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Zechariah

Version 76

[en]

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes
Date: 2023-10-18
Version: 76
Published by: unfoldingWord

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Date: 2023-10-18
Version: 76
Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text
Date: 2023-10-18
Version: 76
Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Hebrew Bible
Date: 2022-10-11
Version: 2.1.30
Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Greek New Testament
Date: 2023-09-26
Version: 0.34
Published by: unfoldingWord

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Version: 76
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Zechariah

Introduction to Zechariah

Part 1: General Introduction

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What is the Book of Zechariah about?

Zechariah wrote to the people of Judah who returned from being exiled in Babylon. The people of Judah continued to sin, as their ancestors did before they went into exile. Zechariah called the people to repent and to obey Yahweh. And he called them to renew the covenant with Yahweh. Zechariah also prophesied about the Messiah and about Israel finally being victorious over her enemies. (See: **covenant (p.330)**)

How should the title of this book be translated?

This book traditionally has been titled "Zechariah" or "The Book of Zechariah." Translators may decide to call it the "The Book About Zechariah" or "The Sayings of Zechariah." (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

Who wrote the Book of Zechariah?

The prophet Zechariah wrote this book between 520 and 518 B.C.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Did Zechariah prophesy before Ezra, Nehemiah, and Haggai?

Zechariah prophesied before the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. He prophesied at the same time as Haggai and continued after Haggai.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What is the meaning of the term "Israel"?

The name "Israel" is used in many different ways in the Bible. Jacob was a son of Isaac. God changed Jacob's name to Israel. The descendants of Jacob became a nation also called Israel. Eventually, the nation of Israel split into two kingdoms. The northern kingdom was named Israel. The southern kingdom was named Judah. Zechariah uses the term "Israel" to refer to both the nation of Israel and the northern kingdom of Israel.

What imagery does Zechariah use in reference to the Messiah?

Zechariah presented the Messiah as both a king and a shepherd. Zechariah said that the Messiah would come and deliver his people. However, the Messiah would also be pierced (12:10) and struck with the sword (13:7). (See: **Christ, Messiah (p.328)**)

What does the phrase "that day" mean?

Zechariah often spoke of the last days by using the phrase "that day" or "in that day." When referring to a future "day," the translator should be aware that the author may be speaking about the last days. (See: **last day, last days, latter days (p.337)**)

Zechariah 1

Zechariah 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written in prose mainly with imagery used throughout to portray Zechariah's vision given by the Lord.

Some translations prefer to set apart quotations. The ULT and many other English translations set lines 1:3-6, 14-17, which are extended quotations, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Special concepts in this chapter

Visions

This book contains a number of visions given to Zechariah, so the images are not ones Zechariah actually saw but were given to him in a vision or dream. It is important for each of these visions to keep their meanings and not be interpreted to mean any specific thing.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Date

Zechariah uses two separate dates in this first chapter. When compared to the book of Haggai, Zechariah's prophecy was proclaimed just a few weeks after Haggai. However, they prophesied in two different places: Haggai was in Jerusalem and Zechariah was somewhere outside of Jerusalem. (See: **prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess (p.340)**)

Zechariah 1:1

In the eighth month

This is the eighth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the last part of October and the first part of November on Western calendars. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-hebrewmonths]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-ordinal]]) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.267)**)

the second year of Darius' reign

"the second year of the reign of Darius the king" or "the second year since Darius became king" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.299)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.299)**)

the word of Yahweh came

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave a message" or "Yawheh spoke this message" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

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.

Berechiah & Iddo

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

Zechariah 1:2

exceedingly angry with your fathers

Alternate translation: "very angry with your forefathers"

Zechariah 1:3

Turn to me & and I will return to you

Yahweh speaks of having a change of attitude toward another person as if it were turning or returning. The people turning to Yahweh means that they will again be devoted to him and worship him, while Yahweh returning to the people means that he will again bless them and help them. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh of hosts has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh of hosts, have declared" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**)

Zechariah 1:4

Turn from your evil ways and wicked practices

No longer doing certain actions is spoken of as if it were turning away from those actions. The phrases "evil ways" and "wicked practices" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "Stop doing all of your wicked actions" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-doublet]]) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated a similar phrase in Zechariah 1:3. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**)

Zechariah 1:5

Your fathers, where are they? Where are the prophets, are they here forever?

These two rhetorical questions emphasize that both their ancestors and the prophets who proclaimed Yahweh's message to their ancestors have died. The questions can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Neither your fathers nor the prophets are here because they have all died." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**)

Zechariah 1:6

But my words and my decrees that I commanded my servants the prophets, have they not overtaken your fathers?

This rhetorical question emphasizes the positive answer that it anticipates. Yahweh speaks of the people's ancestors experiencing the consequences of not obeying Yahweh's commands as if his words and decrees were a person who had chased after and overtaken them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "But my words and my decrees that I commanded my servants the prophets have overtaken your fathers." or "But your fathers have suffered the consequences for disobeying my words and my decrees that I commanded my servants the prophets to tell them." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 312)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**)

my words and my decrees

These phrases are both ways to refer to Yahweh's message that the prophets had declared to their ancestors. (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

our ways and actions

The words "ways" and "actions" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "our behavior" (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

Zechariah 1:7

the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat

"Shebat" is the eleventh month of the Hebrew calendar. The twenty-fourth day is near the middle of February on Western calendars. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-hebrewmonths]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-ordinal]] and **How to Translate Names (p.270)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.267)**)

in the second year of Darius' reign

"in the second year of the reign of Darius the king" or "in the second year since Darius became king." See how you translated this in Zechariah 1:1. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.299)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.299)**)

the word of Yahweh came

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated this in Zechariah 1:1. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave a message" or "Yawheh spoke this message" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Berechiah & Iddo

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

Zechariah 1:8

look

The word "look" here shows that Zechariah was surprised by what he saw.

myrtle trees

a kind of small tree with colorful flowers (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Zechariah 1:9

I said, "What are these things, Lord?" Then the angel who talked with me

Here Zechariah speaks to an unidentified angel. This is not the same as the "man" who was "riding on a red horse."

What are these things, Lord?

"What are these things, sir?" Here the word "Lord" is a form of polite address.

Zechariah 1:10

the man who stood among the myrtle trees

These phrases refer to the man who "was riding on a red horse" in Zechariah 1:8. This could mean: (1) the man dismounted his horse and stood or (2) the word "stood" is an idiom that means he was located in that position. Alternate translation: "the man who was among the myrtle trees" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

These are those

The word "these" refers to the red, reddish-brown, and white horses that were behind the man who was among the myrtle trees. This could mean: (1) it is implicit that there were other men who were riding the horses, and that these phrases refer to the riders or (2) the horses are personified as being able to speak like people. (See: [[rc:///*ta/ man/translate/figs-explicit]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-personification]]) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

to roam throughout the earth

It is implicit that Yahweh sent these out to walk about in order to patrol the earth. This does not suggest that they were wandering or lost. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 1:11

the angel of Yahweh who stood among the myrtle trees

This phrase refers to the man who "was riding on a red horse" in Zechariah 1:8. This could mean: (1) the man dismounted his horse and stood or (2) the word "stood" is an idiom that means he was located in that position. Alternate translation: "the angel of Yahweh who was among the myrtle trees" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p. 278)**)

They answered & they said

The word "they" refers to the red, reddish-brown, and white horses that were behind the man who was among the myrtle trees. This could mean: (1) it is implicit that there were other men who were riding the horses, and that these phrases refer to the riders or (2) the horses are personified as being able to speak like people. (See: [[rc:///ta/ man/translate/figs-explicit]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-personification]]) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

all the earth sits still and is at rest

There being peace and quiet in the world is spoken of as if the earth were a person who is still and resting. This could mean: (1) this is a good thing that means that there is peace between nations or (2) this is a bad thing that means that there is no war because nations are helpless to fight against a stronger nation that has subdued them. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 1:12

to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah

Here the words "Jerusalem" and "cities" refer to the people who live in those cities. Alternate translation: "to the people of Jerusalem and to the people of the cities of Judah" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 1:13

with good words, words of comfort

Alternate translation: "with good, comforting words"

Zechariah 1:14

I have been jealous for Jerusalem

Here the word "jealous" refers to Yahweh's strong desire to protect his people.

