of mourning for my father are near**

This refers to a number of days a person grieves when a family member dies.

## Genesis 27:42

### The words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone told Rebekah about Esau's plan" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### See

"Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

### is consoling himself

"is making himself feel better"

## **Genesis 27:43**

### **Now**

This does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

### **flee to Laban**

“leave here quickly and go to Laban”

## **Genesis 27:44**

### **for a while**

“for a period of time”

### **until your brother’s fury subsides**

“until you brother calms down”

## **Genesis 27:45**

### **until your brother's anger turns away from you**

No longer being angry is spoken of as if the anger turns to a different direction away from the person. Alternate translation: "until he is no longer angry with you" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **Why should I lose you both in one day?**

Rebekah uses a question to emphasize her concern. Alternate translation: "I do not want to lose both of you in one day!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### **I lose you both in one day**

It is implied that if Esau kills Jacob, then they will execute Esau as a murderer. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **I lose**

This is a polite way of referring to her sons dying. (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## **Genesis 27:46**

### **I am weary of life**

Rebekah is exaggerating to emphasize how upset she is about the Hittite women that Esau married. Alternate translation: "I am terribly upset" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1655)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1655)**)

### **the daughters of Heth**

"these Hittite women" or "descendants of Heth"

### **like these women, some of the daughters of the land**

The phrase "daughters of the land" means the local females. Alternate translation: "like these women who live in this land" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **what good will my life be to me?**

Rebekah uses a question to emphasize how upset she would be if Jacob marries a Hittite woman. Alternate translation: "My life will be awful!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 28

### Genesis 28 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Even though Jacob tricked his father in order to receive Esau's blessing, the chapter repeats the blessing, ensuring he inherits the blessings promised to Abraham. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/bless\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#) and **promise, promised (p.1768)**)

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Jacob's dream

Jacob had a dream or received a vision. The purpose of this dream is to show that, despite Jacob's sin, God is giving Abraham's covenant promises to Jacob and his descendants. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/covenant\]\]](#) and **promise, promised (p.1768)**)

##### Bethel

This was an important city for Abraham and his descendants. It is possible that there is some theological significance to the city of Bethel.

## **Genesis 28:1**

### **You must not take**

“Do not take”

## Genesis 28:2

### Arise, go

“Go right away”

### Paddan Aram

This was another name for the region of Mesopotamia, which about the same location as modern Iraq. See how this was translated in [Genesis 25:20](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### house of

This refers to a person's descendants or other relatives. Alternate translation: “family” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### Bethuel

Bethuel was Rebekah's father. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 22:22](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### your mother's father

“your grandfather”

### one of the daughters

“from the daughters”

### your mother's brother

“your uncle”

## Genesis 28:3

### General Information:

## General Information:

Isaac continues speaking to Jacob

### **make you fruitful and multiply you**

The word “multiply” explains how God would make Jacob “fruitful.” Alternate translation: “give you many children and descendants” (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

## Genesis 28:4

### **May he give you the blessing of Abraham, to you, and to your descendants after you**

This speaks about blessing someone as if a blessing were an object that a person can give. The abstract noun “the blessing” can be stated as “bless.” Alternate translation: “May God bless you and your descendants as he blessed Abraham” or “May God give to you and your descendants what he promised to Abraham” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-abstractnouns\]\]](#)) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **that you may inherit the land**

God giving the land of Canaan to Jacob and his descendants is spoken of as if a child were inheriting money or possessions from his father. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **the land where you have been living**

“the land where you have been staying”

### **which God gave to Abraham**

“which God promised to Abraham”

## Genesis 28:5

### Paddan Aram

This was another name for the region of Mesopotamia, which about the same location as modern Iraq. See how this was translated in [Genesis 25:20](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Bethuel

Bethuel was Rebekah's father. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 22:22](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 28:6

### General Information:

## General Information:

The story changes from Jacob to Esau

### Now

This word is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Esau. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### Paddan Aram

This was another name for the region of Mesopotamia, which about the same location as modern Iraq. See how this was translated in [Genesis 25:20](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### to take a wife

“to take a wife for himself”

### He also saw that Isaac had blessed him

“Esau also saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob”

### You must not take

“Do not take”

### women of Canaan

“daughters of Canaan” or “Canaanite women”

## **Genesis 28:7**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 28:8**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

This continues the background information about Esau.

#### **Esau saw**

“Esau realized”

#### **the women of Canaan did not please Isaac his father**

“his father Isaac did not approve of the women of Canaan”

#### **women of Canaan**

“daughters of Canaan” or “the Canaanite women”

## **Genesis 28:9**

### **So he went**

“Because of that, he went”

### **besides the wives that he had**

“in addition to the wives that he already had”

### **Mahalath**

This is the name of one of Ishmael's daughters. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Nebaioth**

This is the name of one of Ishmael's sons. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 28:10**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

The story switches back to Jacob

## **Genesis 28:11**

**He came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set**

“He came to a certain place and, because the sun had set, he decided to stay for the night”

## **Genesis 28:12**

### **He dreamed**

“Jacob had a dream”

### **set up on the earth**

“with the bottom of it touching the ground”

### **reached to heaven**

This refers to the place where God lives.

## **Genesis 28:13**

### **Behold**

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

### **Yahweh stood above it**

Possible meanings are (1) “Yahweh was standing at the top of the stairway” or (2) “Yahweh was standing next to Jacob”

### **Abraham your father**

Here “father” means “ancestor.” Alternate translation: “Abraham your ancestor” or “Abraham your forefather”

## Genesis 28:14

### General Information:

## General Information:

God continues to talk to Jacob in a dream.

### Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth

God compares Jacob's descendants to the dust of the earth to emphasize their huge number. Alternate translation: "You will have more descendants than you can count" (See: **Simile (p.1721)**) (See: **Simile (p.1721)**)

### you will spread far out to the west

The word "you" is singular and refers to Jacob. Here Jacob represents his descendants. Alternate translation: "your descendants will spread out to the west" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### you will spread far out

This means the people will extend the borders of their land and occupy more territory.

### to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south

This phrases are used together to mean "all directions." Alternate translation: "in all directions" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### Through you and through your descendants will all the families of the earth be blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will bless all families on the earth through you and your descendants" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 28:15**

### **Behold, I am**

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

### **for I will not leave you. I will do all**

“for I will not leave you until I have done all”

### **I will keep you**

“I will keep you safe” or “I will protect you”

### **I will bring you into this land again**

“I will bring you back to this land”

## **Genesis 28:16**

### **awoke out of his sleep**

“woke up from his sleep”

## **Genesis 28:17**

### **the house of God & the gate of heaven**

The phrase “the gate of heaven” explains that this place is the entrance to “the house of God” and “the entrance to where God lives.” (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

### **This is the gate of heaven**

This speaks about the entrance to the place where God lives as if it were a literal kingdom that had a gate that someone has to open to let people in. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 28:18

### pillar

This is a memorial pillar, that is, simply a large stone or boulder set up on its end.

### poured oil upon the top of it

This action symbolizes that Jacob is dedicating the pillar to God. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "poured oil on the top of it in order to dedicate the pillar to God" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-symaction\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#)) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## **Genesis 28:19**

### **Bethel**

Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Bethel means 'house of God.'"

### **Luz**

This is the name of a city. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 28:20

### Connecting Statement:

## Connecting Statement:

Jacob begins to make a vow to Yahweh.

### **vowed a vow**

“made a vow” or “solemnly promised God”

### **If God will & clothes to wear**

Jacob is speaking to God in the third person. This can be stated in the second person. Alternate translation: “If you will ... clothes to wear” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### **on this road on which I am walking**

This stands for Jacob’s journey to find a wife and to return home. Alternate translation: “on this journey” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **will give me bread to eat**

Here “bread” stands for food in general. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 28:21

### Connecting Statement:

## Connecting Statement:

The vow that began with the words “If God will ... clothes to wear” in verse 20 continues here.

### **so that I return safely & then Yahweh will be my God**

The vow that began with the words “If God will ... clothes to wear” in verse 20 continues here. Jacob is speaking to God in the third person. This can be stated in the second person. “If you will ... clothes to wear ... so that I return safely ... then you, Yahweh, will be the God that I will worship” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### **to my father’s house**

Here “house” stands for Jacob’s family. Alternate translation: “to my father and the rest of my family” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 28:22**

### **a sacred stone**

This means that the stone will mark the place where God appeared to him and it will be a place where people can worship God. Alternate translation: “God’s house” or “God’s place”

## Genesis 29

### Genesis 29 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This chapter records the conflict between Jacob's wives, Rachel and Leah. This account continues into the next chapter.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Shepherds

Although the exact reasoning for the shepherds' unwillingness to give water to the sheep is unknown, it is probable they were being lazy. The actions of these shepherds contrast Jacob's actions.

#### Kissing

It was common in the ancient Near East for relatives to greet each other with a kiss. There was nothing sexual about this type of kissing.

#### Marriage

It was customary in the ancient Near East for a man to work for a woman's father in order to earn the right to marry her. It is unknown how common it was for a father to have his younger daughter marry before an older daughter. It was also sinful for Jacob to marry more than one wife. (See: **sin, sinful, sinner, sinning (p.1776)**)

## **Genesis 29:1**

### **the people of the east**

This means the people of Paddan Aram, which is a land east of the land of Canaan.

## Genesis 29:2

### and, behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there by it

The word “behold” marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

### For out of that well

“For from that well.” This phrase marks a change from the story to background information about how the shepherds watered the flocks. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### they would water

“the shepherds would water” or “those taking care of the sheep would water”

### the well’s mouth

Here “mouth” is a way of referring to an opening. Alternate translation: “the opening of the well” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 29:3**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 29:4**

### **Jacob said to them**

“Jacob said to the shepherds”

### **My brothers**

This is a polite way to greet a stranger.

## **Genesis 29:5**

### **Laban son of Nahor**

Here "son" refers to a male descendant. Another possible meaning is "Laban the grandson of Nahor."

## **Genesis 29:6**

**and, look there, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep**

“Now look! Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep”

## **Genesis 29:7**

### **it is the middle of the day**

“the sun is still high in the sky” or “the sun is still shining brightly”

### **for the flocks to be gathered together**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “for you to gather the flocks” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **to be gathered together**

This means to gather them together inside a fence for them to stay for the night. The full meaning of this can be made explicit. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **let them graze**

“let them eat grass in the field”

## **Genesis 29:8**

### **We cannot water them**

“We have to wait to water them.” This has to do with timing, not permission.

### **until all the flocks are gathered together**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “until the other shepherds gather their flocks” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **from the well’s mouth**

Here “mouth” is way of referring to an opening. Alternate translation: “from the well” or “from the opening of the well” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **and we will water the sheep**

“then we will water the sheep”

## **Genesis 29:9**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 29:10

### his mother's brother

"his uncle"

### the well's mouth

Here "mouth" is a way of referring to an opening. Alternate translation: "the well" or "the opening of the well" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 29:11

### Jacob kissed Rachel

In ancient Near East, it is common to greet a relative with a kiss. However, it is normally done between men. If your language has an affectionate greeting for a relative, use that. If not, use what is appropriate.

### wept loudly

Jacob weeps because he is so happy. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 29:12**

### **her father's relative**

"related to her father"

## **Genesis 29:13**

### **his sister's son**

“his nephew”

### **embraced him**

“hugged him”

### **kissed him**

In ancient Near East, it is common to greet a relative with a kiss. However, it is normally done between men. If your language has an affectionate greeting for a relative, use that. If not, use what is appropriate.

### **Jacob told Laban all these things**

“then Jacob told Laban everything he told Rachel”

## Genesis 29:14

### my bone and my flesh

This phrase means they are directly related. Alternate translation: “my relative” or “a member of my family” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 29:15

### Should you serve me for nothing & my relative?

Laban uses a question to emphasize that he should pay Jacob for working for him. The question can be translated as a statement. This can also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "It is certainly right that I should pay you for working for me even though you are my relative." (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-rquestion\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-litotes\]\]](#)) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 29:16

### Now Laban had

The word “now” is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Laban and his daughters. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

## **Genesis 29:17**

### **Leah's eyes were tender**

Possible meanings are (1) "Leah's eyes were pretty" or (2) "Leah's eyes were plain"

## **Genesis 29:18**

### **Jacob loved Rachel**

Here the word "loved" refers to a romantic attraction between a man and a woman.

## **Genesis 29:19**

**than that I should give her to another man**

“rather than give her to another man”

## **Genesis 29:20**

**and they seemed to him only a few days**

“but the time seemed to him to be only a few days”

**for the love he had for her**

“on account of the love he had for her” or “because of his love for her”

## Genesis 29:21

**Give me my wife, for my days have been completed—so that I may marry her!**

The phrase “have been completed” can be stated in active form. The statement is emphatic. Alternate translation: “Give me my wife, so that I may marry her, for I have completed the length of time that I was to work for you!” “Give me Rachel so that I may marry her, for I have worked seven years for you!” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 29:22

### made a feast

“prepared a wedding feast.” Most likely Laban had others prepare the feast. Alternate translation: “had others prepare a wedding feast” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 29:23

### who went in to her

“who had sexual relations with her.” You may need to use other, more polite words here. (See: **Euphemism (p. 1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## Genesis 29:24

### Laban gave his female servant Zilpah & her servant

Here the author gives background information about Laban giving Zilpah to Leah. Most likely he gave Zilpah to Leah before the wedding. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### Zilpah

This is the name of Leah's female servant. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 29:25**

### **behold, it was Leah**

“Jacob was surprised to see it was Leah in bed with him.” The word “behold” here shows that Jacob was surprised by what he saw.

### **What is this you have done to me?**

Jacob uses a question to express his anger and surprise. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “I cannot believe you did this to me!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### **Did I not serve you for Rachel?**

Jacob uses these questions to express his hurt that Laban had tricked him. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “I served you for seven years to marry Rachel!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## **Genesis 29:26**

### **It is not our custom to give**

“In our family we do not give”

## **Genesis 29:27**

### **Complete the bridal week of this daughter**

“Finish celebrating Leah’s bridal week”

### **we will give you the other also**

The full meaning can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “next week we will give you Rachel also” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 29:28**

### **Jacob did so, and completed Leah's week**

"And Jacob did what Laban asked, and finished celebrating Leah's bridal week"

## Genesis 29:29

### Bilhah

This is the name of Rachel's female servant. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 29:30

### Jacob went in to Rachel

“Jacob had sexual relations with Rachel.” You may need to use other, more polite words here. See how similar words are translated in [Genesis 29:23](#). (See: [Euphemism \(p.1634\)](#)) (See: [Euphemism \(p.1634\)](#))

### he loved Rachel

This refers to the romantic love between a man and a woman.

## Genesis 29:31

### Leah was not loved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jacob did not love Leah" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### not loved

This is an exaggeration to emphasize that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. Alternate translation: "loved less than Rachel" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1655)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1655)**)

### so he opened her womb

God causing Leah to be able to become pregnant is spoken of as if God is opening her womb. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### was childless

"was not able to become pregnant"

## **Genesis 29:32**

### **Leah conceived and bore a son**

“Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son”

### **she called his name Reuben**

Translators may also add a footnote that says: “The name Reuben means ‘See, a son.’” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Yahweh has looked upon my affliction**

Leah was experiencing emotional pain because Jacob had rejected her. The abstract noun “affliction” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “Yahweh saw that I was suffering” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

## **Genesis 29:33**

### **Then she conceived**

“Then Leah became pregnant”

### **bore a son**

“gave birth to a son”

### **Yahweh has heard that I am unloved**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh has heard that my husband does not love me” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **she called his name Simeon**

Translators may also add a footnote that says “The name Simeon means ‘heard.’” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 29:34**

### **will my husband be attached to me**

“my husband will embrace me”

### **I have borne him three sons**

“I have given birth to three sons for him”

### **his name was called Levi**

Translators may also add a footnote that says “The name Levi means ‘attached.’” (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 29:35**

### **She conceived again**

“Leah became pregnant again”

### **bore a son**

“gave birth to a son”

### **she called his name Judah**

Translators may also add a footnote that says “The name Judah means ‘praise.’” (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 30

### Genesis 30 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the story of the conflict between Rachel and Leah.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Women and their children

In the ancient Near East, it was important for a married woman to have many children. If a woman did not have many children, people believed it brought shame upon her. This is one of the reasons why Rachel and Leah were always jealous of each other. (See: **jealous, jealousy (p.1764)**)

#### Speckled and spotted

Speckled and spotted sheep were considered to be imperfect. Therefore, they were considered to be much less valuable than the spotless sheep. Despite Jacob's fair offer, Laban once again tried to cheat him out of something he deserved. Jacob anticipated Laban's cheating.

## **Genesis 30:1**

### **When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children**

“When Rachel realized that she was unable to become pregnant”

### **I will die**

Rachel is exaggerating to show how upset she is about not having children. Alternate translation: “I will feel completely worthless” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1655)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1655)**)

### **Give me children**

“Cause me to become pregnant”

## Genesis 30:2

### Jacob's anger burned against Rachel

Jacob's anger is spoken of as if it were a fire. Alternate translation: "Jacob was very angry with Rachel" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?

This is a rhetorical question that Jacob uses to scold Rachel. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am not God! I am not the one who is preventing you from having children!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 30:3

### She said

“Rachel said”

### See

“Look” or “Listen” or “Pay attention to what I am about to tell you”

### there is my servant Bilhah & I will have children by her

At that time, this was an acceptable way for a barren woman to have children that would legally belong to her. The full meaning of this may be made explicit. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Bilhah

This is the name of Rachel's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:29](#).

### Go in to her

This is a polite way of talking about sexual relations. You may need to use different words in your language. Alternate translation: “Have sexual relations with her” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### on my knees

This is a way of saying that the child that Bilhah gives birth to will belong to Rachel. Alternate translation: “for me” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### I will have children by her

“and in this way she will cause me to have children”

## Genesis 30:4

### Jacob went in to her

This is a polite way of talking about sexual relations. You may need to use different words in your language.

Alternate translation: "Jacob had sexual relations with her" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## **Genesis 30:5**

### **Bilhah**

This is the name of Rachel's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:29](#).

### **bore Jacob a son**

“gave birth to a son for Jacob”

## **Genesis 30:6**

### **she called his name**

“Rachel gave him the name”

### **called his name Dan**

Translators may also add a footnote that says “The name Dan means ‘he judged.’” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 30:7**

### **Bilhah & conceived again**

“Bilhah ... became pregnant again”

### **bore Jacob a second son**

“gave birth to a second son for Jacob”

## Genesis 30:8

### With mighty wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister

The phrase “wrestlings have I wrestled” is an idiom used for emphasis. It is also a metaphor that speaks of Rachel’s attempts to have a child like her sister as if she were having a physical fight with Leah. Alternate translation: “I have had a great struggle to have children like my older sister, Leah” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#)) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### have prevailed

“I have won” or “I have succeeded”

### called his name Naphtali

Translators may also add a footnote that says “The name Naphtali means ‘my struggle.’”

## Genesis 30:9

### When Leah saw that

“When Leah became aware that”

**she took Zilpah, her servant, and gave her to Jacob as a wife**

“she gave Zilpah, her servant, to Jacob as a wife”

### Zilpah

This is the name of Leah’s female servant. See how you translated this in [Genesis 29:24](#).

## **Genesis 30:10**

### **bore Jacob a son**

“gave birth to a son for Jacob”

## **Genesis 30:11**

### **This is fortunate!**

“How fortunate!” or “What good luck!”

### **called his name Gad**

Translators may also add a footnote that says “The name Gad means ‘fortunate.’”

## Genesis 30:12

### Zilpah

This is the name of Leah's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:24](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### bore Jacob a second son

“gave birth to a second son for Jacob”

## **Genesis 30:13**

### **I am happy!**

“How blessed I am!” or “How happy I am!”

### **the daughters**

“the women” or “the young women”

### **called his name Asher**

Translators may also add a footnote that says “The name Asher means ‘happy.’” (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 30:14

### Reuben went

“Reuben went out”

### in the days of wheat harvest

Here the phrase “in the days of” is an idiom that refers to the season or time of year. Alternate translation: “at the time of year of the wheat harvest” or “during the wheat harvest” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### mandrakes

This is a fruit that was said to increase fertility and the desire to sleep with one’s lover. Alternate translation: “love fruit” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1732)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1732)**)

## Genesis 30:15

### Is it a small matter to you & my husband?

“Do you not care ... my husband?” This is a rhetorical question used to scold Rachel. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “It is bad enough ... my husband.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### Do you now want & too?

This is a rhetorical question, used to scold Rachel. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Now you want ... too!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### Then he will lie with you

Here “lie with” is a euphemism. Alternate translation: “Then Jacob will have sexual intercourse with you” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## Genesis 30:16

### You must come in to me

Here “come in to” is a euphemism. Alternate translation: “You must have sexual intercourse with me” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### with my son’s mandrakes

“for the price of my son’s mandrakes.” See how you translated “mandrake” in [Genesis 30:14](#).

## **Genesis 30:17**

### **she conceived**

“She became pregnant”

### **bore Jacob a fifth son**

“gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob”

## **Genesis 30:18**

### **God has given me my wages**

God rewarding Leah is spoken of as if he were a boss paying wages to someone who works for him. Alternate translation: "God has given my due" or "God has rewarded me" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **She called his name Issachar**

Translators may also add a footnote that says: "The name Issachar means 'there is a reward.'"

## **Genesis 30:19**

### **Leah conceived again**

“Leah became pregnant again”

### **bore a sixth son to Jacob**

“gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob”

## **Genesis 30:20**

### **She called his name Zebulun**

Translators may also add a footnote that says: "The name Zebulun means 'honor.'"

## **Genesis 30:21**

### **called her name Dinah**

This is the name of Leah's daughter. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 30:22

### God called Rachel to mind and listened to her

The phrase “call to mind” means to remember. This does not mean God forgot about Rachel. It means he considered her request. Alternate translation: “God considered Rachel and granted to her what she wanted” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 30:23

### God has taken away my shame

God causing Rachel to no longer feel ashamed is spoken of as if "shame" were an object that person could take away from someone else. The abstract noun "shame" can be stated as "ashamed." Alternate translation: "God has caused me to no longer feel ashamed" (See: [[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-abstractnouns]]) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 30:24**

### **She called his name Joseph**

Translators may also add a footnote that says: "The name Joseph means 'may he add.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Yahweh has added to me another son**

Rachel's first sons were through her female servant Bilhah.

## **Genesis 30:25**

### **After Rachel had borne Joseph**

“After Rachel gave birth to Joseph”

## **Genesis 30:26**

### **and let me go**

“so I can go”

### **you know the service I have given you**

Jacob is reminding Laban of their contract ([Genesis Gen 29:27](#)). The abstract noun “service” can be stated as “served.” Alternate translation: “you know that I have served you long enough” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

## **Genesis 30:27**

### **Laban said to him**

“Laban said to Jacob”

### **If now I have found favor in your eyes**

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: “If I have found favor with you” or “If you are pleased with me” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **found favor**

This is an idiom that means that someone is approved of by someone else. (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **wait, because**

“please stay, because”

### **I have learned by using divination**

“I have discovered by my own spiritual and magical practices”

### **for your sake**

“because of you”

## Genesis 30:28

### Name your wages

This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: "Tell me how much I have to pay to keep you here" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 30:29**

### **Jacob said to him**

“Jacob said to Laban”

### **how your livestock have fared with me**

“how well your livestock have done since I started taking care of them”

## **Genesis 30:30**

### **For you had little before I came**

“your herds were small before I worked for you”

### **and it has increased abundantly**

“but now your wealth has greatly increased”

### **Now when will I provide for my own household also?**

“Now when will I take care of my own family?” Jacob uses a question to emphasize that he wants to start providing for his own family. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Now I want to take care of my family!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 30:31

### What will I pay you

“What can I pay you” or “What can I give you.” This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: “What can I pay you so that you stay and work for me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### If you will do this thing for me

The connecting word “But” can be used at the beginning to show that what Jacob is about to say contrasts with what he just said. Alternate translation: “But if you will do this thing for me” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1617)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1617)**)

### this thing

The phrase “this thing” refers to what Jacob will propose in verse 32.

### feed your flock and keep it

“feed and take care of your flock”

## **Genesis 30:32**

**removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep, and every black one among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats**

“and remove every sheep with spots, every black sheep, and every goat with spots”

**These will be my wages**

“This will be the cost of keeping me here”

## **Genesis 30:33**

### **My integrity will testify for me later on**

The word "integrity" means "honesty." This speaks about integrity as if it were a person who could testify for or against another person. Alternate translation: "And later you will know if I have been honest with you or not" (See: **Personification (p.1698)**) (See: **Personification (p.1698)**)

### **Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the sheep, if any are found with me, will be considered to be stolen**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If you find any goats without spots or any sheep that are not black, you can consider them stolen" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 30:34**

### **Let it be according to your word**

“Let it be as you say” or “We will do what you have said”

## **Genesis 30:35**

### **that were striped and spotted**

“that had stripes and spots”

### **that were speckled and spotted**

“that had spots”

### **every one that had white in it**

“every goat that had some white in it”

### **all the black ones among the sheep**

“all the black sheep”

### **gave them into the hand**

Here “hand” stands for control or care. Alternate translation: “had his sons take care of them” (See: **Metonymy (p. 1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 30:36**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 30:37**

### **fresh poplar & almond & plane tree**

These are all trees with white wood. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1732)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1732)**)

### **peeled white streaks in them, and made the white inner wood appear that was in the sticks**

“peeled off pieces of bark so that the white wood underneath would show”

## **Genesis 30:38**

### **the watering troughs**

long open containers for holding water for animals to drink

## **Genesis 30:39**

### **The flocks bred**

“The animals of the flocks conceived” or “The animals mated”

### **produced striped, speckled, and spotted young**

“gave birth to babies with stripes and spots”

## **Genesis 30:40**

### **Jacob separated**

It can be made explicit that this happened over several years. Alternate translation: "During the several years following, Jacob separated" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **face toward**

"look toward"

### **he separated out his flocks for himself alone**

"he set his flocks apart"

## **Genesis 30:41**

### **before the eyes of the flock**

Here the flock's "eyes" represent the sheep and emphasize what they see. Alternate translation: "so that the flock could see them" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **among the sticks**

"in front of the sticks"

## **Genesis 30:42**

### **the feebler animals**

“the weaker animals”

### **So the feebler animals were Laban’s, and the stronger were Jacob’s**

“So the weaker offspring belonged to Laban, while the stronger offspring belonged to Jacob.” You can make this even more explicit. Alternate translation: “So the weaker offspring did not have stripes or spots and so belonged to Laban, while the stronger offspring did have stripes or spots and so belonged to Jacob” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 30:43**

### **The man**

“Jacob”

### **became very prosperous**

“greatly prospered” or “became very wealthy”

## Genesis 31

### Genesis 31 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### God's blessing

When Jacob left Paddam Aram, he left very wealthy. Despite his punishment of exile from Canaan, God still blessed Jacob and his family. (See: **bless, blessed, blessing (p.1739)**)

#### Household gods

Although a few scholars believe the possession of the household gods was a sign of inheritance, this seems unlikely. It is probable that Rachel believed these idols would bring them "good luck" and would bring them great blessing. This was sinful because they were to trust in Yahweh, who already promised to bless them. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/falsegod\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#) and **sin, sinful, sinner, sinning (p.1776)**)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Irony

Laban's sons complained that Jacob cheated them out of their father's possessions. It was their father who tried to cheat Jacob out of what he promised to give Jacob. Jacob treated his brother Esau in the same way. Jacob cheated Esau out of their father's blessing.

## **Genesis 31:1**

### **Now**

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here the author starts to tell a new part of the story.

### **Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, that they said**

"Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying"

### **Jacob has taken away all that was our father's**

Laban's sons were exaggerating because they were angry. Alternate translation: "Everything that Jacob has taken belonged to our father" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1655)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1655)**)

## Genesis 31:2

**Jacob saw the look on Laban's face. He saw that his attitude toward him had changed**

These two sentences mean basically the same thing. The second explains the look that Jacob saw on Laban's face. Alternate translation: "Jacob noticed that Laban was no longer pleased with him" (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

## **Genesis 31:3**

### **your fathers**

“your father Isaac and your grandfather Abraham”

## **Genesis 31:4**

### **Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flock**

“Jacob sent for Rachel and Leah and told them to meet him out in the field with the flocks”

## **Genesis 31:5**

### **and said to them**

You can start a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "He said to them" (See: **Sentence Structure (p.1719)**)  
(See: **Sentence Structure (p.1719)**)

### **I see your father's attitude toward me has changed**

"I have noticed your father is no longer pleased with me"

## Genesis 31:6

### **You know that it is with all my strength that I have served your father**

The word “you” here refers to both Rachel and Leah. It also adds emphasis. Alternate translation: “You yourselves know that I have served your father with all my strength” (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

## **Genesis 31:7**

### **has deceived me**

“has lied to me” or “has not treated me fairly”

### **my wages**

“what he said he would pay me”

### **to hurt me**

Possible meanings are (1) physical harm or (2) to cause Jacob to suffer in any way.

## **Genesis 31:8**

### **The speckled animals**

“The animals with spots”

### **the flock bore**

“the flock gave birth to”

### **The striped**

“The animals with stripes”

## **Genesis 31:9**

**In this way God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me**

“This is how God gave your father’s animals to me”

## **Genesis 31:10**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

Jacob continues his story to his wives Leah and Rachel.

### **Once at the time of breeding season**

“During the breeding season”

### **mating with the flock**

Here “flock” represents only the female goats. Alternate translation: “mating with the female goats of the flock”  
(See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **were striped, speckled, and spotted**

“had stripes, little spots, and big spots”

## **Genesis 31:11**

### **angel of God**

Possible meanings are (1) God himself appeared as a man or (2) one of God's messengers appeared. Since the phrase is not well understood, it is best to simply translate it as "the angel of God," using the normal word that you use for "angel."

### **I said**

"And I answered"

### **Here I am**

"Yes, I am listening" or "Yes, what is it?" See how you translated this in [Genesis 22:1](#).

## Genesis 31:12

### General Information:

## General Information:

The angel of the Lord continues to talk to Jacob ([Genesis 31:10](#)).

### Lift up your eyes

This is a way of saying “Look up.” (See: [Idiom \(p.1662\)](#)) (See: [Idiom \(p.1662\)](#))

### that are breeding with the flock

Here “flock” stands for only the female goats. Alternate translation: “that are breeding with the female goats of the flock” (See: [Synecdoche \(p.1728\)](#)) (See: [Synecdoche \(p.1728\)](#))

### are striped, speckled, and spotted

“have stripes and spots”

## **Genesis 31:13**

### **where you anointed a pillar**

Jacob poured oil on the pillar to dedicate it to God. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

### **the land of your birth**

“the land where you were born”

## **Genesis 31:14**

### **Rachel and Leah answered and said to him**

This does not mean they talked at the same time. It emphasizes they agreed with each other.

### **Is there any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?**

Rachel and Leah use a question to emphasize that there is nothing left for their father to give. Alternate translation: "There is absolutely nothing left for us to inherit from our father!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 31:15

### Are we not treated by him as foreigners?

They use a question to show their anger about how their father treats them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Our father treats us like a foreign women instead of daughters!" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-rquestion\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### For he has sold us

This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: "He has sold us for his own gain" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### has also completely devoured our money

Laban completely using up the money that he should have given to his daughters is spoken of as if he were a wild beast that ate the money as if it were food. Alternate translation: "he completely used up our money" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 31:16**

**are now ours and our children's**

"belongs to us and to our children"

### **Now then**

Here "Now" does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

**whatever God has said to you, do it**

"do all that God has told you"

## Genesis 31:17

### his sons

Jacob took all of his children. It only mentions the sons because they are important as his heirs. Alternate translation: "his children" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 31:18**

### **He drove all his livestock**

“He drove all his cattle.” Here “livestock” is referring to all his domesticate animals.

### **including the livestock he had acquired in Paddan Aram**

“and the other herd of cattle which he took ownership of when he was in Paddan Aram”

### **Then he set out to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan**

“He went to the land of Canaan, where his father Isaac lived”

## **Genesis 31:19**

### **When Laban had gone to shear his sheep**

“When Laban had left to cut the wool off of his sheep”

## **Genesis 31:20**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 31:21**

### **the River**

This refers to the Euphrates River.

### **headed toward**

“traveled toward”

### **the hill country of Gilead**

“the mountains of Gilead” or “Mount Gilead”

## **Genesis 31:22**

### **On the third day**

It was Jewish custom to count the day of departure as day one. Alternate translation: "Two days after they had left"

### **Laban was told**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone told Laban" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)  
(See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **that Jacob had fled**

Only Jacob is mentioned because he is the leader of the family. It can be made explicit that his family went with him. Alternate translation: "that Jacob had fled with his wives and children" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 31:23**

### **So he took**

“So Laban took”

### **pursued him**

“chased after Jacob”

### **for a seven days’ journey**

Laban spent seven days walking to catch up to Jacob.

### **He overtook him**

“He caught up to him”

## Genesis 31:24

### Now God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night

The word “now” is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Laban. Alternate translation: “That night God came to Laban in a dream” (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad

The phrase “good nor bad” are used together to mean “anything.” Alternate translation: “Do not say anything to try and stop Jacob from leaving” (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

## Genesis 31:25

**Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country.  
Laban also camped with his relatives in the hill country of Gilead**

The word “now” is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Jacob and Laban. Alternate translation: “When Laban caught up with Jacob, Jacob had set up camp in the hill country. Then Laban and his relatives also camped in the hill country of Gilead” (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

## Genesis 31:26

### carried away my daughters like prisoners of war

Laban speaks about Jacob taking his family with him back to the land of Canaan as if Jacob took them as prisoners after a battle and is forcing them to go with him. Laban is exaggerating because he is angry and is trying to make Jacob feel guilty for what he did. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-simile\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-hyperbole\]\]](#)) (See: **Simile (p.1721)**)

## **Genesis 31:27**

### **flee secretly**

“run away in secret”

### **with celebration**

“with joy”

### **with tambourine and with harps**

These instruments stand for music. Alternate translation: “and with music” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **tambourine**

a musical instrument with a head like a drum that can be hit and with pieces of metal around the side that sound when the instrument is shaken (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1732)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1732)**)

## **Genesis 31:28**

### **to kiss my grandsons**

Here "grandsons" would include all grandchildren whether male or female. Alternate translation: "to kiss my grandchildren" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1735)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1735)**)

### **Now you have done foolishly**

"You have acted foolishly"

### **Now**

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

## Genesis 31:29

### **It is in my power to do you harm**

The word “you” is plural and refers to everyone with Jacob. Alternate translation: “I have enough people with me to harm all of you” (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### **Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad**

The words “good nor bad” are used together to mean “anything.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 31:24](#). Alternate translation: “Do not say anything to try and stop Jacob from leaving” (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

## **Genesis 31:30**

### **you have gone away**

This “you” is singular and refers to Jacob. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### **to your father’s house**

Here “house” stands for family. Alternate translation: “to be home with your father and the rest of your family” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **my gods**

“my idols”

## **Genesis 31:31**

**Because I was afraid and thought that you would take your daughters from me by force I left secretly**

“I left in secret because I was afraid that you would take your daughters from me by force”

## **Genesis 31:32**

### **Whoever has stolen your gods will not continue to live**

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "We will kill whoever has stolen your gods" (See: **Litotes (p.1674)**) (See: **Litotes (p.1674)**)

### **In the presence of our relatives**

The word "our" refers to Jacob's relatives and includes Laban's relatives. All the relatives will watch to make sure everything is fair and honest. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**)

### **identify whatever with me is yours and take it**

"look for whatever we have that is yours and take it"

### **For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them**

This changes from the story to background information about Jacob. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

## **Genesis 31:33**

### **the two female servants**

This refers to Zilpah and Bilhah.

### **he did not find them**

“he did not find his idols”

## **Genesis 31:34**

### **Now Rachel & upon them**

The word “now” is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Rachel. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### **saddle**

a seat placed on the back of an animal so a person can ride on it

## **Genesis 31:35**

### **my master**

Calling someone “my master” is a way of honoring them.

### **that I cannot stand up before you**

“because I am unable to stand up in your presence”

### **for I am having my period**

This refers to the time of the month when a woman bleeds from her womb. (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## Genesis 31:36

### He said to him

“Jacob said to Laban”

### What is my offense? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued after me?

The phrases “What is my offense” and “What is my sin” mean basically the same thing. Jacob is asking Laban to tell him what he did wrong. Alternate translation: “What have I done wrong that you should pursue me like this?” (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

### hotly pursued after me

Here the word “hotly” means Laban urgently chased Jacob intending to capture him. (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 31:37**

### **What have you found of all your household goods?**

“What have you found that belongs to you?”

### **Set them here before our relatives**

Here the word “our” refers to Jacob’s relatives and includes Laban’s relatives. Alternate translation: “Lay anything you have found in front of our relatives” (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

### **they may judge between us two**

Here “two of us” refers to Jacob and Laban. The phrase “to judge between” means to decide which person is right in a dispute. Alternate translation: “they may judge between the two of us” (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

## Genesis 31:38

### General Information:

## General Information:

Jacob continues to speak to Laban.

### **twenty years**

"20 years" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **ewes**

female sheep

### **have not miscarried**

This means they have not had a pregnancy end early and unexpectedly with the lamb or kid born dead.

## **Genesis 31:39**

### **What was torn by beasts I did not bring to you**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When a wild animal killed one of your animals I did not bring it to you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **Instead, I bore the loss of it**

For Jacob to count Laban's dead animals as a loss from his own flock is spoken of as if it was a burden he would bear on his shoulders. Alternate translation: "Instead of counting it a loss from your flock, I counted it as a loss from my flock" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 31:40

### **There I was; in the day the heat consumed me, and the frost by night**

Suffering in the hot and cold temperatures is spoken of as if the temperatures were animals that were eating Jacob. Alternate translation: "I stayed with your flocks even during hottest part of the day and the coldest part of the night" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 31:41

### General Information:

## General Information:

Jacob continues to speak to Laban.

### These twenty years

"These last 20 years" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### fourteen years

"14 years" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### changed my wages ten times

"changed what he said he would pay me ten times." See how you translated "my wages" in [Genesis 31:7](#).

## **Genesis 31:42**

### **Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the one Isaac fears, had been with me**

Jacob is referring to the same God not to three different gods. Alternate translation: "If the God of Abraham and Isaac, my father, had not been with me"

#### **the God of my father**

Here the word "father" refers to his parent, Isaac.

#### **the one Isaac fears**

Here the word "fears" refers to the "fear of Yahweh," which means to deeply respect him and show that respect by obeying him.

#### **empty-handed**

This stands for having nothing. Alternate translation: "with absolutely nothing" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **God has seen my oppression and how hard I worked**

The abstract noun "oppression" can be stated as "oppressed." Alternate translation: "God has seen how hard I worked and how you oppressed me" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

## **Genesis 31:43**

**But what can I do today to these my daughters, or to their children whom they have borne?**

Laban uses a question to emphasize that there is nothing he can do. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "But, there is nothing I can do to bring my daughters and grandchildren back with me." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 31:44

### let it be for a witness

Here the word "witness" does not refer to a person, but it is used figuratively and refers to the covenant that Jacob and Laban are making. The covenant is spoken of as if it were a person who is there when they agree to act peacefully to one another. (See: **Personification (p.1698)**) (See: **Personification (p.1698)**)

## **Genesis 31:45**

### **pillar**

This means that a large stone was simply set up on its end to mark the place where this important event happened.

## **Genesis 31:46**

### **made a pile**

“stacked them on top of each other”

### **Then they ate there by the pile**

Eating a meal together was a part of making the covenant with one another. The full meaning of this may be made explicit. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 31:47

### Jegar Saha Dutha

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Jegar Saha Dutha means 'heap of witness' in Laban's language." (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Galeed

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Galeed means 'heap of witness' in Jacob's language. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 31:48

### This pile is a witness between me and you

The stones do not actually bear witness as a person. Alternate translation: "This pile will be a reminder between me and you" (See: **Personification (p.1698)**) (See: **Personification (p.1698)**)

### Galeed

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Galeed means 'heap of witness' in Jacob's language. See how you translated this in [Genesis 31:47](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 31:49

### Mizpah

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Mizpah means 'watchtower.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### when we are out of sight one from another

Here "out of sight" stands for no longer being in each other's presence. Alternate translation: "when we are no longer with each other" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 31:50**

### **although no one else is with us**

Here "us" refers to Laban and Jacob. Alternate translation: "even if no one else is there to see us"

### **see**

"look" or "remember" or "pay attention to what i am about to tell you"

## **Genesis 31:51**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 31:52

### **This pile is a witness, and the pillar is a witness**

These piles of stones were to act as a remembrance and a boundary marker for Jacob and Laban regarding their peace agreement. They are spoken of as if they are human witnesses. (See: **Personification (p.1698)**) (See: **Personification (p.1698)**)

## **Genesis 31:53**

**May the God of Abraham, and the god of Nahor, the gods of their father,  
judge between us**

Abraham is Jacob's grandfather. Nahor is Laban's grandfather. The father of Abraham and Nahor is Terah. Not all of them worshipped Yahweh.

### **the Fear of his father Isaac**

Here the word "Fear" refers to Yahweh, who Isaac deeply respected and showed that respect by obeying him.

## **Genesis 31:54**

### **called his relatives to eat a meal**

Eating a meal together was part of making the covenant with one another. The full meaning of this may be made explicit. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 31:55**

### **Early in the morning & returned home**

Verse 55 is the first verse of chapter 32 in the original Hebrew text, but the last verse of chapter 31 in most modern Bibles. We suggest that you follow the numbering of Bibles in your national language.

### **blessed**

This means expressing a desire for positive and beneficial things to happen to someone.

## Genesis 32

### Genesis 32 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Jacob does not trust Yahweh

Jacob does not trust in Yahweh. Instead, he fears that his brother Esau could kill him and his family. He should have known that Yahweh would continue to bless him and protect his family. He should have trusted in Yahweh's covenant faithfulness. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/bless\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/trust\]\]](#) and **covenant faithfulness, covenant loyalty, covenant love (p.1747)**)

#### Name change

In Scripture, a change in name always occurs at a highly significant point in a person's life. The return of Jacob to Canaan was a significant event in the history of the Hebrew people.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### “A man wrestled with him”

Scholars are divided over the identity of the person Jacob wrestled with. It was probably an angel, but some believe he wrestled with Jesus before he came to earth. The translator will probably have difficulty trying to keep ambiguity in identifying this individual because the word “man” usually indicates a normal, living person. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 32:1**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 32:2**

### **Mahanaim**

Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Mahanaim means 'two camps.'"

## Genesis 32:3

### Seir

This is a mountainous area in the region of Edom. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 32:4

**This is what you will say to my master Esau: This is what your servant Jacob says: 'I have been & have delayed my return until now.'**

This has a quotation within a quotation. The direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "This is what I want you to tell my master Esau. Tell him that I have been ... have delayed my return until now." (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: [Quotes within Quotes \(p.1710\)](#))

### **my master Esau**

Jacob is using polite language and refers to his brother as "my master."

### **your servant Jacob**

Jacob is using polite language and refers to himself as "your servant."

## Genesis 32:5

### I have oxen & in your eyes.

This continues the quotation within a quotation that begins with the words “I have been” in verse 4. The direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. “This is what I want you to tell my master Esau. Tell him that I have been ... Tell him that I have oxen ... in his eyes.” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### that I may find favor in your eyes

When a person finds favor in the eyes of another, the second person approves of the first person. Here “eyes” are a metonym for the person seeing something, and seeing a person is a metaphor for deciding whether what that person sees is good or bad. Alternate translation: “that you may approve of me” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 32:6**

### **four hundred men**

"400 men" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 32:7**

### **afraid**

This refers to the unpleasant feeling a person has when there is a threat of harm to himself or others.

### **upset**

distressed, troubled

## Genesis 32:8

### to one camp and attacks it, then the camp that is left will escape

Here "camp" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "to attack the people in one camp, then the people in the other camp will escape" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 32:9

### God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Yahweh

This does not refer to different gods, but to the one God they all worship. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, who is God of my grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Yahweh, who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will prosper you,’

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, you who said that I should return to my country and to my kindred, and that you would prosper me,” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p. 1710)**)

### to your kindred

“to your family”

### I will prosper you

“I will do good for you” or “I will treat you well”

## Genesis 32:10

### **I am not worthy of all your acts of covenant faithfulness and of all the trustworthiness that you have done for your servant**

The abstract nouns “faithfulness” and “trustworthiness” can be stated as “faithful” and “loyal.” Alternate translation: “I do not deserve for you to remain faithful to your covenant or for you to be loyal to me, your servant” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **your servant**

This is a polite way of saying “me.”