Zechariah 1:15

I am very angry with the nations that are at ease

The phrase "at ease" means that the people thought that they lived in peace and security. Alternate translation: "I am very angry with the nations that enjoy peace and security" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

I was only a little angry with them

Alternate translation: "I was only a little angry with the people of Jerusalem"

they made the disaster worse

"the nations that are at ease made the disaster worse." This means that although Yahweh used these nations to punish Jerusalem, they did more harm to Jerusalem than what Yahweh had intended for them to do. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 1:16

I have returned to Jerusalem with mercies

This could mean: (1) although Yahweh had left Jerusalem when the people had gone into exile, he will now return to Jerusalem when they have come back from exile or (2) Yahweh speaks of having a change of attitude towards the people of Jerusalem and again blessing them and helping them as if he were returning to the city. Alternate translation: "I will once again show mercy towards Jerusalem" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

My house will be built within her

The word "her" refers to Jerusalem, and the word "house" is a metonym for the temple. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "The people will build my temple in Jerusalem" (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive]]) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem

This refers to builders using their instruments to rebuild the city. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "builders will stretch out their measuring lines over Jerusalem" or "the people will rebuild Jerusalem" (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive]]) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 1:17

Again call out, saying

The angel who was speaking to Zechariah says these words.

My cities will once again overflow with goodness

The phrase "my cities" refers to the cities of Judah and represents the people who live in those cities. Yahweh speaks of the inhabitants of those cities again being prosperous as if goodness were a liquid that overflowed the cities, which are its containers. Alternate translation: "My cities will once again be prosperous" or "The people in the cities of Judah will once again be prosperous" (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]]) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Yahweh will again comfort Zion

Here the word "Zion" refers to the people who live in the city. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will again comfort the people in Zion" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 1:18

I lifted up my eyes

The word "eyes" represents the person who looks. Alternate translation: "I looked up" (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

Zechariah 1:19

These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem

Horns were often used as a symbol for military power. Here they symbolize the powerful nations that had conquered the kingdoms of Israel. The words "Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem" represent the people who lived in those places. Alternate translation: "These horns represent the nations that have scattered the people of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem" (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/writing-symlanguage]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy]]) (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**)

Zechariah 1:20

four craftsmen

Alternate translation: "blacksmiths" or "metalworkers"

Zechariah 1:21

these people

This refers to the four craftsmen.

These are the horns that scattered Judah

The horns symbolize the powerful nations that had conquered the kingdoms of Israel. The word "Judah" represents the people who lived in Judah. See how you translated a similar phrase in Zechariah 1:19. Alternate translation: "These horns represent the nations that scattered the people of Judah" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/writing-symlanguage]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy]]) (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**)

so that no man would lift up his head

The nations oppressing the people of Judah severely is spoken of as if no person in Judah was able to raise his head. Alternate translation: "and caused them to suffer greatly" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

to cast down the horns of the nations that lifted up a horn against the land of Judah

Yahweh speaks of the nations using their military power to conquer Judah as if the nations had lifted up their horns. He speaks of these four craftsmen destroying the military power of these nations as if the craftsmen threw those horns to the ground. Alternate translation: "to destroy the power of the nations who used their military might against the land of Judah" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

to cast down the horns of the nations that lifted up a horn

Alternate translation: "to cast down the horns that the nations had lifted up"

Zechariah 2

Zechariah 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is introduced in prose with imagery used in the rest of the chapter to portray Zechariah's third vision about measuring lines given by the Lord.

Some translations prefer to set apart quotations. The ULT and many other English translations set the lines of 2:4-13, which are extended quotations, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Special concepts in this chapter

Visions

This book contains a number of visions given to Zechariah so the images are not ones Zechariah actually saw but were given to him in a vision or dream. It is important for each of these visions to keep their meanings and not be interpreted to mean any specific thing. Please be careful to translate each of the terms in your language.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

"This is Yahweh's declaration"

This phrase is used several times in this chapter. The UST often translates this as "Yahweh says."

Zechariah 2:1

I lifted up my eyes

The word "eyes" represents the person who looks. Alternate translation: "I looked up" (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

measuring line

a rope with a certain length that a person would use to measure buildings or large sections of land

Zechariah 2:2

So he said to me

Alternate translation: "So the man with the measuring line said to me"

Zechariah 2:3

another angel went out to meet him

This angel is a new participant who has not appeared before this verse. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.280)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.280)**)

Zechariah 2:4

The second angel said to him

Alternate translation: "The second angel said to the angel who had talked with me"

Jerusalem will sit in the open country & beasts within her

The phrase "will sit in the open country" translates a word that refers to a city that has no walls. There will be so many inhabitants in the city that it will be too large to have walls around it. Alternate translation: "Jerusalem will not have walls around it … beasts within the city" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 2:5

I & will become for her a wall of fire around her

People built walls around their cities for protection. Here Yahweh speaks of protecting Jerusalem as if he himself were a wall of fire around the city. Alternate translation: "I … will protect the city, like a wall of fire around it" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in Zechariah 1:4. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**)

Zechariah 2:6

Up! Up!

These two words express urgency and add emphasis to the following command. The words can be translated with an expression that communicates urgency in your language. Alternate translation: "Run! Run!" or "Hurry! Hurry!" (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

Zechariah 2:7

you who live with the daughter of Babylon

The phrase "daughter of Babylon" refers to the city of Babylon. Yahweh speaks of the city as if it were a daughter. Alternate translation: "you who live in Babylon" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 2:8

General Information:

General Information:

Zechariah begins to speak and tells how Yahweh is sending him to judge the nations who have plundered Jerusalem.

for whoever touches you

The word "touches" refers to a touch meant to harm. Alternate translation: "for whoever harms you" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 2:9

I myself will shake my hand over them

Raising one's hand against another person is a gesture of hostility. Here it is a symbolic action that means that God will attack those who harm Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "I myself will fight against them" or "I myself will attack them" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.318)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.318)**)

they will be plunder for their slaves

The word "plunder" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "their slaves will plunder them"

Zechariah 2:10

Sing for joy, daughter of Zion

"Zion" is the same as "Jerusalem." The prophet speaks of the city as if it is a daughter. This could mean: (1) Zechariah personifies the city as a person who can sing. Alternate translation: "Sing for joy, Zion" or (2) the phrase "daughter of Zion" is a metonym for the people who live in the city. Alternate translation: "Sing for joy, people of Zion" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-personification]] and **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in Zechariah 1:4. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**)

Zechariah 2:11

great nations will join themselves to Yahweh

Zechariah speaks of the people of great nations becoming Yahweh's people and worshiping him as if they were joining themselves to Yahweh. Alternate translation: "the people of great nations will become the people of Yahweh" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy]]) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

in that day

Alternate translation: "at that time"

I will encamp in the midst of you

Alternate translation: "I will live among you"