### **now I have become two camps**

Here the phrase “I have become” is an idiom meaning what he now possesses. Alternate translation: “and now I have enough people, flocks, and possessions with me to make two camps” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 32:11

### rescue me

“save me”

### from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau

Here the word “hand” refers to power. The two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second clarifies that the brother whom Jacob intended was Esau. Alternate translation: “from the power of my brother, Esau” or “from my brother, Esau” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-parallelism\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### I am afraid of him, that he will

“I am afraid that he will”

## Genesis 32:12

### **But you said, ‘I will certainly make you prosper. I will make your descendants & number.’**

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “But you said that you would certainly prosper me, and that you would make my descendants ... number” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### **make you prosper**

“do good to you” or “treat you well”

### **I will make your descendants like the sand of the sea**

This speaks about the very large number of Jacob’s descendants as if their number will be like the grains of sand on the seashore. (See: **Simile (p.1721)**) (See: **Simile (p.1721)**)

### **which cannot be numbered for their number**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “which no one can count because of their number” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 32:13**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 32:14**

### **two hundred**

"200" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **twenty**

"20" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 32:15**

### **thirty & forty & ten**

“30 ... 40 ... 10” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **their colts**

“their young”

## **Genesis 32:16**

### **These he gave into the hand of his servants, every herd by itself**

Here “into the hand” means to give control over them. Alternate translation: “He divided them into small herds, and gave each of his servants control over one herd” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **put a space between each of the herds**

“let each herd travel at a distance from the other herds”

## **Genesis 32:17**

### **He instructed**

“He commanded”

### **asks you & that are in front of you?’**

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “asks you who your master is, where you are going, and who owns these animals that are ahead of you” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### **To whom do you belong?**

“Who is your master?”

### **Whose animals are these that are in front of you?**

“Who owns these animals that are in front of you?”

## Genesis 32:18

**Then you will say, 'They are your servant Jacob's. They are a gift sent to my master Esau. See, he is also coming after us.'**

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Then I want you to tell him that all of these things belong to Jacob, his servant, and he is giving them to his master, Esau. And tell him that Jacob is on the way to meet him" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### **your servant Jacob's**

Jacob is referring to himself in a polite way as Esau's servant.

### **to my master Esau**

Jacob is referring to Esau in a polite way as his master.

### **coming after us**

Here "us" refers to the servant speaking and the other servants bringing herds to Esau. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**)

## **Genesis 32:19**

### **gave instructions to the second group**

“commanded the second group”

## **Genesis 32:20**

### **You must also say, 'Your servant Jacob**

Possible meanings are (1) "You will say also, 'Your servant Jacob'" or (2) "You will say, 'Also, Your servant Jacob.'"

### **I will appease him**

"I will calm him down" or "I will make his anger go away"

### **he will receive me**

"he will welcome me kindly"

## **Genesis 32:21**

### **So the gifts went on ahead of him**

Here “gifts” stands for the servants taking the gifts. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **He himself stayed**

Here “himself” emphasizes that Jacob did not go with the servants. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1713)**) (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1713)**)

## **Genesis 32:22**

### **his two women servants**

“his two servant wives.” This means Zilpah and Bilhah.

### **ford**

a shallow place in a river that is easy to cross

### **Jabbok**

This is the name of a river. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 32:23**

### **all his possessions**

“all that he had”

## **Genesis 32:24**

### **until daybreak**

“until dawn”

## Genesis 32:25

### Jacob's hip was dislocated as he wrestled with him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The man injured Jacob's hip as he wrestled with him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### hip

the place where the upper leg bone connects to the hip

## **Genesis 32:26**

### **for the dawn is breaking**

“the sun will rise soon”

### **bless**

Here “bless” means to pronounce a formal blessing on someone and to cause good things to happen to that person.

### **I will not let you go unless you bless me**

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “Absolutely not! You must bless me first, then I will let you go” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**)

## **Genesis 32:27**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 32:28

### Israel

Translators may add a footnote that says "The name Israel means 'He struggles with God.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### with men

Here "men" means "people" in general.

## Genesis 32:29

### He said, “Why is it that you ask my name?”

“He said, ‘Why would you ask about my name?’” This rhetorical question was meant to shock, rebuke and cause Jacob to ponder over what just happened between him and the other man he just wrestled with. Alternate translation: “Do not ask me for my name!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 32:30

### Peniel

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Peniel means 'the face of God.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### face to face

Being "face to face" means that two people are seeing each other in person, at a close distance.

### and my life is delivered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "yet he spared my life" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 32:31**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 32:32**

### **That is why to this day**

This marks a change from the story to background information about the descendants of Israel. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### **to this day**

This means to the day that the author was writing this.

### **ligaments of the hip**

This refers to the muscle that connects the thigh bone to the thigh socket.

### **hip joint**

“thigh socket”

### **while dislocating**

“while striking”

## Genesis 33

### Genesis 33 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Jacob's fear

Jacob feared his brother. He showed Esau great respect and sought to protect his family from Esau's power. He did not fear and trust Yahweh. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/fear\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/trust\]\]](#))

#### Favoritism

Jacob showed favoritism towards Rachel and Joseph. He arranged the family according to those he loved the most. Rachel and Joseph were the most protected from a potential attack by Esau. He would have rather had everyone else die, in order to spare their lives. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/favor\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#))

## **Genesis 33:1**

### **behold**

The word “behold” here alerts us to pay attention to a surprising new part of the story.

### **four hundred men**

“400 men” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **Jacob divided the children & female servants**

This does not mean Jacob divided the children evenly so that each woman had the same amount of children with her. Jacob divided the children so that each one went with his or her mother. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **female servants**

“servant wives.” This refers to Bilhah and Zilpah.

## **Genesis 33:2**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 33:3

### He himself went on ahead of them

Here “himself” emphasizes that Jacob went alone in front of the others. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1713)**) (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1713)**)

### He bowed

Here the word “bow” means to bend over to humbly express respect and honor toward someone. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## **Genesis 33:4**

### **meet him**

“meet Jacob”

### **embraced him, hugged his neck, and kissed him**

This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: “Esau put his arms around Jacob, hugged him, and kissed him”

### **Then they wept**

This can be translated more explicitly. Alternate translation: “Then Esau and Jacob cried because they were happy to see each other again” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 33:5**

### **he saw the women and the children**

“he saw the women and children who were with Jacob”

### **The children whom God has graciously given your servant**

The phrase “your servant” is a polite way for Jacob to refer to himself. Alternate translation: “These are the children God has kindly given me, your servant” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

## **Genesis 33:6**

### **female servants**

“servant wives.” This refers to Bilhah and Zilpah.

### **bowed down**

This is a sign of humility and respect before another person. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## **Genesis 33:7**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 33:8

### What do you mean by all these groups that I met?

The phrase “all these groups” refers to the groups of servants that Jacob sent to give gifts to Esau. Alternate translation: “Why did you send all of those different groups to meet me?”

### To find favor in the sight of my master

The phrase “find favor” is an idiom which means to be approved of by someone. Also, sight represents judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: “So that you, my master, would be pleased with me” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#)) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### my master

The phrase “my master” is a polite way of referring to Esau. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

## Genesis 33:9

### I have enough

The word “animals” or “property” is understood. Alternate translation: “I have enough animals” or “I have enough property” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

## Genesis 33:10

### if I have found favor in your eyes

The phrase “found favor” is an idiom which means to be approved of by someone. Here “eyes” are a metonym for sight, and sight is a metaphor representing his evaluation. Alternate translation: “if you are pleased with me” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### my gift from my hand

Here “hand” refers to Jacob. Alternate translation: “this gift that I am giving to you” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### my hand, for indeed

This can be translated as a new sentence: “my hand. For certainly”

### I have seen your face, and it is like seeing the face of God

The meaning of this simile is unclear. Possible meanings are (1) Jacob is happy that Esau has forgiven him like God has forgiven him or (2) Jacob is amazed to see his brother again like he was amazed to see God or (3) Jacob is humbled to be in Esau’s presence like he was humbled to be in God’s presence. (See: **Simile (p.1721)**) (See: **Simile (p.1721)**)

### I have seen your face

Here “face” stands for Esau. It may be best to translate as “face” because of the importance of the word “face” here with “face of God” and “face to face” in [Genesis 32:30](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 33:11**

### **that was brought to you**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that my servants brought to you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **God has dealt graciously with me**

“God has treated me very well” or “God has blessed me very much”

### **Thus Jacob urged him, and Esau accepted it**

It was customary to refuse a gift first, but then to accept the gift before the giver was offended.

## **Genesis 33:12**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 33:13

### My master knows

This is a polite and formal way of referring to Esau. Alternate translation: "You, my master, know" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### the children are young

The meaning can be stated more explicitly. Alternate translation: "the children are too young to travel fast" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### If they are driven hard even one day

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If we force them to go too fast even for one day" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 33:14

### Please let my master go on ahead of his servant

This is a polite and formal way of Jacob referring to himself. Alternate translation: "My lord, I am your servant. Please go ahead of me" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### at the pace of the livestock that are before me

"at the speed the animals I am looking after can go"

### Seir

This is a mountainous area in the region of Edom. See how you translated this in [Genesis 32:3](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 33:15

### Why do that?

Jacob uses a question to emphasize that Esau does not need to leave men. Alternate translation: "Do not do that!" or "You do not need to do that!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### my lord

This is a polite and formal way of referring to Esau. Alternate translation: "you, my lord" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

## **Genesis 33:16**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 33:17

### Succoth

Translators may also add a footnote that says, "The name Succoth means 'shelters.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### built himself a house

It is implied that the house is also for his family. Alternate translation: "built a house for himself and his family" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### for his livestock

"for the animals he looked after"

## Genesis 33:18

### General Information:

## General Information:

This starts a new part of the story. The author describes what Jacob did after he rested in Succoth.

### When Jacob came from Paddan Aram

"After Jacob left Paddan Aram"

### When Jacob & he arrived & He camped

This only mentions Jacob because he is the leader of the family. It is implied that his family was with him. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### He camped near

"He set up his camp near"

## **Genesis 33:19**

### **piece of ground**

“piece of land”

### **Hamor**

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Shechem's father**

Shechem is the name of a city and the name of a man.

### **a hundred**

“100” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 33:20

### El Elohe Israel

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name El Elohe Israel means 'God, the God of Israel.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 34

### Genesis 34 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Israel

Jacob's name was changed to Israel. It is his descendants who inherited the promised blessings given to him and to Isaac and Abraham. This is the first time his descendants are collectively referred to as the people group Israel. The people group Israel is identified through the covenant of circumcision. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#), [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/promise\]\]](#), [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#), [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/promise\]\]](#), [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#), [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/covenant\]\]](#) and **circumcise**, **circumcised**, **circumcision**, **uncircumcised**, **uncircumcision** (p.1741))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Implicit information

Jacob's reacted to the rape of Dinah with indifference. This is possibly because she was not a daughter of Rachel. His reaction was both unwise and improper. This action brought shame on the whole family. Therefore, Jacob's sons corrected this wrong and plotted against Hamor and Shechem.

Shechem raped Dinah, but then he said he loved her. By raping her, he ensured that no one else would want to marry her. This is not love. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/wise\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/love\]\]](#) and **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1601))

## Genesis 34:1

### Now

Here this word is used to mark a new part of the story.

### Dinah

This is the name of Leah's daughter. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 30:21](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 34:2

### the Hivite

This is the name of a people group. See how you translated the similar word “Hivites” in [Genesis 10:17](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### the prince of the land

This is referring to Hamor not Shechem. Also, “prince” here does not mean son of a king. It means Hamor was the leader of the people in that area.

### He took her and lay with her

Possible meanings are (1) “took” and “lay with” are two separate actions. Alternate translation: “he grabbed her and had sexual relations with her” or (2) “took” and “lay with” are a hendiadys, two words used to describe one action, Alternate translation: “raped her” (See: **Hendiadys (p.1648)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.1648)**)

### lay with her

This is a polite way of speaking of sexual relations. You may have to use other words in your translation. Alternate translation: “had sexual relations with her” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## Genesis 34:3

### He was drawn to Dinah

“He was very attracted to her.” This speaks about Shechem loving Dinah and wanting to be with her as if something were forcing him to come to Dinah. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “He wanted very much to be with Dinah” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### spoke tenderly to her

He tried to convince her that he loved her and that he wanted her to love him also.

## **Genesis 34:4**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 34:5

### Now Jacob

“Now” is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Jacob. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### Jacob heard that he

The word “he” refers to Shechem.

### he had defiled

This means that Shechem had greatly dishonored and disgraced Dinah by forcing her to sleep with him.

### held his peace

This is a way of saying that Jacob did not say or do anything about the matter. (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 34:6**

### **Hamor & went out to Jacob**

“Hamor ... went to meet Jacob”

## **Genesis 34:7**

### **The men were offended**

“The men were very insulted” or “They were shocked”

### **he had disgraced Israel**

Here the word “Israel” refers to every member of Jacob’s family. Israel as a people group was disgraced. Alternate translation: “he had humiliated the family of Israel” or “he had brought shame on the people of Israel” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **lying with Jacob’s daughter**

“having sexual relations with Jacob’s daughter”

### **for such a thing should not have been done**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “for he should not have done such a terrible thing” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 34:8**

### **Hamor spoke with them**

“Hamor spoke with Jacob and his sons”

### **loves your daughter**

Here the word “love” refers to romantic love between a man and a woman. Alternate translation: “loves her and wants to marry her”

### **give her to him as a wife**

In some cultures, the parents decide whom their children will marry.

## **Genesis 34:9**

### **Intermarry with us**

To intermarry is to marry a member of a different racial, social, religious or tribal group. Alternate translation: "Allow marriages between your people and ours"

## **Genesis 34:10**

**the land will be open to you**

“the land will be available to you”

## Genesis 34:11

### Shechem said to her father

“Shechem said to Dinah’s father Jacob”

### Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you tell me I will give

The phrase “find favor” is an idiom which means to be approved of by someone. Also, the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: “If you will approve of me, then I will give you whatever you ask” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#)) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 34:12**

### **bride price**

In some cultures, it is customary for a man to give money, property, cattle, and other gifts to the bride's family at the time of marriage.

## Genesis 34:13

### The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father with deceit

The abstract noun “deceit” can be stated as the verb “lied.” Alternate translation: “But the sons of Jacob lied to Shechem and Hamor when they answered them” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### Shechem had defiled Dinah

This means that Shechem had greatly dishonored and disgraced Dinah by forcing her to sleep with him. See how you translated “defiled” in [Genesis 34:5](#).

## **Genesis 34:14**

### **They said to them**

“Jacob’s sons said to Shechem and Hamor”

### **We cannot do this thing, to give our sister**

“We cannot agree to give Dinah in marriage”

### **for that would be a disgrace to us**

“for that would cause us shame.” Here “us” refers to Jacob’s sons and all the people of Israel. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

## **Genesis 34:15**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 34:16**

**give our daughters to you & take your daughters to ourselves**

This means they will allow a person from Jacob's family to marry a person who lives in Hamor's land.

## **Genesis 34:17**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 34:18**

### **Their words pleased Hamor and his son Shechem**

“Hamor and his son Shechem agreed with what Jacob’s sons said”

## **Genesis 34:19**

### **to do what they said**

“to become circumcised”

### **Jacob’s daughter**

“Jacob’s daughter Dinah”

### **because he was the most honored person in all his father’s household**

This can be translated as a new sentence. It can be made explicit that Shechem knew the other men would agree to be circumcised because they greatly respected him. Alternate translation: “Shechem knew all the men in his father’s household would agree with him because he was the most honored among them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 34:20**

### **the gate of their city**

It was common for leaders to meet at the city gate to make official decisions.

## **Genesis 34:21**

### **These men**

“Jacob, his sons, and the people of Israel”

### **peace with us**

Here “us” includes Hamor, his son and all the people they spoke with at the city gate. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

### **let them live in the land and trade in it**

“let them live and trade in the land”

### **for, really, the land is large enough for them**

Shechem uses the word “really” to add emphasis to his statement. “because, certainly, the land is large enough for them” or “because, indeed, there is plenty of land for them”

### **take their daughters & give them our daughters**

This refers to marriages between the women of one group and the men of the other group. See how you translated similar phrases in [Genesis 34:9](#).

## Genesis 34:22

### General Information:

## General Information:

Hamor and Shechem his son continue to talk to the city elders.

**Only on this condition will the men agree to live with us and become one people: If every male among us is circumcised, as they are circumcised**

“Only if every man among us is circumcised, as the men of Israel are circumcised, will they agree to live among us and unite with us as one people”

## Genesis 34:23

### Will not their livestock and their property—all their animals be ours?

Shechem uses a question to emphasize that Jacob's livestock and property will belong to the people of Shechem. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "All of their animals and property will be ours." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 34:24

### Every male was circumcised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So Hamor and Shechem had someone circumcise all the men" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 34:25**

### **On the third day**

“third” is the ordinal number for three. It can be stated without the ordinal number. Alternate translation: “After two days” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1693)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1693)**)

### **when they were still in pain**

“when the men of the city were still in pain”

### **each took his sword**

“took their swords”

### **they attacked the city**

Here “city” stands for the people. Alternate translation: “they attacked the people of the city” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **security, and they killed all the males**

This can be translated as a new sentence. “security. Simeon and Levi killed all the men of the city”

## **Genesis 34:26**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 34:27**

### **the dead bodies**

“the dead bodies of Hamor, Shechem, and their men”

### **looted the city**

“stole everything in the city that was valuable”

### **because the people had defiled their sister**

Shechem alone had defiled Dinah, but Jacob’s sons considered Shechem’s entire family and everyone in the city responsible for this act.

### **had defiled**

This means that Shechem had greatly dishonored and disgraced Dinah by forcing her to sleep with him. See how you translated “defiled” in [Genesis 34:5](#).

## **Genesis 34:28**

### **They took their flocks**

“Jacob's sons took the people's flocks”

## **Genesis 34:29**

### **all their wealth**

“all their possessions and money”

### **All their children and their wives, they captured**

“They captured all their children and wives”

## Genesis 34:30

### brought trouble on me

Causing someone to experience trouble is spoken of as if trouble were an object that is brought and placed on a person. Alternate translation: "caused great problems for me" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### to make me stink to the inhabitants of the land

Causing the people in the surrounding areas to hate Jacob is spoken of as if Jacob's sons made him smell bad physically. This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "You have made me repulsive to the people who live in the land" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### I am few in number & against me and attack me, then I will be destroyed, I and my household

Here the words "I" and "me" refer to all of Jacob's household. Jacob only says "I" or "me" since he is the leader. Alternate translation: "My household is small ... against us and attack us, then they will destroy all of us" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### gather themselves together against me and attack me

"form an army and attack me" or "form an army and attack us"

### then I will be destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will destroy me" or "they will destroy us" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 34:31

### Should Shechem have dealt with our sister as with a prostitute?

Simeon and Levi use a question to emphasize that Shechem did what was wrong and deserved to die. Alternate translation: "Shechem should not have treated our sister as if she were a prostitute!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 35

### Genesis 35 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Name change

In Scripture, a change in name always occurs at a highly significant point in a person's life. The return of Jacob to Canaan was a significant event in the history of the Hebrew people.

#### Covenant

The covenant God made with Abraham is repeated here. It indicates that all of Jacob's descendants will inherit the promises of this covenant. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/covenant\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#) and **promise, promised (p.1768)**)

## **Genesis 35:1**

### **go up to Bethel**

The phrase “go up” is used because Bethel is higher in elevation than Shechem.

### **Build an altar there to God**

God speaks about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: “Build an altar there to me, your God” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

## **Genesis 35:2**

### **said to his household**

“said to his family”

### **Put away the foreign gods that are among you**

“Throw away your idols” or “Get rid of your false gods”

### **purify yourselves, and change your clothes**

This was the custom of cleansing oneself morally and physically before going to worship God.

### **change your clothes**

Putting on a new clothes was a sign that they had made themselves clean before approaching God. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## **Genesis 35:3**

### **in the day of my distress**

“in the time of my distress” or “when I was in trouble”

## **Genesis 35:4**

### **So they gave**

“so everyone in Jacob’s household gave” or “so all of his family and servants gave”

### **that were in their hand**

Here “in their hand” stands for what they own. Alternate translation: “that were in their possession” or “that they had” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **the rings that were in their ears**

“their earrings.” Possible meanings are (1) the gold in the earrings could have been used to make more idols or (2) they took these earrings from the city of Shechem after they attacked it and killed all the people. The earrings would have reminded them of their sin.

## Genesis 35:5

### God made panic to fall on the cities

God causing the people of the cities to be afraid of Jacob and his family is spoken of as if panic were an object that fell on the cities. The abstract noun "panic" can be stated as "afraid." Alternate translation: "God made the people in the surrounding cities afraid of Jacob and those with him" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-abstractnouns\]\]](#)) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### on the cities

Here "cities" stands for the people who live in the cities. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### the sons of Jacob

It is implied that no one attacked anyone in Jacob's family. But two of the sons, Simeon and Levi had attacked the Canaanites relatives of Shechem after he seized and slept with Jacob's daughter. Jacob was afraid they would seek revenge in [Genesis 34:30](#). Alternate translation: "Jacob's family" or "Jacob's household" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 35:6

### Luz

This is the name of a city. See how you translated this in [Genesis 28:19](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)  
(See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 35:7

### El Bethel

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name El Bethel means 'God of Bethel.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### there God had revealed himself to him

"there God made himself known to Jacob"

## Genesis 35:8

### Deborah

This is the name of a woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Rebekah's nurse

A nurse is a woman who takes care of another woman's child. The nurse was highly honored and important to the family.

### She was buried down from Bethel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They buried her down from Bethel" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### down from Bethel

The phrase "down from" is used because they buried her in a place that was lower in elevation than Bethel.

### Allon Bakuth

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Allon Bakuth means 'Oak tree where there is weeping.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 35:9

### When Jacob came from Paddan Aram

It can be made explicit that they were in Bethel. Alternate translation: "After Jacob left Paddan Aram, and while he was in Bethel" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **blessed**

Here "bless" means to pronounce a formal blessing on someone and to cause good things to happen to that person.

## Genesis 35:10

### but your name will no longer be called Jacob

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “but your name will no longer be Jacob” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 35:11

### God said to him

“God said to Jacob”

### Be fruitful and multiply

God told Jacob to produce children so that there would be many of them. The word “multiply” explains how he was to be “fruitful.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:22](#). (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-doublet\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

### A nation and a company of nations will come from you

Here “nation” and “nations” refer to Jacob’s descendants who will establish these nations. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 35:12**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 35:13**

### **God went up from him**

Here “went up” is used because where God dwells is typically thought of as being up or above the world. Alternate translation: “God left him”

## **Genesis 35:14**

### **pillar**

This is a memorial pillar which was simply a large stone or boulder set up on its end.

### **He poured out a drink offering over it and poured oil on it**

This is a sign that he is dedicating the pillar to God. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## **Genesis 35:15**

### **Bethel**

Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Bethel means 'house of God.'"

## **Genesis 35:16**

### **Ephrath**

This is another name for the town of Bethlehem.

### **She had hard labor**

“She was having a very difficult time giving birth to the child”

## **Genesis 35:17**

### **While she was in hardest labor**

“When the labor pain was at its worst”

### **midwife**

a person who helps a woman when she is giving birth to a child

## Genesis 35:18

### As she was dying, with her dying breath

A “dying breath” is a person’s last breath before he or she dies. Alternate translation: “Just before she died, as she was taking her last breath” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### Ben-Oni

Translator may add a footnote that says “The name Ben-Oni means ‘son of my sorrow.’” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Benjamin

Translator may add a footnote that says “The name Benjamin means ‘son of the right hand.’” The phrase “right hand” indicates a place of special favor.

## **Genesis 35:19**

### **was buried**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “they buried her” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **on the way**

“alongside the road”

## **Genesis 35:20**

### **It is the marker of Rachel's grave to this day**

"It marks Rachel's grave still to this day"

### **to this day**

"up to the present time." This means to the time that the author was writing this.

## Genesis 35:21

### Israel traveled on

It is implied that Israel's family and servants are with him. The full meaning of this information can be made explicit. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 35:22

### lay with

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "had sexual relations with" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### Bilhah

This is the name of Rachel's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:29](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Now Jacob had twelve sons

This sentence begins a new paragraph, which continues into the following verses.

### twelve sons

"12 sons" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 35:23**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 35:24**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 35:25

### Bilhah

This is the name of Rachel's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:29](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 35:26

### Zilpah

This is the name of Leah's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:24](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### who were born to him in Paddan Aram

It is implied that this does not include Benjamin who was born in the land of Canaan near Bethlehem. It only mentions Paddan Aram since that is where most of them were born. The full meaning of this can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "who were born to him in Paddan Aram, except Benjamin who was born in the land of Canaan" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 35:27

### Jacob came to Isaac

Here “came” can be stated as “went.” (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

### Mamre

This was another name for the city of Hebron. It may have been named after Mamre, the friend of Abraham who lived there. See how you translated this in [Genesis 13:18](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Kiriath Arba

This is the name of a city. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:2](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 35:28**

**one hundred eighty years**

“180 years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 35:29

### Isaac breathed his last and died

“Isaac took his last breath and died.” The phrases “breathed his last” and “died” mean basically the same thing. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 25:8](#). Alternate translation: “Isaac died” (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

### breathed his last

This is a polite way of saying a person died. See how you translated this in [Genesis 25:8](#). (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### was gathered to his ancestors

This means that after Isaac died, his soul went to the same place as his relatives who died before him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he joined his family members who had already died” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### an old man full of days

The phrases “old man” and “full of days” mean basically the same thing. They emphasize that Isaac lived a very long time. Alternate translation: “after he had lived a very long time and was very old” (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

## Genesis 36

### Genesis 36 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Esau's descendants

Esau's descendants became known as the Edomite people group. They also become a great nation. This nation is prominent in the rest of the Old Testament. God graciously blessed Esau and he had many descendants. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/grace\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/bless\]\]](#))

## Genesis 36:1

### These were the descendants of Esau (also called Edom)

“These are the descendants of Esau, who is also called Edom.” This sentence introduces the account of Esau’s descendants in Genesis 36:1-8. Alternate translation: “This is an account of the descendants of Esau, who is also called Edom” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 36:2

### Adah & Oholibamah

These are names of Esau's wives. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Elon the Hittite

"Elon the descendant of Heth" or "Elon a descendant of Heth." This is the name of a man. See how you translate this in [Genesis 26:34](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Anah & Zibeon

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Hivite

This refers to a larger group of people. See how you translated it in [Genesis 10:17](#).

## Genesis 36:3

### Nebaioth

a man's name (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.1651\)](#)) (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.1651\)](#))

### Basemath

This is the name of one of Esau's wives. See how you translated this in [Genesis 26:34](#). (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.1651\)](#)) (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.1651\)](#))

### Nebaioth

This is the name of one of Ishmael's sons. See how you translated this in [Genesis 28:9](#). (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.1651\)](#)) (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.1651\)](#))

## Genesis 36:4

### Adah & Basemath

These are names of Esau's wives. See how you translated these in [Genesis 36:2-3](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Eliphaz & Reuel

These are names of Esau's sons. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:5

### Oholibamah

These are names of Esau's wives. See how you translated these in [Genesis 36:2](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Jeush & Jalam & Korah

These are names of Esau's sons. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:6

### which he had gathered in the land of Canaan

This refers to all of the things that he had accumulated while living in the land of Canaan. Alternate translation: “which he had accumulated while living in the land of Canaan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### went into a land

This means to moved to another place and live there. Alternate translation: “went to live in another land” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 36:7**

### **their possessions**

“Esau’s and Jacob’s possessions”

### **could not support them because of their livestock**

The land was not large enough to support all of the livestock that Jacob and Esau owned. Alternate translation: “was not big enough to support all of their livestock” or “was not big enough for both Esau’s flocks and Jacob’s flocks” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **where they had settled**

The word “settled” means to move somewhere and live there. Alternate translation: “where they had moved to” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 36:8**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 36:9

### These were the descendants of Esau

This sentence introduces the account of Esau's descendants in Genesis 36:9-43. Alternate translation: "This is an account of the descendants of Esau" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### in the hill country of Seir

This means that they lived in the hill country of Seir. The full meaning of this may be made explicit. Alternate translation: "who lived in the hill country of Seir" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 36:10

### Eliphaz & Reuel

These are names of Esau's sons. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:4](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Adah & Basemath

These are names of Esau's wives. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:2-3](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 36:11**

### **Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz**

These are names of the sons of Eliphaz. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:12

### Amalek

a son of Eliphaz (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Timna

This is the name of Eliphaz's concubine. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:13

### Reuel

This is the name of a son of Esau. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:4](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Nahath & Zerah & Shammah & Mizzah

These are names of Reuel's sons. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Basemath

This is the name of a wife of Esau. See how you translated this in [Genesis 36:3](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:14

### Oholibamah

This is the name of a wife of Esau. See how you translated these in [Genesis 36:2](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Anah & Zibeon

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Jeush, Jalam, and Korah

These are names of Esau's sons. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:5](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:15

### Eliphaz

This is the name of one of Esau's sons. See how you translated his name in [Genesis 36:4](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz

These are names of Eliphaz's sons. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:16

### Korah, Gatam, and Amalek

These are names of Eliphaz's sons. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Adah

This is the name of one of Esau's wives. See how you translated her name in [Genesis 36:2](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:17

### Reuel

This is the name of a son of Esau. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:4](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, Mizzah

These are the names of Reuel's sons. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:13](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### in the land of Edom

This means that they lived in the land of Edom. Alternate translation: "who lived in the land of Edom" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Basemath

This is the name of a wife of Esau. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:3](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:18

### Oholibamah

This is the name of a wife of Esau. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:2](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Jeush, Jalam, Korah

These are the names of Esau's sons. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:5](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Anah

This the name of a man. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:2](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 36:19**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 36:20**

### **Seir**

The word “Seir” is the name of a man and of a country.

### **the Horite**

The word “Horite” refers to a people group. See how you translated it in [Genesis 14:6](#).

### **the inhabitants of the land**

“who lived in the land of Seir, which is also called Edom”

### **Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah**

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 36:21**

### **Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan**

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 36:22**

### **Lotan & Hori and Heman**

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Timna**

This is the name of a woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:23

### Shobal

This is the name of man. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:20](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:24

### Zibeon

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:20](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Aiah and Anah

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 36:25**

### **Anah & Dishon**

These are names of men. See how you translated “Anah” in [Genesis 36:20](#).

### **Oholibamah**

This is the name of a woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:26

### Dishon & Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran

These are names of men. See how you translated “Dishon” in [Genesis 36:21](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:27

### Ezer & Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan

These are names of men. See how you translated “Ezer” in [Genesis 36:20-21](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:28

### Dishan & Uz and Aran

These are names of men. See how you translated “Dishan” in [Genesis 36:21](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:29

### the Horites

This is the name of a people group. See how you translated this in [Genesis 14:6](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, and Anah

These are the names of men. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:20](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:30

### Dishon, Ezer, Dishan

These are the names of men. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:21](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### in the land of Seir

This means that they lived in the land of Seir. Alternate translation: “of those who lived in the land of Seir” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 36:31**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 36:32**

### **Bela & Beor**

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **the name of his city**

This means that this was the city where he lived. Alternate translation: “the name of the city where he lived” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **Dinhabah**

This is the name of a place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 36:33**

### **Bela & Jobab & Zerah**

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Bozrah**

This is the name of a place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:34

### Jobab

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:33](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Husham

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Husham who was of the land of the Temanites

This means that Husham lived in the land of the Temanites. Alternate translation: "Husham who lived in the land of the Temanites" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Temanites

descendants of a man named Teman (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 36:35**

### **Husham & Hadad & Bedad**

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **The name of his city**

This means that this was the city where he lived. Alternate translation: "The name of the city where he lived" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **Avith**

These are names of places. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 36:36**

### **Hadad & Samlah**

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Samlah of Masrekah**

“Samlah from Masrekah” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Masrekah**

These are names of places. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:37

### Samlah

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:36](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### then Shaul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his place

Shaul lived in Rehoboth. Rehoboth was by the Euphrates river. This information may be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "then Shaul reigned in his place. He was from Rehoboth which is by the Euphrates River" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Shaul

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Rehoboth

This is the name of a place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 36:38**

### **Shaul & Baal-Hanan & Akbor**

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 36:39**

### **Baal-Hanan & Akbor & Hadar & Matred & Me Zahab**

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **The name of his city**

This means that this was the city where he lived. Alternate translation: "The name of the city where he lived" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **Pau**

These are names of places. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Mehetabel**

This is the name of a woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **the daughter of Matred, the granddaughter of Me Zahab**

"she was the daughter of Matred, and the granddaughter of Me Zahab"

## **Genesis 36:40**

### **the heads of clans**

“the leaders of the clans”

### **according to their clans and their regions, by their names**

The clans and the regions were named after the heads of the clans. Alternate translation: “the names of their clans and the regions where they lived were named after them. These are their names” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **Timna, Alvah, Jetheth**

These are names of people groups. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 36:41**

### **Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon**

These are names of people groups. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 36:42**

### **Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar**

These are names of people groups. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 36:43

### Magdiel, and Iram

These are names of people groups. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### their settlements

“their dwelling places” or “the places they lived”

### This was Esau

This list is said “to be” Esau, which means that it is the whole list of his descendants. Alternate translation: “This is the list of the descendants of Esau” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 37

### Genesis 37 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This chapter begins to record the account of Jacob's sons. The rest of the book of Genesis focuses on Jacob's sons, especially Joseph. This chapter also references Jacob as "Israel" beginning in this chapter.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Favoritism

Jacob's favoritism became a great problem for his sons. They are always jealous of Joseph because he is the favorite son. The beautiful garment Jacob gave to Joseph greatly strained the relationship between Joseph and his brothers. Joseph dreams he will rule all of his brothers, even though he is not the oldest son. (See: **favor, favorable, favoritism (p.1754)**)

#### God's power

The account of Joseph focuses on the power of God. God is able to protect his people despite the evil actions of some. He also is able to continue to bless them despite their circumstances. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/peopleofgod\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/bless\]\]](#))

## **Genesis 37:1**

**the land where his father was staying, in the land of Canaan**

“in the land of Canaan where his father had lived”

## Genesis 37:2

### These were the events concerning Jacob

This sentence introduces the account of Jacob's children in Genesis 37:1-50:26. Here "Jacob" refers to his whole family. Alternate translation: "This is the account of Jacob's family" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### seventeen years old

"17 years old" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### Bilhah

This is the name of Rachel's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:29](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Zilpah

This is the name of Leah's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:24](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### wives

These women were servants of Leah and Rachel whom they had given to Jacob to produce children.

### an unfavorable report about them

"a bad report about his brothers"

## Genesis 37:3

### Now

This word is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Israel and Joseph. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### loved

This refers to brotherly love or love for a friend or family member. This is natural human love between friends or relatives.

### of his old age

This means that Joseph was born when Israel was an old man. Alternate translation: "who was born when Israel was an old man" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### He made him

"Israel made Joseph"

### a beautiful garment

"a beautiful robe"

## **Genesis 37:4**

**would not speak kindly to him**

“could not speak in a courteous manner to him”

## **Genesis 37:5**

**Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told his brothers about it. They hated him even more**

This is a summary of the events that will happen in 37:6-11.

**They hated him even more**

“And Joseph’s brothers hated him even more than they hated him before”

## **Genesis 37:6**

### **Please listen to this dream which I dreamed**

“Please listen to this dream that I had”

## Genesis 37:7

### General Information:

## General Information:

Joseph tells his brothers about his dream.

### Behold

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

### we were

The word “we” refers to Joseph and includes all of his brothers. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

### tying bundles of grain

When grain is reaped it is tied into bundles and stacked until it is time to separate the grain from the straw.

### behold

Here the word “behold” here shows that Joseph was surprised by what he saw.

### my bundle rose and stood upright & your bundles came around and bowed down

Here the bundles of grain are standing and kneeling as if they were people. These bundle represent Joseph and his brothers. (See: **Personification (p.1698)**) (See: **Personification (p.1698)**)

## Genesis 37:8

### Will you really reign over us? Will you actually rule over us?

Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing. Joseph's brothers are using questions to mock Joseph. They can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "You will never be our king, and we will never bow down to you!" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-parallelism\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-rquestion\]\]](#)) (See: **Parallelism (p. 1695)**)

### reign over us

The word "us" refers to Joseph's brothers but not Joseph. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**)

### for his dreams and for his words

"because of his dreams and what he said"

## **Genesis 37:9**

### **He dreamed another dream**

"Joseph had another dream"

### **eleven stars**

"11 stars" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 37:10**

**his father rebuked him. He said to him**

"Israel scolded him, saying"

**What is this dream that you have dreamed? Will your mother & to the ground to you?**

Israel uses questions to correct Joseph. This can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "This dream you had is not real. Your mother, brothers, and I will not bow down before you!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## **Genesis 37:11**

### **jealous**

This means being angry because someone else is successful or more popular.

### **kept the matter in mind**

The means that he kept thinking about the meaning of Joseph's dream. Alternate translation: "kept thinking about what the dream might mean" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 37:12**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 37:13

### Are not your brothers tending the flock in Shechem?

Israel uses a question to begin a conversation. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You brothers are tending the flock in Shechem." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### Come

Here it is implied that Israel is asking Joseph to prepare himself to leave and go see his brothers. Alternate translation: "Get ready" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### I am ready

He is ready to leave. "I am ready to go" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 37:14**

### **He said to him**

“Israel said to Joseph”

### **bring me word**

Israel wants Joseph to come back and tell him about how his brother and flocks are doing. Alternate translation: “come tell me what you find out” or “give me a report” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **out of the Valley**

“from the Valley”

## **Genesis 37:15**

### **A certain man found Joseph. Behold, Joseph was wandering in a field**

“A certain man found Joseph wandering in a field”

#### **Behold**

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of doing this.

#### **What do you seek?**

“What are you looking for?”

## **Genesis 37:16**

### **Tell me, please, where**

“Please tell me where”

### **tending the flock**

“shepherding their flock”

## Genesis 37:17

### Dothan

This is the name of a place that is about 22 kilometers from Shechem. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)  
(See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 37:18**

### **They saw him from a distance**

“Joseph’s brothers saw him while he was far away”

### **they plotted against him to kill him**

“they made plans to kill him”

## **Genesis 37:19**

### **this dreamer is approaching**

“here comes the one who has the dreams”

## Genesis 37:20

### Come now, therefore

This wording shows that the brothers acted upon their plans. Alternate translation: "So now" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### wild animal

"dangerous animal" or "ferocious animal"

### devoured

to eagerly have eaten

### We will see what will become of his dreams

His brothers planned to kill him, therefore it is ironic that they would speak of his dream coming true, since he would be dead. Alternate translation: "That way we will make sure his dreams do not come true" (See: **Irony (p.1671)**) (See: **Irony (p.1671)**)

## **Genesis 37:21**

### **heard it**

“heard what they were saying”

### **from their hand**

The phrase “their hand” refers to the brothers’ plan to kill him. Alternate translation: “from them” or “from their plans” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **Let us not take his life**

The phrase “take his life” is a euphemism for killing someone. Alternate translation: “Let us not kill Joseph” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## Genesis 37:22

### Shed no blood

The negation can be placed on the verb. Also, “shedding blood” is a euphemism for killing someone. Alternate translation: “Do not spill any blood” or “Do not kill him” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-litotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-euphemism\]\]](#)) (See: **Litotes (p.1674)**)

### that he might rescue him

This can be translated as a new sentence: “Rueben said this so that he might rescue Joseph”

### out of their hand

The phrase “their hand” refers to the brothers’ plan to kill him. Alternate translation: “from them” or “from their plans” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### to bring him back

“and return him”

## **Genesis 37:23**

### **It came about that when**

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

### **they stripped him of his beautiful garment**

“they tore his beautiful garment off of him”

### **beautiful garment**

“beautiful robe.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 37:3](#).

## **Genesis 37:24**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 37:25

### They sat down to eat bread

“Bread” represents food in general. Alternate translation: “They sat down to eat food” or “Joseph’s brothers sat down to eat” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### They lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a caravan

Here looking up is spoken of as if a person literally lifted up his eyes. Also, the word “behold” is used here to draw the reader’s attention to what the men saw. Alternate translation: “They looked up and they suddenly saw a caravan” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### bearing

carrying

### spices

seasonings

### balm

an oily substance with a sweet smell used for healing and protecting skin. “medicine”

### traveling to carry them down to Egypt

“bringing them down to Egypt.” This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: “bringing them down to Egypt to sell them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 37:26

### What profit is it if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "We do not gain a profit by killing our brother and covering up his blood" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### cover up his blood

This is a figure of speech referring to hiding Joseph's death. Alternate translation: "hide his murder" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 37:27**

### **to the Ishmaelites**

“to these men who are descendants of Ishmael”

### **not lay our hands upon him**

This means not to harm or injure him. Alternate translation: “not hurt him” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **he is our brother, our flesh**

The word “flesh” is a metonym that stands for a relative. Alternate translation: “he is our blood relative” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **His brothers listened to him**

“Judah’s brothers listened to him” or “Judah’s brothers agreed with him”

## **Genesis 37:28**

### **Midianite & Ishmaelites**

Both names refer to the same group of traders that Joseph's brothers meet.

### **for twenty pieces of silver**

“for the price of 20 pieces of silver” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **carried Joseph into Egypt**

“took Joseph to Egypt”

## Genesis 37:29

### Reuben returned to the pit, and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit

“Reuben returned to the pit, and was surprised to see that Joseph was not there.” The word “behold” here shows that Reuben was surprised to find out Joseph was gone.

### He tore his clothes

This is an act of deep distress and grief. This can be written more clearly. Alternate translation: “He was so grieved that he tore his clothes” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 37:30

### The boy is not there! And I, where can I go?

Reuben uses questions for emphasis the problem that Joseph was missing. These can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "The boy is gone! I cannot go back home now!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## **Genesis 37:31**

### **Joseph's garment**

This refers to the beautiful garment that his father made for him.

### **the blood**

“the goat's blood”

## **Genesis 37:32**

### **they brought it**

“they brought the garment”

## **Genesis 37:33**

### **has devoured him**

“has eaten him”

### **Joseph has certainly been torn to pieces**

Jacob thinks that a wild animal has torn Joseph's body apart. Alternate translation: “It has certainly torn Joseph to pieces” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 37:34

### Jacob tore his garments

This is an act of deep distress and grief. This can be written more clearly. Alternate translation: "Jacob was so grieved that he tore his garments" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### put sackcloth upon his loins

Here "loins" refers to the middle part of the body or the waist. Alternate translation: "put on sackcloth" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 37:35

### rose up

Here the childrens' coming to their father is spoke of as "rising up." Alternate translation: "came to him" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### but he refused to be comforted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but he would not let them comfort him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### Indeed I will go down to Sheol mourning

The means that he be mourning from now until when he dies. Alternate translation: "Indeed when I die and go down to Sheol I will still be mourning" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 37:36**

### **The Midianites sold him**

“The Midianites sold Joseph”

### **the captain of the bodyguard**

“the leader of the soldiers who guarded the king”

## Genesis 38

### Genesis 38 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This chapter focuses on Jacob's son Judah.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### “Spilling his seed”

Onan was to provide for his brother's widow and give her an heir. This phrase indicates that he used Tamar to fulfill his own sexual desires rather than help her. This was sinful. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-euphemism\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#))

#### God preserves Judah's line

The Canaanite woman, Tamar, deceived her father-in-law, Judah, into having sexual relations with her. If it had not been for this act, Judah would not have any descendants to carry on his family line. Although her actions were wrong, God used them to protect his people. (See: **people of God (p.1765)**)

## **Genesis 38:1**

### **It came about at that time that Judah**

This introduces a new part of the story that focuses on Judah. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### **a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah**

Hirah is the name of a man who lived in the village of Adullam. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 38:2**

### **whose name was Shua**

Shua is a Canaanite woman who married Judah. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **he went in to her**

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "he had sexual relations with her" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## **Genesis 38:3**

### **She became pregnant**

“Judah’s wife became pregnant”

### **He was named Er**

This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: “His father named him Er” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **Er**

Judah’s son (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 38:4**

### **called his name**

“named him”

### **Onan**

Judah's son (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 38:5

### Shelah

Judah's son (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Kezib

This is the name of a place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 38:6

### Er

This is the name of one of Judah's sons. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 38:3](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 38:7

### was wicked in the sight of Yahweh

The phrase “in the sight” refers to Yahweh seeing Er’s wickedness. Alternate translation: “was wicked and Yahweh saw it” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### Yahweh killed him

Yahweh killed him because he was wicked. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: “So Yahweh killed him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 38:8

### Onan

This is the name of one of Judah's sons. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 38:4](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Go in to your brother's wife

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "Have sexual relations with your brother's wife" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### Do the duty of a brother-in-law to her

This refers to a custom that when the oldest brother dies before he and his wife have a son, the next oldest brother would marry and have sexual relations with the widow. When the widow gave birth to the first son, that son was considered the son of the oldest brother and he would receive the oldest brother's inheritance.

## Genesis 38:9

### he went in to

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "he had sexual relations with" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## **Genesis 38:10**

### **was evil in the sight of Yahweh**

The phrase “in the sight” refers to Yahweh seeing Onan’s wickedness. Alternate translation: “was evil and Yahweh saw it” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **Yahweh killed him also**

Yahweh killed him because what he did was evil. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: “So Yahweh killed him also” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 38:11

### his daughter-in-law

“his oldest son’s wife”

### in your father’s house

This means her to live in here father’s house. Alternate translation: “and live in your father’s house” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### until Shelah, my son, grows up

Judah intends for Tamar to marry Shelah when he grows up. Alternate translation: “and when Shelah, my son, grows up, he can marry you” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Shelah

This is the name of one of Judah’s sons. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 38:5](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### For he feared, “He might also die, just like his brothers

Judah feared that if Shelah married Tamar he would also die like his brothers did. Alternate translation: “For he feared, ‘If he marries her he may also die like his brothers did’” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 38:12

### Shua's

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 38:2](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Judah was comforted and

"When Judah was no longer grieving, he"

### his sheepshearers at Timnah

"Timnah, where his men were shearing sheep"

### Timnah

This is the name of a place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite

"His friend Hiram, from Adullam, went with him"

### Hirah the Adullamite

"Hiram" is the name of a man, and "Adullam" is the name of a village where he lived. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 38:1](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 38:13**

### **Tamar was told**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone told Tamar" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)  
(See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **Look, your father-in-law**

"Listen." Here the word "look" is used to get Tamar attention.

### **your father-in-law**

"your husband's father"

## Genesis 38:14

### Enaim

This is the name of a place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### of her widowhood

“that widows wear”

### veil

a very thin material used to cover a woman's head and face

### wrapped herself

This means that she hid herself with her clothing so that people would not recognize her. Traditionally, part of women's clothing were large pieces of cloth they wrapped themselves with. Alternate translation: “wrapped herself in her clothing so that people would not recognize her” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### by the road

“along the road” or “on the way”

### she had not been given to him as a wife

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Judah had not given her to Shelah as a wife” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 38:15

### When Judah saw her

The word “her” here refers to Tamar, but your reader should understand that Judah did not know that the woman he was looking at was Tamar.

### because she had covered her face

Judah did not think she was a prostitute just because her face was covered but also because she was sitting in the gate. Alternate translation: “because she had covered her head and sat where prostitutes often sat” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 38:16**

### **He went to her by the road**

Tamar was sitting by the road. Alternate translation: "He went to where she was sitting by the road" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **Come, please**

"Come with me, please" or "Come now, please"

## **Genesis 38:17**

### **from the flock**

“from my flock of goats”

## Genesis 38:18

### seal and cord & staff

A “seal” is similar to a coin with a design engraved on it, used to imprint melted wax. The “cord” was put through the seal so the owner could wear it around his neck. A staff was long wooden stick that helped in walking over rough ground.

### he went in to her

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: “he had sexual relations with her” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### she became pregnant by him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he caused her to become pregnant” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 38:19**

### **veil**

This was a very thin material used to cover a woman's head and face. See how you translated these in [Genesis 38:14](#).

### **clothing of her widowhood**

"clothing that widows wear." See how you translated these in [Genesis 38:14](#).

## Genesis 38:20

### Adullamite

a person who lives in the village of Adullam. See how you translated this in [Genesis 38:1](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### receive the pledge

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “take back the pledge”(See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### from the woman’s hand

Here “hand” emphasizes that they were in here possession. The woman’s hand refers to the woman. Alternate translation: “from the woman” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 38:21

### Adullamite

a person who lives in the village of Adullam. See how you translated this in [Genesis 38:1](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### the men of the place

“some of the men who lived there”

### cultic prostitute

“prostitute who serves in the temple”

### Enaim

This is the name of a place. See how you translated this in [Genesis 38:14](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 38:22**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 38:23

### that we not be put to shame

When people found out what had happened they would ridicule Judah and laugh at him. This can be made clear and stated in active form. Alternate translation: "or else people will laugh at us when they find out what happened" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 38:24**

### **It came about**

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### **it was told to Judah**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone told Judah" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **Tamar your daughter-in-law**

"Tamar, your oldest son's wife"

### **she is pregnant by it**

Here the word "it" refers to the "prostitution" that she committed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it has made her pregnant" or "she is pregnant" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **Bring her here**

"Bring her out"

### **let her be burned**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we will burn her to death" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 38:25

### When she was brought out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When they brought her out" (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### her father-in-law

"her husband's father"

### seal and cords and staff

A "seal" is similar to a coin with a design engraved on it, used to make an impression in melted wax. The "cord" was put through the seal so the owner could wear it around his neck. A staff was long wooden stick that helped in walking over rough ground. See how you translated this in [Genesis 38:18](#).

## Genesis 38:26

### Shelah

This is the name of one of Judah's sons. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 38:5](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### did not lie with her again

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "did not have sexual relations with her again" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## **Genesis 38:27**

### **It came about at the time**

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p. 1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### **behold**

The word “behold” alerts us to the surprise that Tamar was carrying twins, which was previously unknown.

## Genesis 38:28

### It came about as she was giving birth

This phrase "It came about" marks an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

### one put out a hand

"one of the babies put out his hand"

### midwife

This is a person who helps a woman when she is giving birth to a child. See how you translated this in [Genesis 35:17](#).

### scarlet thread

"bright red thread"

### on his hand

"around his wrist"

## Genesis 38:29

### behold

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

### How you have broken out!

This shows the midwife’s surprise to seeing the second baby come out first. Alternate translation: “So this is how you break your way out first!” or “You have burst out first!” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### he was named

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “she named him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### Perez

This is the name of a boy. Translators may add a footnote that says: “The name Perez means ‘breaking out.’” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 38:30

### Zerah

This is the name of a boy. Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Zerah means 'scarlet or bright red.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 39

### Genesis 39 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### God's power

The account of Joseph focuses on the power of God. God is able to protect his people despite the evil actions of some. He also is able to continue to bless them despite their circumstances. This is a sign of Yahweh's covenant faithfulness. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/peopleofgod\]\]](#), [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/bless\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/sign\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/covenantfaith\]\]](#))

#### Joseph's character

Genesis just recorded a period of time where Joseph's ancestors and brothers struggled with sin. Joseph's character in this chapter is upright. He chose to do what was right, even when it could cause him harm. (See: **sin, sinful, sinner, sinning (p.1776)**)

## Genesis 39:1

### Joseph was brought down to Egypt

Travelling to Egypt is always considered as going “down” in contrast to going “up” to the promised land. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The Ishmaelites had taken Joseph to Egypt” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 39:2

### Yahweh was with Joseph

This means that Yahweh helped Joseph and was always with him. Alternate translation: "Yahweh guided Joseph and helped him" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### He lived in the house

Here the author speaks of working in the master's house as if it were living in the master's house. Only the most trusted servants were permitted to work in their master's house. AT : "he worked in the house" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### his Egyptian master

Joseph was now Potiphar's slave.

## **Genesis 39:3**

### **His master saw that Yahweh was with him**

This means that the master saw how Yahweh was helping Joseph. Alternate translation: "His master saw that Yahweh was helping him" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **that Yahweh prospered everything that he did**

"Yahweh caused everything that Joseph did to prosper"

## Genesis 39:4

### Joseph found favor in his sight

“To find favor” means to be approved by someone. The idiom “in his sight” refers to a person’s opinion. Possible meanings are (1) Alternate translation: “Potiphar was pleased with Joseph” or (2) Alternate translation: “Yahweh was pleased with Joseph” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### He served Potiphar

This means that he was Potiphar’s personal servant.

### Potiphar made Joseph manager over his house, and everything that he possessed

“Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his household and everything that belonged to Potiphar”

### put under his care

When something is “put under someone’s care,” it means that the person is responsible for its care and safe-keeping. Alternate translation: “he had Joseph care for” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 39:5

### **It came about from the time that he made him manager over his house and over everything he possessed, that Yahweh blessed the Egyptian's house because of Joseph**

You may need to use the words "Joseph" and "the Egyptian" before using pronouns to refer to them. "The Egyptian made Joseph manager over his house and over everything he possessed, and it came about from the time that Yahweh blessed the Egyptian's house because of Joseph"

#### **It came about**

This phrase is used here to tell the reader that these two verses are background information for the next event. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

#### **he made him manager over his house and over everything he possessed**

"Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his household and everything that belonged to him"

#### **blessed**

Here "blessed" means to cause good and beneficial things to happen to the person or thing that is being blessed.

#### **The blessing of Yahweh was on**

Here the author speaks of the blessing that Yahweh gave as if it were a physical covering put over something. Alternate translation: "Yahweh blessed" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

#### **everything that Potiphar had in the house and in the field**

This refers his household and his crops and livestock. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Potiphar's household and all of his crops and livestock" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 39:6

### Potiphar put everything that he had under Joseph's care

When something is “put under someone's care,” it means that the person is responsible for its care and safe-keeping. Alternate translation: “So Potiphar put Joseph in charge of everything that he had” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### He did not have to think about anything except the food that he ate

He did not have to worry about anything in his household; he only had to make decisions about what he wanted to eat. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “Potiphar only had to think about what he wanted to eat. He did not have to worry about anything else in his house” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-doublenegatives\]\]](#)) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Now

The word “now” marks a break in the story line as the author gives background information about Joseph. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### handsome and attractive

Both of the words have same meaning. They refer to Joseph's pleasing appearance. He was likely good-looking and strong. Alternate translation: “handsome and strong” (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

## Genesis 39:7

### It came about after this that

“And so.” This phrase is used here to mark a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### Lie with me

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: “have sexual relations with me” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## Genesis 39:8

### Look

“Listen.” Joseph uses this word to get Potiphar’s wife’s attention.

### **my master does not pay attention to what I do in the house**

“my master has no concern about his household with me in charge.” This can be written in positive form. Alternate translation: “my master trusts me with his household” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1626)**)

### **he has put everything that he owns under my care**

When something is “put under someone’s care,” it means that the person is responsible for its care and safe-keeping. Alternate translation: “he has put me in charge of everything that belongs to him” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 39:9**

### **No one is greater in this house than I am**

Here the author speaks of authority as if it were greatness. Alternate translation: "I have more authority in this house than anyone else" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **He has not kept back anything from me but you**

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "He has given me everything except you" (See: **Litotes (p.1674)**) (See: **Litotes (p.1674)**)

### **How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?**

Joseph uses a question for emphasis. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "I certainly cannot do such a wicked thing and sin against God." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 39:10

### She spoke to Joseph day after day

This means that she kept asking him to sleep with her. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "She kept on asking Joseph to sleep with her" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### to lie with her

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "to have sexual relations with her" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### to be with her

"to be near her"

## **Genesis 39:11**

### **It came about**

“And so.” This phrase is used here to mark a new event in the story. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)  
(See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### **None of the men of the house**

“None of the other men who worked in the house”

## **Genesis 39:12**

### **Lie with me**

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "Have sexual relations with me" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### **fled, and went outside**

"and quickly ran outside" or "and quickly ran out of the house"

## **Genesis 39:13**

### **It came about**

“Then” The phrase “it came about” is used here to mark the next event in the story. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### **had fled outside**

“had quickly ran out of the house”

## **Genesis 39:14**

### **the men of her house**

“the men who worked in her house”

### **See**

“Look” or “Listen” or “Pay attention to what I am about to tell you.”

### **He came in to me to lie with me**

Here Potiphar’s wife is accusing Joseph of trying to seize her and have sexual relations with her. “He came into my room to have sexual relations with me” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## Genesis 39:15

### **It came about when he heard me scream, that he**

“When he heard me scream, he.” The phrase “it came about” is used here to mark the next event in the story. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

## **Genesis 39:16**

### **his master**

“Joseph’s master.” This refers to Potiphar.

## Genesis 39:17

### She told him this explanation

"She explained it like this"

### brought to us

The word "us" refers to Potiphar, his wife, and includes the rest of the household. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**)

### came in to mock me

"came in to make a fool of me." Here, the word "mock" is a euphemism for "to seize and to sleep with." Alternate translation: "came into where I was and tried to force me to sleep with him" (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## Genesis 39:18

### It came about that

“Then.” Potiphar’s wife uses this phrase to mark the next event in the account she is telling him about Joseph trying to sleep with her. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### fled outside

“ran quickly out of the house”

## **Genesis 39:19**

### **It came about that**

“And so.” This phrase is used here to mark a new event in the story. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### **his master**

“Joseph’s master.” This refers to Potiphar. This information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “Joseph’s master, Potiphar” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **heard the explanation his wife told him**

“heard his wife explain to him.” The word “his” and “him” here refer to Potiphar.

### **he became very angry**

“Potiphar became very angry”

## **Genesis 39:20**

### **the place where the king's prisoners were confined**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the place where the king put his prisoners" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **He was there**

"Joseph stayed there"

## **Genesis 39:21**

### **But Yahweh was with Joseph**

This refers to how Yahweh took care of Joseph and was kind to him. Alternate translation: "But Yahweh was kind to Joseph" or "But Yahweh took care of Joseph" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **showed covenant faithfulness to him**

The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as "faithful" or "faithfully." Alternate translation: "was faithful to his covenant with him" or "faithfully loved him" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### **He gave him favor in the sight of the prison warden**

This means Yahweh caused the prison warden to approve of Joseph and to treat him well. Alternate translation: "Yahweh caused the prison warden to be pleased with Joseph" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **the prison warden**

"the prison manager" or "the man in charge of the prison"

## **Genesis 39:22**

### **gave into Joseph's hand**

Here "hand" represents Joseph's power or trust. Alternate translation: "put Joseph in charge of" (See: **Metaphor (p. 1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **Whatever they did there, Joseph was in charge of it**

"Joseph was in charge of everything they did there"

## **Genesis 39:23**

### **because Yahweh was with him**

This refers to how Yahweh helped Joseph and guided him. Alternate translation: "because Yahweh guided Joseph"  
(See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **Whatever he did, Yahweh prospered**

"Yahweh caused everything that Joseph did to prosper"

## Genesis 40

### Genesis 40 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### God's power

The account of Joseph focuses on the power of God. God is able to protect his people despite the evil actions of some. He also is able to continue to bless them despite their circumstances. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/peopleofgod\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/bless\]\]](#))

#### Interpretation of dreams

The interpretation of dreams was important in the ancient Near East. It was seen as possible only through divine power. Yahweh gave Joseph the power to interpret dreams in order to bring himself glory and to protect Joseph and the Hebrew people. (See: **glory, glorious, glorify (p.1756)**)

## **Genesis 40:1**

### **It came about that**

This phrase is used here to mark a new event in the story. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### **the cupbearer**

This is the person who brought drinks to the king.

### **king's baker**

This is the person who made food for the king.

### **offended their master**

“upset their master”

## **Genesis 40:2**

### **the chief of the cupbearers and the chief of the bakers**

“the leading cupbearer and the leading baker”

## **Genesis 40:3**

### **He put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard**

“He put them in the prison that was in the house that was overseen by the captain of the guard”

### **He put them**

The king did not put them in prison but rather he commanded for them to be imprisoned. Alternate translation: “He had them put” or “He commanded his guard to put” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **in the same prison where Joseph was confined**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “This was the same prison that Joseph was in” or “This was the same prison Potiphar put Joseph in” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 40:4**

### **They remained in custody for some time**

“They remained in prison for a long time”

## **Genesis 40:5**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 40:6

### Joseph came to them

“Joseph came to the cupbearer and the baker”

### Behold, they were sad

The word “behold” here shows that Joseph was surprised by what he saw. Alternate translation: “He was surprised to see that they were sad” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 40:7**

### **Pharaoh's officials who were with him**

This refers to the cupbearer and the baker.

### **in custody in his master's house**

"In prison in his master's house." "His master" refers to Joseph's master, the captain of the guard.

## Genesis 40:8

### Do not interpretations belong to God?

Joseph uses a question for emphasis. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Interpretations belong to God!" or "It is God who can tell the meaning of dreams!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### Tell me, please

Joseph asks for them to tell him their dreams. Alternate translation: "Tell me the dreams, please" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

## **Genesis 40:9**

### **The chief of the cupbearers**

The most important person who brings drinks to the king. See how you translated this in [Genesis 40:2](#).

### **In my dream, behold, a vine was in front of me**

“In my dream, I saw a vine in front of me!” The cupbearer uses word “behold” here to show that he was surprised by what he saw in his dream and to alert Joseph to pay attention.

## **Genesis 40:10**

### **the clusters of grapes ripened**

“its clusters ripened into grapes”

## Genesis 40:11

### squeezed them

This means that he squeezed the juice out of them. Alternate translation: "squeezed the juice from them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 40:12**

### **This is the interpretation of it**

“Here is what the dream means”

### **The three branches are three days**

“The three branches represent three days”

## **Genesis 40:13**

### **Within three days**

“In three more days”

### **will lift up your head**

Here Joseph speaks of Pharaoh releasing the cupbearer from prison as if Pharaoh were causing him to lift up his head. Alternate translation: “will release you from prison” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **restore you to your office**

“will give you back your job”

### **just as when**

“just as you did when”

## **Genesis 40:14**

### **please show kindness to me**

“please be kind to me”

### **Mention me to Pharaoh and bring me out of this prison**

Joseph means for the cupbearer to tell Pharaoh about him so that Pharaoh will release him from prison. Alternate translation: “Help me get out of this prison by telling Pharaoh about me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 40:15**

### **For indeed I was abducted**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “For indeed people took me” or “For indeed the Ishmaelites took me” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **the land of the Hebrews**

“the land where the Hebrew people live”

### **Here also have I done nothing that they should put me in this dungeon**

“and also while I have been here in Egypt, I have done nothing for which I deserved to be put in prison”

## **Genesis 40:16**

### **the chief of the bakers**

This refers to the leading person who made food for the king. See how this was translated in [Genesis 40:2](#).

### **I also had a dream, and**

"I also had a dream, and in my dream,"

### **behold, three baskets of bread were on my head**

"there were three baskets of bread on my head!" The baker uses word "behold" here to show that he was surprised by what he saw in his dream and to alert Joseph to pay attention.

## **Genesis 40:17**

### **baked goods for Pharaoh**

“baked foods for Pharaoh”

## **Genesis 40:18**

### **This is the interpretation**

“Here is what the dream means”

### **The three baskets are three days**

“The three baskets represent three days”

## Genesis 40:19

### will lift up your head from you

Joseph also used the phrase “will lift up your head” when he spoke to the cupbearer in [Genesis 40:13](#). Here it has a different meaning. Possible meanings are (1) “will lift up your head to put a rope around your neck” or (2) “will lift up your head to cut it off.”

### flesh

Here “flesh” literally means the soft tissue on a person’s body.

## **Genesis 40:20**

### **It came about on the third day that**

“Afterward, on the third day.” The phrase “it came about” is used here to mark a new event in the story. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### **He made a feast**

“He had a feast”

### **the chief of the cupbearers**

This was the leading person who prepared and served drinks to the king. See how these were translated in [Genesis 40:2](#).

### **the chief of the bakers**

This refers to the leading person who made food for the king. See how this was translated in [Genesis 40:2](#).

## Genesis 40:21

### He restored the chief of the cupbearers to his responsibility

The chief of the cupbearer's "responsibility" refers to his job as chief of the cupbearers. Alternate translation: "He gave the chief of the cupbearers his job back" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 40:22

### But he hanged the chief of the bakers

Pharaoh did not personally hang the baker, rather he commanded for him to be hanged. Alternate translation: “But he commanded for the chief of the bakers to be hanged” or “But he commanded his guards to hang the chief of the bakers” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### just as Joseph had interpreted to them

This refers to when Joseph interpreted their dreams. Alternate translation: “just as Joseph had said would happen when he interpreted the two men’s dreams” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 40:23**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 41

### Genesis 41 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### God's power

The account of Joseph focuses on the power of God. God is able to protect his people despite the evil actions of some. He also is able to continue to bless them despite their circumstances. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/peopleofgod\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/bless\]\]](#))

#### Interpretation of dreams

The interpretation of dreams was important in the ancient Near East. It was seen as possible only through divine power. Yahweh gave Joseph the power to interpret dreams in order to bring himself glory and to protect Joseph and the Hebrew people. (See: **glory, glorious, glorify (p.1756)**)

#### Joseph's character

Genesis just recorded a period of time where Joseph's ancestors and brothers struggled with sin. Joseph's character in this chapter is upright. It gained him great favor in the eyes of Pharaoh and helped to save his people. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#), [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/righteous\]\]](#) and **save, saved, safe, salvation (p.1774)**)

## **Genesis 41:1**

### **It came about**

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### **at the end of two full years**

Two years passed after Joseph correctly interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker, who had been in prison with Joseph.

### **Behold, he stood**

The word "behold" here marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "He was surprised because he was standing"

### **he stood**

"Pharaoh was standing"

## **Genesis 41:2**

### **desirable and fat**

“healthy and fat”

### **grazed in the reeds**

“were eating the grass along the side of the river”

### **reeds**

tall, thin grasses that grow in wet areas

## **Genesis 41:3**

### **Behold, seven other cows**

The word “behold” here shows that Pharaoh was again surprised by what he saw.

### **undesirable and thin**

“sick and thin”

### **bank of the river**

“beside the river” or “riverside.” This is the higher ground along the edge of a river.

## **Genesis 41:4**

### **undesirable and thin**

“weak and skinny.” See how you translated this phrase in [Genesis 41:3](#).

### **desirable and fat**

“healthy and well-fed.” See how you translated this phrase in [Genesis 41:2](#).

### **woke up**

“awakened”

## **Genesis 41:5**

### **a second time**

The word “second” is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “again” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1693)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1693)**)

### **Behold, seven heads**

The word “behold” here shows that Pharaoh was surprised by what he saw.

### **heads of grain**

The heads are parts of the corn plant on which the seeds grow.

### **came up on one stalk**

“grew up on one stem.” The stalk is the thick or tall part of a plant.

### **on one stalk, wholesome and good**

“on one stock and they were healthy and beautiful”

## **Genesis 41:6**

### **thin and scorched by the east wind**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that were thin and burned because of the hot wind from the east” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **the east wind**

Wind from the east blew in from the desert. The heat of the east wind was often very destructive.

### **sprouted up**

“grew up” or “developed”

## **Genesis 41:7**

### **The thin heads**

The words “of grain” are understood. Alternate translation: “The thin heads of grain” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

### **swallowed up**

“ate.” Pharaoh is dreaming that unhealthy corn could eat healthy corn just like a person eats food.

### **wholesome and full heads**

“healthy and good heads.” See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 41:5](#).

### **woke up**

“awakened”

### **behold**

The word “behold” here shows that Pharaoh was surprised by what he had seen.

### **it was a dream**

“he had been dreaming”

## Genesis 41:8

### It came about

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### his spirit was troubled

Here the word "spirit" refers to his inner being or his emotions. Alternate translation: "he was troubled in his inner being" or "he was troubled" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### He sent and called

It is understood that he sent servants. Alternate translation: "He sent his servants to call" or "He sent his servants to summon" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

### all the magicians and wise men of Egypt

Ancient kings and rulers used magicians and wise men as advisers.

## **Genesis 41:9**

### **chief cupbearer**

The most important person who brings drinks to the king. See how you translated this in [Genesis 40:2](#).

### **Today I am thinking about my offenses**

The word "Today" is used for emphasis. His "offenses" are that he should have told Pharaoh something much earlier but he did not. Alternate translation: "I just realized that I forgot to tell you something"

## Genesis 41:10

### Pharaoh was angry

The cupbearer is referring to Pharaoh in third person. This is a common way for someone with less power to speak to someone with greater power. Alternate translation: "You, Pharaoh, were angry" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### with his servants

Here "his" refers to Pharaoh. Here "servants" refers to the cupbearer and the chief baker. Alternate translation: "with us, your servants" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, the chief baker and me

"put the chief baker and me in the prison where the captain of the guard was in charge." Here "house" refers to the prison.

### the captain of the guard

The soldier in charge of the royal guards. See how you translated this in [Genesis 40:3](#).

### the chief baker

The most important person who made food for the king. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 40:2](#).

## **Genesis 41:11**

### **We dreamed a dream the same night, he and I**

“One night we both had dreams”

### **We dreamed**

Here “We” refers to the chief cupbearer and the chief baker. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

### **We dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream**

“Our dreams had different meanings”

## Genesis 41:12

### General Information:

### General Information:

The chief cupbearer continues to speak to Pharaoh.

### There was with us there

“In prison there was with the chief baker and me”

### the captain of the guard

The soldier in charge of the royal guards. See how you translated this in [Genesis 40:3](#).

### We told him and he interpreted for us our dreams

“We told him our dreams and he explained their meanings to us”

### He interpreted for each of us according to his dream

Here “his” refers to the cupbearer and baker individually, not to the one interpreting the dream. Alternate translation: “He explained what was going to happen to both of us” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

## Genesis 41:13

### It came about

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

### as he interpreted for us, so it happened

“what he explained about the dreams is what later happened”

### Pharaoh restored me to my post

Here the cupbearer uses Pharaoh's title in speaking to him as a way of honoring him. Alternate translation: “You allowed me to return to my job” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### the other one

“the chief baker”

### he hanged

Here “he” refers to Pharaoh. And, it stands for the soldiers that Pharaoh commanded to hang the chief baker. Alternate translation: “you ordered your soldiers to hang” (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#)) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

## **Genesis 41:14**

### **Pharaoh sent and called for**

It is understood that Pharaoh sent servants. Alternate translation: "Pharaoh sent his servants to get Joseph" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

### **out of the dungeon**

"out of the jail" or "out of the prison"

### **He shaved himself**

It was common practice to shave both the facial and head hair when preparing to go before Pharaoh.

### **came in to Pharaoh**

Here "came" can be stated as "went." Alternate translation: "went before Pharaoh" (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

## **Genesis 41:15**

**there is no interpreter for it**

“no one can explain the meaning”

**you can interpret it**

“you can explain its meaning”

## **Genesis 41:16**

### **It is not in me**

“I am not the one who can explain the meaning”

### **God will answer Pharaoh with favor**

“God will answer Pharaoh favorably”

## **Genesis 41:17**

### **behold, I stood**

Pharaoh uses the word “behold” to make Joseph pay attention to surprising information.

### **bank of the Nile**

This is the higher ground along the edge of the Nile River. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 41:3](#).  
Alternate translation: “beside the Nile”

## **Genesis 41:18**

### **Behold, seven cows**

Pharaoh uses the word “Behold” to make Joseph pay attention to surprising information.

### **fat and desirable**

“well-fed and healthy.” See how you translated this phrase in [Genesis 41:2](#).

### **grazed among the reeds**

“were eating the grass along the side of the river.” See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 41:2](#).

## **Genesis 41:19**

### **Behold, seven other cows**

Pharaoh uses the word “Behold” to make Joseph pay attention to surprising information.

### **undesirable, and thin**

“weak, and skinny.” See how you translated this phrase in [Genesis 41:3](#).

### **such undesirableness**

The abstract noun “undesirableness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “such ugly cows” or “such worthless looking cows” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

## Genesis 41:20

### fat cows

“well-fed cows.” See how you translated this phrase in [Genesis 41:2](#).

## Genesis 41:21

### it could not be known that they had eaten them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one would have been able to tell that the thin cows had eaten the fat cows" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 41:22

### General Information:

## General Information:

Pharaoh continues telling Joseph his dreams.

### I looked in my dream

This begins Pharaoh's next dream after he woke up and went back to sleep. Alternate translation: "Then I dreamed again" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### behold, seven heads

Pharaoh uses the word "Behold" to make Joseph pay attention to surprising information.

### seven heads

The words "of grain" are understood. Alternate translation: "seven heads of grain" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

### came up upon one stalk

"grew up on one stem." The stalk is the thick or tall part of a plant. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 41:5](#).

## **Genesis 41:23**

### **withered**

dead and dried

### **sprang up**

“grew up” or “developed”

## Genesis 41:24

### The thin heads

The words “of grain” are understood. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:7](#). Alternate translation: “The thin heads of grain” (See: [Ellipsis \(p.1631\)](#)) (See: [Ellipsis \(p.1631\)](#))

### swallowed up

“ate.” Pharaoh is dreaming that unhealthy corn could eat healthy corn just like a person eats food. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 41:7](#).

### there was none that could

“there was not a single one that could” or “none of them could”

## Genesis 41:25

### The dreams of Pharaoh are the same

It is implied that the meanings are the same. Alternate translation: "Both dreams mean the same thing" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### What God is about to do, he has declared to Pharaoh

Joseph speaks to Pharaoh in the third person. This is a way of showing respect. It can be stated in the second person. Alternate translation: "God is showing you what he will soon do" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

## **Genesis 41:26**

### **seven good heads**

The words “of grain” are understood. Alternate translation: “seven good heads of grain” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)  
(See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

## Genesis 41:27

### General Information:

## General Information:

Joseph continues his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams

### **thin and undesirable cows**

"skinny and weak cows." See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 41:3](#).

### **seven thin heads scorched by the east wind**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "seven thin heads of grain scorched because of the hot wind from the east" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 41:28

### That is the thing which I spoke to Pharaoh & revealed to Pharaoh

Joseph speaks to Pharaoh in the third person. This is a way of showing respect. It can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: "These events will happen just as I have told you ... revealed to you, Pharaoh" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### he has revealed

"he has made known"

## Genesis 41:29

### Look, seven

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

### **seven years of great abundance will come throughout all the land of Egypt**

This speaks about the years of abundance as if time is something that travels and comes to a place. Alternate translation: “there will be seven years in which there will be plenty of food throughout the land of Egypt” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 41:30

### General Information:

## General Information:

Joseph continues interpreting Pharaoh's dreams.

### Seven years of famine will come after them

This speaks about the seven years of famine as if they are something that travels and comes to a place. Alternate translation: "Then there will be seven years when there is very little food" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### all the abundance will be forgotten & and the famine will devastate the land

Joseph expresses an idea in two ways to emphasize its importance. (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

### all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt

Here "land" refers to the people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people of Egypt will forget about the years in which there was plenty of food" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### will devastate the land

Here "land" refers to the soil, the people, and the entire country. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 41:31**

### **The abundance will not be remembered & because of the famine that will follow**

Joseph expresses an idea in two ways to emphasize its importance. (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

### **because of the famine that will follow**

This speaks about the famine as if it were a thing that travels and follows behind something else. Alternate translation: "because of the time of famine that will happen afterwards" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 41:32**

### **That the dream was repeated to Pharaoh is because the matter has been established by God**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God gave you two dreams to show you that he will certainly cause these things to happen" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 41:33

### General Information:

## General Information:

Joseph continues to address Pharaoh

### Now

This does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

### let Pharaoh look

Joseph speaks to Pharaoh in third person. This is a way of showing respect. It can be stated in second person.

Alternate translation: “You, Pharaoh, should look” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### put him over the land of Egypt

The phrase “put him over” means to give someone authority. Alternate translation: “give him authority over the kingdom of Egypt” or “put him in charge of the kingdom of Egypt” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### land of Egypt

Here “land” stands for all the people and everything in Egypt. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 41:34**

### **let them take a fifth of the crops of Egypt**

The word “fifth” is a fraction. Alternate translation: “let them divide the crops of Egypt into five equal parts, then take one of those parts” (See: **Fractions (p.1641)**) (See: **Fractions (p.1641)**)

### **in the seven abundant years**

“during the seven years in which there is plenty of food”

## Genesis 41:35

### General Information:

## General Information:

Joseph continues to counsel Pharaoh

### Let them gather

“Allow the overseers to gather”

### of these good years that are coming

This speaks of years as if they are something that travels and comes to a place. Alternate translation: “during the good years that will soon happen” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh

The phrase “under the authority of Pharaoh” means Pharaoh gives them authority. Alternate translation: “use the authority of Pharaoh to store the grain” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### They should preserve it

The word “they” refers to the overseers and represents the soldiers that they should command to guard the grain. Alternate translation: “The overseers should leave soldiers there to guard the grain” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 41:36

### The food will be a supply for the land

Here “land” refers to the people. Alternate translation: “This food will be for the people” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### In this way the land will not be devastated by the famine

Here “land” stands for the people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “This way the people will not starve during the famine” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 41:37**

### **This advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants**

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "Pharaoh and his servants thought this was a good plan" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **his servants**

This means Pharaoh's officials.

## **Genesis 41:38**

### **such a man as this**

“a man like the one Joseph described”

### **in whom is the Spirit of God**

“in whom the Spirit of God lives”

## **Genesis 41:39**

### **there is none so discerning**

“no one else is as capable in making decisions.” See how you translated “discerning” in [Genesis 41:33](#).

## Genesis 41:40

### You will be over my house

Here “house” stands for Pharaoh’s palace and the people in the palace. The phrase “will be over” means Joseph will have authority over. Alternate translation: “You will be in charge of everyone in my palace” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### according to your word will all my people be ruled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you will rule over my people and they will do what you command” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### Only in the throne

Here “throne” stands for Pharaoh’s rule as king. Alternate translation: “Only in my role as king”

## Genesis 41:41

### See, I have put you

The word “See” adds emphasis to what Pharaoh says next. Alternate translation: “Look, I have put you”

### I have put you over all the land of Egypt

The phrase “put you over” means to give authority. Here “land” refers to the people. Alternate translation: “I put you in charge of everyone in Egypt” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#)) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 41:42**

### **Pharaoh took off his signet ring & gold chain on his neck**

All of these actions symbolize that Pharaoh is giving Joseph the authority to do everything that Joseph planned. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

#### **signet ring**

This ring had Pharaoh's seal engraved on it. This gave Joseph the authority and money needed to carry out his plans.

#### **clothes of fine linen**

"Linen" here is a smooth, strong cloth made from the blue-flowered flax plant.

## Genesis 41:43

### He had him ride in the second chariot which he possessed

This act makes clear to the people that Joseph is second only to Pharaoh. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

### Bend the knee

“Bow down and honor Joseph.” To bend the knee and bow down was a sign of honor and respect. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

### Pharaoh put him over all the land

The phrase “put you over” means to give authority. Here “land” refers to the people. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 41:41](#). Alternate translation: “I put you in charge of everyone in Egypt”(See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#)) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 41:44

### I am Pharaoh, and apart from you

Pharaoh is emphasizing his authority. Alternate translation: "As Pharaoh, I command that apart from you"

### apart from you, no man will lift his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt

Here "hand" and "foot" stand for a person's actions. Alternate translation: "no person in Egypt will do anything without your permission" or "every person in Egypt must ask your permission before they do anything" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### no man

Here "man" refers to any person in general, whether male or female. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1735)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1735)**)

## Genesis 41:45

### Zaphenath-Paneah

Translators may add the following footnote: The name Zaphenath-Paneah means “a revealer of secrets.” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### He gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, as a wife

Priests in Egypt were the highest and most privileged caste. This marriage signifies Joseph's place of honor and privilege. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

### gave him Asenath

“Asenath” is the name of the woman whom Pharaoh gave to Joseph as his wife. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### daughter of Potiphera

“Potiphera” is the father of Asenath. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### priest of On

On is a city, also called Heliopolis, which was “the City of the Sun” and the center of worship of the sun god Ra. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Joseph went out over the land of Egypt

Joseph traveled over the land to supervise the preparations for the coming drought.

## **Genesis 41:46**

### **thirty years old**

“30 years old” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **when he stood before Pharaoh**

Here “stood before” stands for Joseph starting to serve Pharaoh. Alternate translation: “when he started to serve Pharaoh” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **went throughout all the land of Egypt**

Joseph is inspecting the country as he prepares to carry out his plans.

## **Genesis 41:47**

### **In the seven bountiful years**

“During the seven good years”

### **the land produced abundantly**

“the land produced big harvests”

## Genesis 41:48

### He gathered up & He put

Here "He" stands for Joseph's servants. Alternate translation: "Joseph ordered his servants to gather ... They put"  
(See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 41:49

### Joseph stored up grain like the sand of the sea

This compares the grain to the sand of sea to emphasize its great quantity. Alternate translation: "The grain that Joseph stored was as plentiful as the sand on the seashore" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### Joseph stored up & he stopped

Here "Joseph" and "he" stand for Joseph's servants. Alternate translation: "Joseph had his servants store up ... they stopped" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 41:50

### before the years of famine came

This speaks about years as if they are something that travels and comes to a place. Alternate translation: “before the seven years of the famine began” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### Asenath

a woman’s name. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:45](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### daughter of Potiphera

“Potiphera” is the father of Asenath. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:45](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### priest of On

On is a city, also called Heliopolis, which was “the City of the Sun” and the center of worship of the sun god Ra. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:45](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 41:51**

### **Manasseh**

Translators may also add a footnote that says, "The name 'Manasseh' means 'to cause to forget.'"

### **father's household**

This refers to Joseph's father Jacob and his family.

## **Genesis 41:52**

### **Ephraim**

Translators may also add a footnote that says, "The name 'Ephraim' means 'to be fruitful' or 'to have children.'"

### **made me fruitful**

Here "fruitful" means to prosper or to have children. (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **in the land of my affliction**

The abstract noun "affliction" can be stated as "I have suffered." Alternate translation: "in this land where I have suffered" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

## **Genesis 41:53**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 41:54**

### **in all lands**

In all the surrounding nations beyond Egypt, including the land of Canaan.

### **but in all the land of Egypt there was food**

It is implied that there was food because of Joseph commanded his people to store food during the seven good years. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 41:55

### When all the land of Egypt was famished

Here "land" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "When all the Egyptians were starving" (See: **Metonymy (p. 1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 41:56**

### **The famine was over all the face of the whole land**

The word “face” refers to the surface of the land. Alternate translation: “The famine had spread throughout the land” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians**

Here “Joseph” stands for Joseph’s servants. Alternate translation: “Joseph had his servants open all the storehouses and sell grain to the Egyptians” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 41:57**

### **All the earth was coming to Egypt**

Here "earth" stands for the people from all regions. Alternate translation: "People were coming to Egypt from all the surrounding regions" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **in all the earth**

"throughout the land." It is likely that all the different trading partners and nations that were part of the Egyptian trading routes effected by the drought came to Egypt for grain.

## Genesis 42

### Genesis 42 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Famine

Apparently this famine extended beyond Egypt and encompassed the land of Canaan too. Because of Egypt's size and power, it would not have been unusual for people to go there in times of need. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

#### Joseph's test

Joseph tests his brothers to see if they are good. They treat their brother Benjamin better than they treated Joseph and tried to protect him.

## Genesis 42:1

### Now Jacob became

The word “Now” marks a new part of the story. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### Why do you look at one another?

Jacob uses a question to scold his sons for not doing anything about the grain. Alternate translation: “Do not just sit here!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## **Genesis 42:2**

### **Go down there**

It was common to speak of going from Canaan to Egypt as going “down.”

## **Genesis 42:3**

### **went down**

It was common to speak of going from Canaan to Egypt as going “down.”

### **from Egypt**

Here “Egypt” refers to the people selling grain. Alternate translation: “from those selling grain in Egypt” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 42:4

### Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers

Benjamin and Joseph had the same father and mother; their mother was different from the mothers of the other brothers. Jacob did not want to risk sending Rachel's last son. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 42:5

### The sons of Israel came to buy among those who came

The word "came" can be translated as "went." Also, the words "grain" and "Egypt" are understood. Alternate translation: "The sons of Israel went to buy grain along with other people who went to Egypt" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-go\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-ellipsis\]\]](#)) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

## Genesis 42:6

### Now Joseph

“Now” marks a change from the story to background information about Joseph. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### over the land

Here “land” refers to Egypt. Alternate translation: “over Egypt” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### all the people of the land

Here “land” includes Egypt and other surrounding countries. Alternate translation: “all the people of all the nations that came to buy grain” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Joseph’s brothers came

Here “came” can be translated as “went.” (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

### bowed down to him with their faces to the ground

This is a way of showing respect. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## **Genesis 42:7**

### **Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them**

“When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them”

### **he disguised himself to them**

“he acted like he was not their brother” or “he did not let them know that he was their brother”

### **Where have you come from?**

This was not a rhetorical question even though Joseph knew the answer. It was part of his choice to keep his identity from his brothers.

## **Genesis 42:8**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 42:9

### You are spies

Spies are people who secretly try to get information about a country to help another country.

### You have come to see the undefended parts of the land

The full meaning can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "You have come to find out where we are not guarding our land so that you can attack us" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 42:10**

### **my master**

This is a way to refer to someone to honor them.

### **Your servants have**

The brothers refer to themselves as “your servants.” This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. Alternate translation: “We, your servants, have” or “We have” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p. 1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

## **Genesis 42:11**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 42:12**

### **He said to them**

“Joseph said to his brothers”

### **No, you have come to see the undefended parts of the land**

The full meaning can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “No, you have come to find out where we are not guarding our land so that you can attack us” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 42:13**

### **twelve brothers**

“12 brothers” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **See, the youngest**

“Listen to us, the youngest.” The word “See” is used to emphasize what they say next.

### **the youngest is this day with our father**

“right now our youngest brother is with our father”

## **Genesis 42:14**

### **It is what I said to you; you are spies**

“like I already said, you are spies.” See how you translated “spies” in [Genesis 42:9](#).

## **Genesis 42:15**

### **By this you will be tested**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This is how I will test you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **By the life of Pharaoh**

This phrase indicates a solemn oath. Alternate translation: "I swear by the life of Pharaoh"

## **Genesis 42:16**

### **Send one of yourselves and let him get your brother**

“Choose one of you to go get your brother”

### **You will remain in prison**

“The rest of you will remain in prison”

### **that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “so that I may find out if you are telling the truth” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 42:17**

### **in custody**

“in prison”

## **Genesis 42:18**

### **on the third day**

The word “third” is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: “after the second day” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p. 1693)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1693)**)

### **Do this and live**

The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “If you will do what I say, I will let you live” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

### **fear God**

This refers to deeply respecting God and showing that respect by obeying him.

## Genesis 42:19

### let one of your brothers be confined in this prison

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “leave one of your brothers here in prison” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### but you go

Here “you” is plural and refers to all the brothers that will not stay in prison. Alternate translation: “but the rest of you go” (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### carry grain for the famine of your houses

Here “houses” stands for families. Alternate translation: “carry grain home to help your family during this famine” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 42:20**

### **so your words will be verified**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so I may know what you say is true" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **you will not die**

This implies that Joseph would have his soldiers execute the brothers if he finds out they are spies. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 42:21**

### **in that we saw the distress of his soul**

The word "soul" stands for Joseph. Alternate translation: "because we saw how distressed Joseph was" or "because we saw that Joseph was suffering" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **Therefore this distress has come upon us**

The abstract noun "distress" can be stated as the verb "suffering." Alternate translation: "That is why we are suffering like this now" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

## Genesis 42:22

### Did I not tell you, 'Do not sin against the boy,' but you would not listen?

Reuben uses a question to scold his brothers. Alternate translation: "I told you not to hurt the boy, but you would not listen!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### Did I not tell you, 'Do not sin against the boy,' but

This has a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy, but" or "I told you not to harm the boy, but" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### Now, see

Here "Now" does not mean "at this moment," but both "Now" and "see" are used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

### his blood is required of us

Here "blood" stands for Joseph's death. His brothers thought Joseph was dead. The phrase "is required of us" means they must be punished for what they did. Alternate translation: "we are getting what we deserve for his death" or "we are suffering for having killed him" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 42:23**

### **They did not know & an interpreter between them**

This shifts from the main story line to background information that explains why the brothers thought Joseph could not understand them. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### **an interpreter**

An “interpreter” is someone who translates what one person says into another language. Joseph placed an interpreter between himself and his brothers to make it seem like he did not speak their language.

## Genesis 42:24

### He turned from them and wept

It is implied that Joseph wept because he was emotional after hearing what his brothers said. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### spoke to them

Joseph was still speaking a different language and using the interpreter to speak to his brothers. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### bound him before their eyes

Here the people are represented by their “eyes” to emphasize what they see. Alternate translation: “bound him in their sight” or “bound him as they watched” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 42:25**

### **to give them provisions**

“to give them the supplies they needed”

### **It was done for them**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The servants did for them everything that Joseph commanded” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 42:26**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 42:27**

**As one of them opened his sack to give his donkey feed in the lodging place, he saw his money. Behold, it was in the opening of his sack**

“When they stopped at a place for the night, one of the brothers opened his sack to get food for his donkey. In the sack he saw his money!”