Zechariah 2:12

Yahweh will inherit Judah as his rightful possession

Zechariah speaks of Yahweh claiming Judah as his own land as if Judah were something that Yahweh inherits as a permanent possession. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will claim Judah as his rightful possession" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 2:13

all flesh

Here the word "flesh" represents all humanity. Alternate translation: "all people" (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

he has been roused

Zechariah speaks of Yahweh beginning to act as if someone had roused Yahweh from inactivity. It is implied that this action refers to his returning to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "he is coming" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]]) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

from out of his holy place

Here "his holy place" refers to heaven, and not to the temple in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "from his holy place in heaven" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 3

Zechariah 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is introduced in prose and shares the fourth vision, which is the priest in dirty clothes. (See: **priest, priesthood (p.338)**)

Some translations prefer to set apart quotations. The ULT and many other English translations set the lines of 3:7-9, which is an extended quotation, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Difficult concepts in this chapter

Visions

It is important for each of these visions to keep their meanings and not be interpreted to mean any specific thing.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The high priest

This chapter seems to refer to a particular person, Joshua the high priest. However, little is known about him. (See: **high priest, chief priests (p.334)**)

Zechariah 3:1

General Information:

General Information:

Yahweh shows Zechariah a vision of Joshua the priest.

Satan was standing at his right hand to accuse him of sin

Alternate translation: "Satan was standing at Joshua's right side, ready to accuse Joshua of sin"

Zechariah 3:2

Is this not a brand pulled from the fire?

The angel of Yahweh asks this rhetorical question to emphasize the positive answer that it anticipates. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "Joshua is a brand pulled from the fire." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**)

a brand pulled from the fire

A brand is a burning piece of wood. The angel of Yahweh speaks of Joshua being rescued from captivity in Babylon as if he were a piece of wood that someone pulls from a fire before the wood is completely burned. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 3:3

Joshua was dressed in filthy garments

In this vision "filthy garments" are symbolic of sinfulness. (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**)

Zechariah 3:4

those who stood before him

The word "him" refers to the angel. The phrase refers to other angels who were present.

Look

Alternate translation: "Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important"

I have caused your iniquity to pass from you

Since Joshua's garments were symbolic of his sinfulness, by removing his garments, the angel removed Joshua's iniquity. Causing iniquity to pass from him is an idiom that means that he had removed Joshua's iniquity. Alternate translation: "I have removed your iniquity from you" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

dress you in fine clothing

Here fine clothing symbolizes righteousness. (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**)

Zechariah 3:5

Let them put

Here the word "them" refers to the other angels who were present.

turban

a long piece of cloth wrapped around the head

Zechariah 3:6

solemnly commanded Joshua

Alternate translation: "commanded Joshua in a very serious manner"

Zechariah 3:7

If you will walk in my ways, and if you will keep my commandments

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Yahweh speaks of obeying him as if the person were walking along Yahweh's paths. Alternate translation: "If you will obey me and keep my commandments" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/ translate/figs-parallelism]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]]) (See: **Parallelism (p.301)**)

you will govern my house and guard my courts

Here the word "house" is a metonym for the temple, while the word "courts" refers to the courtyards around the temple. Together the phrases mean that Joshua will have authority over the whole temple complex. Alternate translation: "you will have authority over my temple and its courtyards" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

to go and come among these who stand before me

The phrase "to go and come among" is an idiom that means that Joshua will be a part of this group and have the same privilege as they do of access to Yahweh. Alternate translation: "to come before me as these who stand here do" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-idiom]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]]) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Zechariah 3:8

your companions who live with you

This phrase refers to other priests who would serve in the temple under the leadership of Joshua. Alternate translation: "the other priests who live with you" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

For these men are a sign

Here the word "sign" refers to something that communicates a special meaning to those who see it. Yahweh speaks of the priests serving in the temple as being this sign that shows that Yahweh will bring his servant.

my servant the Branch

The word "Branch" refers to a messianic figure that would serve as king over Yahweh's people. Yahweh speaks of this person as if he were a branch that grows out from a tree. Since the word "Branch" is a title, it should be translated with an equivalent word in your language. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 3:9

the stone that I have set before Joshua

Here the word "stone" likely refers to a precious stone or jewel.

There are seven eyes on this single stone

The sides or facets of the stone that reflect light are spoken of as if they are eyes. Alternate translation: "There are seven sides on this single stone" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

engrave

Alternate translation: "carve"

I will remove the sin from this land in one day

Here the word "land" represents the people who live in the land. Alternate translation: "I will remove the sin of the people from this land in one day" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 3:10

each man will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree

Both the "vine" and the "fig tree" are symbols of prosperity. This phrase describes actions in which people live prosperously and in peace. Alternate translation: "because they will be at peace, each person will invite his neighbor to come and sit under his vine and his fig tree" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 4

Zechariah 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written mainly in prose about the fifth vision, which is about the golden lampstand olive trees.

Special concepts in this chapter

Visions

This chapter shows a conversation between Zechariah and the angel of Yahweh. It is important for each of these visions to keep their meanings and not be interpreted to mean any specific thing.

Zechariah 4:1

roused me like a man roused from his sleep

Zechariah compares the way in which the angel interrupted his being in deep thought with the way someone would awaken another person from sleep. Alternate translation: "caused me to become more alert like a man awakened from his sleep" (See: **Simile (p.315)**) (See: **Simile (p.315)**)

Zechariah 4:2

lamp wicks

the parts of a lamp that are lit on fire

Zechariah 4:3

the left side

The ellipsis in this phrase may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "the left side of the bowl" (See: **Ellipsis (p.259)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.259)**)

Zechariah 4:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Zechariah 4:5

Do you not know what these things mean?

The angel asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that Zechariah should have known what these things mean. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you know what these things mean." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**)

Zechariah 4:6

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

The angel who speaks with Zechariah continues to explain the vision.

Not by might nor by power

Since there is no verb in this phrase, it may be necessary in your language to supply one. Alternate translation: "You will not succeed by might nor by power" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Not by might nor by power

This could mean: (1) that the words "might" and "power" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the greatness of Zerubbabel's strength or (2) that the word "might" refers to military strength and the word "power" refers to Zerubbabel's physical ability. Alternate translation: "Certainly not by your own strength" or "Not by military strength nor by your own power" (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

Zechariah 4:7

What are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain

This is a metaphor in which Yahweh speaks of the obstacles that Zerubbabel will face as if they were a large mountain. He asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that these obstacles pose no threat to Zerubbabel's success. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are nothing, great mountain! Zerubbabel will cause you to become a plain" or "Although obstacles may appear as large as mountains, Zerubbabel will overcome them as easily as one walks upon level ground" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-rquestion]]) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

he will bring out the top stone

The top stone is the last stone placed when building something. This refers to the top stone of the temple. Alternate translation: "he will bring out the top stone of the temple" or "he will complete the construction of the temple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

to shouts of 'Grace! Grace to it!'

This could mean: (1) the word "grace" refers to God's grace and the people are requesting that God bless the completed temple. Alternate translation: "while people shout, 'May God bless it! May God bless it!'" or (2) the word "grace" refers to beauty and the people are declaring how beautiful the completed temple is. Alternate translation: "while people shout, 'Beautiful! It is beautiful!'" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 4:8

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

The angel who speaks with Zechariah continues to explain the vision.