### **Behold**

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

## Genesis 42:28

### My money has been put back

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone has put my money back" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### Look at it

"Look in my sack!"

### Their hearts sank

To become afraid is spoken of as if their heart were sinking. Here "hearts" stands for courage. Alternate translation: "They became very afraid" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#)) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 42:29**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 42:30**

### **lord of the land**

“the lord of Egypt”

### **spoke roughly**

“spoke harshly”

### **we were spies**

Spies are people who secretly try to get information about a country to help another country. See how you translated “spies” in [Genesis 42:9](#).

## Genesis 42:31

**We said to him, 'We are honest men. We are not spies.'**

This has a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. "We told him that we are honest men and not spies." (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

## Genesis 42:32

### **We are twelve brothers, sons of our father. One is no longer alive & land of Canaan.'**

The quotation within a quotation that began with the words "We said to him, 'We are honest men ... not spies. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. "We told him that we are honest men ... not spies. We said that we are twelve brothers, sons of our father, and that one brother is no longer alive ... land of Canaan" (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### **One is no longer alive**

The word "brother" is understood. Alternate translation: "One brother is no longer alive" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

### **the youngest is this day with our father**

The word "brother" is understood. Alternate translation: "the youngest brother is with our father right now" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

## **Genesis 42:33**

### **the lord of the land**

“The lord of Egypt”

### **take grain for the famine in your houses**

Here “houses” stands for “family.” Alternate translation: “take grain to help your family during the famine” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **go your way**

“go home” or “leave”

## **Genesis 42:34**

### **you will trade in the land**

“I will allow you to buy and sell in this land”

## **Genesis 42:35**

### **It came about**

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

### **behold, every**

“they were surprised because every”

## **Genesis 42:36**

### **You have bereaved me of my children**

“you have deprived me of my children” or “you have caused me to lose two of my children”

### **All these things are against me**

“all these things hurt me”

## Genesis 42:37

### Put him in my hands

This is a request for Reuben to take Benjamin with him and to care for him on the journey. Alternate translation: "Put me in charge of him" or "Let me take care of him" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 42:38

### My son will not go down with you

It was common to use the phrase “go down” when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt. Alternate translation: “My son, Benjamin, will not go with you to Egypt”

### with you

Here “you” is plural and refers to Jacob’s older sons. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### For his brother is dead and he alone is left

The full meaning can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “For my wife, Rachel, only had two children. Joseph is dead and Benjamin is the only one left” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### on the road in which you go

“while you are traveling to Egypt and back” or “while you are away.” Here “road” stands for traveling.

### then you will bring down my gray hair with sorrow to Sheol

To “bring down ... to Sheol” is way of saying they will cause him to die and go to Sheol. He uses the word “down” because it was commonly believed sheol is somewhere underground. Alternate translation: “then you will cause me, an old man, to die of sorrow” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### my gray hair

This stands for Jacob and emphasizes his old age. Alternate translation: “me, an old man” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 43

### Genesis 43 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Israel's concern

Israel is concerned over his favored son, Benjamin. He is also confused about the reason the Egyptian official treated them so kindly. This caused him some concern. It is possible he thought his sons were lying to him. (See: **favor, favorable, favoritism (p.1754)**)

## Genesis 43:1

### The famine was severe in the land

The word "Canaan" is understood. This information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "The famine was severe in the land of Canaan" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

## Genesis 43:2

### It came about

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### when they had eaten

“when Jacob and his family had eaten”

### they had brought

“Jacob's older sons had brought”

### buy us

Here “us” refers to Jacob, his sons, and the rest of the family. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

## Genesis 43:3

### Judah told him

“Judah told his father Jacob”

### The man

This refers to Joseph, but the brothers did not know it was Joseph. They referred to him as “the man” or “the man, the lord of the land” as in [Genesis 42:30](#).

### warned us, ‘You will not see my face unless your brother is with you.’

This has a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “warned us that we would not see his face unless we brought our youngest brother with us” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### solemnly warned us

“was very serious when he warned us, saying”

### You will not see my face

Judah uses this phrase twice in 43:3-5 to emphasize to his father that they cannot return to Egypt without Benjamin. The phrase “my face” refers to the man, who is Joseph. Alternate translation: “You will not see me” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### your brother is with you

Judah is referring to Benjamin, Rachel's last born before she died.

## **Genesis 43:4**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 43:5**

### **we will not go down**

It was common to use the phrase “go down” when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

## **Genesis 43:6**

### **Why did you treat me so badly**

“Why did you cause me so much trouble”

## Genesis 43:7

### The man asked details

"The man asked many questions"

#### about us

Here "us" is exclusive and refers to the brothers who went to Egypt and spoke with "the man." (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1636)**)

### He said, 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "He asked us directly if our father was still alive and if we had another brother." (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### We answered him according to these questions

"We answered the questions he asked us"

### How could we have known that he would say & down?

The sons use a question emphasize that they did not know what the man would tell them to do. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "We did not know he would say ... down!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### he would say, 'Bring your brother down?'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "he would tell us to bring our brother down to Egypt." (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### Bring your brother down

It was common to use the word "down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

## Genesis 43:8

### **We will rise and go that we may live and not die, both we, you, and also our children**

The phrases “we may live” and “not die” mean the same thing. Judah is emphasizing that they have to buy food in Egypt in order to survive. Alternate translation: “We will go now to Egypt and get grain so our whole family will live” (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

#### **We will rise**

Here “We” refers to the brothers who will travel to Egypt. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

#### **we may live**

Here “we” refers to the brothers, Israel, and the whole family. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

#### **both we**

Here “we” refers to the brothers. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

#### **we, you**

Here “you” is singular and refers to Israel. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

#### **also our children**

Here “our” refers to the brothers. This refers to the small children who were most likely to die during a famine. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

## Genesis 43:9

### I will be a guarantee for him

The abstract noun “guarantee” can be stated as the verb “promise.” Alternate translation: “I will promise to bring him back” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### You will hold me responsible

How Jacob will hold Judah responsible can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “You will make me answer to you about what happens to Benjamin” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### let me bear the blame

This speaks about “blame” as if it were an object that a person has to carry. Alternate translation: “you may blame me” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 43:10**

### **For if we had not delayed**

Judah is describing something that could have happened in the past but did not. Judah is scolding his father for waiting so long to send his sons to Egypt to get more food. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**)

### **we would have come back here a second time**

“we would have returned twice”

## Genesis 43:11

### If it be so, now do this

"If this is our only choice, then do it"

### Carry down

It was common to use the word "down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

### balm

an oily substance with a sweet smell used for healing and protecting skin. See how you translated this word in [Genesis 37:25](#). Alternate translation: "medicine"

### spices

seasonings. See how you translated these words in [Genesis 37:25](#).

### pistachio nuts

small, green tree nuts (See: [Translate Unknowns \(p.1732\)](#)) (See: [Translate Unknowns \(p.1732\)](#))

### almonds

tree nuts with a sweet flavor (See: [Translate Unknowns \(p.1732\)](#)) (See: [Translate Unknowns \(p.1732\)](#))

## Genesis 43:12

### Take double money in your hand

Here “hand” stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: “Take double the money with you” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### The money that was returned in the opening of your sacks, carry again in your hand

Here “hand” stands for the whole person. The phrase “that was returned” can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “take back to Egypt the money someone put in your sacks” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 43:13**

### **Take also your brother**

“Take also Benjamin”

### **go again**

“return”

## **Genesis 43:14**

### **May God Almighty give you mercy before the man**

The abstract noun “mercy” can be stated as the adjective “kind.” Alternate translation: “May God Almighty cause the man to be kind to you” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### **your other brother**

“Simeon”

### **If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved**

“If I lose my children, then I lose my children.” This means that Jacob knows he must accept whatever happens to his sons.

## **Genesis 43:15**

### **in their hand they took**

Here “hand” refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: “they took” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **went down to Egypt**

It was common to use the phrase “went down” when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

## **Genesis 43:16**

### **Benjamin with them**

“Benjamin with Joseph’s older brothers”

### **the steward of his house**

The “steward” was responsible for managing Joseph’s household activities.

## **Genesis 43:17**

### **He brought the men**

Here “brought” can be translated as “took.” (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

### **to Joseph’s house**

“into Joseph’s house”

## **Genesis 43:18**

### **The men were afraid**

“Joseph’s brothers were afraid”

### **they were brought to Joseph’s house**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “they were going into Joseph’s house” or “the steward was taking them into Joseph’s house” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **It is because of the money that was returned in our sacks the first time we were brought in**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The steward is bringing us into the house because of the money that someone put back in our sacks” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **that he may seek an opportunity against us. He might arrest us**

This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: “He is waiting for the opportunity to accuse us, so that he might arrest us”

## **Genesis 43:19**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 43:20**

### **we came down**

It is common to use the phrase “came down” when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

## **Genesis 43:21**

### **Connecting Statement:**

## **Connecting Statement:**

The brothers continue speaking to the steward of the house.

### **It came about**

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

### **when we reached the lodging place**

“when we came to the place that we were going to stay for the night”

### **behold**

The word “behold” here shows that the brothers were surprised by what they saw.

### **every man’s money was in the opening of his sack, our money in full weight**

“each one of us found the full amount of his money in his sack”

### **We have brought it back in our hands**

Here “hands” stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: “We have brought the money back with us” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 43:22**

### **Other money we have also brought down in our hand to buy food**

Here “hand” stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: “We have also brought more money to buy food”  
(See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **brought down**

It common to use the word “down” when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

## **Genesis 43:23**

### **Peace be to you**

The abstract noun "Peace" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Relax" or "Calm yourselves" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### **Your God and the God of your father**

The steward is not speaking about two different Gods. Alternate translation: "Your God, the God your father worships"

## Genesis 43:24

### washed their feet

This custom helped tired travelers to refresh themselves after walking long distances. The full meaning of this statement may be made explicit. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### feed to their donkeys

“Feed” is dry food that is set aside for animals

## **Genesis 43:25**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 43:26**

### **they brought the gifts which were in their hand**

Here "hand" stands for the entire person. Alternate translation: "the brothers brought the gifts they had with them" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **bowed down before him**

This is a way of showing honor and respect. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## **Genesis 43:27**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 43:28**

### **Your servant our father**

They refer to their father as “Your servant” to show respect. Alternate translation: “Our father who serves you”

### **They prostrated themselves and bowed down**

These words basically mean the same thing. They laid down in front of the man to show him respect. Alternate translation: “They bowed down in front of him” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## **Genesis 43:29**

### **he lifted up his eyes**

This means “he looked up.” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **his mother’s son, and he said**

This can be translated with a new sentence. Alternate translation: “his mother’s son. Joseph said”

### **Is this your youngest brother & me?**

Possible meanings are (1) Joseph is truly asking a question to confirm that this man is Benjamin, or (2) it is a rhetorical question. Alternate translation: “So this is your youngest brother ... me.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### **my son**

This is a friendly way one man speaks to another man of lower rank. Alternate translation: “young man”

## **Genesis 43:30**

### **hurried to go out of the room**

“hurried out of the room”

### **for he was deeply moved about his brother**

The phrase “deeply moved” refers to having a strong feeling or emotion when something important happens.  
Alternate translation: “for he had strong feelings of compassion for his brother” or “for he had strong feelings of affection for his brother” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 43:31

### saying

It can be made explicit to whom Joseph is speaking. Alternate translation: “and said to his servants” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### Serve the food

This means to distribute the food so that people may eat.

## **Genesis 43:32**

### **The servants served Joseph by himself and the brothers by themselves. The Egyptians there ate with him by themselves**

This means that Joseph, the brothers, and the other Egyptians are eating in three different places within the same room. Alternate translation: "The servants served Joseph by himself and the brothers by themselves and the Egyptians, who were eating with him, by themselves"

### **The Egyptians there ate with him by themselves**

These are probably other Egyptian officials who ate with Joseph, but they still sat separately from him and the Hebrew brothers.

### **because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is detestable to the Egyptians**

This can be translated as a new sentence: "They did this because the Egyptians thought it was shameful to eat with the Hebrews"

### **could not eat bread**

Here "bread" stands for food in general. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 43:33**

### **The brothers sat before him**

It is implied that Joseph had arranged where each brother would sit. You can make clear the implied information. Alternate translation: "The brothers sat across from the man, according to how he arranged their places" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth**

The "firstborn" and the "youngest" are used together to mean all the brothers were sitting in order according to their age. (See: **Merism (p.1676)**) (See: **Merism (p.1676)**)

### **The men were astonished together**

"The men were very surprised when they realized this"

## **Genesis 43:34**

### **But Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of his brothers**

The phrase "five times" can be stated more generally. Alternate translation: "But Benjamin received a portion that was much bigger than what his brothers received"

## Genesis 44

### Genesis 44 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Judah's sacrifice

Judah is willing to sacrifice himself in order to save Benjamin, the favored son of Jacob. Judah's descendants will become the leaders of the Israelites and the godliest of the twelve tribes of Israel. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/favor\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/godly\]\]](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Joseph's test

Joseph tests his brothers to see if they are good. They treat their brother Benjamin better than they treated Joseph and tried to protect him. (See: **test, tested, testing, testing in the fire (p.1778)**)

## **Genesis 44:1**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

This begins a new event in the story. Most likely this is the next morning after the feast.

#### **steward of his house**

The “steward” was responsible for managing Joseph’s household activities.

#### **every man’s money**

Their money was silver coins most likely in a small bag.

#### **in his sack’s opening**

“in his sack”

## **Genesis 44:2**

### **Put my cup, the silver cup**

“Put my silver cup”

### **in the sack’s opening of the youngest**

The word “brother” is understood. Alternate translation: “in the youngest brother’s sack” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)  
(See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

## **Genesis 44:3**

### **The morning dawned**

“The morning light shown”

### **the men were sent away, they and their donkeys**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “they sent the men away, along with their donkeys” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 44:4

### Why have you returned evil for good?

This question is used to scold the brothers. Alternate translation: "You have treated us badly, after we were good to you!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 44:5

### **Is this not the cup from which my master drinks, and the cup that he uses for divination?**

This question is used to scold the brothers. Alternate translation: "You already know that this is the cup that my master uses for drinking and for fortune telling!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### **You have done evil, this thing that you have done**

This repeats "you have done" for emphasis. Alternate translation: "What you have done is very evil" (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

## **Genesis 44:6**

### **spoke these words to them**

“spoke what Joseph told him to say”

## Genesis 44:7

### Why does my master speak such words as these?

Here “words” stands for what was said. The brothers refer to the steward as “my master.” This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. It can be stated in the second person. Alternate translation: “Why are you saying this, my master?” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### Far be it from your servants that they would do such a thing.

The brothers refer to themselves as “your servants” and “they.” This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. Alternate translation: “We would never do such a thing!” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### Far be it from your servants

Something that a person would never do is spoken of as if it were an object that person wants to put very far from himself. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 44:8**

### **Look, the money**

“Listen to what we are about to say and you will see that we are speaking the truth: the money”

### **the money that we found in our sacks’ openings**

“you know the money that we found in our sacks”

### **we brought again to you out of the land of Canaan**

“we brought back to you from Canaan”

### **How then could we steal out of your master’s house silver or gold?**

The brothers use a question to emphasize that they would not steal from the lord of Egypt. Alternate translation: “So we would never take anything from your master’s house!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### **silver or gold**

These words are used together to mean that they would not steal anything of any value.

## Genesis 44:9

### With whomever of your servants it is found

The brothers refer to themselves as “your servants.” This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. It can be stated in the first person. Also, “it is found” can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “If you find that one of us has stolen the cup” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### we also will be my master’s slaves

The phrase “my master” refers to the steward. This can be stated in the second person. Alternate translation: “you may take us as your slaves” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p. 1638)**)

## **Genesis 44:10**

### **Now also let it be according to your words**

“Very well. I will do what you said.” Here “now” does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

### **He with whom the cup is found will be my slave**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “If I find the cup in one of your sacks, that person will be my slave” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 44:11**

### **brought his sack down**

“lowered his sack”

## **Genesis 44:12**

### **the oldest & the youngest**

The word “brother” is understood. Alternate translation: “the oldest brother ... the youngest brother” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

### **youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack**

This can be translated as a new sentence and in active form. Alternate translation: “youngest. The steward found the cup in Benjamin’s sack” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## **Genesis 44:13**

### **Then they tore their clothes**

The word “they” refers to the brothers. Tearing clothes was a sign of great distress and sorrow. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

### **donkey and returned**

“donkey, and they returned”

## **Genesis 44:14**

### **He was still there**

“Joseph was still there”

### **they bowed before him**

“they fell before him.” This is a sign of the brothers wanting the lord to be merciful to them. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## Genesis 44:15

### Do you not know that a man like me practices divination?

Joseph uses a question to scold his brothers. Alternate translation: "Surely you know that a man like me can learn things by magic!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 44:16

### What can we say to my master? What can we speak? Or how can we justify ourselves?

All 3 questions mean basically the same thing. They use these questions to emphasize that there is nothing they can say to explain what happened. Alternate translation: "We have nothing to say, my master. We cannot speak anything of value. We cannot justify ourselves." (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-parallelism\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-rquestion\]\]](#)) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

### What can we say to my master & my master's slaves

Here "my master" refers to Joseph. This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. It can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: "What can we say to you ... your slaves" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### God has found out the iniquity of your servants

Here "found out" does not mean God just found out what the brothers did. It means God is now punishing them for what they did. Alternate translation: "God is punishing us for our past sins"

### the iniquity of your servants

The brothers refer to themselves as "your servants." This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. It can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: "our iniquity" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### he also in whose hand the cup was found

Here "hand" stands for the whole person. Also, "was found" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the one who had your cup" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 44:17

### Far be it from me that I should do so

Something that a person would never do is spoken of as if it were an object the person wants put far away from him. Alternate translation: "It is not like me to do something like that" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### The man in whose hand the cup was found

Here "hand" stands for the whole person. Also, "was found" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The man who had my cup" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 44:18

### came near to

“approached”

### let your servant

Judah refers to himself as “your servant.” This is a formal way of speaking to someone with more authority. This can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: “let me, your servant” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### speak a word in my master’s ears

The word “ear” is a synecdoche that stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: “speak to you, my master” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### in my master’s ears

Here “my master” refers to Joseph. This is a formal way of speaking to someone with more authority. This can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: “to you” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### do not let your anger burn against your servant

Being angry is spoke of as if it were a burning fire. Alternate translation: “please do not be angry with me, your servant” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### for you are just like Pharaoh

Judah compares the master to Pharaoh to emphasize the great power that the master has. He is also implying that he does want the master to become angry and execute him. Alternate translation: “for you are as powerful as Pharaoh and could have your soldiers kill me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 44:19

### My master asked his servants, saying, 'Do you have a father or a brother?'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "My master asked us if we have a father or a brother." (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### My master asked his servants

Judah refers to Joseph with the words "my master" and "his." He also refers to himself and his brothers as "his servants." Alternate translation: "You, my master, asked us, your servants" or "You asked us" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

## Genesis 44:20

### General Information:

## General Information:

Judah continues to speak before Joseph

### **We said to my master, 'We have a father & his father loves him.'**

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "And we said to my master that we have a father ... his father loves him" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### **his father loves him**

This refers to love for a friend or family member.

## Genesis 44:21

### Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me that I may see him.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "And you said to your servants that we should bring our youngest brother to you so that you may see him" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### Then you said to your servants

Judah refers to himself and his brothers as "your servants." Alternate translation: "Then you said to us, your servants" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### Bring him down to me

It was common to use the word "down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt. Alternate translation: "Bring him to me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 44:22

### we said to my master

Judah refers to Joseph as “my master.” This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. Alternate translation: “we said to you, my master” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### After that, we said to my master, ‘The boy cannot & father would die.’

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “In response, we said to my master that the boy cannot ... father would die” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### his father would die

It is implied that their father would die from sorrow. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 44:23

### General Information:

## General Information:

Judah continues his story to Joseph

### Then you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Then you said to your servants that unless our youngest brother comes with us, we would not see you again." (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p. 1710)**)

### Then you said to your servants

Judah refers to himself and his brothers as "your servants." This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. Alternate translation: "Then you said to us, your servants" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p. 1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### comes down

It was common to use the word "down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

### you will not see my face again

Here "face" stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: "you will not see me again" (See: **Synecdoche (p. 1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 44:24**

### **Then it came about**

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### **we went up to your servant my father**

It was common to use the phrase “went up” when speaking of traveling from Egypt to Canaan.

### **we told him the words of my master**

Judah refers to Joseph as “my master.” Alternate translation: “we told him what you said, my master” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

## Genesis 44:25

### Our father said, 'Go again, buy us some food.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Our father told us to go again to Egypt to buy food for us and our families." (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

## Genesis 44:26

### go down

It was common to use the word “down” when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

### Then we said, ‘We cannot go down. If our youngest brother & is with us.’

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “Then we said to him that we cannot go down to Egypt. We told him that if our youngest brother is with us ... is with us” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### to see the man’s face

Here “face” stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: “to see the man” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 44:27

### General Information:

### General Information:

Judah continues his story to Joseph.

### Connecting Statement:

### Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a three-level quote.

### said to us

Here “us” does not include Joseph. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1636)**)

### You know

Here “You” is plural and refers to the brothers. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

## Genesis 44:28

### Connecting Statement:

## Connecting Statement:

The three-level quote that began in verse 27 continues.

### **he is torn in pieces**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a wild animal has torn him to pieces" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

## Genesis 44:29

### Connecting Statement:

## Connecting Statement:

The three-level quote that began in verse 27 ends here.

### Now if you also take this one from me, and harm comes to him, you will bring down my gray hair with sorrow to Sheol

The three-level quote that began with the words “Your servant ... said to us, ‘You know ... two sons’” in verse 27 and continued with the words “and I said, ‘Surely ... since’” in verse 28 ends here. You may need to change one or more of these levels to indirect quotes. “This is what your servant my father said to us: ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons. One of them went out from me and I said that surely he had been torn in pieces, and I have not seen him since. Now if you also take this one from me, and harm comes to him, you will bring down my gray hair with sorrow to Sheol.’” or “Your servant my father told us that we knew that his wife had borne him two sons. One of them went out from him, and he said that surely that son had been torn in pieces, and he has not seen him since. He then said that if we also took this one from him, and harm came to him, we would bring down his gray hair with sorrow to Sheol.” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### harm comes to him

Something bad happening to a person is spoken of as if “harm” were something that travels and comes to a person. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### you will bring down my gray hair with sorrow to Sheol

To “bring down ... to Sheol” is way of saying they will cause him to die and go to Sheol. He uses the word “down” because it was commonly believed Sheol is somewhere underground. Alternate translation: “then you will cause me, an old man, to die of sorrow” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### my gray hair

This stands for Jacob and emphasizes his old age. Alternate translation: “me, an old man” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 44:30**

### **Now**

This does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

### **therefore, when I come**

Judah begins to describe to Joseph a realistic but hypothetical case of what he will expect will happen to Jacob when he returns without Benjamin. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**)

### **when I come to your servant**

Here “come” can be translated as “go” or “return.”

### **the lad is not with us**

“the boy is not with us”

### **since his life is bound up in the boy’s life**

The father saying he would die if his son died is spoken of as if their two lives were physically bound together. Alternate translation: “since he said he would die if the boy did not come back” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 44:31

### Connecting Statement:

## Connecting Statement:

Judah finishes describing to Joseph the realistic but hypothetical case that began with the words “therefore, when I come” in verse 30.

### sorrow to Sheol

Judah finishes describing to Joseph the realistic but hypothetical case that began with the words “therefore, when I come” in verse 30. This is what he expects will happen to Jacob when he returns without Benjamin. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**)

### it will come about

Judah is speaking about a hypothetical case in the future as if it would certainly happen. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1659)**)

## Your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol

To “bring down ... to Sheol” is way of saying they will cause him to die and go to Sheol. He uses the word “down” because it was commonly believed Sheol is somewhere underground. Alternate translation: “And we will have caused our old father to die of sorrow” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### Your servants

Judah refers to himself and his brothers as “your servants.” This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. Alternate translation: “And we, your servants” or “And we” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### the gray hair of your servant our father

Here “gray hair” stands for Jacob and emphasizes his old age. Alternate translation: “our old father” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## Genesis 44:32

### For your servant became a guarantee for the boy to my father

The abstract noun “guarantee” can be stated with the verb “promised.” Alternate translation: “For I promised my father concerning the boy” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### For your servant

Judah refers to himself as “your servant.” Alternate translation: “For I, your servant” or “For I” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### then I will bear the guilt to my father

Being considered guilty is spoken of as if “guilt” were something that a person carries. Alternate translation: “then my father may blame me” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 44:33

### Now

This does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

### let your servant

Judah refers to himself as “your servant.” This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. Alternate translation: “let me, your servant” or “let me” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### to my master

Judah refers to Joseph as “my master.” Alternate translation: “to you, my master” or “to you” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### let the boy go up

It was going to use the phrase “go up” when speaking about traveling from Egypt to Canaan.

## **Genesis 44:34**

### **For how can I go up to my father if the boy is not with me?**

Judah uses a question to emphasize the grief he would have if Benjamin did not return home. Alternate translation: "I cannot return to my father if the boy is not with me." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

### **I am afraid to see the evil that would come on my father**

A person suffering terribly is spoken of as if "evil" were a thing that comes upon a person. Alternate translation: "I am afraid to see how much my father would suffer" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 45

### Genesis 45 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Joseph finally reveals himself to his brothers in this chapter. This chapter forms the conclusion of the story which began in chapter 43.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### God's power

The account of Joseph focuses on the power of God. God is able to protect his people despite the evil actions of some. He also is able to continue to bless them despite their circumstances. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/peopleofgod\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/bless\]\]](#))

#### Joseph's character

Genesis just recorded a period of time where Joseph's ancestors and brothers struggled with sin. Joseph's character in this chapter is upright. It gained him great favor in the eyes of Pharaoh and helped to save his people. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#) [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/save\]\]](#))

## **Genesis 45:1**

### **could not control himself**

This means he could not control his emotions. It can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “was about to start crying”

### **by him**

“near him”

## Genesis 45:2

### house of Pharaoh

Here “house” stands for the people in the Pharaoh’s palace. Alternate translation: “everyone in Pharaoh’s palace”  
(See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 45:3**

**shocked in his presence**

“terrified of him”

## Genesis 45:4

### whom you sold into Egypt

The meaning can be stated more explicitly. Alternate translation: “whom you sold as a slave to the trader who brought me to Egypt” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 45:5

### Do not be grieved

“do not be upset” or “do not be distressed”

### that you sold me here

The meaning can be stated more explicitly. Alternate translation: “that you sold me as a slave and sent me here to Egypt” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### to preserve life

Here “life” stands for the people that Joseph saved from dying during the famine. Alternate translation: “so I could save many lives” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 45:6

**there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest**

“there will be five more years without planting or harvesting.” Here “neither plowing nor harvest” stands for the fact that the crops still will not grow because of the famine. Alternate translation: “and the famine will last five more years” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 45:7**

### **to preserve you as a remnant in the earth**

“so that you and your families would not completely perish from the earth” or “to make sure your descendants would survive”

### **to keep you alive by a great deliverance**

The abstract noun “deliverance” can be stated as “rescuing.” Alternate translation: “to keep you alive by rescuing you in a mighty way” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

## Genesis 45:8

### he has made me a father to Pharaoh

Joseph advising and helping Pharaoh is spoken of as if Joseph were Pharaoh's father. Alternate translation: "he has made me a guide to Pharaoh" or "he has made me the chief adviser to Pharaoh" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### of all his house

Here "house" stands for the people who live in his palace. Alternate translation: "of all his household" or "of all his palace" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### ruler of all the land of Egypt

Here "land" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "ruler over all the people of Egypt" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### ruler

Here Joseph means that he is ruler in second place to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. This understood information can be made clear. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 45:9**

### **Connecting Statement:**

## **Connecting Statement:**

This is the beginning of a three-level quotation.

### **go up to my father**

It was common to use the phrase “go up” when speaking about going from Egypt to Canaan. Alternate translation: “go back to my father”

### **Come down to me**

It was common to use the phrase “come down” when speaking about going from Canaan to Egypt. Alternate translation: “Come here to me”

## **Genesis 45:10**

### **Connecting Statement:**

### **Connecting Statement:**

The three-level quotation that began in verse 9 continues here.

## Genesis 45:11

### Connecting Statement:

## Connecting Statement:

The three-level quotation that began in verse 9 ends here.

### I will provide & all that you have

The three-level quotation that began with the words “say to him” in verse 9 ends here. You may need to reduce the number of levels by making some levels indirect quotes. “say to him that his son Joseph says that God has made him master of all Egypt, so he must go down to Joseph and not delay. He will live in the land of Goshen, and he will be near Joseph, he and his children and his children’s children, and his flocks and his herds, and all that he has. Joseph will provide for him there, for there are still five years of famine, so that he does not come to poverty, him, his household, and all that he has.” or “say to him, ‘Your son Joseph says that God has made him master of all Egypt, so he must go down to Joseph and not delay. He will live in the land of Goshen, and he will be near Joseph, he and his children and his children’s children, and his flocks and his herds, and all that he has. Joseph will provide for him there, for there are still five years of famine, so that he does not come to poverty, him, his household, and all that he has.’”

### come to poverty

This speaks about “poverty” as if it were a destination. Alternate translation: “waste away” or “starve” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 45:12**

### **your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin**

The word "eyes" stands for the entire person. Alternate translation: "All of you and Benjamin can see" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **that it is my mouth that speaks to you**

The word "mouth" stands for the entire person. Alternate translation: "that I, Joseph, am speaking to you" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 45:13**

### **about all my honor in Egypt**

“how the people in Egypt greatly honor me”

### **my father down here**

It was common to use the word “down” when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt. Alternate translation: “my father here to me”

## **Genesis 45:14**

**He hugged his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck**

"Joseph hugged his brother Benjamin, and they both wept"

## **Genesis 45:15**

### **He kissed all his brothers**

In ancient Near East, it is common to greet a relative with a kiss. If your language has an affectionate greeting for a relative, use that. If not, use what is appropriate.

### **wept over them**

This means Joseph was crying while he kissed them.

### **After that his brothers talked with him**

Earlier they were too afraid to speak. Now they feel they can speak freely. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "After that his brothers talked freely with him" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 45:16

### **The news of the matter was told in Pharaoh's house: "Joseph's brothers have come."**

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. It may also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Everyone in Pharaoh's palace heard that Joseph's brothers had come." (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#) and **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### **Pharaoh's house**

This stands for Pharaoh's palace.

## **Genesis 45:17**

**Connecting Statement:**

**Connecting Statement:**

This is the beginning of a two-level quotation.

## Genesis 45:18

### Connecting Statement:

## Connecting Statement:

The two-level quotation that began in verse 17 ends here.

### Get your father & fat of the land.'

The two-level quotation that began in verse 17 ends here. This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. "Pharaoh told Joseph to tell his brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and go to the land of Canaan. Get your father and your households and come to me. I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land.'" or "Pharaoh to Joseph to tell his brothers to do this: to load their animals and go to the land of Canaan, and also to get their father and their households and go to him. Pharaoh would give them the good of the land of Egypt, and they would eat the fat of the land." (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### I will give you the good of the land of Egypt

"I will give you the best land in Egypt"

### you will eat the fat of the land

The best food that a land produces is spoken of as if it were the fat portion of the land. Alternate translation: "you will eat the best food in the land" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 45:19

### General Information:

### General Information:

Pharaoh continues to tell Joseph what to tell his brothers.

### Connecting Statement:

### Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a two-level quotation.

### Now

This does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

### you are commanded

This can be stated in active form. You may also need to add the words “to tell them,” which the writer left out of this ellipsis. Alternate translation: “I also command you to tell them” or “also tell them” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-ellipsis\]\]](#)) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### take carts out

“Carts” are wagons with two or four wheels. Animals pull the carts.

## Genesis 45:20

### Connecting Statement:

## Connecting Statement:

The two-level quote that began in verse 19 ends here.

**Do not be concerned about your possessions, for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.'**

The two-level quote that began in verse 19 ends here. This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. "Now you are commanded to tell them to take carts out of the land of Egypt for their children and for their wives, to get their father, and to come. They are not to be concerned about their possessions, for the good of all the land of Egypt will be theirs." (See: [\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]](#) and [\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

## **Genesis 45:21**

### **gave them provisions for the journey**

“gave them what they needed for traveling”

## **Genesis 45:22**

### **he gave each man changes of clothing**

Each man received a set of clothes except for Benjamin who received 5 sets of clothes. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **three hundred pieces**

“300 pieces” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 45:23**

### **ten donkeys & and ten female donkeys**

The donkeys were included as part of the gift. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)  
(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 45:24**

### **do not quarrel**

Possible meanings include (1) "do not argue" and (2) "do not become afraid"

## **Genesis 45:25**

### **went up out of Egypt**

It was common to use the word “up” when speaking of traveling from Egypt to Canaan.

## **Genesis 45:26**

### **he is ruler over all the land of Egypt**

Here “land of Egypt” stands for the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: “he rules all the people of Egypt” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **His heart was astonished**

Here “heart” stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: “and he was astonished” or “he was very surprised” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### **he could not believe what they told him**

“he did not accept that what they said was true”

## **Genesis 45:27**

### **They told him**

“They told Jacob”

### **all the words of Joseph that he had said to them**

“everything that Joseph had said to them”

### **the spirit of Jacob their father revived**

The word “spirit” stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: “Jacob their father recovered” or “Jacob their father became very excited” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 45:28**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 46

### Genesis 46 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Going to Egypt

Yahweh allowed Israel to go to Egypt. He was to trust in Yahweh and his covenant faithfulness. God continued to bless them in Egypt. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/trust\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/covenantfaith\]\]](#) and **bless, blessed, blessing (p.1739)**)

#### Shepherds

Because of the regular flooding of the Nile River, Egypt's economy revolved around farming more than raising animals. Therefore, the Egyptians despised the nomadic lifestyle of shepherds. Joseph's instructions permitted the Hebrew people to live separately from the Egyptians.

## **Genesis 46:1**

### **went to Beersheba**

“came to Beersheba”

## **Genesis 46:2**

### **Here I am**

“Yes, I am listening”

## Genesis 46:3

### to go down to Egypt

It was common to use the phrase “go down” when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

### I will make you a great nation

The “you” is singular and refers to Jacob. Here Jacob refers to his descendants that will become a large nation.

Alternate translation: “I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-you\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#)) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

## Genesis 46:4

### into Egypt

“to Egypt”

### I will surely bring you up again

The promise was made to Jacob, but the promise would be fulfilled to all of Israel's descendants. Alternate translation: “I will surely bring your descendants out of Egypt again” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-you\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#)) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### bring you up again

It was common to use the word “up” when speaking about traveling from Egypt to Canaan.

### Joseph will close your eyes with his own hand

The phrase “close you eyes with his own hand” is a way of saying that Joseph will be present when Israel dies and it will be Joseph who will close Jacob's eyelids at the time of his death. Alternate translation: “Joseph will even be present with you at the time of your death” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### will close your eyes

It was a custom to pull down the eyelids when a person died with their eyes open. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 46:5**

### **rose up from**

“set out from”

### **in the carts**

“Carts” are wagons with two or four wheels. Animals pull the carts. See how you translated “carts” in [Genesis 45:19](#).

## **Genesis 46:6**

### **they had accumulated**

“they had acquired” or “they had gained”

## **Genesis 46:7**

### **He brought with him**

“Jacob brought with him”

### **his sons' sons**

“his grandsons”

### **his sons' daughters**

“his granddaughters”

## **Genesis 46:8**

### **These were the names**

This refers to the names of the people that the author is about to list.

### **of the children of Israel**

“of Israel’s family members”

## **Genesis 46:9**

### **Hanok, Pallu, Hezron, and Karmi**

These are all names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 46:10**

### **Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul**

These are all names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 46:11**

### **Gershon, Kohath, and Merari**

These are all names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 46:12**

### **Er, Onan, Shelah**

These were the sons of Judah by his wife, Shua. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 38:3-5](#).

### **Perez, and Zerah**

These were the sons of Judah by his daughter-in-law, Tamar. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 38:29-30](#).

### **Hezron & Hamul**

These are all names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 46:13**

### **Tola, Puah, Lob & Shimron**

These are all names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 46:14**

### **Sered, Elon & Jahleel**

These are all names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 46:15

### Dinah

This is the name of Leah's daughter. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 30:21](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### His sons and his daughters numbered thirty-three

Here "sons" and "daughters" refer to Jacob's sons, daughters, and grandchildren related to Leah. Alternate translation: "Altogether he had 33 sons, daughters, and grandchildren" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 46:16**

### **Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi & Areli**

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 46:17**

### **Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi & Beriah & Heber & Malkiel**

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **Serah**

This is the name of a woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 46:18

### Zilpah

This is the name of Leah's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:24](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### These sons she bore to Jacob—sixteen in all

This refers to 16 children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren that were related to Zilpah. (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 46:19**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 46:20

### Asenath

a woman's name. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:45](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Potiphera

a man's name. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:45](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### priest of On

On is a city, also called Heliopolis, which was "the City of the Sun" and the center of worship of the sun god Ra. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:45](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 46:21**

**Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard**

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 46:22**

### **fourteen in all**

This refers to the 14 sons and grandsons related to Rachel. (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 46:23

### Hushim

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 46:24**

### **Jahziel, Guni, Jezer & Shillem**

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 46:25

### Bilhah

This is the name of Rachel's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:29](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### seven in all

This refers to the 7 children and grandchildren related to Bilhah. (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 46:26

### sixty-six

"66" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 46:27**

### **seventy**

"70" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 46:28**

**to show the way before him to Goshen**

“to show them the way to Goshen”

## **Genesis 46:29**

### **Joseph prepared his chariot and went up**

Here “Joseph” stands for his servants. Alternate translation: “Joseph’s servants prepared his chariot and Joseph went up” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **went up to meet Israel**

The phrase “went up” is used because Joseph is traveling to a higher elevation to meet his father. Alternate translation: “went to meet Israel”

### **hugged his neck, and wept on his neck a long time**

“put his arms around his father, and wept for a long time”

## **Genesis 46:30**

### **Now let me die**

“Now I am ready to die” or “Now I will die happy”

### **since I have seen your face, that you are still alive**

Here “face” stands for the entire person. Jacob was expressing joy at seeing Joseph. Alternate translation: “since I have seen you alive again” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 46:31**

### **Connecting Statement:**

## **Connecting Statement:**

This is the beginning of a two-level quotation.

### **his father's house**

Here "house" stands for his family. Alternate translation: "his father's family" or "his father's household" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **I will go up and tell Pharaoh**

It was common to use the phrase "go up" when referring to someone going to speak with someone with greater authority. Alternate translation: "I will go tell Pharaoh"

## Genesis 46:32

### Connecting Statement:

## Connecting Statement:

The two-level quotation that began in verse 31 ends here.

### **The men are shepherds & all that they have**

The two-level quotation that began with the words “I will go up” in verse 31 ends here. This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “I will go up and tell Pharaoh and say that my brothers and my father’s house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. I will tell him that the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock, and that they have brought their flocks, their herds, and all that they have.” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

## **Genesis 46:33**

### **Connecting Statement:**

## **Connecting Statement:**

This is the beginning of a two-level quotation.

### **It will come about**

This phrase is used here to mark an important event that is about to happen in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

## Genesis 46:34

### Connecting Statement:

## Connecting Statement:

The two-level quotation that began in verse 33 ends here.

**you should say, 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth until now, both we, and our forefathers.'**

The two-level quotation that began with the words “when Pharaoh ... asks” in verse 33 ends here. This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. “when Pharaoh ... asks what your occupation is, that you should say that you have been keepers of livestock from your youth until now, both you and your forefathers. Do this” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### Your servants

Joseph's family are to refer to themselves as “your servants” when they speak to Pharaoh. This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. It can be stated in the first person. Alternate translation: “We, your servants” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians

The abstract noun “abomination” can be translated with the adjective “disgusting.” Alternate translation: “Egyptians think shepherds are disgusting” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

## Genesis 47

### Genesis 47 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Abrahamic covenant

Part of the Abrahamic covenant was that Yahweh would bless those who bless Abraham's descendants. Since Pharaoh cared for the Hebrew people, Yahweh blessed the Egyptians while the Hebrew people lived in Egypt. The Hebrew people also multiplied greatly as this covenant promised. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/covenant\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/bless\]\]](#) and **promise, promised (p.1768)**)

#### Jacob was not buried in Egypt

In the ancient Near east, a person was typically buried in their hometown. Since Egypt was not the Israelites' home, Jacob did not wish to be buried in Egypt. This was a lesson to the Israelites that Canaan was their true home, the promised land. (See: **Promised Land (p.1769)**)

## Genesis 47:1

### Joseph went in and told Pharaoh

It is not clear whether Joseph went with his father and family from Canaan to Goshen and then alone from Goshen to see the Pharaoh, back to Goshen for his five brothers, and then back to Pharaoh, as the ULT implies, or whether he brought the five brothers with him the first time he went from Goshen to Pharaoh, as the UST states. (See: **Order of Events (p.1691)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.1691)**)

## Genesis 47:2

### He took five of his brothers and introduced them

It is not clear whether Joseph went with his father and family from Canaan to Goshen and then alone from Goshen to see the Pharaoh, back to Goshen for his five brothers, and then back to Pharaoh, as the ULT implies, or whether he brought the five brothers with him the first time he went from Goshen to Pharaoh, as the UST states. (See: **Order of Events (p.1691)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.1691)**)

## **Genesis 47:3**

### **Your servants are shepherds**

“Your servants shepherd flocks”

### **Your servants**

Joseph’s brothers refer to themselves as “your servants.” This is a formal way of speaking to someone with more authority. This can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: “We, your servants” or “We” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### **as our ancestors**

“both we and our forefathers” or “both we and our ancestors”

## **Genesis 47:4**

### **We come as temporary residents in the land**

“We have come to stay for a while in Egypt”

### **There is no pasture**

“There is no grass to eat”

### **now**

This does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

## **Genesis 47:5**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 47:6**

### **The land of Egypt is before you**

“The land of Egypt is open to you” or “All of the land of Egypt is available to you”

### **Settle your father and your brothers in the best region, the land of Goshen**

“Settle your father and your brothers in the land of Goshen, which is the best region”

### **If you know any capable men among them**

It is implied that they are capable of taking care of animals. Alternate translation: “If you know of any men among them who have great skill taking care of animals” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## **Genesis 47:7**

### **Jacob blessed Pharaoh**

Here “blessed” means to express a desire for positive and beneficial things to happen to that person.

## **Genesis 47:8**

### **How long have you lived?**

“How old are you?”

## **Genesis 47:9**

### **The years of my travels are a hundred and thirty**

The phrase “years of my travels” refers to how long he has lived on the earth traveling from one place to another.  
Alternate translation: “I have traveled on the earth for 130 years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **The years of my life have been few & not been as long as those of my ancestors**

Jacob means his life is short compared to the lives of Abraham and Isaac.

### **painful**

Jacob has experienced much pain and trouble during his life.

## **Genesis 47:10**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 47:11**

### **Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers**

“Then Joseph took care of his father and his brothers and helped them establish where they would live”

### **the land of Rameses**

This is another name for the land of Goshen. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 47:12**

### **according to the number of their dependents**

Here, the word “dependents” means the small children in the family. Alternate translation: “according to how many small children were in their families”

## **Genesis 47:13**

### **Now**

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here the author starts to tell a new part of the story.

### **The land of Egypt and the land of Canaan**

This refers to the people living in these lands. Alternate translation: "The people of Egypt and the people of Canaan" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **wasted away**

"became thin and weak"

## **Genesis 47:14**

**Joseph gathered all the money that was in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, by selling grain to the inhabitants**

“The people of Egypt and Canaan spent all of their money buying grain from Joseph”

### **Joseph gathered & Joseph brought**

Most likely Joseph ordered his servants to gather and bring the money. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 47:15

### When all the money of the lands of Egypt and Canaan was spent

Here “lands” stands for the people who live in the lands. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “When the people of Egypt and Canaan used up all their money” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### of the lands of Egypt and Canaan

“from the land of Egypt and from the land of Canaan”

### Why should we die in your presence because our money is gone?

The people used a question to emphasize how desperate they are to buy food. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Please, do not let us die because we have used up all of our money!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## **Genesis 47:16**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 47:17

### He fed them with bread

Here "bread" stands for food in general. Alternate translation: "He gave them food" or "He provided them with food" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 47:18**

### **they came to him**

“the people came to Joseph”

### **We will not hide from my master**

The people refer to Joseph as “my master.” This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. It can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: “We will not hide from you, our master” or “We will not hide from you” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### **There is nothing left in the sight of my master**

Here “sight” stands for Joseph himself. Alternate translation: “We have nothing left to give you, our master” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 47:19

### Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land?

The word “eyes” refers to Joseph’s sight. The people use a question to emphasize how desperate they are to buy food. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Please do not just watch as we die and our land is ruined!” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-rquestion\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### Why should we die & both we and our land

The land becomes useless and ruined because there is no seed to plant; thus it is spoken of as if the land would die. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 47:20**

**In this way, the land became Pharaoh's**

"So the land became Pharaoh's"

## **Genesis 47:21**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## **Genesis 47:22**

### **It was only the land of the priests that Joseph did not buy**

“But he did not buy the land of the priests”

### **the priests were given an allowance**

An “allowance” is an amount of money or food that someone regularly gives to another person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Pharaoh gave the priests a certain amount of food each day” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### **They ate from the allotment which Pharaoh gave them**

“They ate from what Pharaoh gave them”

## **Genesis 47:23**

**and you will plant**

“that you might sow”

## **Genesis 47:24**

**At the harvest, you must give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four parts will be your own**

The word "fifth" is a fraction. Alternate translation: "At harvest time you will divide the crops into five parts. You will give one part back to Pharaoh for payment and the four parts are for your own" (See: **Fractions (p.1641)**) (See: **Fractions (p.1641)**)

**for food for your households and your children**

You can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: "for food for your households and for food for your children" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

## Genesis 47:25

### May we find favor in your eyes

The phrase “find favor” is an idiom which means to be approved of by someone. Also, the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: “May you be pleased with us” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#)) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 47:26**

### **in the land of Egypt**

“over the land of Egypt” or “throughout the land of Egypt”

### **to this day**

This means to the time that the author was writing this.

### **one-fifth**

See how you translated “a fifth” in [Genesis 47:24](#).

## Genesis 47:27

### They were fruitful and multiplied greatly

The word “multiplied” explains how they were “fruitful.” Alternate translation: “They had very many children” (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

### were fruitful

Here “fruitful” means to prosper or to have children. (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 47:28**

### **seventeen years**

“17 years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **so the years of Jacob’s life were one hundred forty-seven years**

“so Jacob lived to be 147 years old” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 47:29

### When the time approached for Israel to die

This speaks about time as if it travels and comes to a place. Alternate translation: "When it was almost time for Israel to die" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### If now I have found favor in your eyes

Here "eyes" is a metonym for sight, and "sight" stands for thoughts or opinions. Alternate translation: "If I have found favor with you" or "If I have pleased you" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

### found favor

This means that someone is approved of by someone else. (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### put your hand under my thigh

This act is a sign of making a serious promise. See how you translated this in [Genesis 24:2](#). (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

### show me faithfulness and trustworthiness

The abstract nouns "faithfulness" and "trustworthiness" can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "treat me in a faithful and trustworthy manner" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1596)**)

### Please do not bury me in Egypt

The word "please" adds emphasis to this request.

## Genesis 47:30

### When I sleep with my fathers

Here “sleep” is a polite way to refer to dying. Alternate translation: “When I die and join my family members who died before me” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## **Genesis 47:31**

### **Swear to me**

“Promise me” or “Make an oath to me”

### **swore to him**

“promised him” or “made an oath to him”

## Genesis 48

### Genesis 48 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 48:15-16, and in 58:20.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Blessing

The blessing of Jacob is given to Joseph, and his sons Manasseh and Ephraim. It is probably distinct from inheriting the promises Yahweh gave to Abraham because Scripture talks about all of Israel's descendants inheriting those promises. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/bless\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]\]](#) and **promise, promised (p.1768)**)

## **Genesis 48:1**

### **It came about**

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p. 1668)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1668)**)

### **one said to Joseph**

“someone said to Joseph”

### **Look, your father**

“Listen, your father.” Here the word “look” is used to get Joseph’s attention.

### **So he took**

“So Joseph took”

## Genesis 48:2

### When Jacob was told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When someone told Jacob" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### your son Joseph has arrived to see you

"your son Joseph has come to you"

### Israel gathered strength and sat up in bed

Here the author speaks of Israel struggling to sit up in bed as if he were gathering "strength" as someone gathers actual things. Alternate translation: "Israel made a great effort to sit up in bed" or "Israel struggled as he sat up in bed" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 48:3

### Luz

This is the name of a city. See how you translated the name of this city in [Genesis 28:19](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### in the land of Canaan. He blessed me

This can be translated with the new sentence starting in a different place. Alternate translation: “in the land of Canaan, and he blessed me”

### blessed

This refers to God pronouncing a formal blessing on someone.

## Genesis 48:4

### and said to me

This can be translated with the new sentence starting in a different place. Alternate translation: "And he said to me"

**said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful, and multiply you. I will make of you an assembly of nations. I will give this land to your descendants as an everlasting possession.'**

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "said to me that he would make me fruitful and multiply me. And, he said that he would make me an assembly of nations and he would give this land to my descendants as an everlasting possession." (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### Behold

God used the word "behold" here to alert Jacob to pay attention to what he was about to tell him.

### I will make you fruitful, and multiply you

The phrase "multiply you" explains how God would make Jacob "fruitful." Alternate translation: "I will give you very many descendants" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-doublet\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Doublet (p.1629)**)

### I will make of you an assembly of nations

Here "you" refers to Jacob, but it stands for Jacob's descendants. Alternate translation: "I will make your descendants into many nations" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### an everlasting possession

"a permanent possession"

## **Genesis 48:5**

### **Now**

This does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

### **Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine**

Ephraim and Manasseh each will receive a portion of land just like Joseph's brothers.

## **Genesis 48:6**

### **they will be listed under the names of their brothers in their inheritance**

Possible meanings are (1) the rest of Joseph's children would inherit land as part of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh or (2) Joseph will be given separate land from Ephraim and Manasseh and Joseph's other children will inherit that land. Alternate translation: "as for their inheritance, you will list them under the names of their brothers"

## Genesis 48:7

### Ephrath

This is another name for the town of Bethlehem. See how you translated the name of this city in [Genesis 35:16](#).

## **Genesis 48:8**

### **Whose are these?**

“Whose sons are these?”

## **Genesis 48:9**

### **bless**

A father would often pronounce a formal blessing on his children or grandchildren.

## **Genesis 48:10**

### **Now Israel's eyes & could not see**

The word "Now" is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Israel. (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1605)**)

### **he kissed them**

"Israel kissed them"

## Genesis 48:11

### to see your face again

Here “face” stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: “to see you again” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 48:12**

### **between Israel's knees**

When Joseph placed his sons on Israel's lap or knees it was a sign that Israel was adopting them. This gave the children special inheritance rights from Jacob. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

### **then he bowed with his face to the earth**

Joseph bowed down to show honor to his father. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## Genesis 48:13

### Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand

Joseph places the boys so that Israel will put his right hand on Manasseh. Manasseh was the oldest brother and the right hand was the sign he would receive the greater blessing. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## Genesis 48:14

### his right hand and laid it upon Ephraim's head

Placing the right hand on Ephraim's head was the sign that he would receive the greater blessing. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## Genesis 48:15

### Israel blessed Joseph

Here "Joseph" also stands for Ephraim and Manasseh. Since Joseph is the father, he is the only one mentioned here. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked

Serving God is spoken of as if it were walking before God. Alternate translation: "The God who my grandfather Abraham and father Isaac served" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### who has cared for me

God has taken care of Israel like a shepherd takes care of his sheep. Alternate translation: "who has cared for me like a shepherd cares for his animals" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

## Genesis 48:16

### the angel

Possible meanings are (1) this refers to the angel that God sent to protect Jacob or (2) this refers to God who appeared in angel form to protect Jacob.

### protected me

“delivered me”

### May my name be named in them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac

Here “name” stands for the person. The phrase “my name be named in them” is an idiom that means a person is remembered because of another person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May people remember Abraham, Isaac, and me because of Ephraim and Manasseh” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### May they grow into a multitude on the earth

Here “they” refers to Ephraim and Manasseh, but it stands for their descendants. Alternate translation: “May they have many descendants who will live all over the earth” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 48:17**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 48:18

### Put your right hand upon his head

The right hand was the sign of the greater blessing which the oldest son was supposed to receive. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## Genesis 48:19

### He also will become a people, and he also will be great

Here "He" refers to Manasseh, but it stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: "Your older son will have many descendants, and they will become a great people" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 48:20

### that day with these words

“that day, saying”

### The people of Israel will pronounce blessings by your names saying

“The people of Israel will speak your names when they are blessing others”

### by your names saying, ‘May God make you like Ephraim and like Manasseh’

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “by your names. They will ask God to make others like Ephraim and like Manasseh” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### like Ephraim and like Manasseh

Israel saying Ephraim’s name first is another way he indicates that Ephraim will be greater than Manasseh.

### Israel put Ephraim before Manasseh

Giving Ephraim the greater blessing and making him more important than Manasseh is spoken of as if Israel physically put Ephraim in front of Manasseh. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 48:21**

### **will be with you & bring you back & your fathers**

Here “you” and “your” are plural and refer to all the people of Israel. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### **will be with you**

This is an idiom that means God will help and bless the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “God will help you” or “God will bless you” (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **will bring you back**

Here “bring” can be translated as “take.” (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1643)**)

### **land of your fathers**

“land of your ancestors”

## Genesis 48:22

### **To you, as one who is above your brothers, I give to you the mountain slope**

Possible meanings are (1) Joseph having more honor and authority than his brothers is spoken of as if he were physically above them. Alternate translation: "To you, who is greater than your brothers, I give the mountain slope" or (2) Jacob means he is giving more land to Joseph than he is giving to Joseph's brothers. Alternate translation: "To you, I give one more ridge than I give your brothers. I give to you the mountain slope" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### **To you**

Here "you" is singular and refers to Joseph. (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1640)**)

### **the mountain slope that I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow**

Here "sword" and "bow" stands for fighting in battle. Alternate translation: "the portion of land I fought for and took from the Amorites" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 49

### Genesis 49 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 49:1-27.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Prophecies

These statements made by Jacob to his sons are probably prophecies. These prophecies are concerned with the descendants of each of Jacob's sons who would become the twelve tribes of Israel. (See: **prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess (p.1770)**)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### “The scepter will not depart from Judah”

This prophecy indicates Judah will be the ruling tribe of Israel. The future kings of Israel all come from the tribe of Judah. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

#### “I buried Leah”

Since Moses wrote the book of Genesis, this is an editorial comment he makes in the text as the narrator.

## Genesis 49:1

### General Information:

## General Information:

This begins Jacob's final blessings to his sons. This continues through [Genesis 49:27](#). Jacob's blessings are written in poetic form. (See: **Poetry (p.1700)**) (See: **Poetry (p.1700)**)

## Genesis 49:2

### **Assemble yourselves and listen, you sons of Jacob. Listen to Israel, your father**

Both sentences say the same thing for emphasis. Alternate translation: "Come and listen carefully to your father" (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

### **you sons of Jacob. Listen to Israel, your father**

Jacob is referring to himself in the third person. It can be stated in the first person. Alternate translation: "my sons. Listen to me, your father" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

## **Genesis 49:3**

### **my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength**

The phrases “my firstborn, my might” and “the beginning of my strength” mean the same thing. The words “might” and “strength” stand for Jacob’s ability to produce children. The words “firstborn” and “beginning” mean that Reuben is his first child. Alternate translation: “my first child after I became a man” (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

### **outstanding in dignity, and outstanding in power**

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: “You are first in honor and power” or “You surpass everyone else in honor and power”

## Genesis 49:4

### Uncontrollable as rushing water

Jacob compares Reuben to water in a strong current to emphasize that he cannot control his anger and he is not stable. (See: [Simile \(p.1721\)](#)) (See: [Simile \(p.1721\)](#))

### you will not have the preeminence

“you shall not be first among your brothers”

### because you went up to your father’s bed. Then you defiled it; you went up to my couch

Here “bed” and “couch” stand for Jacob’s concubine, Bilhah. Jacob is referring to when Reuben slept with Bilhah ([Genesis 35:22](#)). Alternate translation: “because you went to my bed and slept with Bilhah my concubine. You have shamed me” (See: [Metonymy \(p.1684\)](#)) (See: [Metonymy \(p.1684\)](#))

### you went up to your father’s bed & you went up to my couch

Both statements mean the same thing. (See: [Parallelism \(p.1695\)](#)) (See: [Parallelism \(p.1695\)](#))

## **Genesis 49:5**

### **Simeon and Levi are brothers**

This does not just mean they are brothers by birth. Jacob is emphasizing that they worked together to kill the people of Shechem.

### **Weapons of violence are their swords**

“They use their swords to hurt and to kill people”

## Genesis 49:6

### O my soul & my heart

Jacob uses the words “soul” and “heart” to refer to himself and is saying that other people, and perhaps God also, honor him so much that he does not wish to join with those who make plans to do evil. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### do not come into their council; do not join in their meetings

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Jacob combines them to emphasize that he does not want to participate in their wicked plans. Alternate translation: “I certainly will not join with them to make any plans” (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

### they hamstrung oxen

This refers to Simeon and Levi crippling oxen just for fun.

### hamstrung

This refers to cutting the sinews of an animal's leg so that it cannot walk.

## Genesis 49:7

### May their anger be cursed, for it was fierce—and their fury, for it was cruel

God cursing Simeon and Levi is spoken of as if God were cursing their anger and fury. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Lord says, 'I will curse them because of their fierce anger and their cruel fury'" or "I, the Lord, will curse them because of their fierce anger and their cruel fury" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive\]\]](#)) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### May their anger be cursed

In prophecy, the prophet will often speak the words of God as if God himself were speaking. This emphasizes how closely united the prophet and God are.

### their fury, for it was cruel

The words "I will curse" are understood. Alternate translation: "I will curse their fury, for it was cruel" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1631)**)

### I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel

The word "I" refers to God. The word "them" refers to Simeon and Levi but they are a metonym standing for their descendants. The words "Jacob" and "Israel" are a metonym standing for all people of Israel. Alternate translation: "I will divide their descendants and scatter them among all the people of Israel" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-parallelism\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 49:8

### **your brothers will praise you & Your father's sons will bow down before you**

These two statements mean the same thing. (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

### **will praise you. Your hand**

The second sentence states the reason for the first sentence. This can be made clear with "for" or "because."  
Alternate translation: "will praise you. For your hand" or "will praise you because your hand" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1617)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1617)**)

### **Your hand will be on the neck of your enemies**

This is a way of saying "You will conquer your enemies." (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **bow down**

This means to bend over to humbly express respect and honor toward someone. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## Genesis 49:9

### Judah is a lion's cub

Jacob speaks about Judah as if he were a lion's cub. Jacob is emphasizing Judah's strength. Alternate translation: "Judah is like a young lion" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### My son, you have gone up from your victims

"You, my son, have come back from eating your prey"

### like a lioness

Jacob also compares Judah to a female lion. The lioness is the primary hunter and protector of her cubs. (See: **Simile (p.1721)**) (See: **Simile (p.1721)**)

### Who would dare to awaken him?

Jacob uses a question to emphasize how terrifying Judah is to other people. Alternate translation: "No one wants to wake him up." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## Genesis 49:10

### **The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet**

The "scepter" and the "staff" are long decorated sticks that kings carried. Here they are metonymies that stand for the power to rule. And, "Judah" stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: "The power to rule will always be with the descendants of Judah" (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-parallelism\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **until Shiloh comes. The nations will obey him**

Possible meanings are (1) "Shiloh" means "tribute." Alternate translation: "until the nations obey him and bring him tribute" or (2) "Shiloh" refers to the city of Shiloh. Alternate translation: "until the ruler comes to Shiloh. Then the nations will obey him" Many people consider this a prophecy about the Messiah, who is a descendant of King David. David is a descendant of Judah.

### **The nations will obey him**

Here "nations" refer to the people. Alternate translation: "The people of the nations will obey him" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 49:11

### Binding his donkey & to the choice vine

Both statements mean the same thing. It is implied that the vines are so full of grapes that the master does not mind that his donkey eats some of them. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-parallelism\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#)) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

### his & he

Possible meanings for all occurrences of “his” or “he” are (1) they refer to Judah’s descendants. Alternate translation: “their ... they” or (2) they refer to the ruler in [Genesis 49:10](#), which may refer to the Messiah.

### he has washed & in the blood of grapes

Both statements mean the same thing. It implies that there are so many grapes that they can wash their clothes in the juice. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-parallelism\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#)) (See: **Parallelism (p.1695)**)

### he has washed

Often in prophecy events that will happen in the future are described as something that has already happened in the past. This emphasizes that this event will certainly happen. Alternate translation: “they will wash” or “he will wash” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1703)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1703)**)

### the blood of grapes

This speaks about the grape juice as if it were blood. This emphasizes how red the juice is. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 49:12

### His eyes will be as dark as wine

This refers to the color of a person's eyes to the red color of wine. Possible meanings are (1) dark eyes imply healthy eyes or (2) people eyes will be red from drinking too much of wine. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-simile\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#)) (See: **Simile (p.1721)**)

### his teeth as white as milk

This compare the color of the person's teeth to the white color of milk. This implies that there will be so many healthy cows they will have much milk to drink. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-simile\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#)) (See: **Simile (p.1721)**)

## **Genesis 49:13**

### **Zebulun will live**

This refers to the descendants of Zebulun. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Zebulun will live" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **He will be a harbor**

Here "He" stands for sea towns that the people of Zebulun will inhabit or build. These cities will provide shelter for ships. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **harbor**

a part of the sea that is next to land and is a safe place for ships

## Genesis 49:14

### Issachar is a strong donkey

Jacob speaks about Issachar and his descendants as if they are a donkey. This emphasizes that they will work very hard. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Issachar will be like a strong donkey" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### Issachar is

Often in prophecy events that will happen in the future are described as something that is already happening. This emphasizes that the event will certainly happen. It can be stated in the future tense. Alternate translation: "Issachar will be" or "The descendants of Issachar will be"

### lying down between the sheepfolds

Possible meanings are (1) "lying down between the packs they were carrying" or (2) "lying down between two sheep pens." Either way, Jacob speaks about Issachar's descendants as if they are donkeys that have worked hard and are lying down to rest. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 49:15**

### **He sees & He will**

These words refer to the descendants of Issachar (verse 14). Alternate translation: "They see ... They will" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **a good resting place and the pleasant land**

"a resting place that is good and that the land is pleasant"

### **He will bend his shoulder to the burden**

The phrase "bend his shoulder to the burden" is a way of saying "work very hard to carry the load" (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

### **become a servant for the task**

"will work for others as slaves"

## **Genesis 49:16**

### **Dan will judge his people**

Here “Dan” stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: “The descendants of Dan will judge their people” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **his people**

Possible meanings for “his people” are (1) “the people of Dan” or (2) “the people of Israel”

## Genesis 49:17

### Dan will be a snake beside the road

Jacob speaks about Dan and his descendants as if they were snakes. Though a snake is small, it can bring down a rider off his horse. So Dan, though a small tribe, is very dangerous to its enemies. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Dan will be like a snake beside the road" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 49:18**

### **I wait for your salvation, Yahweh**

The abstract noun “salvation” can be translated as “save.” Alternate translation: “I wait for you, Yahweh, to save me”

### **I wait**

The word “I” refers to Jacob.

## Genesis 49:19

### Gad & attack him, but he

Here "Gad" stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Gad ... attack them, but they" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### at their heels

Here "heels" stands for the raiders who are running away from the descendants of Gad. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 49:20**

### **Asher's food & and he**

Here "Asher" stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: "Asher's descendants' food ... and they" (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **food will be rich**

Here "rich" is a way of saying "delicious." (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 49:21

### Naphtali is & he will

Here “Naphtali” stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: “The descendants of Naphtali are ... they will” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### Naphtali is a doe let loose

Jacob speaks about the descendants of Naphtali as if they were a female deer that is free to run. This may emphasize that they will be swift messengers. Alternate translation: “The descendants of Naphtali will be like deer set free” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### have beautiful fawns

A “fawn” is a baby deer. The meaning of the Hebrew word is unclear. Some versions translate it as “have beautiful words” or “speak beautiful things” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 49:22

### Joseph is a fruitful bough

Here “Joseph” is a metonym that stands for his descendants. Jacob speaks about them as if they were a tree branch that produces a lot of fruit. This emphasizes that they will greatly increase in number. Alternate translation: “The descendants of Joseph are a fruitful bough” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### bough

a main branch of a tree

### whose branches climb over the wall

Branches that grow and extend over a wall are spoken of as if they were climbing. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 49:23**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 49:24

### General Information:

## General Information:

Jacob continues to bless Joseph and his descendants.

### his bow will remain steady

The person holding the bow steady is spoken of as if the bow itself will remain steady. It is implied he is holding it steady as he aims at his enemy. Alternate translation: “he will hold his bow steady as he aims at his enemy” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### his bow & his hands

Here “his” refers to Joseph who stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: “their bow ... their hands” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### his hands will be skillful

Here the whole person is represented by the “hands” since they are used to hold the bow. Alternate translation: “his arms will remain strong as he aims his bow” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

### the hands of the Mighty One

The “hands” are expressing the power of Yahweh. Alternate translation: “the power of the Mighty One” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### because of the name of the Shepherd

Here “name” refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: “because of the Shepherd” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### the Shepherd

Jacob speak of Yahweh as if he were a “Shepherd.” This emphasizes that Yahweh guides and protects his people. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### the Rock

Jacob speaks of Yahweh as if he were a “Rock” that people can climb upon to find safety from enemies. This emphasizes that Yahweh protects his people. (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## Genesis 49:25

### General Information:

## General Information:

Jacob continues to bless Joseph and his descendants ([Genesis 49:22-23](#)).

### help you & bless you

Here “you” refers to Joseph who stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: “help your descendants ... bless them” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### blessings of the sky

Here “sky” stands for the rain that helps the crops to grow. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### blessings of the deep that lies beneath

Here “deep” stands for the water underneath the ground that supplies rivers and wells. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### blessings of the breasts and womb

Here “breasts and womb” stand for the ability for a mother to have children and feed them milk. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## Genesis 49:26

### General Information:

## General Information:

Jacob continues to bless Joseph and his descendants.

### the ancient mountains

The meaning of the original language is not certain. Some Bible translations have “my ancestors” instead of “ancient mountains.”

### May they be on the head of Joseph

Here “they” refers to the blessings of his father.

### upon the crown of the head of the prince of his brothers

Jacob desires for these blessings to be passed on to even the most important of his descendants. Alternate translation: “on the head of the most important of Joseph’s descendants” (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### prince of his brothers

“most important of his brothers”

## Genesis 49:27

### Benjamin is a hungry wolf

Here "Benjamin" is a metonym that stands for his descendants. Jacob speaks about Benjamin's descendants as if they were a hungry wolf. This emphasizes that they will be fierce warriors. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Benjamin will be like hungry wolves" (See: [[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy]] and [[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]]) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

## **Genesis 49:28**

### **These are the twelve tribes of Israel**

“These” refers to the sons Jacob mentioned in 49:1-27. Each son became the leader of his own tribe.

### **when he blessed them**

Here the word “blessed” refers to the speaking of formal blessings.

### **Each one he blessed with an appropriate blessing**

“He gave each son a fitting blessing”

## Genesis 49:29

### he instructed them

“he commanded them”

### I am about to go to my people

This is a polite way of saying he is about to die. Alternate translation: “I am about to die” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-euphemism\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### go to my people

Jacob is referring to where his inner man will go when he dies. He expects to join Abraham and Isaac in the afterlife. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-euphemism\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### Ephron the Hittite

This is the name of a man. “Hittite” means “descendent of Heth.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:8](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## Genesis 49:30

### Machpelah

Machpelah was the name of an area or region. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:9](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Mamre

This was another name for the city of Hebron. It may have been named after Mamre, the friend of Abraham who lived there. See how you translated this in [Genesis 13:18](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 49:31**

### **General Information:**

### **General Information:**

Jacob continues speaking to his sons.

## **Genesis 49:32**

### **in it were purchased**

The purchase can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "in it were purchased by Abraham" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### **from the people of Heth**

"from the Hittites"

## **Genesis 49:33**

### **finished these instructions to his sons**

“finished instructing his sons” or “finished commanding his sons”

### **he pulled his feet into the bed**

Jacob was sitting on the bed. Now, Jacob turns and puts his feet in the bed so he can lie down.

### **breathed his last**

This is a polite way of saying a person died. (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

### **went to his people**

After Jacob died, his inner man went to the same place as his relatives who died before him. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-euphemism\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#)) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## Genesis 50

### Genesis 50 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Embalming

Embalming was practiced in Egypt on very important people when they died. They removed the liquids from the body then wrapped it in an attempt to preserve the body from decay.

#### Joseph's character

Joseph's character was so upright that Pharaoh's officials went with him to Canaan to bury Jacob. This was a very large funeral procession. He also learned lessons from earlier in his life and unified his family. (See: **righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness (p.1772)**)

## **Genesis 50:1**

### **that he collapsed on the face of his father**

The term "he collapsed" is an idiom for being overcome. Alternate translation: "that he fell on his father in grief"  
(See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## **Genesis 50:2**

### **his servants the physicians**

“his servants who took care of dead bodies”

### **to embalm his father**

To “embalm” is a special way of preserving a dead body before it is buried. Alternate translation: “to prepare his father’s body for burial” (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1634)**)

## **Genesis 50:3**

### **They took forty days**

"They took 40 days" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### **seventy days**

"70 days" (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 50:4

### Connecting Statement:

## Connecting Statement:

A three-level quotation is introduced with the words “Joseph spoke ... saying.” The second level begins with the words “If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak to Pharaoh, saying.”

### days of weeping

“days of mourning him” or “days of weeping for him”

### Joseph spoke to the house of Pharaoh

Here “house of Pharaoh” stands for the officials that make up Pharaoh’s royal court. Alternate translation: “Joseph spoke to Pharaoh’s officials” (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### If now I have found favor in your eyes

The phrase “find favor” is an idiom which means to be approved of by someone. Also, the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: “If I have found favor with you” or “If you are pleased with me” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-idiom\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#)) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 50:5

### Connecting Statement:

## Connecting Statement:

The three-level quotation that began with the words “Joseph spoke ... saying” in verse 4 continues. The second level of that quotation, which began with the words “If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak to Pharaoh, saying” in verse 4 continues.

**My father made me swear, saying, “See, I am about to die. Bury me in my tomb that I dug for myself in the land of Canaan. There you will bury me.” Now let me go up & I will return.**

This is the second level of the three-level quotation that begins with the words “If now I have” in verse 4. It contains a quote within it. This embedded quote can be translated as an indirect quote. “My father made me swear, saying that he was about to die and that I was to bury him in his tomb that he dug for himself in the land of Canaan. I was to bury him there. Now let me go up ... I will return.” The entire second-level quotation can also be translated as an indirect quote. “If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak to Pharaoh and tell him that my father made me swear, saying that he was about to die and that I was to bury him in his tomb that he dug for himself in the land of Canaan. I was to bury him there. Now let me go up ... I will return.” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### See, I am about to die & you will bury me

This is the third level of the three-level quotation that begins with the words “If now I have” in verse 4.

### See, I am about to die

“See, I am dying”

### let me go up

It was common to use the phrase “go up” when speaking of traveling from Egypt to Canaan.

## Genesis 50:6

### Pharaoh answered

It is implied that the members of the court spoke to Pharaoh, and now Pharaoh is replying to Joseph. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1601)**)

### as he made you swear

“as you swore to him”

## **Genesis 50:7**

### **Joseph went up**

It was common to use the phrase “went up” when speaking of traveling from Egypt to Canaan.

### **All the officials & the elders & the senior officials**

All of Pharaoh’s most important leaders attended the burial procession.

### **the elders of his household**

Here “household” refers to Pharaoh’s royal court.

## **Genesis 50:8**

### **with all Joseph's household and his brothers, and his father's household**

This can be translated as a new sentence: "Joseph's household, his brothers, and his father's household also went with him" (See: **Order of Events (p.1691)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.1691)**)

## **Genesis 50:9**

### **Chariots**

Here this stands for the men riding in the chariots. (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1684)**)

### **It was a very large group of people**

“It was a very large gathering”

## **Genesis 50:10**

### **When they came**

The word “they” refers to the participants in the burial procession.

### **floor of Atad**

Possible meanings are (1) the word “Atad” means “thorn” and it may refer to a place where large amounts of thorns grew, or (2) it may be the name of the person who owns the threshing floor. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **they mourned with very great and grievous sorrow**

“they were extremely sad and they mourned very much”

### **a seven-day**

“a 7-day” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## **Genesis 50:11**

### **in the floor of Atad**

Possible meanings are (1) “on the threshing floor that belonged to a man named Atad” or (2) “in the threshing floor at a place called Atad” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### **This is a very sad occasion for the Egyptians**

“The mourning of the Egyptians is very great”

### **Abel Mizraim**

The translator can add a footnote that says: “The name Abel Mizraim means “the mourning of Egypt.” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 50:12**

### **So his sons**

“So Jacob’s sons”

### **just as he had instructed them**

“just as he had directed them”

## Genesis 50:13

### His sons carried him

“His sons took his body”

### Machpelah

Machpela was the name of an area or region. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:9](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Mamre

This was another name for the city of Hebron. It may have been named after Mamre, the friend of Abraham who lived there. See how you translated this in [Genesis 13:18](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### Ephron the Hittite

This is the name of a man. “Hittite” means “descendent of Heth.” See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:8](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

## **Genesis 50:14**

### **Joseph returned into Egypt**

“Joseph returned to Egypt”

### **all who had accompanied him**

“all who had come with him”

## Genesis 50:15

### What if Joseph holds on to anger against us

Here anger is spoken of as if it was something physical that Joseph could hold in his hands. Alternate translation: "What if Joseph is actually still angry with us" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

### wants to repay us in full for all the evil we did to him

Avenging oneself against someone who harmed him is spoken of as if the person were paying they other person what they are owed. Alternate translation: "wants revenge for the evil thing we did to him" (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1678)**)

## **Genesis 50:16**

### **Connecting Statement:**

### **Connecting Statement:**

A three-level quotation begins with the words "Your father gave."

### **Your father gave instructions before he died, saying**

Jacob was the father of all the brothers. Here they say "your father" to emphasize that Joseph needs to pay attention to what his father said. Alternate translation: "Before our father died he said"

## Genesis 50:17

### Connecting Statement:

## Connecting Statement:

The three-level quotation that begins with the words “Your father gave” in verse 16 ends here.

### **Tell Joseph this, “Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin when they did evil to you.”**

The three-level quotation that begins with the words “Your father gave” in verse 16 ends here. This is the second-level quotation, and it contains a third-level quotation that can be stated as an indirect quotation. “Tell Joseph to please forgive your transgression and your sin when you did evil to him.” Both the second- and third-level quotations can be translated as indirect quotations. “Your father instructed us before he died to tell you to please forgive our transgression and our sin when we did evil to you.” (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-quotations\]\]](#)) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1710)**)

### **and their sin when they did evil to you**

“for the wicked things they did to you”

### **Now**

This does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

### **please forgive the servants of the God of your father**

The brothers are referring to themselves as “the servants of the God of your father.” This can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: “please forgive us, the servants of the God of our father” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1638)**)

### **Joseph wept when they spoke to him**

“Joseph wept when he heard this message”

## Genesis 50:18

### lay facedown before him

They lay down with their faces toward the ground. This is a sign of humility and respect for Joseph. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1724)**)

## Genesis 50:19

### Am I in the place of God?

Joseph uses a question to comfort his brothers. Alternate translation: "I am not in the place of God." or "I am not God." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1716)**)

## **Genesis 50:20**

### **you meant to harm me**

“you intended to do evil against me”

### **God meant it for good**

“God intended it for good”

## **Genesis 50:21**

### **So now do not be afraid**

“So do not fear me”

### **I will provide for you and your little children**

“I will always make sure you and your children have enough to eat”

### **He comforted them in this way and spoke kindly to their hearts**

Here “hearts” refers to the brothers. Alternate translation: “He comforted them by speaking kindly to them” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1728)**)

## **Genesis 50:22**

### **one hundred ten years**

“110 years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

## Genesis 50:23

### Ephraim's children to the third generation

"Ephraim's children and grandchildren"

### Machir

This is the name of Joseph's grandson. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1651)**)

### who were placed on the knees of Joseph

This expression means that Joseph adopted these children of Machir as his own children. This means they would have special inheritance rights from Joseph. (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1662)**)

## Genesis 50:24

### surely come to you

In [Genesis 50:24/26](#) the word “you” refers to Joseph's brothers, but it also stands for their descendants. (See: [Metonymy \(p.1684\)](#)) (See: [Metonymy \(p.1684\)](#))

### lead you up out of this land to the land

It was common to use the word “up” when speaking of traveling from Egypt to Canaan. Alternate translation: “bring you out of this land and take you to the land” (See: [Order of Events \(p.1691\)](#)) (See: [Order of Events \(p.1691\)](#))

## **Genesis 50:25**

(There are no notes for this verse.)

## Genesis 50:26

### 110 years

“one hundred and ten years” (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1688)**)

### They embalmed him

To “embalm” is a special way of preserving a dead body before it is buried. See how you translated “embalmed” in [Genesis 50:1](#).

### he was placed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “they placed him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1598)**)

### in a coffin

“in a chest” or “in a case.” This is a box a dead person is placed in.



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Academy**

**Version 36**

## 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:

*Parts of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Sentence Structure* ([UTA PDF](#))

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**.

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 18:20](#); [Genesis 18:21](#); [Genesis 19:13](#); [Genesis 19:19](#); [Genesis 21:16](#); [Genesis 21:23](#); [Genesis 21:30](#); [Genesis 23:10](#); [Genesis 23:13](#); [Genesis 23:16](#); [Genesis 24:12](#); [Genesis 24:14](#); [Genesis 24:27](#); [Genesis 24:49](#); [Genesis 29:32](#); [Genesis 30:26](#); [Genesis 31:42](#); [Genesis 34:13](#); [Genesis 39:21](#); [Genesis 41:19](#); [Genesis 41:52](#); [Genesis 42:21](#); [Genesis 43:9](#); [Genesis 43:14](#); [Genesis 43:23](#); [Genesis 44:32](#); [Genesis 45:7](#); [Genesis 46:34](#); [Genesis 47:29](#)

## 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:

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Verbs \(UTA PDF\)](#)

## 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: "

**Referenced in:** Genesis 1:9; Genesis 2:1; Genesis 2:20; Genesis 3:17; Genesis 3:22; Genesis 4:11; Genesis 4:15; Genesis 4:24; Genesis 5:2; Genesis 6:1; Genesis 7:23; Genesis 8:2; Genesis 8:7; Genesis 8:13; Genesis 9:14; Genesis 10 General Notes; Genesis 10:25; Genesis 11:4; Genesis 12:3; Genesis 12:13; Genesis 12:15; Genesis 14:19; Genesis 15:13; Genesis 16:5; Genesis 17:10; Genesis 17:12; Genesis 17:13; Genesis 17:14; Genesis 17:27; Genesis 18:4; Genesis 18:18; Genesis 18:25; Genesis 18:29; Genesis 18:30; Genesis 18:31; Genesis 19:15; Genesis 20:16; Genesis 21:12; Genesis 22:13; Genesis 22:14; Genesis 22:18; Genesis 22:20; Genesis 24:32; Genesis 24:67; Genesis 25:10; Genesis 26:4; Genesis 26:11; Genesis 26:29; Genesis 27:29; Genesis 27:42; Genesis 28:14; Genesis 29:7; Genesis 29:8; Genesis 29:21; Genesis 29:31; Genesis 29:33; Genesis 30:33; Genesis 31:22; Genesis 31:39; Genesis 32:10; Genesis 32:12; Genesis 32:25; Genesis 32:30; Genesis 33:11; Genesis 33:13; Genesis 34:7; Genesis 34:24; Genesis 34:30; Genesis 35:8; Genesis 35:10; Genesis 35:19; Genesis 37:33; Genesis 37:35; Genesis 38:3; Genesis 38:13; Genesis 38:14; Genesis 38:18; Genesis 38:20; Genesis 38:24; Genesis 38:25; Genesis 38:29; Genesis 39:20; Genesis 40:3; Genesis 40:15; Genesis 41:6; Genesis 41:21; Genesis 41:27; Genesis 41:32; Genesis 41:40; Genesis 42:15; Genesis 42:16; Genesis 42:19; Genesis 42:20; Genesis 42:25; Genesis 42:28; Genesis 43:18; Genesis 44:3; Genesis 44:10; Genesis 44:12; Genesis 44:28; Genesis 45:16; Genesis 45:19; Genesis 47:22; Genesis 48:2; Genesis 48:16; Genesis 50:26

## 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:

*Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (UTA PDF)*

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 3:7](#); [Genesis 3:17](#); [Genesis 4:1](#); [Genesis 4:3](#); [Genesis 4:4](#); [Genesis 4:8](#); [Genesis 4:18](#); [Genesis 4:25](#); [Genesis 4:26](#); [Genesis 6:14](#); [Genesis 7:10](#); [Genesis 7:16](#); [Genesis 8:5](#); [Genesis 8:12](#); [Genesis 8:21](#); [Genesis 9 General Notes](#); [Genesis 9:5](#); [Genesis 10:19](#); [Genesis 10:32](#); [Genesis 11 General Notes](#); [Genesis 11:5](#); [Genesis 11:7](#); [Genesis 11:9](#); [Genesis 12:6](#); [Genesis 12:9](#); [Genesis 12:10](#); [Genesis 12:12](#); [Genesis 12:17](#); [Genesis 13 General Notes](#); [Genesis 13:1](#); [Genesis 13:3](#); [Genesis 14:3](#); [Genesis 14:8](#); [Genesis 14:17](#); [Genesis 14:24](#); [Genesis 15:14](#); [Genesis 16:15](#); [Genesis 18 General Notes](#); [Genesis 19:10](#); [Genesis 19:19](#); [Genesis 19:20](#); [Genesis 19:22](#); [Genesis 19:23](#); [Genesis 19:32](#); [Genesis 19:34](#); [Genesis 20:10](#); [Genesis 20:18](#); [Genesis 21 General Notes](#); [Genesis 21:1](#); [Genesis 21:6](#); [Genesis](#)

21:9; Genesis 21:11; Genesis 21:23; Genesis 22:1; Genesis 22:2; Genesis 22:12; Genesis 22:16; Genesis 22:19;  
Genesis 23 General Notes; Genesis 24:21; Genesis 24:49; Genesis 25 General Notes; Genesis 25:19; Genesis 25:21;  
Genesis 25:22; Genesis 25:33; Genesis 26:1; Genesis 26:6; Genesis 26:14; Genesis 26:17; Genesis 26:24; Genesis  
26:25; Genesis 26:30; Genesis 26:34; Genesis 27:2; Genesis 27:3; Genesis 27:4; Genesis 27:27; Genesis 27:28;  
Genesis 27:39; Genesis 27:45; Genesis 29:7; Genesis 29:11; Genesis 29:27; Genesis 30:3; Genesis 30:28; Genesis  
30:31; Genesis 30:40; Genesis 30:42; Genesis 31:15; Genesis 31:17; Genesis 31:22; Genesis 31:46; Genesis 31:54;  
Genesis 32 General Notes; Genesis 32:9; Genesis 33:1; Genesis 33:4; Genesis 33:13; Genesis 33:17; Genesis 33:18;  
Genesis 34 General Notes; Genesis 34:19; Genesis 35:5; Genesis 35:9; Genesis 35:21; Genesis 35:26; Genesis 36:1;  
Genesis 36:6; Genesis 36:7; Genesis 36:9; Genesis 36:17; Genesis 36:30; Genesis 36:34; Genesis 36:37; Genesis  
36:40; Genesis 37:13; Genesis 37:25; Genesis 37:29; Genesis 37:34; Genesis 37:35; Genesis 38:7; Genesis 38:10;  
Genesis 38:11; Genesis 38:14; Genesis 38:15; Genesis 38:16; Genesis 38:23; Genesis 38:29; Genesis 39:5; Genesis  
39:6; Genesis 39:10; Genesis 39:19; Genesis 40:6; Genesis 40:11; Genesis 40:14; Genesis 40:22; Genesis 41:22;  
Genesis 41:25; Genesis 41:54; Genesis 42 General Notes; Genesis 42:4; Genesis 42:6; Genesis 42:9; Genesis 42:12;  
Genesis 42:20; Genesis 42:24; Genesis 42:38; Genesis 43:9; Genesis 43:24; Genesis 43:31; Genesis 43:33; Genesis  
44:18; Genesis 44:21; Genesis 44:22; Genesis 45:4; Genesis 45:5; Genesis 45:8; Genesis 45:15; Genesis 45:22;  
Genesis 45:23; Genesis 46:4; Genesis 47:6; Genesis 48:15; Genesis 49 General Notes; Genesis 49:32; Genesis 50:6

## Background Information

### Description

When people tell a story, they normally tell the events in the order that they happened. This sequence of events makes up the storyline. The storyline is full of action verbs that move the story along in time. But sometimes a writer may take a break from the storyline and give some information to help his listeners understand the story better. This type of information is called background information. The background information might be about things that happened before the events he has already told about, or it might explain something in the story, or it might be about something that would happen much later in the story.

This page answers the question: *What is background information, and how can I show that some information is background information?*

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

[Order of Events \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Writing Styles \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Example** — The bolded phrases in the story below are all background information.

Peter and John went on a hunting trip because **their village was going to have a feast the next day. Peter was the best hunter in the village. He once killed three wild pigs in one day!** They walked for hours through low bushes until they heard a wild pig. The pig ran, but they managed to shoot the pig and kill it. Then they tied up its legs with some rope **they had brought with them** and carried it home on a pole. When they brought it to the village, Peter's cousin saw the pig and realized that it was his own pig. Peter had mistakenly killed his cousin's pig.

Background information often tells about something that had happened earlier or something that would happen much later. Examples of these are: "their village was going to have a feast the next day," "He once killed three wild pigs in one day," and "that they had brought with them."

Often background information uses "be" verbs like "was" and "were," rather than action verbs. Examples of these are "their village was going to have a feast the next day," and "Peter **was** the best hunter in the village."

Background information can also be marked with words that tell the reader that this information is not part of the event line of the story. In this story, some of these words are "because," "once," and "had."

### A writer may use background information:

- to help their listeners be interested in the story
- to help their listeners understand something in the story
- to help the listeners understand why something is important in the story
- to tell the setting of a story
  - > \* Setting includes:
    - > \* where the story takes place
    - > \* when the story takes place
    - > \* who is present when the story begins
    - > \* what is happening when the story begins

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of marking background information and storyline information.
- You (the translator) need to know the order of the events in the Bible, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.
- You will need to translate the story in a way that marks the background information in a way that your own readers will understand the order of events, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.

## Examples From the Bible

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram **was 86 years old** when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:15-16 ULT)

The first sentence tells about two events. Hagar gave birth and Abraham named his son. The second sentence is background information about how old Abram was when those things happened.

And Jesus himself **was beginning about 30 years old**. He **was the son** (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli, (Luke 3:23 ULT)

The verses before this tell about when Jesus was baptized. This sentence introduces background information about Jesus' age and ancestors. The story resumes in chapter 4 where it tells about Jesus going to the wilderness.

Then **it happened on a Sabbath** that he **was going through the grain fields**, and his disciples **were picking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands**. But some of the Pharisees said ... (Luke 6:1-2a ULT)

These verses give the setting of the story. The events took place in a grain field on the Sabbath day. Jesus, his disciples, and some Pharisees were there, and Jesus' disciples were picking heads of grain and eating them. The main action in the story starts with the phrase, "But some of the Pharisees said ...."

## Translation Strategies

To keep translations clear and natural you will need to study how people tell stories in your language. Observe how your language marks background information. You may need to write down some stories in order to study this. Observe what kinds of verbs your language uses for background information and what kinds of words or other markers signal that something is background information. Do these same things when you translate, so that your translation is clear and natural and people can understand it easily.

- (1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information.
- (2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first. (This is not always possible when the background information is very long.)

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information. The examples below explain how this was done in the ULT English translations.

**And** Jesus himself **was** beginning about 30 years old. He **was** the son (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli. (Luke 3:23 ULT)

As here, English sometimes uses the word "and" to show that there is some kind of change in the story. The verb "was" shows that it is background information.

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The bolded phrase happened before John rebuked Herod. In English, the helping verb "had" in "had done" shows that Herod did those things before John rebuked him.

- (2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first.

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.

**Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.** (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

"**When Abram was 86 years old**, Hagar gave birth to his son, and Abram named his son Ishmael."

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The translation below reorders John's rebuke and Herod's actions.