The word of Yahweh came to me, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave a message to me. He said" or "Yahweh spoke this message to me" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Zechariah 4:9

The hands of Zerubbabel have laid & his hands will bring it to completion

Here the word "hands" represents Zerubbabel. Alternate translation: "Zerubbabel has laid … he will bring it to completion" (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

the foundation of this house

The word "house" represents the temple. Alternate translation: "the foundation of this temple" (See: **Metonymy (p. 294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 4:10

Who has despised the day of small things? These people will rejoice

Zechariah uses this rhetorical question to speak specifically about those who have "despised the day of small things." If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "Those who have despised the day of small things will rejoice" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**)

the day of small things

"the time of small things." This phrase refers to the time when the people were building the temple and appeared to be making little progress. Alternate translation: "the time when progress was slow" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

plumb stone

This refers to an instrument made with a heavy object attached to the end of a string that builders used to ensure that the walls of buildings were straight.

These seven lamps

This phrase refers to the lamps that Zechariah saw in Zechariah 4:2-3.

These seven lamps are the eyes of Yahweh that roam over the whole earth

The seven lamps symbolize the eyes of Yahweh, but they are not literally the eyes of Yahweh. The angel speaks of Yahweh seeing everything that happens on the earth as if his eyes roamed over the whole earth. Alternate translation: "These seven lamps represent the eyes of Yahweh, who sees everything that happens on the earth" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/writing-symlanguage]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]]) (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**)

Zechariah 4:11

these two olive trees

This refers to the olive trees that Zechariah saw in Zechariah 4:2-3.

Zechariah 4:12

What are these two olive branches

Here Zechariah changes his question and asks about branches that are connected to the two olive trees.

the two gold pipes

These pipes were not mentioned in the previous description of Zechariah's vision. It is possible that they are connected to the bowl on top of the lampstand and provide the oil with which the lampstand burns.

golden oil

Here "golden" refers to the color of the oil and does not mean that the oil was made of gold.

Zechariah 4:13

Do you not know what these are?

The angel asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that Zechariah should have known what these things mean. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you know what these are." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**)

Zechariah 4:14

These are the sons of fresh olive oil

The branches symbolize these people, but they are not literally the people. Alternate translation: "These two branches represent the sons of fresh olive oil" (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Language (p. 320)**)

the sons of fresh olive oil

This idiom means that these men have been anointed with fresh olive oil. A person who is anointed is one whom Yahweh has chosen or appointed for a special duty. Alternate translation: "the anointed men" or "the men whom Yahweh has appointed" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

who stand before the Lord

The idiom "stand before" means to be in a person's presence and to serve him. Alternate translation: "who serve the Lord" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Zechariah 5

Zechariah 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter contains the next two visions. One is about a flying scroll and one is about the basket filled with iniquity. (See: **iniquity (p.336)**)

Zechariah 5:1

Then I turned

The word "I" refers to Zechariah.

lifted my eyes

The word "eyes" represents the person who looks. Alternate translation: "looked up" (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

behold

The word "behold" here shows that Zechariah was surprised by what he saw.

Zechariah 5:2

twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide

A cubit is 46 centimeters. Alternate translation: "9.2 meters long and 4.6 meters wide" (See: **Biblical Distance (p. 244)**) (See: **Biblical Distance (p.244)**)

Zechariah 5:3

This is the curse

The word "this" refers to the scroll. The scroll is a metonym for what is written on the scroll. Alternate translation: "On this scroll is the curse" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

that goes out over the surface of the whole land

The phrase "the surface of the whole land" refers to every place within the land. It is implied that the curse will apply to every person who lives in the land. Alternate translation: "that is upon every person within the whole land" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-idiom]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]]) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

every thief will be cut off & everyone who swears a false oath will be cut off

Yahweh removing these people from the land is spoken of as if he were cutting them off, like a person would cut a branch from a tree. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will cut off every thief … Yahweh will cut off everyone who swears a false oath" or "Yahweh will remove every thief from the land … Yahweh will remove from the land everyone who swears a false oath" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive]]) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

what it says on the one side & what it says on the other side

Alternate translation: "what the scroll says on one side … what the scroll says on the other side"

Zechariah 5:4

I will send it out

Alternate translation: "I will send out the curse"

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in
Zechariah 1:3. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh of hosts has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh of hosts,
have declared" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**)

consume its timber and stones

The curse destroying the houses of the thief and of the one who swears falsely is spoken of as if the curse would
consume the building materials that people had used to build the houses. Alternate translation: "destroy its wood
and stones" or "completely destroy it" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-
synecdoche]]) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 5:5

Raise your eyes

The word "eyes" represents the person who looks. Alternate translation: "Look up" (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

Zechariah 5:6

This is a basket containing an ephah that is coming

An "ephah" is a unit of measurement for dry materials and is equal to 22 liters. Here the word is a metonym for the container that would hold an ephah of dry material. Alternate translation: "This is a measuring basket that is coming" or "This is a large container that is coming" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-bvolume]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy]]) (See: **Biblical Volume (p.247)**)

This is their iniquity in the whole land

The basket symbolizes the people's iniquity, but it is not literally their iniquity. Alternate translation: "This basket represents the iniquity of the people throughout the whole land" (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**)

Zechariah 5:7

a lead covering was lifted off the basket

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: someone lifted a lead covering off the basket" (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

there was a woman under it sitting in it

Alternate translation: "there was a woman under the lead covering sitting in the basket"

Zechariah 5:8

This is Wickedness

The woman represents wickedness. Alternate translation: "This woman represents wickedness" (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**)

He threw her & he threw the lead cover

"He thrust her … he forced the lead cover." The word "threw" indicates the force with which the angel did these things. He did not literally throw the woman or the cover.

Zechariah 5:9

I lifted my eyes

Here the word "eyes" represents the person who sees. Alternate translation: "I looked up" (See: **Synecdoche (p. 322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

wind was in their wings

This idiom means that they were flying. Alternate translation: "they were flying" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p. 278)**)

they had wings like a stork's wings

A stork is a type of large bird that has a wingspan of two to four meters. Zechariah compares the size of the women's wings with the size of the stork's wings.

They lifted up the basket between earth and heaven

The words "earth" and "heaven" form a merism that refer to the sky. It is implicit that the two women flew away with the basket. Alternate translation: "They lifted the basket up into the sky and flew away" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-merism]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]]) (See: **Merism (p.286)**)

Zechariah 5:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Zechariah 5:11

To build a temple in the land of Shinar for it

The ellipsis can be supplied from the previous verse. Alternate translation: "They are taking the basket to the land of Shinar to build a temple for it" (See: **Ellipsis (p.259)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.259)**)

the basket will be set there

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "they will set the basket there" (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

on its prepared base

The words "prepared base" refer to a pedestal or other kind of fixture upon which they will place the basket.

Zechariah 6

Zechariah 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written mainly in prose and tells the last vision of the four chariots in the first part of the chapter.

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 poetic song in 6:12-13.

Special concepts in this chapter

Crown

The second part of the chapter is about a crown made for the high priest. This is an actual person, but the meaning of the word "branch" should be translated as his name. (See: **high priest, chief priests (p.334)**)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Meaning of the visions

The visions are stated and even when the prophet asked for an explanation, their true meaning is often obscure. This uncertainty should remain in your translation. (See: **prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess (p.340)**)

Zechariah 6:1

lifted my eyes

Here the word "eyes" represents the person who sees. Alternate translation: "looked up" (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

between two mountains; and the two mountains were made of bronze

Since the second phrase describes the mountains in the first phrase, the two phrases may be combined. Alternate translation: "between two bronze mountains"

Zechariah 6:2

The first chariot had red horses

It is implicit that the horses were pulling the chariots. Alternate translation: "The first chariot had red horses pulling it" or "Red horses were pulling the first chariot" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 6:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Zechariah 6:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Zechariah 6:5

These are the four winds of heaven

The chariots symbolize the four winds of heaven, but they are not literally the four winds. Alternate translation: "These chariots represent the four winds of heaven" (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**)

the four winds of heaven

This phrase refers to the four directions from which the wind blows: north, east, south, and west. However, some modern versions interpret this Hebrew expression to mean "four spirits."

standing before the Lord of all the earth

The idiom to "stand before" means to be in a person's presence and to serve him. See how you translated this in Zechariah 4:14. Alternate translation: "serving the Lord of all the earth" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Zechariah 6:6

the white horses are going out to the west country

Some modern versions interpret this Hebrew phrase to mean "the white horses are going out after them," that is, following the black horses to the north country.

the white horses are & the spotted gray horses are

Here the horses represent the chariots that they pull. Alternate translation: "the chariot with the white horses is … the chariot with the spotted gray horses is" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 6:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Zechariah 6:8

he called out to me

Alternate translation: "the angel called out to me"

Look at the ones

Alternate translation: "Look at the black horses"

they will appease my spirit concerning the north country

The words "my spirit" refer to Yahweh, so many translations change this to read "Yahweh's spirit." This could mean:
(1) the word "spirit" represents Yahweh's emotions and appeasing his spirit means that the chariots will cause
Yahweh no longer to be angry with the north country Alternate translation: "they will calm my anger concerning
the north country" or (2) the word "spirit" represents Yahweh's presence and the chariots will cause the Jews who
live in the north land to experience Yahweh's blessings. Alternate translation: "they will cause my spirit to rest in the
north country" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 6:9

the word of Yahweh came to me, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave a message to me. He said" or "Yahweh spoke this message to me" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Zechariah 6:10

Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

this same day

Alternate translation: "today"

Zechariah 6:11

Jehozadak

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

take the silver and gold, make a crown

Alternate translation: "make a crown with the silver and gold"

Zechariah 6:12

Speak to him and say

Alternate translation: "Speak to Joshua and say"

his name is Branch

The word "Branch" refers to a messianic figure that would serve as king over Yahweh's people. Yahweh speaks of this person as if he were a branch that grows out from a tree. Since the word "Branch" is a title, it should be translated with an equivalent word in your language. See how you translated this name in Zechariah 3:8. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

He will grow up where he is

The phrase "grow up" refers to the growth of a plant, and so continues the metaphor of this person as a "Branch." This likely refers to this person appearing or coming into power as the one who would supervise the rebuilding of the temple. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 6:13

He will be a priest on his throne

This could mean: (1) the "Branch" will be both priest and king or (2) the "Branch" will be king, and another person will be a priest who will share the royal power. Alternate translation: "There will be a priest upon his throne"

he will bear a counsel of peace between the two

The words "the two" refer to the roles of king and priest. The meaning of this phrase depends upon the meaning of the previous phrase. This could mean: (1) the "Branch" will faithfully carry out his duties as both priest and king and not forsake one in order to fulfill the other or (2) the "Branch" who serves as king and the other person who serves as a priest will each carry out their duties faithfully and they will work together in peace.

Zechariah 6:14

The crown will given

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "You will give the crown" (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah & Hen

These are the names of men. See how you translated these in Zechariah 6:10. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 270)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

for Hen son of Zephaniah as a memorial

Some modern versions interpret this phrase as "as a memorial to the generosity of the son of Zephaniah" or "as a memorial to the one who is gracious, the son of Zephaniah." Also, some modern versions interpret the name "Hen" as meaning the name "Josiah."

Zechariah 6:15

those who are far off

This refers to the Israelites who remain in Babylon. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)
(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

so you will know

The word "you" is plural and refers to the people of Israel. (See: **Forms of You (p.266)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.266)**)

truly listen to the voice of Yahweh your God

Here to "listen" means to obey and the word "voice" represents the words that Yahweh speaks. Alternate
translation: "truly obey what Yahweh your God says" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 7

Zechariah 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter starts about two years after the previous chapter and is written in prose.

Some translations prefer to set apart quotations. The ULT and many other English translations set the lines of 7:4-14, which is an extended quotation, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Special concepts in this chapter

Fasting

This chapter discusses fasting. People were asking the same questions as those from previous generations. The Israelites were asking these same questions before they were exiled from their land.

Zechariah 7:1

on the fourth day

"on day 4" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.299)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.299)**)

Kislev (which was the ninth month)

"Kislev" is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. The fourth day of Kislev is near the end of November on Western calendars. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-hebrewmonths]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-names]]) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.267)**)

the word of Yahweh came to Zechariah

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave a message to Zechariah" or "Yahweh spoke this message to Zechariah" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Zechariah 7:2

Sharezer and Regem-Melek

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

beg

Here the word "beg" means to plead or ask urgently.

before the face of Yahweh

Here "face" is a metonym for Yahweh's presence. Alternate translation: "in the presence of Yahweh" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 7:3

They spoke & they said

The word "they" refers to Sharezer and Regem Melek.

Should I mourn in the fifth month

"Should I mourn in month 5." The assumed knowledge is that the Jewish people fasted during a part of the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar because this is when the Babylonians destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. The fifth month is during the last part of July and the first part of August on Western calendars. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-ordinal]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]] and **Hebrew Months (p.267)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.299)**)

by means of a fast

Alternate translation: "by fasting"

Zechariah 7:4

the word of Yahweh of hosts came to me, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh of hosts gave me a message. He said" or "Yahweh of hosts spoke this message to me" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Zechariah 7:5

in the fifth and in the seventh month

"in months 5 and 7" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.299)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.299)**)

in the fifth

The word "month" can be supplied in translation. Alternate translation: "in the fifth month" (See: **Ellipsis (p.259)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.259)**)

in the seventh month

The assumed knowledge is that the Jews mourned during a part of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar because in this month the remaining Jews in Jerusalem fled to Egypt after the murder of Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon appointed as governor over Judah. The seventh month is during the last part of September and the first part of October on Western calendars. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-hebrewmonths]]) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

for these seventy years

The assumed knowledge is that the people of Israel had been slaves in Babylon for 70 years. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-numbers]]) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

were you truly fasting for me?

This question is asked to make the people think about what their real reason for fasting had been. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "you were not really fasting for me." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**)

Zechariah 7:6

When you ate and drank

This could mean: (1) when they feasted and drank when celebrating religious festivals or (2) when they ate and drank whenever they were not fasting.

did you not eat and drink for yourselves?

This question is used to make the people think about whether they were honoring Yahweh when they ate and drank. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "it was for yourselves that you ate and drank." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**)

Zechariah 7:7

Were these not the same words & to the west?

Yahweh uses a question to scold the people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "These are the same words … to the west." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.312)**)

by the mouth of the former prophets

Here "mouth" is a metonym for the words spoken by the mouth. Alternate translation: "by the words of the former prophets" or "through the former prophets" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

you still inhabited Jerusalem

Alternate translation: "you still lived in Jerusalem"

foothills

hills at the base of a mountain or mountain range

Zechariah 7:8

The word of Yahweh came to Zechariah, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave a message to Zechariah. He said" or "Yahweh spoke this message to Zechariah" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Zechariah 7:9

Judge with true justice, covenant faithfulness, and mercy

The abstract nouns "justice," "faithfulness," and "mercy" can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "When you judge, be just, faithful to the covenant, and merciful" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 236)**)

Let each man do this

The word "this" refers to how a person should judge.