"Now Herod the tetrarch married his brother's wife, Herodias, and **he did many other evil things**, so John rebuked him. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison."

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Connecting Words and Phrases (UTA PDF)*

*Introduction of a New Event (UTA PDF)*

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 13:5](#); [Genesis 14:10](#); [Genesis 14:13](#); [Genesis 16:1](#); [Genesis 16:16](#); [Genesis 20:4](#); [Genesis 23:10](#); [Genesis 24:29](#); [Genesis 25:28](#); [Genesis 27:5](#); [Genesis 27:6](#); [Genesis 28:6](#); [Genesis 29:2](#); [Genesis 29:16](#); [Genesis 29:24](#); [Genesis 31:24](#); [Genesis 31:25](#); [Genesis 31:32](#); [Genesis 31:34](#); [Genesis 32:32](#); [Genesis 34:5](#); [Genesis 37:3](#); [Genesis 39:5](#); [Genesis 39:6](#); [Genesis 42:6](#); [Genesis 42:23](#); [Genesis 48:10](#)

## Biblical Distance

### Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man’s hand.
- The **span** or handspan was the width of a man’s hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man’s forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **“long” cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as “furlong,” which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

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

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal\]\]](#)  
*Fractions (UTA PDF)*

The metric values in the table below are close but not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact length from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Metric Measure
handbreadth	8 centimeters
span	23 centimeters
cubit	46 centimeters
“long” cubit	54 centimeters
stadia	185 meters

### Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as “.46 meters” or even as “46 centimeters,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a meter,” “45 centimeters,” or “50 centimeters.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as “about ten kilometers” from Jerusalem.

When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

## Translation Strategies

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

## Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 25:10 below.

They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half. (Exodus 25:10 ULT)

- (1) Use the measurements given in the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half kubits**; its width will be **one kubit and a half**; and its height will be **one kubit and a half**.”

- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement. For example, if you measure things using the standard meter length, you could translate it as below.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half cubits (one meter)**; its width will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**; and its height will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**.”

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; <sup>1</sup> its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; <sup>2</sup> and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; <sup>1</sup> its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; <sup>2</sup> and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

[<sup>1</sup>] two and a half cubits  
[<sup>2</sup>] one cubit and a half

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 6:15](#); [Genesis 6:16](#)

## Biblical Volume

### Description

The following terms are the most common units of volume used in the Bible to state how much a certain container could hold. The containers and measurements are given for both liquids (such as wine) and dry solids (such as grain). The metric values are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the measures of volume that are in the Bible?*

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

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

Type	Original Measure	Liters
Dry	omer	2 liters
Dry	ephah	22 liters
Dry	homer	220 liters
Dry	cor	220 liters
Dry	seah	7.7 liters
Dry	lethek	114.8 liters
Liquid	metrete	40 liters
Liquid	bath	22 liters
Liquid	hin	3.7 liters
Liquid	kab	1.23 liters
Liquid	log	0.31 liters

### Translation Principles

- The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
- Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
- Whatever measures you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kinds of measures in the text or a footnote.
- If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one hin as “3.7 liters,” readers might think that the measurement is exactly 3.7 liters, not 3.6 or 3.8. It would be better to use a more approximate measure such as “three and a half liters” or “four liters.”
- When God tells people how much of something to use, and when people use those amounts in obedience to him, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much they used.

## When the unit of measure is stated

### Translation Strategies

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy](#) or [Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

### Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Isaiah 5:10 below.

For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one bath, and one homer of seed will yield only an ephah. (Isaiah 5:10 ULT)

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy](#) or [Borrow Words](#).)

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one **bat**, and one **homer** of seed will yield only an **efa**.”

- (2) Use the measurements given in the UST. Usually they are metric measurements. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22 liters** and **220 liters** of seed will yield only **22 liters**.”

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22**, and **ten baskets** of seed will yield only **one basket**.”

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **six gallons**, and **six and a half bushels** of seed will yield only **20 quarts**.”

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **one bath (six gallons)**, and **one homer (six and a half bushels)** of seed will yield only **an ephah (20 quarts)**.”

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in footnotes.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only 22 liters<sup>1</sup>, and 220 liters<sup>2</sup> of seed will yield only 22 liters<sup>3</sup>.”

The footnotes would look like:

[1] one bath  
[2] one homer  
[3] one ephah

## When the unit of measure is implied

Sometimes the Hebrew does not specify a particular unit of volume but only uses a number. In these cases, many English versions, including the ULT and UST, add the word “measure.”

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 measures** of wine, there were only 20. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

## Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.
- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”
- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.
- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

## Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Haggai 2:16 below.

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty measures** of wine, there were only **20**. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.

When you came to a heap of **20** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”

When you came to a heap of **20 amounts** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty amounts** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.

When you came to a heap of **20 baskets** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 jars** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

When you came to a heap for **20 liters** of grain, there were only **ten liters**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 liters** of wine, there were only **20 liters**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Fractions (UTA PDF)*

*Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (UTA PDF)*

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 18:6](#)

# Biblical Weight

## Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of weight in the Bible?*

The following terms are the most common units of weight in the Bible. The term “shekel” means “weight,” and many other weights are described in terms of the shekel. Some of these weights were used for money. The metric values in the table below are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are only an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Shekels	Grams	Kilograms
shekel	1 shekel	11 grams	-
bekah	1/2 shekel	5.7 grams	-
pim	2/3 shekel	7.6 grams	-
gerah	1/20 shekel	0.57 grams	-
mina	50 shekels	550 grams	1/2 kilogram
talent	3,000 shekels	-	34 kilograms

## Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one gerah as “.57 grams,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a gram.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, 2 Samuel 21:16 says that Goliath’s spear weighed 300 shekels. Instead of translating this as “3300 grams” or “3.3 kilograms,” it can be translated as “about three and one half kilograms.”

When God tells people how much something should weigh, and when people use those weights, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise, it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much the thing should weigh.

## Translation Strategies

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this, you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

## Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 38:29 below.

█ The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. (Exodus 38:29 ULT)

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talentes and 2,400 sekeles**."

(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **2,400 kilograms**."

(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **5,300 pounds**."

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a footnote. The following shows both measurements in the text.

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents (2,380 kilograms) and 2,400 shekels (26.4 kilograms)**."

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a footnote. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

█ "The bronze from the offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. <sup>1</sup>"

The footnote would look like:

█ <sup>[1]</sup> This was a total of about 2,400 kilograms.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 23:15](#); [Genesis 24:22](#)

## Connecting Words and Phrases

### Description

This page answers the question: *How do connecting words work to join parts of the text in different ways?*

As humans, we write our thoughts in phrases and sentences. We usually want to communicate a series of thoughts that are connected to each other in different ways. **Connecting words and phrases** show how these thoughts are related to each other. For example, we can show how the following thoughts are related by using the Connecting Words in bold type:

- It was raining, **so** I opened my umbrella.
- It was raining, **but** I did not have an umbrella. **So** I got very wet.

Connecting words or phrases can connect phrases or clauses within a sentence. They can connect sentences to each other. They can also connect entire chunks to one another in order to show how the chunk before relates to the chunk after the connecting word. Very often, the connecting words that connect entire chunks to one another are either conjunctions or adverbs.

It was raining, but I did not have an umbrella, so I got very wet.

**Now** I must change my clothes. Then I will drink a cup of hot tea and warm myself by the fire.

In the above example, the word **now** connects the two short chunks of text, showing the relationship between them. The speaker must change his clothes, drink hot tea, and warm himself because of something that happened earlier (that is, he got wet in the rain).

Sometimes people might not use a connecting word because they expect the context to help the readers understand the relationship between the thoughts. Some languages do not use connecting words as much as other languages do. They might say:

- It was raining. I did not have an umbrella. I got very wet.

You (the translator) will need to use the method that is most natural and clear in the target language. But in general, using connecting words whenever possible helps the reader to understand the ideas in the Bible most clearly.

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You need to understand the relationship between paragraphs, between sentences, and between parts of sentences in the Bible, and how connecting words and phrases can help you to understand the relationship between the thoughts that they are connecting.
- Each language has its own ways of showing how thoughts are related.
- You need to know how to help readers understand the relationship between the thoughts in a way that is natural in your language.

### Translation Principles

- You need to translate in a way that readers can understand the same relationship between thoughts that the original readers would have understood.
- Whether or not a connecting word is used is not as important as readers being able to understand the relationship between the ideas.

## The Different Types of Connections

Listed below are different types of connections between ideas or events. These different types of connections can be indicated by using different connecting words. When we write or translate something, it is important to use the right connecting word so that these connections are clear for the reader. If you would like additional information, simply click the colored, hyperlinked word to be directed to a page containing definitions and examples for each type of connection.

- [Sequential Clause](#) — a time relationship between two events in which one happens and then the other happens.
- [Simultaneous Clause](#) — a time relationship between two or more events that occur at the same time.
- [Background Clause](#) — a time relationship in which the first clause describes a long event that is happening at the time when the beginning of the second event happens, which is described in the second clause.
- [Exceptional Relationship](#) — one clause describes a group of people or items, and the other clause excludes one or more items or people from the group.
- [Hypothetical Condition](#) — the second event will only take place if the first one takes place. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.
- [Factual Condition](#) — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true, so that the condition is guaranteed to happen.
- [Contrary-to-Fact Condition](#) — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain that it is not true. See also: [Hypothetical Statements](#).
- [Goal Relationship](#) — a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first.
- [Reason and Result Relationship](#) — a logical relationship in which one event is the reason for the other event, the result.
- [Contrast Relationship](#) — one item is being described as different or in opposition to another.

## Examples from the Bible

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT)

The word “instead” introduces something that contrasts with what was said before. The contrast here is between what Paul did not do and what he did do. The word “then” introduces a sequence of events. It introduces something that Paul did after he returned to Damascus.

**Therefore**, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

The word “therefore” links this section with the section before it, signaling that the section that came before gave the reason for this section. “Therefore” usually links sections larger than one sentence. The word “and” links only two actions within the same sentence, that of breaking commandments and teaching others. In this verse the word “but” contrasts what one group of people will be called in God’s kingdom with what another group of people will be called.

We place nothing as a stumbling block in front of anyone, **so that** our ministry might not be discredited. **Instead**, we commend ourselves in everything as God’s servants. (2 Corinthians 6:3-4 ULT)

Here the words “so that” connect what follows as the reason for what came before; the reason that Paul does not place stumbling blocks is that he does not want his ministry brought into disrepute. “Instead” contrasts what Paul does (prove by his actions that he is God’s servant) with what he said he does not do (place stumbling blocks).

## General Translation Strategies

### See each type of Connecting Word above for specific strategies

If the way the relationship between thoughts is shown in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, then consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).
- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be strange to use one and people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.
- (3) Use a different connecting word.

### Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).

Jesus said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Then immediately they left the nets and followed him. (Mark 1:17-18 ULT)

They followed Jesus because he told them to. Some translators may want to mark this clause with the connecting word "so."

Jesus said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." **So**, immediately they left the nets and followed him.

- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be odd to use one, and if people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Some languages would prefer not to use connecting words here because the meaning is clear without them and using them would be unnatural. They might translate like this:

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments, teaching others to do so as well, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT) (Galatians 1:16-18 ULT)

Some languages might not need the words "instead" or "then" here. They might translate like this:

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me. I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. After three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days.

- (3) Use a different connecting word.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Instead of a word like “therefore,” a language might need a phrase to indicate that there was a section before it that gave the reason for the section that follows. Also, the word “but” is used here because of the contrast between the two groups of people. But in some languages, the word “but” would show that what comes after it is surprising because of what came before it. So “and” might be clearer for those languages. They might translate like this:

**Because of that**, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **And** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 24:12](#); [Genesis 24:48](#); [Genesis 26:15](#); [Genesis 26:16](#); [Genesis 27:6](#); [Genesis 30:31](#); [Genesis 49:8](#)

## Direct and Indirect Quotations

### Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "I do not know at what time I will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that he did not know at what time he would arrive.

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

### Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."  
(Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, "**Go, show yourself to the priest ...**"

And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you."  
(Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming**,
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**"
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, '**Look, here it is!**' or, '**There it is!**'

This page answers the question: *What are direct and indirect quotations?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Verbs \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Quotations and Quote Margins \(UTA PDF\)](#)

## Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it. If the kind of quote used in that context is not natural for your language, follow these strategies.

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, **“Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”** (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him to tell no one, but **to go and show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for his cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.**

- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

And he commanded him **to tell no one**, but, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him, **“Tell no one.** But go and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”

You may also want to watch the video at [https://ufw.io/figs\\_quotations](https://ufw.io/figs_quotations).

Next we recommend you learn about: " [Quotes within Quotes \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 24:30](#)

## 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:

[Parts of Speech \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

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 \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 2:11](#); [Genesis 2:14](#); [Genesis 6:7](#); [Genesis 8:6](#); [Genesis 14:6](#); [Genesis 14:12](#); [Genesis 23:9](#); [Genesis 23:10](#); [Genesis 23:18](#)

## 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:

[Parts of Speech \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

### 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.

...ἰώτα ἓν ἢ μία κεραία **οὐ μὴ** παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου (Matthew 5:18)

...iota one or one serif **not not** may pass away from the law

...**not even** one iota or one serif may pass away from the law

or:

...**certainly no** iota or serif may pass away from the law

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Verbs \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 8:22](#); [Genesis 11:6](#); [Genesis 21:23](#); [Genesis 22:12](#); [Genesis 22:16](#); [Genesis 32:26](#); [Genesis 39:8](#)

## 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.

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.”

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:

*Figures of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

(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!"

"

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 1:22](#); [Genesis 1:26](#); [Genesis 1:28](#); [Genesis 5:29](#); [Genesis 8:17](#); [Genesis 9:1](#); [Genesis 9:2](#); [Genesis 9:7](#); [Genesis 23:1](#); [Genesis 24:67](#); [Genesis 25:8](#); [Genesis 25:17](#); [Genesis 28:3](#); [Genesis 28:17](#); [Genesis 35:11](#); [Genesis 35:29](#); [Genesis 39:6](#); [Genesis 47:27](#); [Genesis 48:4](#)

## Ellipsis

### Description

An ellipsis<sup>[^1]</sup> occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, **nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.**  
(Psalm 1:5 ULT)

There is ellipsis in the second part because “nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **will** sinners **stand** in the assembly of the righteous.

### 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:

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:

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

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

*Figures of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Sentence Structure* ([UTA PDF](#))

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.

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 12:2](#); [Genesis 18:29](#); [Genesis 18:31](#); [Genesis 19:17](#); [Genesis 21:24](#); [Genesis 24:21](#); [Genesis 24:25](#); [Genesis 24:49](#); [Genesis 33:9](#); [Genesis 40:8](#); [Genesis 41:7](#); [Genesis 41:8](#); [Genesis 41:14](#); [Genesis 41:22](#); [Genesis](#)

41:24; Genesis 41:26; Genesis 42:18; Genesis 42:32; Genesis 43:1; Genesis 44:2; Genesis 44:12; Genesis 47:24;  
Genesis 49:7

# 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:

*Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)*

## 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."

"

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 4:1](#); [Genesis 4:17](#); [Genesis 4:25](#); [Genesis 11:30](#); [Genesis 12:15](#); [Genesis 15:15](#); [Genesis 16:5](#); [Genesis 17:11](#); [Genesis 17:14](#); [Genesis 19:5](#); [Genesis 19:8](#); [Genesis 19:31](#); [Genesis 19:32](#); [Genesis 19:33](#); [Genesis 19:35](#); [Genesis 20:4](#); [Genesis 20:6](#); [Genesis 21:7](#); [Genesis 21:8](#); [Genesis 24 General Notes](#); [Genesis 25:8](#); [Genesis 26:10](#); [Genesis 27:45](#); [Genesis 29:23](#); [Genesis 29:30](#); [Genesis 30:3](#); [Genesis 30:4](#); [Genesis 30:15](#); [Genesis 30:16](#); [Genesis 31:35](#); [Genesis 34:2](#); [Genesis 35:22](#); [Genesis 35:29](#); [Genesis 37:21](#); [Genesis 38:2](#); [Genesis 38:8](#); [Genesis 38:9](#); [Genesis 38:18](#); [Genesis 38:26](#); [Genesis 39:7](#); [Genesis 39:10](#); [Genesis 39:12](#); [Genesis 39:14](#); [Genesis 39:17](#); [Genesis 47:30](#); [Genesis 49:29](#); [Genesis 49:33](#); [Genesis 50:2](#)

## Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

### Description

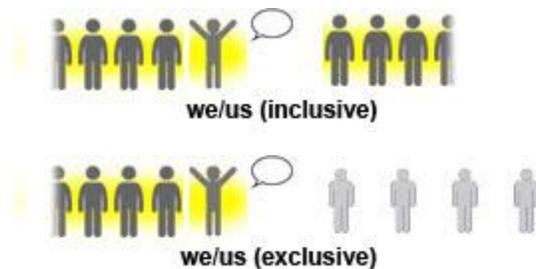
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also true for "us," "our," "ours," and "ourselves." Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these. Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms for these words will need to understand what the speaker meant so that they can decide which form to use.

This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive "we" and the exclusive "we" refer to.



### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for "we." If your language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of "we," then you will need to understand what the speaker meant so that you can decide which form of "we" to use.

### Examples From the Bible

#### Exclusive

They said, "There are not more than five loaves of bread and two fish with us—unless **we** go and buy food for all these people." (Luke 9:13 ULT)

In the second clause, the disciples are talking about some of them going to buy food. They were speaking to Jesus, but Jesus was not going to buy food. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" would use the **exclusive** form there.

**We** have seen it, and **we** bear witness to it. **We** are announcing to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and which has been made known to **us**. (1 John 1:2 ULT)

John is telling people who have not seen Jesus what he and the other apostles have seen. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **exclusive** forms in this verse.

#### Inclusive

The shepherds said one to each other, "Let **us** now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to **us**." (Luke 2:15b ULT)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said "us," they were including the people they were speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Now it happened that on one of those days, he indeed got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let **us** go over to the other side of the lake." So they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULT)

When Jesus said "us," he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[When Masculine Words Include Women \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 19:2](#); [Genesis 19:13](#); [Genesis 20:9](#); [Genesis 22:5](#); [Genesis 24:23](#); [Genesis 26:10](#); [Genesis 26:20](#); [Genesis 31:32](#); [Genesis 31:37](#); [Genesis 32:18](#); [Genesis 34:14](#); [Genesis 34:21](#); [Genesis 37:7](#); [Genesis 37:8](#); [Genesis 39:17](#); [Genesis 41:11](#); [Genesis 43:2](#); [Genesis 43:7](#); [Genesis 43:8](#); [Genesis 44:27](#)

## First, Second or Third Person

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

### Description

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

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

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

*Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Pronouns* ([UTA PDF](#))

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

### Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Translation Strategies

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

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

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Forms of You \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 18:14](#); [Genesis 18:19](#); [Genesis 18:27](#); [Genesis 19:2](#); [Genesis 19:19](#); [Genesis 27:31](#); [Genesis 28:20](#); [Genesis 28:21](#); [Genesis 33:5](#); [Genesis 33:8](#); [Genesis 33:13](#); [Genesis 33:14](#); [Genesis 33:15](#); [Genesis 35:1](#); [Genesis 41:10](#); [Genesis 41:12](#); [Genesis 41:13](#); [Genesis 41:25](#); [Genesis 41:28](#); [Genesis 41:33](#); [Genesis 42:10](#); [Genesis 44:7](#); [Genesis 44:9](#); [Genesis 44:16](#); [Genesis 44:18](#); [Genesis 44:19](#); [Genesis 44:21](#); [Genesis 44:22](#); [Genesis 44:23](#); [Genesis 44:24](#); [Genesis 44:31](#); [Genesis 44:32](#); [Genesis 44:33](#); [Genesis 46:34](#); [Genesis 47:3](#); [Genesis 47:18](#); [Genesis 49:2](#); [Genesis 50:17](#)

## Forms of You

### Singular, Dual, and Plural

Some languages have more than one word for “you” based on how many people the word “you” refers to. The **singular** form refers to one person, and the **plural** form refers to more than one person. Some languages also have a **dual** form which refers to two people, and some languages have other forms that refer to three or four people.

You may also want to watch the video at [https://ufw.io/figs\\_younum](https://ufw.io/figs_younum).

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses a singular form of “you” even though he is speaking to a crowd.

- [Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups](#)

### Formal and Informal

Some languages have more than one form of “you” based on the relationship between the speaker and the person he is talking to. People use the **formal** form of “you” when speaking to someone who is older, or has higher authority, or is someone they do not know very well. People use the **informal** form when speaking to someone who is not older, or does not have higher authority, or is a family member or close friend.

You may also want to watch the video at [https://ufw.io/figs\\_youform](https://ufw.io/figs_youform).

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- [Forms of “You” — Formal or Informal](#)

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 2:16](#); [Genesis 3:1](#); [Genesis 3:3](#); [Genesis 3:4](#); [Genesis 3:5](#); [Genesis 3:9](#); [Genesis 6:20](#); [Genesis 6:21](#); [Genesis 7:1](#); [Genesis 18:3](#); [Genesis 18:5](#); [Genesis 24:25](#); [Genesis 24:31](#); [Genesis 24:49](#); [Genesis 27:28](#); [Genesis 27:29](#); [Genesis 31:6](#); [Genesis 31:29](#); [Genesis 31:30](#); [Genesis 42:19](#); [Genesis 42:38](#); [Genesis 43:8](#); [Genesis 44:27](#); [Genesis 46:3](#); [Genesis 46:4](#); [Genesis 48:21](#); [Genesis 48:22](#)

This page answers the question: *What are the different forms of you?*

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

*Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (UTA PDF)*

*Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (UTA PDF)*

# Fractions

## Description

A fraction is a number that represents part of a whole. When an item is divided into several equal parts, a fraction refers to one or more of those parts.

For the drink offering, you must offer **a third** of a hin of wine. (Numbers 15:7a ULT)

A hin is a container of a set size which is used for measuring wine and other liquids. The people were to think about dividing a hin container into three equal parts, filling up only one of those parts and offering that amount.

... **a third** of the ships were destroyed. (Revelation 8:9b ULT)

There were many ships. If all those ships were divided into three equal groups of ships, one group of ships was destroyed.

Most fractions in English simply have the letters “th” added to the end of the number, such as fourth, sixth, ninth, tenth.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | ----- | ----- | | four | fourth | | ten | tenth | | one hundred | one hundredth | | one thousand | one thousandth |

Some fractions in English do not follow that pattern.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | ----- | ----- | | two | half | | three | third | | five | fifth |

## Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use fractions. They may simply talk about parts or groups, but they do not use fractions to tell how big a part is or how many parts are included in a group.

## Examples From the Bible

Now to the **half-tribe** of Manasseh, Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the other **half**, Joshua gave a possession among their brothers across the Jordan on the west. (Joshua 22:7 ULT)

The tribe of Manasseh divided into two groups. The phrase “the half-tribe of Manasseh” refers one of those groups. The phrase “the other half” refers to the other group.

So the four angels who had been prepared for that hour, that day, that month, and that year, were released so that they would kill **a third** of mankind. (Revelation 9:15 ULT)

If all the people in the world were to be divided into three equal groups, then the number of people in one group would be killed.

You must also prepare **a fourth** of a hin of wine as the drink offering. (Numbers 15:5 ULT)

They were to imagine dividing a hin of wine into four equal parts and prepare the amount equal to one of them.

This page answers the question: *What are fractions and how can I translate them?*

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

[Numbers \(UTA PDF\)](#)

## Translation Strategies

If a fraction in your language would give the right meaning, consider using it. If not, you could consider these strategies.

- (1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.
- (2) For measurements such as for weight and length, use a unit that your people might know or the unit in the UST.
- (3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

## Examples of These Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.

**A third** of the ocean became red like blood (Revelation 8:8 ULT)

It was like they **divided** the ocean **into three parts**, and **one part** of the ocean became blood.

Then you must offer with the bull a grain offering of **three-tenths** of an ephah of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9 ULT)

... then you must **divide** an ephah of fine flour **into ten parts** and **divide** a hin of oil **into two parts**. Then mix **three of those parts** of the flour with **one of the parts** of oil. Then you must offer that grain offering along with the bull.

(2) For measurements, use the measurements that are given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

... **two-thirds of a shekel** ... (1 Samuel 13:21b ULT)

... **eight grams** of silver ... (1 Samuel 13:21b UST)

... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)

... **six and one-half liters** of finely ground flour mixed with **two liters** of olive oil. (Numbers 15:9b UST)

(3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)

**six quarts** of fine flour mixed with **two quarts** of oil.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Biblical Money \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 41:34](#); [Genesis 47:24](#)

## Go and Come

### Description

This page answers the question: *What do I do if the word "go" or "come" is confusing in a certain sentence?*

Different languages have different ways of determining whether to use the words "go" or "come" and whether to use the words "take" or "bring" when talking about motion. For example, when saying that they are approaching a person who has called them, English speakers say "I'm coming," while Spanish speakers say "I'm going." You will need to study the context in order to understand what is meant by the words "go" and "come" (and also "take" and "bring"), and then translate those words in a way that your readers will understand which direction people are moving in.

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of talking about motion. The biblical languages or your source language may use the words "go" and "come" or "take" and "bring" differently than your language uses them. If these words are not translated in the way that is natural in your language, your readers may be confused about which direction people are moving.

### Examples From the Bible

Yahweh said to Noah, "**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark." (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

In some languages, this would lead people to think that Yahweh was in the ark.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. Then you will be free from my oath. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to his servant. Abraham's relatives lived far away from where he and his servant were standing and he wanted his servant to **go** to them, not **come** toward Abraham.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14a ULT)

Moses is speaking to the people in the wilderness. They had not yet gone into the land that God was giving them. In some languages, it would make more sense to say, "When you have **gone** into the land ..."

They **brought** him up to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (Luke 2:22b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to say that they **took** or **carried** Jesus to the temple.

Then see, there was a man whose name was Jairus, and he was a leader of the synagogue. And falling at the feet of Jesus, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

The man was not at his house when he spoke to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to **go** with him to his house.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to ask what did you come out to see.

### Translation Strategies

If the word used in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other strategies.

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.
- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

But you will be free from my oath if you **go** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you come out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14 ULT)

“When you have **arrived** in the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ...”

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark ...” (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Enter**, you and all your household, into the ark ...”

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you travel out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 6:17](#); [Genesis 7:1](#); [Genesis 7:2](#); [Genesis 7:15](#); [Genesis 8:16](#); [Genesis 8:17](#); [Genesis 8:18](#); [Genesis 14:7](#); [Genesis 24:32](#); [Genesis 24:41](#); [Genesis 35:27](#); [Genesis 41:14](#); [Genesis 42:5](#); [Genesis 42:6](#); [Genesis 43:17](#); [Genesis 48:21](#)

## Hebrew Months

### Description

This page answers the question: *What are the Hebrew months?*

The Hebrew calendar used in the Bible has twelve months. Unlike the western calendar, its first month begins in the spring of the northern hemisphere. Sometimes a month is called by its name (Aviv, Ziv, Sivan), and sometimes it is called by its order in the Hebrew calendar year (first month, second month, third month).

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may be surprised to read of months that they have never heard of, and they may wonder how those months correspond to the months that they use.
- Readers may not realize that phrases such as “the first month” or “the second month” refer to the first or second month of the Hebrew calendar, not some other calendar.
- Readers may not know when the first month of the Hebrew calendar begins.
- The Bible may tell about something happening in a certain month, but readers will not be able to fully understand what is said about it if they do not know what season of the year that was.

### List of Hebrew Months

This is a list of the Hebrew months with information about them that may be helpful in the translation.

**Aviv** — (This month was called **Nisan** after the Babylonian exile.) This is the first month of the Hebrew calendar. It marks when God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. It is at the beginning of the spring season when the late rains come and people begin to harvest their crops. It is during the last part of March and the first part of April on western calendars. The Passover celebration started on Aviv 10; the Festival of Unleavened Bread was right after that, and the Festival of Harvest was a few weeks after that.

**Ziv** — This is the second month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the harvest season. It is during the last part of April and the first part of May on Western calendars.

**Sivan** — This is the third month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the harvest season and the beginning of the dry season. It is during the last part of May and the first part of June on Western calendars. The Feast of Weeks is celebrated on Sivan 6.

**Tammuz** — This is the fourth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of June and the first part of July on Western calendars.

**Ab** — This is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of July and the first part of August on Western calendars.

**Elul** — This is the sixth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the dry season and the beginning of the rainy season. It is during the last part of August and the first part of September on Western calendars.

**Ethanim** — This is the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the early rain season which would soften the land for sowing. It is during the last part of September and the first part of October on Western calendars. The Feast of Ingathering and the Day of Atonement are celebrated in this month.

**Bul** — This is the eighth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the rainy season when people plough their fields and sow seed. It is during the last part of October and the first part of November on Western calendars.

**Kislev** — This is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. This is at the end of the sowing season and the beginning of the cold season. It is during the last part of November and the first part of December on Western calendars.

**Tebeth** — This is the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the cold season when there may be rain and snow. It is during the last part of December and the first part of January on Western calendars.

**Shebat** — This is the eleventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is the coldest month of the year, and it has heavy rainfall. It is during the last part of January and the first part of February on Western calendars.

**Adar** — This is the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the cold season. It is during the last part of February and the first part of March on western calendars. The feast called Purim is celebrated in Adar.

## Examples From the Bible

Today you are going out, in **the month of Aviv**. (Exodus 13:4 ULT)

You must eat unleavened bread from evening of the fourteenth day **in the first month of the year**, until evening of the twenty-first day of the month. (Exodus 12:18 ULT)

## Translation Strategies

You may need to make some information about the months explicit. (See [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#).)

(1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.

(2) Use the names for months that people know.

(3) State clearly what season the month occurred in.

(4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the Hebrew name of the month. (If possible, use a footnote to show the Hebrew month and day.)

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The examples below use these two verses.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of Aviv**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt. (Exodus 23:15b ULT)

It will always be a statute for you that in **the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month**, you must humble yourselves and do no work. (Leviticus 16:29a ULT)

(1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the first month of the year**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.

(2) Use the months that people know.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of March**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.

It will always be a statute for you that **on the day I choose in late September** you must humble yourselves and do no work.

(3) State clearly what season the month occurs in.

It will always be a statute for you that **in the autumn, on the tenth day of the seventh month**, you must humble yourselves and do no work.

(4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the month.

It will always be a statute for you that in **the day I choose in early autumn**<sup>1</sup> you must humble yourselves and do no work.

The footnote would look like:

<sup>[1]</sup> The Hebrew says, "the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 7:11](#); [Genesis 8:4](#); [Genesis 8:5](#); [Genesis 8:13](#); [Genesis 8:14](#)

## Hendiadys

### Description

In a hendiadys, a speaker uses two words that mean different things and that are connected with “and.” These two words work together to express a single idea. Usually one of the words is the primary idea and the other word further describes the primary one.

... his own **kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

Though “kingdom” and “glory” are both nouns, “glory” actually tells what kind of kingdom it is: it is a **kingdom of glory** or a **glorious kingdom**.

Two phrases connected by “and” can also be a hendiadys when they refer to a single person, thing, or event.

while we look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

Titus 2:13 contains two hendiadyses. “The blessed hope” and “appearing of the glory” refer to the same thing and serve to strengthen the idea that the return of Jesus Christ is greatly anticipated and wonderful. Also, “our great God” and “Savior Jesus Christ” refer to one person, not two.

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Often a hendiadys contains an abstract noun. Some languages may not have a noun with the same meaning.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that the second word is further describing the first one.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that only one person or thing is meant, not two.

### Examples From the Bible

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

“A mouth” and “wisdom” are nouns, but in this figure of speech “wisdom” describes what comes from the mouth.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

“Willing” and “obedient” are adjectives, but “willing” describes “obedient.”

### Translation Strategies

If the hendiadys would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.
- (2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.
- (3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

This page answers the question: *What is hendiadys and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

*Figures of Speech* (UTA PDF)

*Parts of Speech* (UTA PDF)

(4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the other.

(5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

For I will give you **wise words** ...

Walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own glorious kingdom**.

(2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

for I will give you **words of wisdom**.

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own kingdom of glory**.

(3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

If you are **willingly obedient** ...

(4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the other.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

The adjective "obedient" can be substituted with the verb "obey."

if you **obey willingly** ...

(4) and (5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

We look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

The noun "glory" can be changed to the adjective "glorious" to make it clear that Jesus' appearing is what we hope for. Also, "Jesus Christ" can be moved to the front of the phrase and "great God and Savior" put into a relative clause that describes the one person, Jesus Christ.

We look forward to receiving **what we are longing for, the blessed and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, who is our great God and Savior**.

"

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 4:12](#); [Genesis 19:24](#); [Genesis 34:2](#)

## How to Translate Names

### Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

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

[Translate Unknowns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

### Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see [Borrow Words](#).
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

### Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

**Saul** was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

## Translation Strategies

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.
- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
- (3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
- (4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
- (5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like ‘drawn out’)**, and she said,  
“For out of the water I drew him.”

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?”  
Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called “Saul” before Acts 13 and “Paul” after Acts 13. You could translate his name as “Paul” all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** <sup>1</sup>

The footnote would look like:

<sup>[1]</sup> Most versions say “Saul” here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called “Paul.”

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write “Saul” where the source text has “Saul” and “Paul” where the source text has “Paul.”

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

<sup>[1]</sup> This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**<sup>1</sup> and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

[1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Introduction to Genesis](#); [Genesis 2:11](#); [Genesis 2:13](#); [Genesis 4:18](#); [Genesis 4:19](#); [Genesis 4:22](#); [Genesis 4:25](#); [Genesis 5:6](#); [Genesis 5:9](#); [Genesis 5:12](#); [Genesis 5:15](#); [Genesis 5:18](#); [Genesis 5:21](#); [Genesis 5:25](#); [Genesis 5:29](#); [Genesis 10:26](#); [Genesis 11:10](#); [Genesis 11:12](#); [Genesis 11:14](#); [Genesis 11:16](#); [Genesis 11:18](#); [Genesis 11:20](#); [Genesis 11:22](#); [Genesis 11:24](#); [Genesis 11:27](#); [Genesis 11:28](#); [Genesis 11:29](#); [Genesis 12:6](#); [Genesis 13:18](#); [Genesis 14:1](#); [Genesis 14:4](#); [Genesis 14:5](#); [Genesis 14:6](#); [Genesis 15:19](#); [Genesis 15:20](#); [Genesis 15:21](#); [Genesis 16:14](#); [Genesis 19:38](#); [Genesis 20:1](#); [Genesis 21:22](#); [Genesis 22:2](#); [Genesis 22:20](#); [Genesis 22:21](#); [Genesis 22:22](#); [Genesis 22:24](#); [Genesis 23:2](#); [Genesis 23:3](#); [Genesis 23:5](#); [Genesis 23:7](#); [Genesis 23:8](#); [Genesis 23:9](#); [Genesis 23:10](#); [Genesis 23:14](#); [Genesis 23:16](#); [Genesis 23:17](#); [Genesis 23:18](#); [Genesis 23:20](#); [Genesis 24:10](#); [Genesis 24:15](#); [Genesis 25:1](#); [Genesis 25:9](#); [Genesis 25:11](#); [Genesis 25:13](#); [Genesis 25:18](#); [Genesis 25:20](#); [Genesis 26:20](#); [Genesis 26:21](#); [Genesis 26:22](#); [Genesis 26:26](#); [Genesis 26:33](#); [Genesis 26:34](#); [Genesis 28:2](#); [Genesis 28:5](#); [Genesis 28:6](#); [Genesis 28:9](#); [Genesis 28:19](#); [Genesis 29:24](#); [Genesis 29:29](#); [Genesis 29:32](#); [Genesis 29:33](#); [Genesis 29:34](#); [Genesis 29:35](#); [Genesis 30:6](#); [Genesis 30:12](#); [Genesis 30:13](#); [Genesis 30:21](#); [Genesis 30:24](#); [Genesis 31:47](#); [Genesis 31:48](#); [Genesis 31:49](#); [Genesis 32:3](#); [Genesis 32:22](#); [Genesis 32:28](#); [Genesis 32:30](#); [Genesis 33:14](#); [Genesis 33:17](#); [Genesis 33:19](#); [Genesis 33:20](#); [Genesis 34:1](#); [Genesis 34:2](#); [Genesis 35:6](#); [Genesis 35:7](#); [Genesis 35:8](#); [Genesis 35:18](#); [Genesis 35:22](#); [Genesis 35:25](#); [Genesis 35:26](#); [Genesis 35:27](#); [Genesis 36:2](#); [Genesis 36:3](#); [Genesis 36:4](#); [Genesis 36:5](#); [Genesis 36:10](#); [Genesis 36:11](#); [Genesis 36:12](#); [Genesis 36:13](#); [Genesis 36:14](#); [Genesis 36:15](#); [Genesis 36:16](#); [Genesis 36:17](#); [Genesis 36:18](#); [Genesis 36:20](#); [Genesis 36:21](#); [Genesis 36:22](#); [Genesis 36:23](#); [Genesis 36:24](#); [Genesis 36:25](#); [Genesis 36:26](#); [Genesis 36:27](#); [Genesis 36:28](#); [Genesis 36:29](#); [Genesis 36:30](#); [Genesis 36:32](#); [Genesis 36:33](#); [Genesis 36:34](#); [Genesis 36:35](#); [Genesis 36:36](#); [Genesis 36:37](#); [Genesis 36:38](#); [Genesis 36:39](#); [Genesis 36:40](#); [Genesis 36:41](#); [Genesis 36:42](#); [Genesis 36:43](#); [Genesis 37:2](#); [Genesis 37:17](#); [Genesis 38:1](#); [Genesis 38:2](#); [Genesis 38:3](#); [Genesis 38:4](#); [Genesis 38:5](#); [Genesis 38:6](#); [Genesis 38:8](#); [Genesis 38:11](#); [Genesis 38:12](#); [Genesis 38:14](#); [Genesis 38:20](#); [Genesis 38:21](#); [Genesis 38:26](#); [Genesis 38:29](#); [Genesis 38:30](#); [Genesis 41:45](#); [Genesis 41:50](#); [Genesis 46:9](#); [Genesis 46:10](#); [Genesis 46:11](#); [Genesis 46:12](#); [Genesis 46:13](#); [Genesis 46:14](#); [Genesis 46:15](#); [Genesis 46:16](#); [Genesis 46:17](#); [Genesis 46:18](#); [Genesis 46:20](#); [Genesis 46:21](#); [Genesis 46:23](#); [Genesis 46:24](#); [Genesis 46:25](#); [Genesis 47:11](#); [Genesis 48:3](#); [Genesis 49:29](#); [Genesis 49:30](#); [Genesis 50:10](#); [Genesis 50:11](#); [Genesis 50:13](#); [Genesis 50:23](#)

# 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:

*Figures of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

## 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.

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 25:32](#); [Genesis 27:46](#); [Genesis 29:31](#); [Genesis 30:1](#); [Genesis 31:1](#)

## 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:

*Writing Styles (UTA PDF)*

### 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](https://ufw.io/figs_hypo).

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**Referenced in:** [Genesis 24:8](#); [Genesis 24:39](#); [Genesis 24:41](#); [Genesis 43:10](#); [Genesis 44:30](#); [Genesis 44:31](#)

## 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:

*Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)*

## 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**

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**Referenced in:** [Genesis 2:2](#); [Genesis 2:24](#); [Genesis 3:5](#); [Genesis 3:17](#); [Genesis 4:5](#); [Genesis 4:8](#); [Genesis 4:14](#); [Genesis 4:16](#); [Genesis 6:8](#); [Genesis 15:1](#); [Genesis 15:4](#); [Genesis 15:12](#); [Genesis 15:14](#); [Genesis 17:2](#); [Genesis 17:20](#); [Genesis 18:3](#); [Genesis 18:25](#); [Genesis 18:33](#); [Genesis 19:7](#); [Genesis 19:9](#); [Genesis 19:17](#); [Genesis 19:19](#); [Genesis 19:29](#); [Genesis 20:3](#); [Genesis 20:15](#); [Genesis 21:20](#); [Genesis 21:22](#); [Genesis 21:23](#); [Genesis 22:12](#); [Genesis 23:6](#); [Genesis 24:50](#); [Genesis 25:8](#); [Genesis 25:17](#); [Genesis 26:2](#); [Genesis 26:11](#); [Genesis 26:19](#); [Genesis 27:20](#); [Genesis 27:27](#); [Genesis 27:46](#); [Genesis 29:2](#); [Genesis 29:8](#); [Genesis 29:10](#); [Genesis 30:3](#); [Genesis 30:8](#); [Genesis 30:14](#); [Genesis 30:22](#); [Genesis 30:27](#); [Genesis 31:12](#); [Genesis 31:36](#); [Genesis 32:5](#); [Genesis 32:10](#); [Genesis 32:16](#); [Genesis 33:8](#); [Genesis 33:10](#); [Genesis 34:5](#); [Genesis 34:11](#); [Genesis 35:18](#); [Genesis 35:29](#); [Genesis 36:6](#); [Genesis 36:7](#); [Genesis 36:32](#); [Genesis 36:35](#); [Genesis 36:39](#); [Genesis 37:3](#); [Genesis 37:11](#); [Genesis 37:14](#); [Genesis 37:20](#); [Genesis 37:27](#); [Genesis 38:7](#); [Genesis 38:10](#); [Genesis 39:1](#); [Genesis 39:2](#); [Genesis 39:3](#); [Genesis 39:4](#); [Genesis 39:21](#); [Genesis 39:23](#); [Genesis 41:33](#); [Genesis 41:35](#); [Genesis 41:41](#); [Genesis 41:43](#); [Genesis 41:52](#); [Genesis 41:56](#); [Genesis 42:38](#); [Genesis 43:29](#);

Genesis 43:30; Genesis 44:29; Genesis 44:31; Genesis 46:4; Genesis 47:25; Genesis 47:27; Genesis 47:29; Genesis 48:21; Genesis 49:8; Genesis 49:15; Genesis 49:20; Genesis 50:1; Genesis 50:4; Genesis 50:23

## Imperatives — Other Uses

### Description

Imperative sentences are mainly used to express a desire or requirement that someone do something. In the Bible, sometimes imperative sentences have other uses.

This page answers the question: *What other uses are there for imperative sentences in the Bible?*

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

[Sentence Types \(UTA PDF\)](#)

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use an imperative sentence for some of the functions that they are used for in the Bible.

### Examples From the Bible

Speakers often use imperative sentences to tell or ask their listeners to do something. In Genesis 26, God spoke to Isaac and told him not to go to Egypt but to live where God would tell him to live.

Now Yahweh appeared to him and said, “**Do not go down** to Egypt; **live** in the land that I tell you to live in.” (Genesis 26:2 ULT)

Sometimes imperative sentences in the Bible have other uses.

### Imperatives that make things happen

God can make things happen by commanding that they happen. Jesus healed a man by commanding that the man be healed. The man could not do anything to obey the command, but Jesus caused him to be healed by commanding it. (In this context, the command “Be clean” means to “be healed” so that others around would know that it was safe to touch the man again.)

“I am willing. **Be clean.**” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

In Genesis 1, God commanded that there should be light, and by commanding it, he caused it to exist. Some languages, such as the Hebrew of the Bible, have commands that are in the third person. English does not do that, and so it must turn the third-person command into a general, second-person command, as in the ULT:

God said, “**Let there be** light,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

Languages that have third-person commands can follow the original Hebrew, which translates into English as something like “light must be.”

### Imperatives that function as blessings

In the Bible, God blesses people by using imperatives. This indicates what his will is for them.

God blessed them and said to them, “**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

## Imperatives that function as conditions

An imperative sentence can also be used to tell the **condition** under which something will happen. The proverbs mainly tell about life and things that often happen. The purpose of Proverbs 4:6 below is not primarily to give a command, but to teach what people can expect to happen **if** they love wisdom.

**Do not abandon** wisdom and she will watch over you;  
**love** her and she will keep you safe. (Proverbs 4:6 ULT)

The purpose of Proverbs 22:6, below, is to teach what people can expect to happen if they teach their children the way they should go.

**Teach** a child the way he should go,  
and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

## Translation Strategies

- (1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.
- (2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like “so” to show that what happened was a result of what was said.
- (3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.

**Be clean.** (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

“You are now clean.”  
“I now cleanse you.”

God said, “**Let there be** light,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

God said, “**There is now light**” and there was light.

God blessed them and said to them, “**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

God blessed them and said to them, “**My will for you is that you be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **I want you to have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

- (2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like “so” to show that what happened was a result of what was said.

God said, “**Let there be** light,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

God said, ‘Let there be light,’ **so** there was light.  
God said, “Light must be;” **as a result**, there was light.