Zechariah 7:10

widow

a woman whose husband has died

orphan

a child whose parents have died

foreigner

someone who travels from his own land to a different land

let none of you plot any harm against another in your heart

Here "heart" represents the thoughts of a person. Alternate translation: "you must not make plans to do evil" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 7:11

set their shoulders stubbornly

This is an image of an ox refusing to allow its owner to put a yoke on its shoulders. This metaphor represents the people being stubborn. Alternate translation: "became stubborn" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

They stopped up their ears so they would not hear

This is an image of people putting something into their ears so they would not hear the message from Yahweh. This metaphor represents the people not being willing to hear and obey. Alternate translation: "They refused to listen" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 7:12

They made their hearts as hard as rock so they would not hear the law or the words of Yahweh of hosts

The people refusing to hear and obey Yahweh are compared to their being as unyielding as rock. Here the heart represents the will of a person. Alternate translation: "They stubbornly refused to hear the law or the words of Yahweh of hosts" (See: **Simile (p.315)**) (See: **Simile (p.315)**)

in earlier times

Alternate translation: "in the past"

by the mouth of the prophets

Here the "mouth of the prophets" is a metonym for the words that the prophets speak. Alternate translation: "through the words of the prophets" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 7:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Zechariah 7:14

I will scatter them with a whirlwind

Yahweh speaks of how he will scatter the people as if a whirlwind were scattering everything in its path. Alternate translation: "I will scatter them as a whirlwind scatters things" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

whirlwind

a strong wind that spins very quickly as it moves and can cause damage

delightful land

Alternate translation: "pleasant land" or "fruitful land"

Zechariah 8

Zechariah 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is a series of sayings from Yahweh of hosts. Each saying is an encouraging note for those returning from the exile to the land of Judah and Jerusalem. (See: **Yahweh of hosts, God of hosts, host of heaven, host of the heavens, Lord of hosts (p.343)**)

Zechariah 8:1

The word of Yahweh of hosts came to me, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated this in Zechariah 7:4. Alternate translation: "Yahweh of hosts gave me a message. He said" or "Yahweh of hosts spoke this message to me, saying" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Zechariah 8:2

I am passionate for Zion

Alternate translation: "I have a strong desire to protect Zion"

for Zion

Here "Zion" represents the people of Zion. Alternate translation: "for the people of Zion" or "for the people of Jerusalem" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

with great anger

The implied information is that this anger is against the enemies of Zion. Alternate translation: "with great anger against her enemies" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 8:3

the mountain of Yahweh of hosts

The implied information is that this refers to Mount Zion, the location upon which the city of Jerusalem was built. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 8:4

be in the streets of Jerusalem

Alternate translation: "be living in Jerusalem"

in his hand because he has grown so old

People having the opportunity to grow old implies the city will be peaceful and prosperous for a long time. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 8:5

The streets of the city will be full

The public areas of the city will be full of people in their normal activities.

Zechariah 8:6

If something seems impossible in the eyes of

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "If something does not appear to be possible to" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

the remnant of this people

Alternate translation: "the people of Judah who survive"

in my eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "to me" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in Zechariah 1:4. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**)

Zechariah 8:7

I am about to rescue my people

The implied information is that the people are in exile. "I am about to rescue my people of Judah who went into exile" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

from the land of the sunrise and from the land of the setting sun

This could mean: (1) this is a poetic way of expressing specific countries to which the people were exiled. Alternate translation: "From the land to the east and from the land to the west" or (2) this is a merism that means from all directions. Alternate translation: "from all lands in every direction" (See: **Merism (p.286)**) (See: **Merism (p.286)**)

Zechariah 8:8

I will be their God in truth and in righteousness

This can be rewritten to remove the abstract nouns "truth" and "righteousness." Alternate translation: "I will be their God. I will be faithful to them and act toward them in a just manner" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**)

Zechariah 8:9

Strengthen your hands

This is an idiom that means to be courageous for the work. Alternate translation: "Be strong and courageous" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Zechariah 8:10

For before those days

Here "those days" refers to the time the people of Judah started to rebuild the temple.

no crops were gathered in

Alternate translation: "there were no crops to harvest"

there was no profit for either man or beast

It was useless for people and their animals to farm the land, because they got no food from it.

for anyone going or coming

This merism refers to all of life's activities everywhere that anyone went. (See: **Merism (p.286)**) (See: **Merism (p. 286)**)

I had set every person each against his neighbor

Alternate translation: "I had turned everyone against each other"

Zechariah 8:11

But now it will not be as in former days, I will be with the remnant of this people

Alternate translation: "But I will not treat the remnant of this people now as I did in former days"

in former days

"in the past." The implied information is that this refers to the time when the people started rebuilding the temple. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

the remnant of this people

The implied information is that this is the remnant of the people who returned from exile. Alternate translation: "the people who returned from exile" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in Zechariah 1:3. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh of hosts has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh of hosts, have declared" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**)

Zechariah 8:12

seeds of peace will be sown

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "the people will safely sow seed" (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

the earth will give its produce; the skies will give their dew

The earth and skies are spoken of as if they were persons giving what is needed. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

inherit all these things

Alternate translation: "to have all these things"

Zechariah 8:13

You were an example to the other nations of a curse

The implied information is that the way Yahweh had allowed the temple to be destroyed and his people to be exiled had been used by other nations as an example of what it meant to be cursed by Yahweh. Alternate translation: "When I punished you, the other nations learned what happens when I curse a people" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

house of Judah and house of Israel

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the people in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Alternate translation: "people of Judah and Israel" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

you will be a blessing

This could mean: (1) the implied information is that the people of Judah and Israel would be a blessing to the nations around them. Alternate translation: "you will be a blessing to the surrounding nations" or (2) the implied information is that the nations around them would see what it meant to be blessed by Yahweh. Alternate translation: when I bless you, the other nations will learn what happens when I bless a people" or (3) Yahweh will bless the people of Judah and Israel. Alternate translation: "I will give you many good things" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

let your hands be strong

This is an idiom that means to be courageous for the work. Alternate translation: "be strong and courageous" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

house of Judah and house of Israel

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the people in the kingdom of Judah. Alternate translation: "people of Judah" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 8:14

do harm to you

Alternate translation: "punish you"

provoked my anger

Alternate translation: "angered me"

did not relent

Alternate translation: "did not decide to punish them less"

Zechariah 8:15

Jerusalem

This is a metonym for the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the people of Jerusalem" (See: **Metonymy (p. 294))** (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 8:16

that you must do

"You" refers to the people of Judah.

Speak truth, every person with his neighbor

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **truth**, you can express the same idea with an adjective such as "true." Alternate translation: "Everyone must say only true things to his neighbor" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**)

his neighbor

Here "neighbor" means any person, not just someone who lives nearby.

Judge with truth, justice, and peace in your gates

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "truth," "justice," and "peace." Alternate translation: "When you are making decisions in your gates, judge in a way that is true and just and causes people to live peacefully with each other" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**)

in your gates

The assumed knowledge is that this refers to the places where judgment took place. Alternate translation: "in your places of judgment" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 8:17

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in Zechariah 1:4. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**)

Zechariah 8:18

the word of Yahweh of hosts came to me, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated this in Zechariah 7:4. Alternate translation: "Yahweh of hosts gave me a message. He said" or "Yahweh of hosts spoke this message to me, saying" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

came to me

Here "me" refers to Zechariah.

Zechariah 8:19

The fasts of the fourth month, the fifth month, the seventh month, and the tenth month

"The fasts of months 4, 5, 7, and 10" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.299)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.299)**)

The fasts of the fourth month

The assumed knowledge is that the Jews mourned during a part of the fourth month of the Hebrew calendar because this is when the Babylonians broke through the walls of Jerusalem. The fourth month is during the last part of June and the first part of July on Western calendars. (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/translate-hebrewmonths]]) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

the fifth month

The assumed knowledge is that the Jewish people fasted during a part of the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar because this is when the Babylonians destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. The fifth month is during the last part of July and the first part of August on Western calendars. See how you translated this in Zechariah 7:3. (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/translate-hebrewmonths]]) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

the seventh month

The assumed knowledge is that the Jews mourned during a part of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar because in this month the remaining Jews in Jerusalem fled to Egypt after the murder of Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon appointed as governor over Judah. The seventh month is during the last part of September and the first part of October on Western calendars. See how you translated this in Zechariah 7:5. (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/translate-hebrewmonths]]) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

the tenth month

The assumed knowledge is that the Jews mourned during a part of the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar because this is when the Babylonians began their siege against Jerusalem. The tenth month is during the last part of December and the first part of January on Western calendars. (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/translate-hebrewmonths]]) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

times of joy, gladness, and happy festivals

The abstract nouns "joy" and "gladness" can be translated using adjectives. Alternate translation: "joyful and glad times, with happy festivals" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**)

the house of Judah

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the people in the kingdom of Judah, which included the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

love truth and peace

The abstract nouns "truth" and "peace" can be translated using adjectives. Alternate translation: "love what is truthful and peaceful" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**)

Zechariah 8:20

People will come again

The implied information is that Jerusalem is where the people will come. Alternate translation: "People will come again to Jerusalem" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 8:21

will go to another city

This is a metonym for the people in the other city. Alternate translation: "will go to the people of another city" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

beg

Here the word "beg" means to plead or ask urgently.

before the face of Yahweh

Here "face" is a metonym for Yahweh's presence. See how you translated this in Zechariah 7:2. Alternate translation: "in the presence of Yahweh" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

seek Yahweh of hosts

Those who want to know Yahweh and please him are spoken of as if they are literally seeking to find Yahweh. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 8:22

mighty nations

This is a metonym for the people in the mighty nations. Alternate translation: "people of mighty nations" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 8:23

will grasp the hem of your robe

The implied information is that the foreigners will grab their robe to get their attention. Alternate translation: "will grasp the hem of your robe to get your attention" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Let us go with you

The implied information is that people of God are going to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Let us go to Jerusalem with you" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

God is with you

Alternate translation: "God is with you people"

Zechariah 9

Zechariah 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written mainly in prose about the cities and peoples around where Israel stood as a country until the exile.

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 poetic song in 9:9-10.

Special concepts in this chapter

Prophecies against other nations

The first two verses show that the prophecy concerns neighboring countries. Hamath, Damscus, Tyre and Sidon are cities in areas that were near Israel. (See: **prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess (p.340)**)

Zechariah 9:1

This is a declaration of Yahweh's word concerning

Alternate translation: "This is Yahweh's message about"

the land of Hadrak and Damascus

Here "Hadrak" and "Damascus" refer to the people who live in those places. Alternate translation: "the people of the land of Hadrak and the city Damascus" (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/translate-names]]) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Hadrak

The location of Hadrak is unknown today.

its resting place

Alternate translation: "the resting place of the people of Hadrak"

for the eyes of all humanity and all the tribes of Israel are toward Yahweh

Some versions translate this as "for Yahweh's eye is on all mankind and on the tribes of Israel."

the eyes of all humanity and all the tribes of Israel are toward Yahweh

Here "eyes" refers to what they look at. Alternate translation: "all humanity and all the tribes of Israel look toward Yahweh" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 9:2

Hamath

This refers to the people who live in that land. Alternate translation: "the people of the land of Hamath" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Tyre and Sidon

This refers to the people who live in those cities. Alternate translation: "the people of Tyre and Sidon" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

for they are very wise

This could mean: (1) the people are wise for looking at Yahweh for help or (2) Zechariah did not really mean that the people of Hamath were wise and was using irony. Alternate translation: "though they think they are very wise" (See: **Irony (p.283)**) (See: **Irony (p.283)**)

Zechariah 9:3

built herself a stronghold

Here the city of Tyre is pictured as a woman. Alternate translation: "built a strong fortress" or "built a high wall" (See: **Personification (p.304)**) (See: **Personification (p.304)**)

heaped up silver like dust and refined gold like mud in the streets

Yahweh exaggerates to emphasize how rich Tyre was. Alternate translation: "accumulated silver and gold as much as soil in the streets" (See: **Hyperbole (p.274)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.274)**)

Zechariah 9:4

Look! The Lord will dispossess her

Here "Look!" tells the reader to pay attention to the important statement that follows. Alternate translation: "Pay attention! The Lord will take away Tyre's possessions"

destroy her strength on the sea

Tyre's "strength on the sea" refers to the ships that were used for commerce and conquest. Alternate translation: "destroy Tyre's ships in which men fight on the sea" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

so she will be devoured by fire

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "and enemies will burn the city to the ground" (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

Zechariah 9:5

Ashkelon & Gaza & Ekron, her hopes

These cities each refer to the people who live in them. Alternate translation: "The people of Ashkelon … the people of Gaza … the hopes of the people of Ekron" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

will see

Alternate translation: "will see Tyre be destroyed"

Zechariah 9:6

Strangers will make their homes in Ashdod

Alternate translation: "Foreigners will take over Ashdod and live there"

I will cut off the pride of the Philistines

Here "cut off" is an idiom that means to stop their pride. Alternate translation: "I will make the Philistines to be proud of themselves no longer" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Zechariah 9:7

I will remove their blood from their mouths and their abominations from between their teeth

Here "blood" is a metonym for meat with blood in it, and "abominations" is a metonym for meat offered to idols. Alternate translation: "I will no longer allow them to eat meat that still has blood in it, and I will forbid them to eat food that they offered to idols" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 9:8

I will camp around my land

God is speaking about himself as if he were an army that was protecting his land. Alternate translation: "I will protect my land" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

for now

Alternate translation: "For at that time"

I see with my own eyes

Here "my own eyes" represent Yahweh's personal attention. Alternate translation: "I will personally watch over my land" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 9:9

General Information:

General Information:

Yahweh appears to be the speaker in verses 9-13.

Shout with great joy, daughter of Zion! Shout with happiness, daughter of Jerusalem!

These two sentences mean the same thing and intensify the command to rejoice. Yahweh is speaking to the people of Jerusalem as if they were present, but they were not there. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-parallelism]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-apostrophe]]) (See: **Parallelism (p.301)**)

daughter of Zion & daughter of Jerusalem

"Zion" is the same as "Jerusalem." The prophet speaks of the city as if it is a daughter. See how you translated "daughter of Zion" in Zechariah 2:10.

Behold!

This alerts the reader to pay special attention to the surprising statement that follows. Alternate translation: "Pay attention!" or "Here is a surprising fact!"

Your king is coming to you with righteousness and is rescuing you

Alternate translation: "Your king is righteous and is coming to rescue you"

on a donkey, on the colt of a donkey

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and refer to one animal. The second phrase clarifies that this is a young donkey. Alternate translation: "on a young donkey" (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

Zechariah 9:10

cut off the chariot from Ephraim

Here "cut off" is an idiom that means to destroy. Alternate translation: "destroy the chariots in Israel that are used for battle"

the horse from Jerusalem

The references to "chariot" and "bow" means that this refers to horses used in battle. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the warhorses in Jerusalem" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

the bow will be cut off from battle

Here the bow represents all weapons used in warfare. Alternate translation: "all weapons of war will be destroyed" (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

for he will speak peace to the nations

Here the action of announcing peace represents the action of making peace. Alternate translation: "for your king will bring peace to the nations" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

his dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!