(3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translated as:

**If** you teach a child the way he should go,  
**then** when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction.”

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 1:3](#); [Genesis 1:6](#); [Genesis 1:9](#); [Genesis 1:11](#); [Genesis 1:14](#); [Genesis 1:15](#); [Genesis 1:20](#); [Genesis 1:22](#); [Genesis 1:24](#); [Genesis 24:3](#); [Genesis 24:4](#)

## Introduction of a New Event

### Description

When people tell a story, they tell about an event or a series of events. Often they put certain information at the beginning of the story, such as who the story is about, when it happened, and where it happened. This information that the writer gives before the events of the story begin is called the setting of the story. Some new events in a story also have a setting because they might involve new people, new times, and new places. In some languages, people also tell if they saw the event or heard about it from someone else.

When your people tell about events, what information do they give at the beginning? Is there a certain order that they put it in? In your translation, you will need to follow the way your language introduces new information at the beginning of a story or a new event rather than the way the source language did that. In this way your translation will sound natural and communicate clearly in your language.

This page answers the question: *How do we introduce a new event in a story?*

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

[Writing Styles \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Order of Events \(UTA PDF\)](#)

### Examples From the Bible

**In the days of Herod**, king of Judea, **there was a certain priest named Zechariah**, from the division of Abijah. And **his wife was** from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. (Luke 1:5 ULT)

The verses above introduce a story about Zechariah. The first bolded phrase tells when it happened, and the next two bolded phrases introduce the main people. The next two verses go on to explain that Zechariah and Elizabeth were old and did not have any children. All of this is the setting. Then the phrase “And it happened that” in Luke 1:8 helps to introduce the first event in this story:

**And it happened that** in his performing as priest before God, in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, he came up by lot to enter into the temple of the Lord to burn incense. (Luke 1:8-9 ULT)

**The birth of Jesus Christ happened in the following way.** His mother, Mary, was engaged to marry Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18 ULT)

The bolded sentence above makes it explicit that a story about Jesus is being introduced. The story will tell about how the birth of Jesus happened.

**Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king**, behold, learned men from the east arrived in Jerusalem. (Matthew 2:1 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that the events concerning the learned men happened **after** Jesus was born.

**Now in those days** John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea. (Matthew 3:1-22 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that John the Baptist came preaching around the time of the previous events. It is probably very general and refers to when Jesus lived in Nazareth.

**Then** Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to John, to be baptized by him. (Matthew 3:13 ULT)

The word “then” shows that Jesus came to the Jordan River some time after the events in the previous verses.

Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**. This man came to Jesus at night. (John 3:1-2a ULT)

The author first introduced the new person and then told about what he did and when he did it. In some languages, it might be more natural to tell about the time first.

6 Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. 7 Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)

Verse 6 is a statement of the events that happen in the rest of chapter 7. Chapter 6 already told about how God told Noah that there would be a flood, and how Noah prepared for it. Chapter 7 verse 6 introduces the part of the story that tells about Noah and his family and the animals going into the ship, the rain starting, and the rain flooding the earth. Some languages might need to make it clear that this verse simply introduces the event, or move this verse after verse 7. Verse 6 is not one of the events of the story. The people went into the ship before the flood came.

## Translation Strategies

If the information given at the beginning of a new event is clear and natural to your readers, consider translating it as it is in the ULT or UST. If not, consider one of these strategies:

- (1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.
- (2) If readers would expect certain information but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase to fill in that information, such as: "another time" or "someone."
- (3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language's way of showing that it is a summary.
- (4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, indicate that the event would actually happen later in the story.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.

Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**. This man came to Jesus at night. (John 3:1-2a ULT)

There was a **man whose name was Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**. One night he came to Jesus.

One night **a man named Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**, came to Jesus.

As he passed by, **he saw Levi the son of Alpheus, sitting** at the tax collector's tent, and he said to him ... (Mark 2:14a ULT)

As he passed by, **Levi the son of Alpheus was sitting** at the tax collector's tent. Jesus saw him and and said to him ...

As he passed by, **there was a man sitting** at the tax collector's tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ...

As he passed by, **there was a tax collector** sitting at the tax collector’s tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ...

(2) If readers would expect certain information, but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase such as “another time,” or “someone.”

Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT) — If people expect to be told something about when the new event happened, the phrase “after that” can help them see that it happened after the events already mentioned.

**After that**, when Noah was 600 years old, the flood came upon the earth.

**Again he began** to teach beside the sea. (Mark 4:1a ULT) — In chapter 3 Jesus was teaching at someone’s house. Readers may need to be told that this new event happened at another time, or that Jesus actually went to the sea.

**Another time** Jesus began to teach people again beside the sea.

Jesus went to the sea and **began to teach people again** there.

(3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language’s way of showing that it is a summary.

Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT)

**Now this is what happened when** Noah was 600 years old and the flood came upon the earth.

**This part tells about what happened when** the flood came upon the earth. It happened when Noah was 600 years old.

(4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, show that the event will actually happen later in the story.

Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)

**Now this is what happened when** Noah was 600 years old. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives went into the ark together because **God had said that the waters of the flood would come.**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Background Information \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Introduction of New and Old Participants \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 21:22](#); [Genesis 22:1](#); [Genesis 22:20](#); [Genesis 38:1](#); [Genesis 38:24](#); [Genesis 38:27](#); [Genesis 39:7](#); [Genesis 39:11](#); [Genesis 39:13](#); [Genesis 39:15](#); [Genesis 39:18](#); [Genesis 39:19](#); [Genesis 40:1](#); [Genesis 40:20](#); [Genesis 41:1](#); [Genesis 41:8](#); [Genesis 42:1](#); [Genesis 43:2](#); [Genesis 44:24](#); [Genesis 48:1](#)

# 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:

*Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)*

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:

*Litotes (UTA PDF)*

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 37:20](#)

## Litotes

### Description

Litotes is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses a strong positive meaning by negating a word or phrase that means the opposite of the meaning that he intends. For example, someone could intend to communicate that something is extremely good by describing it as "not bad." The difference between a litotes and a **double negative** is that a litotes heightens the positive meaning beyond what a plain positive statement would do, and a double negative does not. In the example above, the literal meaning of "not bad," taken as a plain double negative, would be "acceptable" or even "good." But if the speaker intended it as a litotes, then the meaning is "very good" or "extremely good."

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

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

*Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)*

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use litotes. People who speak those languages might not understand that a statement using litotes actually strengthens the positive meaning. Instead, they might think that it weakens or even cancels the positive meaning.

### Examples From the Bible

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**, (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

By using litotes, Paul emphasized that his visit with them was **very** useful.

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

By using litotes, Luke emphasized that there was a **lot** of excitement or anxiety among the soldiers about what happened to Peter. (Peter had been in prison, and even though there were soldiers guarding him, he escaped when an angel let him out. So they were very agitated.)

But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are **not the least** among the leaders of Judah,  
for from you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel. (Matthew 2:6 ULT)

By using litotes, the prophet emphasized that Bethlehem would be a **very important city**.

### Translation Strategies

If the litotes would be understood correctly, consider using it.

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

### Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**. (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

“For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you **did much good.**”

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

“Now when it became day, there was **great excitement** among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter.”

or:

“Now when it became day, the soldiers were **very concerned** because of what had happened to Peter.”

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 24:27](#); [Genesis 31:32](#); [Genesis 37:22](#); [Genesis 39:9](#)

## 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:

[Figures of Speech \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**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**.

"

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 1:5](#); [Genesis 1:8](#); [Genesis 1:13](#); [Genesis 1:19](#); [Genesis 1:23](#); [Genesis 1:31](#); [Genesis 2:9](#); [Genesis 3:5](#); [Genesis 3:22](#); [Genesis 8:22](#); [Genesis 19:11](#); [Genesis 24:3](#); [Genesis 31:24](#); [Genesis 31:29](#); [Genesis 43:33](#)

# 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:

[Figures of Speech \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Simile \(UTA PDF\)](#)

## 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](#).

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**Referenced in:** [Genesis 4:7](#); [Genesis 5:22](#); [Genesis 6:7](#); [Genesis 6:11](#); [Genesis 6:12](#); [Genesis 9:2](#); [Genesis 9:6](#); [Genesis 15:1](#); [Genesis 16:12](#); [Genesis 17:1](#); [Genesis 18:3](#); [Genesis 18:23](#); [Genesis 18:24](#); [Genesis 18:27](#); [Genesis 19:11](#); [Genesis 19:15](#); [Genesis 19:17](#); [Genesis 19:19](#); [Genesis 19:32](#); [Genesis 19:34](#); [Genesis 20:9](#); [Genesis 20:16](#); [Genesis 21:19](#); [Genesis 24:8](#); [Genesis 24:21](#); [Genesis 24:40](#); [Genesis 24:41](#); [Genesis 24:45](#); [Genesis 24:49](#); [Genesis 25:8](#); [Genesis 25:27](#); [Genesis 26:10](#); [Genesis 26:35](#); [Genesis 27:1](#); [Genesis 27:12](#); [Genesis 27:13](#); [Genesis 27:28](#); [Genesis 27:34](#); [Genesis 27:35](#); [Genesis 27:36](#); [Genesis 27:39](#); [Genesis 27:40](#); [Genesis 27:45](#); [Genesis 28:4](#); [Genesis 28:17](#); [Genesis 29:31](#); [Genesis 30:2](#); [Genesis 30:18](#); [Genesis 30:23](#); [Genesis 30:27](#); [Genesis 31:15](#); [Genesis 31:39](#); [Genesis 31:40](#); [Genesis 32:5](#); [Genesis 33:10](#); [Genesis 34:3](#); [Genesis 34:30](#); [Genesis 35:5](#); [Genesis 37:25](#); [Genesis 37:26](#); [Genesis 37:35](#); [Genesis 39:2](#); [Genesis 39:4](#); [Genesis 39:5](#); [Genesis 39:6](#); [Genesis 39:8](#); [Genesis 39:9](#); [Genesis 39:22](#); [Genesis 40:13](#); [Genesis 41:29](#); [Genesis 41:30](#); [Genesis 41:31](#); [Genesis 41:35](#); [Genesis 41:37](#); [Genesis 41:49](#); [Genesis 41:50](#); [Genesis 42:28](#); [Genesis 42:37](#); [Genesis 43:9](#); [Genesis 44:7](#); [Genesis 44:17](#); [Genesis 44:18](#); [Genesis 44:29](#); [Genesis 44:30](#); [Genesis 44:32](#); [Genesis 44:34](#); [Genesis 45:8](#); [Genesis 45:11](#); [Genesis 45:18](#); [Genesis 47:19](#); [Genesis 47:29](#); [Genesis 48:2](#); [Genesis 48:15](#); [Genesis 48:20](#); [Genesis 48:22](#); [Genesis 49:7](#); [Genesis 49:9](#); [Genesis 49:11](#); [Genesis 49:14](#); [Genesis 49:17](#); [Genesis 49:21](#); [Genesis 49:22](#); [Genesis 49:24](#); [Genesis 49:26](#); [Genesis 50:15](#)

# 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:

*Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)*

... 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](#).

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**Referenced in:** [Genesis 3:17](#); [Genesis 4:10](#); [Genesis 6:5](#); [Genesis 6:6](#); [Genesis 6:11](#); [Genesis 6:17](#); [Genesis 7:15](#); [Genesis 7:22](#); [Genesis 9:2](#); [Genesis 11:1](#); [Genesis 12:2](#); [Genesis 14:10](#); [Genesis 14:11](#); [Genesis 15:1](#); [Genesis 15:14](#); [Genesis 19:15](#); [Genesis 19:24](#); [Genesis 19:31](#); [Genesis 20:4](#); [Genesis 20:5](#); [Genesis 20:6](#); [Genesis 20:9](#); [Genesis 20:11](#); [Genesis 20:13](#); [Genesis 21:13](#); [Genesis 21:16](#); [Genesis 21:17](#); [Genesis 21:18](#); [Genesis 21:23](#); [Genesis 22:18](#); [Genesis 23:11](#); [Genesis 23:18](#); [Genesis 24:7](#); [Genesis 24:28](#); [Genesis 24:56](#); [Genesis 24:60](#); [Genesis 25:23](#); [Genesis 26:9](#); [Genesis 26:14](#); [Genesis 26:25](#); [Genesis 27:8](#); [Genesis 27:13](#); [Genesis 27:29](#); [Genesis 27:40](#); [Genesis 28:2](#); [Genesis 28:14](#); [Genesis 28:20](#); [Genesis 28:21](#); [Genesis 29:14](#); [Genesis 29:22](#); [Genesis 30:35](#); [Genesis 31:27](#); [Genesis 31:30](#); [Genesis 31:42](#); [Genesis 31:49](#); [Genesis 32:8](#); [Genesis 32:11](#); [Genesis 32:21](#); [Genesis 34:7](#); [Genesis 34:25](#); [Genesis 35:4](#); [Genesis 35:5](#); [Genesis 35:11](#); [Genesis 36:43](#); [Genesis 37:21](#); [Genesis 37:22](#); [Genesis 37:27](#); [Genesis 40:3](#); [Genesis 40:21](#); [Genesis 40:22](#); [Genesis 41:30](#); [Genesis 41:33](#); [Genesis 41:35](#); [Genesis 41:36](#); [Genesis 41:40](#); [Genesis 41:44](#); [Genesis 41:46](#); [Genesis 41:55](#); [Genesis 41:57](#); [Genesis 42:3](#); [Genesis 42:19](#); [Genesis 42:22](#); [Genesis 42:33](#); [Genesis 44:7](#); [Genesis 45:2](#); [Genesis 45:5](#); [Genesis 45:6](#); [Genesis 45:8](#); [Genesis 45:26](#); [Genesis 46:29](#); [Genesis 46:31](#); [Genesis 47:13](#); [Genesis 47:14](#); [Genesis 47:15](#); [Genesis 47:18](#); [Genesis 47:19](#); [Genesis 47:29](#); [Genesis 48:4](#); [Genesis 48:16](#); [Genesis 48:19](#); [Genesis 48:22](#); [Genesis 49:4](#); [Genesis 49:7](#); [Genesis 49:10](#); [Genesis 49:13](#); [Genesis 49:15](#); [Genesis 49:16](#); [Genesis 49:19](#); [Genesis 49:20](#); [Genesis 49:21](#); [Genesis 49:22](#); [Genesis 49:24](#); [Genesis 49:25](#); [Genesis 49:27](#); [Genesis 50:4](#); [Genesis 50:9](#); [Genesis 50:24](#)

## 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:

*Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)*

### 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**.

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**Referenced in:** [Genesis 3:20](#); [Genesis 19:31](#); [Genesis 23:4](#); [Genesis 23:6](#); [Genesis 23:8](#); [Genesis 23:11](#); [Genesis 23:13](#); [Genesis 23:15](#)

# Numbers

## Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words (“five”) or as numerals (“5”). Some numbers are very large, such as “two hundred” (200), “twenty-two thousand” (22,000), or “one hundred million” (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

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

[Translate Unknowns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

▮ Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

▮ That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word “about” shows that it is not an exact number.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

## Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

## Examples From the Bible

▮ When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

▮ Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands**. (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

## Translation Strategies

- (1) Write numbers using numerals.
- (2) Write numbers using your language’s words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
- (3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

(1) Write numbers using numerals.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents), ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

## Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

## Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord® Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord® Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Fractions \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 4:24](#); [Genesis 5:3](#); [Genesis 5:4](#); [Genesis 5:5](#); [Genesis 5:6](#); [Genesis 5:7](#); [Genesis 5:8](#); [Genesis 5:9](#); [Genesis 5:10](#); [Genesis 5:11](#); [Genesis 5:12](#); [Genesis 5:13](#); [Genesis 5:14](#); [Genesis 5:23](#); [Genesis 5:28](#); [Genesis 5:30](#); [Genesis 5:31](#); [Genesis 6:3](#); [Genesis 11:10](#); [Genesis 11:11](#); [Genesis 11:13](#); [Genesis 11:32](#); [Genesis 14:14](#); [Genesis 20:16](#); [Genesis 21:4](#); [Genesis 21:5](#); [Genesis 23:1](#); [Genesis 23:15](#); [Genesis 24:60](#); [Genesis 25:7](#); [Genesis 25:16](#); [Genesis 25:17](#); [Genesis 25:20](#); [Genesis 25:26](#); [Genesis 26:12](#); [Genesis 26:34](#); [Genesis 31:38](#); [Genesis 31:41](#); [Genesis 32:6](#); [Genesis 32:14](#); [Genesis 32:15](#); [Genesis 33:1](#); [Genesis 33:19](#); [Genesis 35:22](#); [Genesis 35:28](#); [Genesis 37:2](#); [Genesis 37:9](#); [Genesis 37:28](#); [Genesis 41:46](#); [Genesis 42:13](#); [Genesis 45:22](#); [Genesis 46:15](#); [Genesis 46:18](#); [Genesis 46:22](#); [Genesis 46:25](#); [Genesis 46:26](#); [Genesis 46:27](#); [Genesis 47:9](#); [Genesis 47:28](#); [Genesis 50:3](#); [Genesis 50:10](#); [Genesis 50:22](#); [Genesis 50:26](#)

## Order of Events

### Description

In the Bible, events are not always told in the order in which they occurred. Sometimes the author wanted to discuss something that happened at an earlier time than the event that he just talked about. This can be confusing to the reader.

This page answers the question: *Why are some events not listed in the order they happened, and how do I translate them?*

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

[Writing Styles \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Verbs \(UTA PDF\)](#)

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers might think that the events happened in the order that they are told. It is important to help them understand the correct order of events.

### Examples From the Bible

He even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

This could sound like John baptized Jesus after John was locked up in prison, but John baptized Jesus before John was locked up in prison.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed after them. But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

This could sound like Joshua gave the order not to shout after the army had already started their march, but he had given that order before they started marching.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

This sounds like a person must first open the scroll and then break its seals, but the seals that lock the scroll must be broken before the scroll can be unrolled.

### Translation Strategies

- (1) If your language uses phrases or time words to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using one of them.
- (2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that. (See the section on "Aspect" of [Verbs](#).)
- (3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occurred, consider reordering the events so they are in that order. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6). (See [Verse Bridges](#).)

### Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If your language uses phrases, time words or tenses to show that an event happened before the one just mentioned, consider using one of them.

20 he even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

20 But then Herod ... had John locked up in prison. 21 **Before John was put in prison**, while all the people were being baptized by John, Jesus also was baptized.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to open the scroll **after** breaking its seals?

(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets 10 But Joshua **had commanded** the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout."

(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occur, consider reordering the events. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6).

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8,10 Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout." Then just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets...

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?

You may also want to watch the video at [https://ufw.io/figs\\_events](https://ufw.io/figs_events).

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Background Information \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Connecting Words and Phrases \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Introduction of a New Event \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Verse Bridges \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 24:30](#); [Genesis 26:18](#); [Genesis 27:24](#); [Genesis 47:1](#); [Genesis 47:2](#); [Genesis 50:8](#); [Genesis 50:24](#)

## Ordinal Numbers

### Description

Ordinal numbers are used in the Bible mainly to tell the position of something in a list.

And God has indeed appointed some in the church, **first** apostles, **second** prophets, **third** teachers, then miracles. (1 Corinthians 12:28a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are ordinal numbers and how can I translate them?*

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

[Numbers \(UTA PDF\)](#)

This is a list of workers that God gave to the church in their order.

### Ordinal Numbers in English

Most ordinal numbers in English simply have “-th” added to the end.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
4	four	fourth
10	ten	tenth
100	one hundred	one hundredth
1,000	one thousand	one thousandth

Some ordinal numbers in English do not follow that pattern.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
1	one	first
2	two	second
3	three	third
5	five	fifth
12	twelve	twelfth

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have special numbers for showing the order of items in a list. There are different ways to deal with this.

### Examples From the Bible

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

The people cast lots and one went to each of these people in the order given.

You must place in it four rows of precious stones. The **first** row must have a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet. The **second** row must have an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. The **third** row

must have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. The **fourth** row must have a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They must be mounted in gold settings. (Exodus 28:17-20 ULT)

This describes four rows of stones. The first row is probably the top row, and the fourth row is probably the bottom row.

## Translation Strategies

If your language has ordinal numbers and using them would give the right meaning, consider using them. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.
- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Tell the total number of items, and use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.

The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim ... the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **another** to Jedaiah, **another** to Harim ... **another** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **the next** to Jedaiah, **the next** to Harim ... **the next** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **the first** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the second** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the third** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. **The fourth** river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10-14 ULT)

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **one** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the next** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the next** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. The **last** river is the Euphrates.

- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

They cast **24** lots. The lots went to Jerhoiarib, Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim ... Delaiah, and Maaziah.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 7:11](#); [Genesis 8:13](#); [Genesis 22:4](#); [Genesis 22:15](#); [Genesis 34:25](#); [Genesis 41:5](#); [Genesis 42:18](#)

# 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."

Yahweh sees everything a person does  
and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

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

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

*Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)*

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 \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 1:27](#); [Genesis 4:23](#); [Genesis 6:22](#); [Genesis 11:1](#); [Genesis 19:14](#); [Genesis 26:5](#); [Genesis 31:2](#); [Genesis 31:36](#); [Genesis 37:8](#); [Genesis 41:30](#); [Genesis 41:31](#); [Genesis 43:8](#); [Genesis 44:5](#); [Genesis 44:16](#); [Genesis 49:2](#); [Genesis 49:3](#); [Genesis 49:4](#); [Genesis 49:6](#); [Genesis 49:8](#); [Genesis 49:11](#)

## 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:

*Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)*

## 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 \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 1:16](#); [Genesis 4:7](#); [Genesis 4:11](#); [Genesis 4:12](#); [Genesis 19:19](#); [Genesis 30:33](#); [Genesis 31:44](#); [Genesis 31:48](#); [Genesis 31:52](#); [Genesis 37:7](#)

# 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:

[Figures of Speech \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Writing Styles \(UTA PDF\)](#)

## 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: " [Symbolic Language \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 25:23](#); [Genesis 49:1](#)

## Predictive Past

### Description

The predictive past is a figure of speech that uses the past tense to refer to things that will happen in the future. This is sometimes done in prophecy to show that the event will certainly happen. It is also called the prophetic perfect.

Therefore my people have gone into captivity for lack of understanding;  
their honored leaders go hungry, and their common people have nothing to drink. (Isaiah 5:13 ULT)

This page answers the question: *What is the predictive past?*

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

[Figures of Speech \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Verbs \(UTA PDF\)](#)

In the example above, the people of Israel had not yet gone into captivity, but God spoke of their going into captivity as if it had already happened because he had decided that they certainly would go into captivity.

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

Readers who are not aware of the past tense being used in prophecy to refer to future events may find it confusing.

### Examples From the Bible

Now Jericho was tightly closed because of the sons of Israel. No one went out and no one came in. Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:1-2 ULT)

For to us a child has been born, to us a son has been given;  
and the rule will be on his shoulder. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)

In the examples above, God spoke of things that would happen in the future as if they had already happened.

But even Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them, saying, "Look! The Lord came with thousands and thousands of his holy ones." (Jude 1:14 ULT)

Enoch was speaking of something that would happen in the future, but he used the past tense when he said "the Lord came."

### Translation Strategies

If the past tense would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.
- (2) If it refers to something in the immediate future, use a form that would show that.
- (3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

### Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.

For to us a child **has been born**, to us a son **has been given**. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)

For to us a child **will be born**, to us a son **will be given**.

(2) If it refers to something that would happen very soon, use a form that shows that.

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:2 ULT)

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I **am about to deliver** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers."

(3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:2 ULT)

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I **am delivering** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers."

"

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 49:11](#)

## Pronouns

### Description

Pronouns are words that people might use instead of using a noun when referring to someone or something. Some examples are “I,” “you,” “he,” “it,” “this,” “that,” “himself,” “someone,” and others. The personal pronoun is the most common type of pronoun.

This page answers the question: *What are pronouns, and what kinds of pronouns are in some languages?*

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

*Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)*

### Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns refer to people or things and show whether the speaker is referring to himself, the person he is speaking to, or someone or something else. The following are kinds of information that personal pronouns may provide. Other types of pronouns may give some of this information, as well.

#### Person

- First Person — The speaker and possibly others (I, me, we, us)
  - [Exclusive and Inclusive “We”](#)
- Second Person — The person or people that the speaker is talking to and possibly others (you)
  - [Forms of You](#)
- Third Person — Someone or something other than the speaker and those he is talking to (he, she, it, they)

#### Number

- Singular — one (I, you, he, she, it)
- Plural — more than one (we, you, they)
  - [Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups](#)
- Dual — two (Some languages have pronouns specifically for two people or two things.)

#### Gender

- Masculine — he
- Feminine — she
- Neuter — it

### Relationship to other words in the sentence

- Subject of the verb: I, you, he, she, it, we, they
- Object of the verb or preposition: me, you, him, her, it, us, them
- Possessor with a noun: my, your, his, her, its, our, their
- Possessor without a noun: mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs

### Other Types of pronouns

**Reflexive Pronouns** refer to another noun or pronoun in the same sentence: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.

- John saw **himself** in the mirror. The word “himself” refers to John.

**Interrogative Pronouns** are used to make a question that needs more than just a yes or no for an answer: what, which, who, whom, whose.

- **Who** built the house?

**Relative Pronouns** mark a relative clause. The relative pronouns, who, whom, whose, which and that give more information about a noun in the main part of the sentence. Sometimes, the relative adverbs when and where can also be used as relative pronouns.

- I saw the house **that John built**. The clause “that John built” tells which house I saw.
- I saw the man **who built the house**. The clause “who built the house” tells which man I saw.

**Demonstrative Pronouns** are used to draw attention to someone or something and to show distance from the speaker or something else. The demonstrative pronouns are: this, these, that, and those.

- Have you seen **this** here?
- Who is **that** over there?

**Indefinite pronouns** are used when no particular noun is being referred to. The indefinite pronouns are: any, anyone, someone, anything, something, and some. Sometimes a personal pronoun is used in a generic way to do this: you, they, he or it.

- He does not want to talk to **anyone**.
- **Someone** fixed it, but I do not know who.
- **They** say that **you** should not wake a sleeping dog.

In the last example, “they” and “you” just refer to people in general.

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 1:26](#); [Genesis 3:15](#); [Genesis 5:1](#); [Genesis 11:7](#)

## Proverbs

### Description

Proverbs are short sayings that give wise advice or teach something that is generally true about life. People enjoy proverbs because they give a lot of wisdom in few words. Proverbs in the Bible often use metaphor and parallelism. Proverbs should not be understood as absolute and unchangeable laws. Rather, proverbs offer general advice to a person about how to live his life.

Hatred stirs up conflicts, but love covers over all offenses. (Proverbs 10:12 ULT)

Here is another example from the book of Proverbs.

Look at the ant, you lazy person, consider her ways, and be wise. It has no commander, officer, or ruler, yet it prepares its food in the summer, and during the harvest it stores up what it will eat. (Proverbs 6:6-8 ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are proverbs, and how can I translate them?*

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

[Metaphor \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Parallelism \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Writing Styles \(UTA PDF\)](#)

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Each language has its own ways of saying proverbs. There are many proverbs in the Bible. They need to be translated in the way that people say proverbs in your language so that people recognize them as proverbs and understand what they teach.

### Examples From the Bible

A good name is to be chosen over great riches,  
and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

This means that it is better to be a good person and to have a good reputation than it is to have a lot of money.

Like vinegar on the teeth and smoke in the eyes,  
so is the sluggard to those who send him. (Proverbs 10:26 ULT)

This means that a lazy person is very annoying to those who send him to do something.

The way of Yahweh protects those who have integrity,  
but it is destruction for the wicked. (Proverbs 10:29 ULT)

This means that Yahweh protects people who do what is right, but he destroys those who are wicked.

### Translation Strategies

If translating a proverb literally would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing that. If not, here are some options:

- (1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.
- (2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them

with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.

(3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.

(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.

A good name is to be chosen over great riches,  
and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

Here are some ideas for ways that people might say a proverb in their language.

It is better to have a good name than to have great riches,  
and to be favored by people than to have silver and gold.

Wise people choose a good name over great riches,  
and favor over silver and gold.

Try to have a good reputation rather than great riches.

Will riches really help you?

I would rather have a good reputation.

(2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.

Like **snow in summer** or rain in harvest,  
so a fool does not deserve honor. (Proverbs 26:1 ULT)

It is not natural for **a cold wind to blow in the hot season** or for it to rain  
in the harvest season;

And it is not natural to honor a foolish person.

(3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.

Do not boast about tomorrow,  
for you do not know what a day may bring. (Proverbs 27:1a ULT)

Do not count your chickens before they hatch.

(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

There is a generation that curses their father  
and does not bless their mother.  
There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes,

and yet they are not washed of their filth. (Proverbs 30:11-12 ULT)

People who do not respect their parents think that they are righteous,  
and they do not turn away from their sin.

"

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 10:9](#)

## Quotes within Quotes

### Description

A quotation may have a quote within it, and quotes that are inside of other quotes can also have quotes within them. When a quote has quotes within it, we say there are “layers” of quotation, and each of the quotes is a layer. When there are many layers of quotes inside of quotes, it can be hard for listeners and readers to know who is saying what. Some languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes to make it easier.

This page answers the question: *What is a quote within a quote, and how can I help the readers understand who is saying what?*

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

[Direct and Indirect Quotations \(UTA PDF\)](#)

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

When there is a quote within a quote, the listener needs to know who the pronouns refer to. For example: if a quote that is inside a quote has the word “I,” the listener needs to know whether “I” refers to the speaker of the inner quote or the outer quote.

Some languages make this clear by using different kinds of quotes when there are quotes within quotes.

They may use direct quotes for some and indirect quotes for others.

Some languages do not use indirect quotes.

### Examples From the Bible

#### A quotation with only one layer

But Paul said, “I, however, was indeed born a citizen.” (Acts 22:28b ULT)

#### Quotations with two layers

Jesus answered and said to them, “Be careful that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name. They will say, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will lead many astray.” (Matthew 24:4-5 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to his disciples. The second layer is what other people will say.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king.” (John 18:37b ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to Pilate. The second layer is what Pilate said about Jesus.

#### A quotation with three layers

Abraham said, “... I said to her, ‘You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, **“He is my brother.”**” (Genesis 20:11a, 13 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Abraham responded to Abimelech. The second layer is what Abraham had told his wife. The third layer is what he wanted his wife to say. (We have bolded the third layer.)

#### A quotation with four layers

They said to him, “A man came to meet us who said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Yahweh says this: **‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal- Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.’**”” (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

The outermost layer is what the messengers said to the king. The second layer is what the man who had met the messengers told them. The third is what that man wanted the messengers to say to the king. The fourth is what Yahweh said. (We have bolded the fourth layer.)

## Translation Strategies

Some languages use only direct quotes. Other languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes. In those languages it might sound strange and perhaps even be confusing if there are many layers of direct quotes.

- (1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes.
- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. (See [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#).)

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes. In the example below we have bolded the indirect quotes in the ULT and the quotes that we have changed to direct quotes below it.

Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul, saying, "There is a certain man was left here as a prisoner by Felix. So I am uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked **if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there to be judged concerning these things**. But when Paul appealed **to keep him in custody for the decision of the emperor**, I ordered him **to be held in custody until when I could send him to Caesar.**" (Acts 25:14b, 20-21 ULT)

Festus presented Paul's case to the king. He said, "A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner. I was uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked him, '**Will you go to Jerusalem to be judged there concerning these things?**' But when Paul said, '**I want to be kept in custody for the emperor's decision,**' I told the guard, '**Keep him in custody until when I can send him to Caesar.**'"

(2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. In English the word "that" can come before indirect quotes. It is bolded in the examples below. The pronouns that changed because of the indirect quote are also bolded.

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Speak to them and say, 'During the evenings you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be satisfied with bread. And you will know that I am Yahweh your God.'" (Exodus 16:11-12 ULT)

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard **that** during the evenings **they** will eat meat, and in the morning **they** will be satisfied with bread. And **they** will know that I am Yahweh **their** God."

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, 'Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.''" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

They told him **that** a man had come to meet **them** who said to **them**, "Go back to the king who sent you, and tell him **that** Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal

Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.”

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Quote Markings \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 20:5](#); [Genesis 20:11](#); [Genesis 20:13](#); [Genesis 24:7](#); [Genesis 24:14](#); [Genesis 26:9](#); [Genesis 27:7](#); [Genesis 32:4](#); [Genesis 32:5](#); [Genesis 32:9](#); [Genesis 32:12](#); [Genesis 32:17](#); [Genesis 32:18](#); [Genesis 42:22](#); [Genesis 42:31](#); [Genesis 42:32](#); [Genesis 43:3](#); [Genesis 43:7](#); [Genesis 44:19](#); [Genesis 44:20](#); [Genesis 44:21](#); [Genesis 44:22](#); [Genesis 44:23](#); [Genesis 44:25](#); [Genesis 44:26](#); [Genesis 44:29](#); [Genesis 45:16](#); [Genesis 45:18](#); [Genesis 45:20](#); [Genesis 46:32](#); [Genesis 46:34](#); [Genesis 48:4](#); [Genesis 48:20](#); [Genesis 50:5](#); [Genesis 50:17](#)

## Reflexive Pronouns

### Description

All languages have ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. English does this by using reflexive pronouns. These are pronouns that refer to someone or something that has already been mentioned in a sentence. In English the reflexive pronouns are: “myself,” “yourself,” “himself,” “herself,” “itself,” “ourselves,” “yourselves,” and “themselves.” Other languages may have other ways to show this.

This page answers the question: *What are reflexive pronouns?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. For those languages, translators will need to know how to translate the English reflexive pronouns.
- The reflexive pronouns in English also have other functions.

### Uses of Reflexive Pronouns

- To show that the same person or things fills two different roles in a sentence
- To emphasize a person or thing in the sentence
- To show that someone did something alone
- To show that someone or something was alone

### Examples From the Bible

Reflexive pronouns are used to show the same person or thing fills two different roles in a sentence.

If **I** should testify about **myself**, my testimony would not be true. (John 5:31 ULT)

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and **many** went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to purify **themselves**. (John 11:55 ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to emphasize a person or thing in the sentence.

**Jesus himself** was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2 ULT)

So they left the crowd, taking Jesus with them, just as he was, in the boat. There also were other boats with him. Then a violent windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already full of water. But **Jesus himself** was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. (Mark 4:36-38a ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to show that someone did something alone.

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15 ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to show that someone or something was alone.

He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. **It** was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)

## Translation Strategies

If a reflexive pronoun would have the same function in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other strategies.

- (1) In some languages people put something on the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.
- (2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.
- (3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it.
- (4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like “alone.”
- (5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) In some languages people modify the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.

If I should testify about **myself** alone, my testimony would not be true. (John 5:31)

“If I should **self-testify** alone, my testimony would not be true.”

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to **purify themselves**. (John 11:55)

“Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out from country before the Passover in order to **self-purify**.”

- (2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.

**He himself** took our sickness and bore our diseases. (Matthew 8:17 ULT)

“**It was he who** took our sickness and bore our diseases.”

**Jesus himself** was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2)

“**It was not Jesus who** was baptizing, but his disciples were.”

- (3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it. English adds the reflexive pronoun.

But Jesus said this to test Philip, for he **himself** knew what he was going to do. (John 6:6)

- (4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like “alone.”

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15)

“When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again **alone** up the mountain.”

- (5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)

“He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up and lying **in its own place.**”

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 20:5](#); [Genesis 22:8](#); [Genesis 32:21](#); [Genesis 33:3](#)

## 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:

[Figures of Speech \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Sentence Types \(UTA PDF\)](#)

## 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

"

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 3:1](#); [Genesis 3:11](#); [Genesis 3:13](#); [Genesis 4:6](#); [Genesis 4:7](#); [Genesis 4:9](#); [Genesis 4:10](#); [Genesis 12:18](#); [Genesis 13:9](#); [Genesis 16:13](#); [Genesis 17:17](#); [Genesis 18:12](#); [Genesis 18:13](#); [Genesis 18:17](#); [Genesis 18:18](#); [Genesis 18:24](#); [Genesis 18:25](#); [Genesis 19:20](#); [Genesis 20:5](#); [Genesis 20:9](#); [Genesis 21:7](#); [Genesis 23:15](#); [Genesis 24:31](#); [Genesis 25:32](#); [Genesis 26:10](#); [Genesis 27:36](#); [Genesis 27:37](#); [Genesis 27:45](#); [Genesis 27:46](#); [Genesis 29:15](#); [Genesis 29:25](#); [Genesis 30:2](#); [Genesis 30:15](#); [Genesis 30:30](#); [Genesis 31:14](#); [Genesis 31:15](#); [Genesis 31:43](#); [Genesis 32:29](#); [Genesis 33:15](#); [Genesis 34:23](#); [Genesis 34:31](#); [Genesis 37:10](#); [Genesis 37:13](#); [Genesis 37:26](#); [Genesis 37:30](#); [Genesis 39:9](#); [Genesis 40:8](#); [Genesis 42:1](#); [Genesis 42:22](#); [Genesis 43:7](#); [Genesis 43:29](#); [Genesis 44:4](#); [Genesis 44:5](#); [Genesis 44:8](#); [Genesis 44:15](#); [Genesis 44:34](#); [Genesis 47:15](#); [Genesis 49:9](#); [Genesis 50:19](#)

## Sentence Structure

### Description

The simplest sentence structure in English includes a **subject** and an **action** word:

- The boy ran.

### Subject

The **subject** is who or what the sentence is about. In these examples, the subject is bolded:

- **The boy** is running.
- **He** is running.

Subjects are typically noun phrases or pronouns. (See [Parts of Speech](#).) In the examples above, “the boy” is a noun phrase that has the noun “boy,” and “he” is a pronoun.

When the sentence is a command, in many languages it does not have a subject pronoun. People understand that the subject is “you.”

- Close the door.

### Predicate

The predicate is the part of a sentence that tells something about the subject. It usually has a verb. (See [Verbs](#).) In the sentences below, the subjects are “the man” and “he.” The predicates are in bold.

- The man is **strong**.
- He worked **hard**.
- He made **a garden**.

### Compound Sentences

A sentence can be made up of more than one sentence. Each of the two lines below has a subject and a predicate and is a full sentence.

- He planted the yams.
- His wife planted the maize.

The compound sentence below contains the two sentences above. In English, compound sentences are joined with a conjunction such as “and,” “but,” or “or.”

- He planted the yams **and** his wife planted the maize.

### Clauses

Sentences can also have clauses and other phrases. Clauses are like sentences because they have a subject and a predicate, but they do not normally occur by themselves. Here are some examples of clauses. The subjects are in bold, and the predicates are bolded.

- when **the maize was ready**
- after **she picked it**

This page answers the question: *What are the parts of a sentence?*

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

*Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)*

- because **it tasted so good**

Sentences can have many clauses, and so they can become long and complex. But each sentence has to have at least one **independent clause**, that is, a clause that can be a sentence all by itself. The other clauses that cannot be sentences by themselves are called the **dependent clauses**. Dependent clauses depend on the independent clause to complete their meaning. The dependent clauses are bolded in the sentences below.

- **When the maize was ready**, she picked it.
- **After she picked it**, she carried it home and cooked it.
- Then she and her husband ate it all, **because it tasted so good**.

The following phrases can each be a whole sentence. They are the independent clauses from the sentences above.

- She picked it.
- She carried it home and cooked it.
- Then she and her husband ate it all.

## Relative Clauses

In some languages, clauses can be used with a noun that is part of a sentence. These are called **relative clauses**.

In the sentence below, “the corn that was ready” is part of the predicate of the whole sentence. The relative clause “that was ready” is used with the noun “corn” to tell which corn she picked.

- His wife picked **the maize that was ready**.

In the sentence below “her mother, who was very annoyed” is part of the predicate of the whole sentence. The relative clause “who was very annoyed” is used with the noun “mother” to tell how her mother felt when she did not get any maize.

- She did not give any maize to **her mother, who was very annoyed**.

## Translation Issues

- Languages have different orders for the parts of a sentence. (See [Information Structure](#).)
- Some languages do not have relative clauses, or they use them in a limited way. (See [Distinguishing versus Informing or Reminding](#).)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Word Order \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 31:5](#)

# 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:

*Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)*

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 (UTA PDF)*

*Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns (UTA PDF)*

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 19:28](#); [Genesis 22:17](#); [Genesis 25:25](#); [Genesis 26:4](#); [Genesis 28:14](#); [Genesis 31:26](#); [Genesis 32:12](#); [Genesis 33:10](#); [Genesis 49:4](#); [Genesis 49:9](#); [Genesis 49:12](#)

## Symbolic Action

### Description

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their heads up and down to mean “yes” or turn their heads from side to side to mean “no.” Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures. In the Bible, sometimes people perform symbolic actions and sometimes they only refer to the symbolic action.

This page answers the question: *What is a symbolic action and how do I translate it?*

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

[Translate Unknowns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

### 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.

"

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 21:27](#); [Genesis 24:2](#); [Genesis 24:9](#); [Genesis 24:26](#); [Genesis 24:48](#); [Genesis 24:52](#); [Genesis 24:65](#); [Genesis 27:29](#); [Genesis 28:18](#); [Genesis 31:13](#); [Genesis 33:3](#); [Genesis 33:6](#); [Genesis 35:2](#); [Genesis 35:14](#); [Genesis 41:42](#); [Genesis 41:43](#); [Genesis 41:45](#); [Genesis 42:6](#); [Genesis 43:26](#); [Genesis 43:28](#); [Genesis 44:13](#); [Genesis 44:14](#); [Genesis 47:29](#); [Genesis 48:12](#); [Genesis 48:13](#); [Genesis 48:14](#); [Genesis 48:18](#); [Genesis 49:8](#); [Genesis 50:18](#)

# Symbolic Language

## Description

Symbolic language in speech and writing is the use of symbols to represent other things, other events, etc. In the Bible it occurs most in prophecy and poetry, especially in visions and dreams about things that will happen in the future. Though people may not immediately know the meaning of a symbol, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.

This page answers the question: *What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?*

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

*Writing Styles* ([UTA PDF](#))

█ Eat this scroll; then go speak to the house of Israel. (Ezekiel 3:1 ULT)

This was in a dream. Eating the scroll is a symbol of Ezekiel reading and understanding well what was written on the scroll, and accepting these words from God into himself.

## Purposes of Symbolism

- One purpose of symbolism is to help people understand the importance or severity of an event by putting it in other, very dramatic terms.
- Another purpose of symbolism is to tell some people about something while hiding the true meaning from others who do not understand the symbolism.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

People who read the Bible today may find it hard to recognize that the language is symbolic, and they may not know what the symbol stands for.

## Translation Principles

- When symbolic language is used, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.
- It is also important not to explain the symbol more than the original speaker or writer did, since he may not have wanted everyone living then to be able to understand it easily.

## Examples From the Bible

█ After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

The meaning of the bolded symbols is explained in Daniel 7:23-24 as shown below. The animals represent kingdoms, iron teeth represent a powerful army, and the horns represent powerful leaders.

█ This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.' (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

█ I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me, and as I turned I saw **seven golden lampstands**. In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a son of man ... He had **seven stars** in his right hand and **a sword with two sharp edges** was coming out of his mouth. As for the hidden meaning about the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven

golden lampstands: **The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches**, and **the seven lampstands are the seven churches**. (Revelation 1:12-13a, 16a, 20 ULT)

This passage explains the meaning of the seven lampstands and the seven stars. The two-edged sword represents God's word and judgment.

## Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.
- (2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.

This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.' (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

- (2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

After this I saw in my dream at night a fourth animal, <sup>1</sup> terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had large iron teeth; <sup>2</sup> it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had ten horns. <sup>3</sup>

The footnotes would look like:

- [1] The animal is a symbol for a kingdom.
- [2] The iron teeth is a symbol for the kingdom's powerful army.
- [3] The horns are a symbol of powerful kings.

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 23:7](#); [Genesis 23:12](#)

# 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)

■ I looked on all the deeds that **I** had accomplished

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:

*Figures of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

"

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 3:19](#); [Genesis 4:11](#); [Genesis 6:12](#); [Genesis 6:17](#); [Genesis 7:15](#); [Genesis 7:22](#); [Genesis 9:5](#); [Genesis 9:11](#); [Genesis 9:15](#); [Genesis 14:10](#); [Genesis 15:15](#); [Genesis 19:8](#); [Genesis 21:14](#); [Genesis 21:30](#); [Genesis 22:6](#); [Genesis 22:7](#); [Genesis 22:17](#); [Genesis 24:3](#); [Genesis 24:37](#); [Genesis 26:5](#); [Genesis 26:18](#); [Genesis 27:22](#); [Genesis 27:29](#); [Genesis 27:40](#); [Genesis 27:41](#); [Genesis 28:14](#); [Genesis 28:20](#); [Genesis 30:41](#); [Genesis 31:10](#); [Genesis 31:12](#); [Genesis 33:10](#); [Genesis 34:30](#); [Genesis 37:2](#); [Genesis 37:25](#); [Genesis 38:20](#); [Genesis 41:8](#); [Genesis 41:48](#); [Genesis 41:49](#); [Genesis 41:56](#); [Genesis 42:21](#); [Genesis 42:24](#); [Genesis 42:38](#); [Genesis 43:3](#); [Genesis 43:12](#); [Genesis 43:15](#); [Genesis 43:21](#); [Genesis 43:22](#); [Genesis 43:26](#); [Genesis 43:32](#); [Genesis 44:16](#); [Genesis 44:17](#); [Genesis 44:18](#); [Genesis 44:23](#); [Genesis 44:26](#); [Genesis 44:29](#); [Genesis 44:31](#); [Genesis 45:12](#); [Genesis 45:26](#); [Genesis 45:27](#); [Genesis 46:30](#); [Genesis 47:17](#); [Genesis 48:11](#); [Genesis 48:15](#); [Genesis 49:6](#); [Genesis 49:19](#); [Genesis 49:24](#); [Genesis 50:21](#)

## Textual Variants

### Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However, people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, or some mistook one word for another that looked like it. Occasionally, they added words or even whole sentences, either by accident or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles include some of these sentences that were added. In the ULT, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

This page answers the question: *Why does the ULT have missing or added verses, and should I translate them?*

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

[Choosing a Source Text \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Original Manuscripts \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Bible scholars have read many old copies and compared them with each other. For each place in the Bible where there was a difference, they have figured out which wordings are most likely correct. The translators of the ULT based the ULT on wordings that scholars say are most likely correct. Because people who use the ULT may have access to Bibles that are based on other copies, the ULT translators have sometimes included information about some of the differences between them, either in the ULT footnotes or in the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes.

Translators are encouraged to translate the text in the ULT and to write about added sentences in footnotes, as is done in the ULT. However, if the local church really wants those sentences to be included in the main text, translators may put them in the text and include a footnote about them.

### Examples From the Bible

Matthew 18:10-11 ULT has a footnote about verse 11.

<sup>10</sup> See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> <sup>[1]</sup>

[1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

John 7:53-8:11 is not in the best earliest manuscripts. It has been included in the ULT, but it is marked off with square brackets ([ ]) at the beginning and end, and there is a footnote after verse 11.

53 [Then everyone went to his own house ... 11 She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."] <sup>[2]</sup>

[2] Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

### Translation Strategies

When there is a textual variant, you may choose to follow the ULT or another version that you have access to.

- (1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.
- (2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The translation strategies are applied to Mark 7:14-16 ULT, which has a footnote about verse 16.

14 He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. 15 There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." 16 [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.

14 He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. 15 There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." 16 [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

14 He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. 15 There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man. 16 If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

Next we recommend you learn about: "

- [Chapter and Verse Numbers \(UTA PDF\)](#)
- [Original Manuscripts \(UTA PDF\)](#)
- [Terms to Know \(UTA PDF\)](#)
- [The Original and Source Languages \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 4:8](#)

## Translate Unknowns

While working to translate the Bible, you (the translator) might find yourself asking: “How do I translate words like lion, fig tree, mountain, priest, or temple when people in my culture have never seen these things and we do not have a word for them?”

This page answers the question: *How can I translate ideas that my readers are not familiar with?*

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

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

### Description

Unknowns are things that occur in the source text that are not known to the people of your culture. The unfoldingWord® Translation Words pages and the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes will help you understand what they are. After you understand them, you will need to find ways to refer to those things so that people who read your translation will understand what they are.

They said to him, “We have nothing here except five loaves of **bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread and do not know what it is.

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

### Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God’s commands and historical facts accurately.

### Examples From the Bible

So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals**. (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

They offered him wine mixed with **myrrh**, but he did not drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

## Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
- (4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.
- (5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but **inwardly they are very hungry and dangerous animals**.

"Ravenous wolves" is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See [Translating Metaphors](#).)

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked grain seeds** and two fish.

- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.

Your sins ... will be white like **milk**.

Your sins ... will be white like **the moon**.

- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **myrrh**. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT) — People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word "medicine."

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **a medicine called myrrh**. But he refused to drink it.

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT) — People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).

We have nothing here except five loaves of **baked crushed seed bread** and two fish.

(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **wild dogs**

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked food** and two fish.

(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

to him who made **the sun and the moon**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[How to Translate Names \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 2:12](#); [Genesis 21:33](#); [Genesis 25:34](#); [Genesis 30:14](#); [Genesis 30:37](#); [Genesis 31:27](#); [Genesis 43:11](#)

## When Masculine Words Include Women

In the Bible, sometimes the words “men,” “brothers,” and “sons” refer only to men. At other times, those words include both men and women. In those places where the writer meant both men and women, you (the translator) need to translate it in a way that does not limit the meaning to men.

### Description

In some languages a word that normally refers to men can also be used in a more general way to refer to both men and women. For example, the Bible sometimes says “brothers” when it refers to both brothers and sisters.

Also in some languages, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can be used in a more general way for any person if it is not important whether the person is a man or a woman. In the example below, the pronoun is “his,” but it is not limited to males.

A wise son makes **his** father rejoice  
but a foolish son brings grief to **his** mother. (Proverbs 10:1 ULT)

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- In some cultures words like “man,” “brother,” and “son” can only be used to refer to men. If those words are used in a translation in a more general way, people will think that what is being said does not apply to women.
- In some cultures, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can only refer to men. If a masculine pronoun is used, people will think that what is said does not apply to women.

### Translation Principles

When a statement applies to both men and women, translate it in such a way that people will be able to understand that it applies to both.

### Examples From the Bible

Now we want you to know, **brothers**, the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 8:1 ULT)

This verse is addressing the believers in Corinth, not only men, but **men and women**.

Then said Jesus to his disciples, “If anyone wants to follow me, **he** must deny **himself**, take up **his** cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

Jesus was not speaking only of men, but of **men and women**.

**Caution:** Sometimes masculine words are used specifically to refer to men. Do not use words that would lead people to think that they include women. The words below are specifically about men.

Moses said, ‘If **someone** dies, not having children, **his brother** must marry **his** wife and have children for **his brother**.’ (Matthew 22:24 ULT)

This page answers the question: *How do I translate “brother” or “he” when it could refer to anyone, male or female?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Generic Noun Phrases \(UTA PDF\)](#)

## Translation Strategies

If people would understand that that masculine words like “man,” “brother,” and “he” can include women, then consider using them. Otherwise, here are some ways for translating those words when they include women.

- (1) Use a noun that can be used for both men and women.
- (2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.
- (3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use nouns that can be used for both men and women.

The wise **man** dies just like the fool dies. (Ecclesiastes 2:16b ULT)

“The wise **person** dies just like the fool dies.”

“Wise **people** die just like fools die.”

- (2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.

For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia. (2 Corinthians 1:8) — Paul was writing this letter to both men and women.

“For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers and sisters**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia.”

- (3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

“If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”  
(Matthew 16:24 ULT)

English speakers can change the masculine singular pronouns, “he,” “himself,” and “his” to plural pronouns that do not mark gender, “they,” “themselves,” and “their” in order to show that it applies to all people, not just men.

>

“If **people** want to follow me, **they** must deny **themselves**, take up **their** cross, and follow me.”

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 31:28](#); [Genesis 41:44](#)



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Words**

**Version 40**

## avenge, avenger, revenge, vengeance

### Definition:

To “avenge” or “take revenge” or “execute vengeance” is to punish someone in order to pay him back for the harm he did. The act of avenging or taking revenge is “vengeance.”

- Usually “avenge” implies an intent to see justice done or to right a wrong,
- When referring to people, the expression “take revenge” or “get revenge” usually involves wanting to get back at the person who did the harm.
- When God “takes vengeance” or “executes vengeance,” he is acting in righteousness because he is punishing sin and rebellion.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The expression to “avenge” could also be translated as to “right a wrong” or to “get justice for.”
- When referring to human beings, to “take revenge” could be translated as “pay back” or “hurt in order to punish” or “get back at.”
- Depending on the context, “vengeance” could be translated as “punishment” or “punishment of sin” or “payment for wrongs done.” If a word meaning “retaliation” is used, this would apply to human beings only.
- When God says, “take my vengeance,” this could be translated by “punish them for wrongs done against me” or “cause bad things to happen because they have sinned against me.”
- When referring to God’s vengeance, make sure it is clear that God is right in his punishment of sin.

(See also: [punish](#), [just](#), [righteous](#))

### Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 24:12-13
- Ezekiel 25:15
- Isaiah 47:3-5
- Leviticus 19:17-18
- Psalms 18:47
- Romans 12:19

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1350, H3467, H5358, H5359, H5360, H8199, G15560, G15570, G15580, G37090

”

Referenced in: [Genesis 4 General Notes](#)

## bless, blessed, blessing

### Definition:

To “bless” someone or something means to cause good and beneficial things to happen to the person or thing that is being blessed.

- Blessing someone also means expressing a desire for positive and beneficial things to happen to that person.
- In Bible times, a father would often pronounce a formal blessing on his children.
- When people “bless” God or express a desire that God be blessed, this means they are praising him.
- The term “bless” is sometimes used for consecrating food before it is eaten, or for thanking and praising God for the food.

### Translation Suggestions:

- To “bless” could also be translated as “provide abundantly for” or to “be very kind and favorable toward.”
- “God has brought great blessing to” could be translated as “God has given many good things to” or “God has provided abundantly for” or “God has caused many good things to happen to”.
- “He is blessed” could be translated as “he will greatly benefit” or “he will experience good things” or “God will cause him to flourish.”
- “Blessed is the person who” could be translated as “How good it is for the person who.”
- Expressions like “blessed be the Lord” could be translated as “May the Lord be praised” or “Praise the Lord” or “I praise the Lord.”
- In the context of blessing food, this could be translated as “thanked God for the food” or “praised God for giving them food” or “consecrated the food by praising God for it.”

(See also: [praise](#))

### Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 10:16
- Acts 13:34
- Ephesians 1:3
- Genesis 14:20
- Isaiah 44:3
- James 1:25
- Luke 6:20
- Matthew 26:26
- Nehemiah 9:5
- Romans 4:9

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:7** God saw that it was good and he **blessed** them.
- **1:15** God made Adam and Eve in his own image. He **blessed** them and told them, “Have many children and grandchildren and fill the earth.”
- **1:16** So God rested from all he had been doing. He **blessed** the seventh day and made it holy, because on this day he rested from his work.
- **4:4** “I will make your name great. I will **bless** those who **bless** you and curse those who curse you. All families on earth will be **blessed** because of you.”
- **4:7** Melchizedek **blessed** Abram and said, “May God Most High who owns heaven and earth **bless** Abram.”

- **7:3** Isaac wanted to give his **blessing** to Esau.
- **8:5** Even in prison, Joseph remained faithful to God, and God **blessed** him.

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H0833, H0835, H1288, H1289, H1293, G17570, G21270, G21280, G21290, G31060, G31070, G31080, G60500

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**Referenced in:** [Genesis 31 General Notes](#); [Genesis 46 General Notes](#)

## circumcise, circumcised, circumcision, uncircumcised, uncircumcision

### Definition:

The term “circumcise” means to cut off the foreskin of a man or male child. A circumcision ceremony may be performed in connection with this.

- God commanded Abraham to circumcise every male among his family and servants as a sign of God’s covenant with them.
- God also commanded Abraham’s descendants to continue to do this for every baby boy born into their households.
- The phrase, “circumcision of the heart” refers figuratively to the “cutting away” or removal of sin from a person.
- In a spiritual sense, “the circumcised” refers to people whom God has purified from sin through the blood of Jesus and who are his people.
- The term “uncircumcised” refers to those who have not been circumcised physically. It can also refer figuratively to those who have not been circumcised spiritually, who do not have a relationship with God.

The terms “uncircumcised” and “uncircumcision” refer to a male who has not been physically circumcised. These terms are also used figuratively.

- Egypt was a nation that also required circumcision. So when God talks about Egypt being defeated by the “uncircumcised,” he is referring to people whom the Egyptians despised for not being circumcised.
- The Bible refers to people who have an “uncircumcised heart” or who are “uncircumcised in heart.” This a figurative way of saying that these people are not God’s people, and are stubbornly disobedient to him.
- If a word for circumcision is used or known in the language, “uncircumcised” could be translated as “not circumcised.”
- The expression “the uncircumcision” could be translated as “people who are not circumcised” or “people who do not belong to God,” depending on the context.
- Other ways to translate figurative senses of this term could include “not God’s people” or “rebellious like those who don’t belong to God” or “people who have no sign of belonging to God.”
- The expression “uncircumcised in heart” could be translated as “stubbornly rebellious” or “refusing to believe.” However, if possible it is best to keep the expression or a similar one since spiritual circumcision is an important concept.

### Translation Suggestions:

- If the culture of the target language performs circumcisions on males, the word used to refer to this should be used for this term.
- Other ways to translate this term would be, “cut around” or “cut in a circle” or “cut off the foreskin.”
- In cultures where circumcision is not known, it may be necessary to explain it in a footnote or glossary.
- Make sure the term used to translate this does not refer to females. It may be necessary to translate this with a word or phrase that includes the meaning of “male.”

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

(See also: [Abraham, covenant](#))

### Bible References:

- Genesis 17:11
- Genesis 17:14
- Exodus 12:48

- Leviticus 26:41
- Joshua 5:3
- Judges 15:18
- 2 Samuel 1:20
- Jeremiah 9:26
- Ezekiel 32:25
- Acts 10:44-45
- Acts 11:3
- Acts 15:1
- Acts 11:3
- Romans 2:27
- Galatians 5:3
- Ephesians 2:11
- Philippians 3:3
- Colossians 2:11
- Colossians 2:13

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:3** "You must **circumcise** every male in your family."
- **5:5** That day Abraham **circumcised** all the males in his household.

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H4135, H4139, H5243, H6188, H6189, H6190, G02030, G05640, G19860, G40590, G40610

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**Referenced in:** [Genesis 17 General Notes](#); [Genesis 34 General Notes](#)

## clean, wash

### Definition:

The term “clean” generally refers either to removing dirt or stains from someone/something or to not having any dirt or stain in the first place. The term “wash” refers specifically to action of removing dirt or stains from someone/something.

- “Cleanse” is the process of making something “clean.” It could also be translated as “wash” or “purify.”
- In the Old Testament, God told the Israelites which animals he had specified as ritually “clean” and which ones were “unclean.” Only the clean animals were permitted to be used for eating or for sacrifice. In this context, the term “clean” means that the animal was acceptable to God for use as a sacrifice.
- A person who had certain skin diseases would be unclean until the skin was healed enough to no longer be contagious. Instructions for cleansing the skin had to be obeyed in order for that person to be declared “clean” again.
- Sometimes “clean” is used figuratively to refer to moral purity, meaning to be “clean” from sin.

In the Bible, the term “unclean” is used figuratively to refer to things that God declared to be unfit for his people to touch, eat, or sacrifice.

- God gave the Israelites instructions about which animals were “clean” and which ones were “unclean.” The unclean animals were not permitted to be used for eating or for sacrifice.
- People with certain skin diseases were said to be “unclean” until they were healed.
- If the Israelites touched something “unclean,” they themselves would be considered unclean for a certain period of time.
- Obeying God’s commands about not touching or eating unclean things kept the Israelites set apart for God’s service.
- This physical and ritual uncleanness was also symbolic of moral uncleanness.
- In another figurative sense, an “unclean spirit” refers to an evil spirit.

### Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated with the common word for “clean” or “pure” (in the sense of being not dirty).
- Other ways to translate this could include, “ritually clean” or “acceptable to God.”
- “Cleanse” could be translated by “wash” or “purify.”
- Make sure that the words used for “clean” and “cleanse” can also be understood in a figurative sense.
- The term “unclean” could also be translated as “not clean” or “unfit in God’s eyes” or “physically unclean” or “defiled.”
- When referring to a demon as an unclean spirit, “unclean” could be translated as “evil” or “defiled.”
- The translation of this term should allow for spiritual uncleanness. It should be able to refer to anything that God declared as unfit for touching, eating, or sacrifice.

(See also: [defile](#), [demon](#), [holy](#), [sacrifice](#))

### Bible References:

- Genesis 7:2
- Genesis 7:8
- Deuteronomy 12:15
- Psalms 51:7
- Proverbs 20:30
- Ezekiel 24:13
- Matthew 23:27

- Luke 5:13
- Acts 8:7
- Acts 10:27-29
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- James 4:8

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H1249, H1252, H1305, H2134, H2135, H2141, H2398, H2548, H2834, H2889, H2890, H2891, H2893, H2930, H2931, H2932, H3001, H3722, H5079, H5352, H5355, H5356, H6172, H6565, H6663, H6945, H7137, H8552, H8562, G01670, G01690, G25110, G25120, G25130, G28390, G28400, G33940, G36890

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Referenced in: [Genesis 7 General Notes](#)

## covenant

### Definition:

In the Bible, the term “covenant” refers to a formal, binding agreement between two parties that one or both parties must fulfill.

- This agreement can be between individuals, between groups of people, or between God and people.
- When people make a covenant with each other, they promise that they will do something, and they must do it.
- Examples of human covenants include marriage covenants, business agreements, and treaties between countries.
- Throughout the Bible, God made several different covenants with his people.
- In some of the covenants, God promised to fulfill his part without conditions. For example, when God established his covenant with mankind promising to never destroy the earth again with a worldwide flood, this promise had no conditions for people to fulfill.
- In other covenants, God promised to fulfill his part only if the people obeyed him and fulfilled their part of the covenant.

The term “new covenant” refers to the commitment or agreement God made with his people through the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus.

- God’s “new covenant” was explained in the part of the Bible called the “New Testament.”
- This new covenant is in contrast to the “old” or “former” covenant that God had made with the Israelites in Old Testament times.
- The new covenant is better than the old one because it is based on the sacrifice of Jesus, which completely atoned for people’s sins forever. The sacrifices made under the old covenant did not do this.
- God writes the new covenant on the hearts those who become believers in Jesus. This causes them to want to obey God and to begin to live holy lives.
- The new covenant will be completely fulfilled in the end times when God establishes his reign on earth. Everything will once again be very good, as it was when God first created the world.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate this term could include, “binding agreement” or “formal commitment” or “pledge” or “contract.”
- Some languages may have different words for covenant depending on whether one party or both parties have made a promise they must keep. If the covenant is one-sided, it could be translated as “promise” or “pledge.”
- Make sure the translation of this term does not sound like people proposed the covenant. In all cases of covenants between God and people, it was God who initiated the covenant.
- The term “new covenant” could be translated as “new formal agreement” or “new pact” or “new contract.”
- The word “new” in these expressions has the meaning of “fresh” or “new kind of” or “another.”

(See also: [covenant](#), [promise](#))

### Bible References:

- Genesis 9:12
- Genesis 17:7
- Genesis 31:44
- Exodus 34:10-11
- Joshua 24:24-26

- 2 Samuel 23:5
- 2 Kings 18:11-12
- Mark 14:24
- Luke 1:73
- Luke 22:20
- Acts 7:8
- 1 Corinthians 11:25-26
- 2 Corinthians 3:6
- Galatians 3:17-18
- Hebrews 12:24

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:9** Then God made a **covenant** with Abram. A **covenant** is an agreement between two parties.
- **5:4** "I will make Ishmael a great nation, too, but my **covenant** will be with Isaac."
- **6:4** After a long time, Abraham died and all of the promises that God had made to him in the **covenant** were passed on to Isaac.
- **7:10** "The **covenant** promises God had promised to Abraham and then to Isaac now passed on to Jacob."
- **13:2** God said to Moses and the people of Israel, "If you will obey my voice and keep my **covenant**, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."
- **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."
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the **covenant** that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai.
- **21:5** Through the prophet Jeremiah, God promised that he would make a **New Covenant**, but not like the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai. 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. The Messiah would start the **New Covenant**.
- **21:14** Through the Messiah's death and resurrection, God would accomplish his plan to save sinners and start the **New Covenant**.
- **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. Do this to remember me every time you drink it."
- **48:11** But God has now made a **New Covenant** that is available to everyone. Because of this **New Covenant**, anyone from any people group can become part of God's people by believing in Jesus.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H1285, H2319, H3772, G08020, G12420, G49340

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**Referenced in:** [Genesis 13 General Notes](#); [Genesis 21 General Notes](#); [Genesis 22 General Notes](#); [Genesis 27 General Notes](#)

## 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

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Referenced in: [Genesis 32 General Notes](#)

## curse, cursed, cursing

### Definition:

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

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

### Translation Suggestions:

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

(See also: [bless](#))

### Bible References:

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

### Examples from the Bible stories:

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

### Word Data:

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

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**Referenced in:** [Genesis 3 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

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Referenced in: [Genesis 19 General Notes](#)

## faith

### Definition:

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

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

### Translation Suggestions:

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

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

### Bible References:

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

### Examples from the Bible stories:

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

### Word Data:

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

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**Referenced in:** [Genesis 19 General Notes](#)

## favor, favorable, favoritism

### Definition:

The term “favor” generally means approval. Someone who favors another person regards that person positively and approves of them.

- Jesus grew up “in favor with” God and men. This means that both God and others approved of his character and behavior.
- The expression “find favor” with someone means that someone is approved of by that person.
- When a king shows favor to someone, it often means that he approves of that person’s request and grants it.
- A “favor” can also be a gesture or action towards or for another person for their benefit.
- The term “favoritism” means an attitude of acting favorably toward some people but not others. It means the inclination to pick one person over another or one thing over another because the person or item is preferred. Generally, favoritism is considered unfair.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate the term “favor” could include “approval” or “blessing” or “benefit.”
- The “favorable year of Yahweh” could be translated as “the year (or time) when Yahweh will bring great blessing.”
- The term “favoritism” could be translated as “partiality” or “being prejudiced” or “unjust treatment.” This word is related to the word “favorite,” which means to prefer above all others.

### Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 2:25-26
- 2 Chronicles 19:7
- 2 Corinthians 1:11
- Acts 24:27
- Genesis 41:16
- Genesis 47:25
- Genesis 50:5

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0995, H1156, H1293, H1779, H1921, H2580, H2603, H2896, H5278, H5375, H5414, H5922, H6213, H6437, H6440, H7521, H7522, H7965, G11840, G36850, G43800, G43820, G54850, G54860

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Referenced in: [Genesis 37 General Notes](#); [Genesis 43 General Notes](#)

## fool, foolish, folly

### Definition:

The term “fool” refers to a person who often makes wrong choices, especially choosing to disobey. The term “foolish” describes a person or behavior that is not wise.

- In the Bible, the term “fool” usually refers to a person who does not believe or obey God. This is often contrasted to the wise person, who trusts in God and obeys God.
- In the Psalms, David describes a fool as a person who does not believe in God, one who ignores all the evidence of God in his creation.
- The Old Testament book of Proverbs also gives many descriptions of what a fool, or foolish person, is like.
- The term “folly” refers to an action that is not wise because it is against God’s will. Often “folly” also includes the meaning of something that is ridiculous or dangerous.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “fool” could be translated as “foolish person” or “unwise person” or “senseless person” or “ungodly person.”
- Ways to translate “foolish” could include “lacking understanding” or “unwise” or “senseless.”

(See also: [wise](#))

### Bible References:

- Ecclesiastes 1:17
- Ephesians 5:15
- Galatians 3:3
- Genesis 31:28
- Matthew 7:26
- Matthew 25:8
- Proverbs 13:16
- Psalms 49:13

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0191, H0196, H0200, H1198, H1984, H2973, H3684, H3687, H3688, H3689, H3690, H5014, H5034, H5036, H5039, H5528, H5529, H5530, H5531, H6612, H8417, H8602, H8604, G04530, G04540, G07810, G08010, G08770, G08780, G27570, G31500, G31540, G34710, G34720, G34730, G34740, G39120

”

Referenced in: [Genesis 25 General Notes](#)

## glory, glorious, glorify

### Definition:

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

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

### Old Testament

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

### New Testament

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

### Translation Suggestions:

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

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

### Bible References:

- Exodus 24:17
- Numbers 14:9-10
- Isaiah 35:2
- Luke 18:43

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

### Examples from the Bible stories:

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

### Word Data:

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

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 40 General Notes](#); [Genesis 41 General Notes](#)

## 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

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Referenced in: [Genesis 24 General Notes](#)

## heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly

### Definition:

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

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

### Translation Suggestions:

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

(See also: [kingdom of God](#))

### Bible References:

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

### Examples from the Bible stories:

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

### Word Data:

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

"

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 7 General Notes](#); [Genesis 14 General Notes](#)

## 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

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 2 General Notes](#)

## jealous, jealousy

### Definition:

The terms "jealous" and "jealousy" refer to a strong desire to protect the purity of a relationship. They can also refer to a strong desire to keep possession of something or someone.

- These terms are often used to describe the angry feeling that a person has toward a spouse who has been unfaithful in their marriage.
- When used in the Bible, these terms often refer to God's strong desire for his people to remain pure and unstained by sin.
- God is also "jealous" for his name, desiring that it be treated with honor and reverence.
- Another meaning of jealous involves being angry that someone else is successful or more popular. This is close in meaning to the word "envious."

### Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate "jealous" could include "strong protective desire" or "possessive desire."
- The term "jealousy" could be translated as "strong protective feeling" or "possessive feeling."
- When talking about God, make sure the translation of these terms does not give a negative meaning of being resentful of someone else.
- In the context of people's wrong feelings of anger toward other people who are more successful, the terms "envious" and "envy" could be used. But these terms should not be used for God.

(See also: [envy](#))

### Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 12:20
- Deuteronomy 5:9
- Exodus 20:5
- Ezekiel 36:5
- Joshua 24:19
- Nahum 1:2-3
- Romans 13:13

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H7065, H7067, H7068, H7072, G22050, G38630

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Referenced in: [Genesis 30 General Notes](#)

## people of God

### Definition:

The concept of the “people of God” in the Bible refers to people with whom God has established a covenant relationship.

- In the Old Testament, the phrase “people of God” refers to the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel was chosen by God and set apart from the other nations of the world in order to serve and obey him.
- In the New Testament, the phrase “people of God” refers to the “Church,” meaning everyone who believes in Jesus. This includes both Jews and Gentiles. In the New Testament, sometimes this group of people is called the “sons of God” or “children of God.”
- When God uses the phrase “my people,” he is referring to people who have a covenant relationship with him. God’s people are chosen by him, and he wants them to live in a way that is pleasing to him.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “people of God” could be translated as “God’s people” or “the people who worship God” or “people who serve God” or “people who belong to God.”
- When God says “my people” other ways to translate it could include “the people I have chosen” or “the people who worship me” or “the people who belong to me.”
- Similarly, “your people” could be translated as “the people who belong to you” or “the people you chose to belong to you.”
- Also “his people” could be translated as “the people who belong to him” or “the people God chose to belong to himself.”

(See also: [Israel](#), [people group](#))

### Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:2
- Acts 7:34
- Acts 7:51-53
- Acts 10:36-38
- Daniel 9:24-25
- Isaiah 2:5-6
- Jeremiah 6:20-22
- Joel 3:16-17
- Micah 6:3-5
- Revelation 13:7-8

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0430, H5971, G23160, G29920

”

Referenced in: [Genesis 38 General Notes](#)

## 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

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 14 General Notes](#)

## promise, promised

### Definition:

When used as a verb, the term “promise” refers to the action of a person saying that he will do something in such way that he obligates himself to fulfill what he has said. When used as a noun, the term “promise” refers to the thing that a person obligates himself to do.

- The Bible records many promises that God has made for his people.
- Promises are an important part of formal agreements such as covenants.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “promise” could be translated as “commitment” or “assurance” or “guarantee.”
- To “promise to do something” could be translated as “assure someone that you will do something” or “commit to doing something.”

(See also: [covenant](#), [oath](#), [vow](#))

### Bible References:

- Galatians 3:15-16
- Genesis 25:31-34
- Hebrews 11:9
- James 1:12
- Numbers 30:2

### 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.”<sup>⚡</sup>
- **3:16** God then made the first rainbow as a sign of his **promise**. Every time the rainbow appeared in the sky, God would remember what he **promised** and so would his people.
- **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. Abram believed God’s **promise**.
- **5:4** “Your wife, Sarai, will have a son—he will be the son of **promise**.”
- **8:15** The covenant **promises** that God gave to Abraham were passed on to Isaac, then to Jacob, and then to Jacob’s twelve sons and their families.
- **17:14** Though David had been unfaithful to God, God was still faithful to his **promises**.
- **50:1** Jesus **promised** he would return at the end of the world. Though he has not yet come back, he will keep his **promise**.

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0559, H0562, H1696, H8569, G18430, G18600, G18610, G18620, G36700, G42790

”

**Referenced in:** [Genesis 12 General Notes](#); [Genesis 13 General Notes](#); [Genesis 17 General Notes](#); [Genesis 28 General Notes](#); [Genesis 35 General Notes](#); [Genesis 47 General Notes](#); [Genesis 48 General Notes](#)

## Promised Land

### Facts:

The term "Promised Land" only occurs in the Bible stories, not the Bible text. It is an alternate way of referring to the land of Canaan which God had promised to give to Abraham and his descendants.

- When Abram was living in the city of Ur, God commanded him to go live in the land of Canaan. He and his descendants, the Israelites, lived there for many years.
- When a severe famine caused there to be no food in Canaan, the Israelites moved to Egypt.
- Four hundred years later, God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and brought them back to Canaan again, the land God had promised to give them.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term "Promised Land" can be translated as the "land that God said he would give to Abraham" or "land that God promised to Abraham" or "land God promised to his people" or "land of Canaan."
- In the Bible text, this term occurs as some form of "the land God promised."

(See also: [Canaan](#), [promise](#))

### Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 8:1-2
- Ezekiel 7:26-27

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:1** They (Israelites) were no longer slaves, and they were going to the **Promised Land!**
- **14:1** After God had told the Israelites the laws he wanted them to obey as part of his covenant with them, God began leading them from Mount Sinai toward the **Promised Land**, which was also called Canaan.
- **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.
- **14:14** Then God led the people to the edge of the **Promised Land** again.
- **15:2** The Israelites had to cross the Jordan River to enter into the **Promised Land**.
- **15:12** After this battle, God gave each tribe of Israel its own section of the **Promised Land**.
- **20:9** This period of time when God's people were forced to leave the **Promised Land** is called the Exile.

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H0776, H3068, H3423, H5159, H5414, H7650

"

Referenced in: [Introduction to Genesis](#); [Genesis 47 General Notes](#)

## prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess

### Definition:

A “prophet” is a man who speaks God’s messages to people. A woman who does this is called a “prophetess.”

- Often prophets warned people to turn away from their sins and obey God.
- A “prophecy” is the message that the prophet speaks. To “prophesy” means to speak God’s messages.
- Often the message of a prophecy was about something that would happen in the future.
- Many prophecies in the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.
- In the Bible the collection of books written by prophets are sometimes referred to as “the prophets.”
- For example the phrase, “the law and the prophets” is a way of referring to all the Hebrew scriptures, which are also known as the “Old Testament.”
- An older term for a prophet was “seer” or “someone who sees.”
- Sometimes the term “seer” refers to a false prophet or to someone who practices divination.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “prophet” could be translated as “God’s spokesman” or “man who speaks for God” or “man who speaks God’s messages.”
- A “seer” could be translated as “person who sees visions” or “man who sees the future from God.”
- The term “prophetess” could be translated as “spokeswoman for God” or “woman who speaks for God” or “woman who speaks God’s messages.”
- Ways to translate “prophecy” could include, “message from God” or “prophet message.”
- The term “prophesy” could be translated as “speak words from God” or “tell God’s message.”
- The figurative expression, “law and the prophets” could also be translated as “the books of the law and of the prophets” or “everything written about God and his people, including God’s laws and what his prophets preached.” (See: [synecdoche](#))
- When referring to a prophet (or seer) of a false god, it may be necessary to translate this as “false prophet (seer)” or “prophet (seer) of a false god” or “prophet of Baal,” for example.

(See also: [Baal](#), [divination](#), [false god](#), [false prophet](#), [fulfill](#), [law](#), [vision](#))

### Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
- Acts 3:25
- John 1:43-45
- Malachi 4:4-6
- Matthew 1:23
- Matthew 2:18
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalm 51:1

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they trusted in God and believed that Moses was a **prophet** of God.
- **17:13** God was very angry about what David had done, so he sent the **prophet** Nathan to tell David how evil his sin was.
- **19:1** Throughout the history of the Israelites, God sent them **prophets**. The **prophets** heard messages from God and then told the people God’s messages.

- **19:6** All the people of the entire kingdom of Israel, including the 450 **prophets** of Baal, came to Mount Carmel.
- **19:17** Most of the time, the people did not obey God. They often mistreated the **prophets** and sometimes even killed them.
- **21:9** The **prophet** Isaiah **prophesied** that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- **43:5** "This fulfills the **prophecy** made by the **prophet** Joel in which God said, 'In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.'"
- **43:7** "This fulfills the **prophecy** which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.'"
- **48:12** Moses was a great **prophet** who proclaimed the word of God. But Jesus is the greatest **prophet** of all. He is the Word of God.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H2372, H2374, H4853, H5012, H5013, H5016, H5017, H5029, H5030, H5031, H5197, G24950, G43940, G43950, G43960, G43970, G43980, G55780

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Referenced in: [Genesis 49 General Notes](#)

## righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness

### Definition:

The term “righteousness” refers to God’s absolute goodness, justice, faithfulness, and love. Having these qualities makes God “righteous.” Because God is righteous, he must condemn sin.

- These terms are also often used to describe a person who obeys God and is morally good. However, because all people have sinned, no one except God is completely righteous.
- Examples of people the Bible who were called “righteous” include Noah, Job, Abraham, Zachariah, and Elisabeth.
- When people trust in Jesus to save them, God cleanses them from their sins and declares them to be righteous because of Jesus’ righteousness.

The term “unrighteous” means to be sinful and morally corrupt. “Unrighteousness” refers to sin or the condition of being sinful.

- These terms especially refer to living in a way that disobeys God’s teachings and commands.
- Unrighteous people are immoral in their thoughts and actions.
- Sometimes “the unrighteous” refers specifically to people who do not believe in Jesus.

The terms “upright” and “uprightness” refer to acting in a way that follows God’s laws.

- The meaning of these words includes the idea of standing up straight and looking directly ahead.
- A person who is “upright” is someone who obeys God’s rules and does not do things that are against his will.
- Terms such as “integrity” and “righteous” have similar meanings and are sometimes used in parallelism constructions, such as “integrity and uprightness.” (See: [parallelism](#))

### Translation Suggestions:

- When it describes God, the term “righteous” could be translated as “perfectly good and just” or “always acting rightly.”
- God’s “righteousness” could also be translated as “perfect faithfulness and goodness.”
- When it describes people who are obedient to God, the term “righteous” could also be translated as “morally good” or “just” or “living a God-pleasing life.”
- The phrase “the righteous” could also be translated as “righteous people” or “God-fearing people.”
- Depending on the context, “righteousness” could also be translated with a word or phrase that means “goodness” or “being perfect before God” or “acting in a right way by obeying God” or “doing perfectly good.”
- The term “unrighteous” could simply be translated as “not righteous.”
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this could include “wicked” or “immoral” or “people who rebel against God” or “sinful.”
- The phrase “the unrighteous” could be translated as “unrighteous people.”
- The term “unrighteousness” could be translated as “sin” or “evil thoughts and actions” or “wickedness.”
- If possible, it is best to translate this in a way that shows its relationship to “righteous, righteousness.”
- Ways to translate “upright” could include “acting rightly” or “one who acts rightly” or “following God’s laws” or “obedient to God” or “behaving in a way that is right.”
- The term “uprightness” could be translated as “moral purity” or “good moral conduct” or “rightness.”
- The phrase “the upright” could be translated as “people who are upright” or “upright people.”

(See also: [evil](#), [faithful](#), [good](#), [holy](#), [integrity](#), [just](#), [law](#), [law](#), [obey](#), [pure](#), [righteous](#), [sin](#), [unlawful](#))

## Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 19:16
- Job 1:8
- Psalms 37:30
- Psalms 49:14
- Psalms 107:42
- Ecclesiastes 12:10-11
- Isaiah 48:1-2
- Ezekiel 33:13
- Malachi 2:6
- Matthew 6:1
- Acts 3:13-14
- Romans 1:29-31
- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- Galatians 3:7
- Colossians 3:25
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 1 Peter 3:18-20
- 1 John 1:9
- 1 John 5:16-17

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a **righteous** man, living among wicked people.
- **4:8** God declared that Abram was **righteous** because he believed in God's promise.
- **17:2** David was a humble and **righteous** man who trusted and obeyed God.
- **23:1** Joseph, the man Mary was engaged to, was a **righteous** man.
- **50:10** Then the **righteous** ones will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God their Father.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H1368, H2555, H3072, H3474, H3476, H3477, H3483, H4334, H4339, H4749, H5228, H5229, H5324, H5765, H5766, H5767, H5977, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6665, H6666, H6968, H8535, H8537, H8549, H8552, G00930, G00940, G04580, G13410, G13420, G13430, G13440, G13450, G13460, G21180, G37160, G37170

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Referenced in: [Genesis 50 General Notes](#)

## save, saved, safe, salvation

### Definition:

The term “save” refers to keeping someone from experiencing something bad or harmful. To “be safe” means to be protected from harm or danger.

- In a physical sense, people can be saved or rescued from harm, danger, or death.
- In a spiritual sense, if a person has been “saved,” then God, through Jesus’ death on the cross, has forgiven him and rescued him from being punished in hell for his sin.
- People can save or rescue people from danger, but only God can save people from being punished eternally for their sins.

The term “salvation” refers to being saved or rescued from evil and danger.

- In the Bible, “salvation” usually refers to the spiritual and eternal deliverance granted by God to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus.
- The Bible also talks about God saving or delivering his people from their physical enemies.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “save” could include “deliver” or “keep from harm” or “take out of harm’s way” or “keep from dying.”
- In the expression “whoever would save his life,” the term “save” could also be translated as “preserve” or “protect.”
- The term “safe” could be translated as “protected from danger” or “in a place where nothing can harm.”
- The term “salvation” could also be translated using words related to “save” or “rescue,” as in “God’s saving people (from being punished for their sins)” or “God’s rescuing his people (from their enemies).”
- “God is my salvation” could be translated as “God is the one who saves me.”
- “You will draw water from the wells of salvation” could be translated as “You will be refreshed as with water because God is rescuing you.”

(See also: [cross](#), [deliver](#), [punish](#), [sin](#), [Savior](#))

### Bible References:

- Genesis 49:18
- Genesis 47:25-26
- Psalms 80:3
- Jeremiah 16:19-21
- Micah 6:3-5
- Luke 2:30
- Luke 8:36-37
- Acts 4:12
- Acts 28:28
- Acts 2:21
- Romans 1:16
- Romans 10:10
- Ephesians 6:17
- Philippians 1:28
- 1 Timothy 1:15-17
- Revelation 19:1-2

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:8** Moses tried to **save** his fellow Israelite.
- **11:2** God provided a way to **save** the firstborn son of anyone who believed in him.
- **12:5** Moses told the Israelites, "Stop being afraid! God will fight for you today and **save** you."
- **12:13** The Israelites sang many songs to celebrate their new freedom and to praise God because he **saved** them from the Egyptian army.
- **16:17** This pattern repeated many times: the Israelites would sin, God would punish them, they would repent, and God would send a deliverer to **save** them.
- **44:8** "You crucified Jesus, but God raised him to life again! You rejected him, but there is no other way to be **saved** except through the power of Jesus!"
- **47:11** The jailer trembled as he came to Paul and Silas and asked, "What must I do to be **saved**?" Paul answered, "Believe in Jesus, the Master, and you and your family will be **saved**."
- **49:12** Good works cannot **save** you.
- **49:13** God will **save** everyone who believes in Jesus and receives him as their Master. But he will not **save** anyone who does not believe in him.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0983, H2421, H2502, H3444, H3467, H3468, H4190, H4422, H4931, H5338, H6308, H6403, H7682, H7951, H7965, H8104, H8199, H8668, G08030, G08040, G08060, G12950, G15080, G49820, G49910, G49920, G51980

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Referenced in: [Genesis 41 General Notes](#)

## sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

### Definition:

The term “sin” refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God’s will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people don’t know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God’s will are called “sinful.”
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a “sinful nature,” a nature that that controls them and causes them to sin.
- A “sinner” is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word “sinners” was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who didn’t keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term “sinner” was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- To “sin” could also be translated as to “disobey God” or to “do wrong.”
- Depending on the context “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebellious against God.”
- Depending on the context the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people don’t see or know about.
- The term “sin” should be general, and different from the terms for “wickedness” and “evil.”

(See also: disobey, [evil](#), flesh, [tax collector](#))

### Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3
- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31

- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:4

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, "I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children."
- **13:12** God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- **20:1** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- **21:13** The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no **sin**. He would die to receive the punishment for other people's **sin**.
- **35:1** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinner**s who had gathered to hear him.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**."
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**."
- **48:8** We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- **49:17** Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

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**Referenced in:** [Genesis 3 General Notes](#); [Genesis 22 General Notes](#); [Genesis 25 General Notes](#); [Genesis 29 General Notes](#); [Genesis 31 General Notes](#); [Genesis 39 General Notes](#)

## test, tested, testing, testing in the fire

### Definition:

The term “test” refers to a difficult or painful experience that reveals a person’s strengths and weaknesses.

- God tests people, but he does not tempt them to sin. Satan, however, tempts people to sin.
- God sometimes uses tests to expose people’s sin. A test helps a person to turn away from sin and to draw closer to God.
- Gold and other metals are tested with fire to find out how pure and strong they are. This is a picture of how God uses painful circumstances to test his people.
- To “put to the test” can mean, “challenge something or someone to prove its value.”
- In the context of putting God to the test, it means to try to make him do a miracle for us, taking advantage of his mercy.
- Jesus told Satan that it is wrong to put God to the test. He is the almighty, holy God who is above everything and everyone.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term to “test” could also be translated as, to “challenge” or to “cause to experience difficulties” or to “prove.”
- Ways to translate “a test” could be, “a challenge” or “a difficult experience.”
- To “put to the test” could be translated as to “test” or to “set up a challenge” or to “force to prove oneself.”
- In the context of testing God, this could be translated as “trying to force God to prove his love.”
- In some contexts, when God is not the subject, the term “test” can mean “tempt.”

(See also: [tempt](#))

### Bible References:

- 1 John 4:1
- 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- Acts 15:10
- Genesis 22:1
- Isaiah 7:13
- James 1:12
- Lamentations 3:40-43
- Malachi 3:10
- Philippians 1:10
- Psalm 26:2

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5254, H5713, H5715, H5749, H6030, H8584, G12420, G12630, G13030, G13820, G19570, G31400, G31410, G31420, G31430, G39840, G43030, G44510, G48280, G60200

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Referenced in: [Genesis 44 General Notes](#)

## trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness

### Definition:

To “trust” something or someone is to believe that the thing or person is true or dependable. That belief is also called “trust.” A “trustworthy” person is one you can trust to do and say what is right and true, and therefore one who has the quality of “trustworthiness.”

- Trust is closely related to faith. If we trust someone, we have faith in that person to do what they promised to do.
- Having trust in someone also means depending on that person.
- To “trust in” Jesus means to believe that he is God, to believe that he died on the cross to pay for our sins, and to rely on him to save us.
- A “trustworthy saying” refers to something that is said that can be counted on to be true.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “trust” could include “believe” or “have faith” or “have confidence” or “depend on.”
- The phrase “put your trust in” is very similar in meaning to “trust in.”
- The term “trustworthy” could be translated as “dependable” or “reliable” or “can always be trusted.”

(See also: [believe](#), confidence, [faith](#), [faithful](#), true)

### Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:22-24
- 1 Timothy 4:9
- Hosea 10:12-13
- Isaiah 31:1-2
- Nehemiah 13:13
- Psalm 31:5
- Titus 3:8

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they **trusted** in God and believed that Moses was a prophet of God.
- **14:15** Joshua was a good leader because he **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **17:2** David was a humble and righteous man who **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **34:6** Then Jesus told a story about people who **trusted** in their own good deeds and despised other people.

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H0539, H0982, H1556, H2620, H2622, H3176, H4009, H4268, H7365, G16790, G38720, G39820, G40060, G41000, G42760

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Referenced in: [Genesis 18 General Notes](#)

# 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

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Referenced in: [Genesis 2 General Notes](#)

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