The phrases "sea to sea" and "from the River to the ends of the earth" mean the same thing and can be combined. Alternate translation: "his kingdom will be over all the earth!" (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

the River

This probably refers to the Euphrates River.

Zechariah 9:11

General Information:

General Information:

Yahweh appears to be the speaker in verses 9-13.

As for you

Here "you" is singular, and continues to refer to the city of Jerusalem, also called "Zion."

the pit where there is no water

This dry pit represents the exile in Babylon. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 9:12

Return to the stronghold

Jerusalem is spoken of as a place of safety. Alternate translation: "Come back to your nation where you will be safe" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

prisoners of hope

This expression refers to the Israelites in exile who were still trusting in God to rescue them. Alternate translation: "prisoners who still hope in Yahweh"

return double to you

Alternate translation: "return to you twice as much as was taken from you"

Zechariah 9:13

Zion

This refers to the city of Jerusalem, also called "Zion."

I have bent Judah as my bow

The people of Judah are referred to as if they were a bow carried by God into battle. Here "Judah" refers to the people of that nation. Alternate translation: "I will cause the people of Judah to be like my bow" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy]]) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

filled my quiver with Ephraim

Yahweh speaks of the people of Israel, the northern kingdom, as if they were arrows that he would shoot at his enemies. A quiver is a bag that holds a soldier's arrows. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

I have roused your sons, Zion, against your sons, Greece

God is speaking to the people of two different nations at the same time. (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 9:14

General Information:

General Information:

In verses 14-16, Zechariah describes how Yahweh will rescue Israel from their enemies.

will appear to them

The word "them" refers to God's people. Alternate translation: "will be seen in the sky by his people" or "will come to his people"

his arrows will shoot out like lightning!

The Israelites sometimes thought of lightning bolts as arrows that God shot. (See: **Simile (p.315)**) (See: **Simile (p. 315)**)

blow the trumpet

The trumpets were rams' horns. People blew into them to give signals in battle and on other occasions. Here the trumpet is blown as a military signal.

will advance with the storms from Teman

Team was located to the south of Judah. The Israelites sometimes thought of God as traveling on violent storms coming from the south. Alternate translation: "will march from Teman with the storm winds"

Zechariah 9:15

they will devour them

Alternate translation: "the people of Judah will devour their enemies"

will devour

To completely defeat enemies is spoken of as devouring them as a wild animal eats its prey. Alternate translation: "will completely defeat" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

defeat the stones of the slings

Slings to throw stones were a common weapon in the days of Zechariah. Here the "stones of the slings" represent the soldiers who were using them to attack Israel. Alternate translation: "defeat the enemies who attack them with slings and stones" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Then they will drink and shout like men drunk on wine

The people of Judah will shout and celebrate their victory over their enemies as if they were noisy drunks. Alternate translation: "Then they will shout and celebrate their victory as loudly as if they were drunk" (See: **Simile (p.315)**) (See: **Simile (p.315)**)

they will be filled with wine like bowls

This probably refers to the bowls that the priests used to carry animal's blood to the altar. Alternate translation: "they will be as full of wine as the basins with which priests carry blood to the altar" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/ figs-simile]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]]) (See: **Simile (p.315)**)

like the corners of the altar

Altars had projecting corners that were drenched in animal blood. Alternate translation: "they will be drenched as the corners of the altar are covered in blood" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-simile]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/ figs-explicit]]) (See: **Simile (p.315)**)

Zechariah 9:16

General Information:

General Information:

In verses 14-16, Zechariah describes how Yahweh will rescue Israel from their enemies.

God will rescue them & as the flock of his people

The people of Israel are spoken of as if they are God's sheep that he cares for and protects. (See: **Simile (p.315)**) (See: **Simile (p.315)**)

They are the jewels of a crown

The people of Israel are spoken of as if they were the expensive jewels in the crown of a king that show how glorious he is. Alternate translation: "They will be like beautiful stones in a crown" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 9:17

How good and how beautiful they will be!

This is an exclamation, and not a question. Alternate translation: "They will be very good and beautiful!" (See: **Exclamations (p.262)**) (See: **Exclamations (p.262)**)

The young men will flourish on grain and the virgins on sweet wine!

This sentence uses a parallel structure to express that everyone will have plenty to eat and drink. If your readers might think that only the men ate and only the women drank, you may want to adjust the wording. Alternate translation: "All of the people, both men and women, will have plenty of grain to eat and sweet wine to drink!" (See: **Parallelism (p.301)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.301)**)

The young men & the virgins

These two phrases are parallel and together represent the entire population of Israel. (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-parallelism]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche]]) (See: **Parallelism (p.301)**)

grain & sweet wine

These two phrases are parallel and together represent all of the different kinds of the food and drink. (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-parallelism]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche]]) (See: **Parallelism (p.301)**)

Zechariah 10

Zechariah 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written mainly in prose but still uses figurative language as the writer shares a message of redemption and hope for the exiles. (See: **redeem, redeemer, redemption (p.342)**)

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 poetic song in 10:1-2.

Special concepts in this chapter

Redemption

This book, and especially this chapter, uses the concepts of redemption and remnant to share the relationship that the people of Judah have with their God. So many of the people of Israel perished as their kingdom went into exile. Now they are returning to the land, but the land is no longer theirs. They are living under foreign rule. (See: [[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/redeem]] and [[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/remnant]])

Zechariah 10:1

vegetation in the field

Alternate translation: "causes plants to grow in the field"

Zechariah 10:2

household idols speak falsely

"household idols give false messages." Zechariah is not suggesting that idols actually speak. He is referring to the messages people say they hear from idols. The UST makes this explicit.

diviners envision a lie

Alternate translation: "diviners see false visions"

they tell deceitful dreams

It is implied that they know these dreams are false. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "diviners lie about their dreams in order to deceive people" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

empty comfort

This refers to words that sooth temporarily, but do not provide any longterm help.

they wander like sheep

The people who do not have true prophets who tell the truth are spoken of as sheep who do not have a shepherd to tell them where to go. Alternate translation: "the people who listen to the false prophets are like sheep who do not know which way to go" (See: **Simile (p.315)**) (See: **Simile (p.315)**)

they & suffer because there is no shepherd

The people who do not have true prophets are spoken of as sheep who suffer because they do not have a shepherd to tell them where to go. Alternate translation: "the people who listen to the false prophets ... are suffering like sheep who do not have a shepherd to guide them" (See: **Simile (p.315)**) (See: **Simile (p.315)**)

Zechariah 10:3

General Information:

General Information:

It is unclear whether Yahweh is speaking, or if Zechariah is speaking for Yahweh in verses 3-5.

My wrath burns against the shepherds

Here "the shepherds" represent the leaders of God's people. The intensity of Yahweh's anger is spoken of as if it was a blazing fire. Alternate translation: "My anger toward the shepherds of my people is as intense as a fire" or "I am very angry with the leaders of my people" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

it is the male goats—the leaders—that I will punish

Male goats are typically more dominant than female goats. Here "male goats" represents the oppressive leaders of God's people. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Yahweh of hosts will also attend to his flock, the house of Judah

Here Yahweh's care for his people is spoken of as a shepherd cares for his sheep. Alternate translation: "Yahweh of hosts will take care of the house of Judah as a shepherd cares for his sheep"

the house of Judah

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the people of Judah, which included the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. Alternate translation: "Judah" or "the people of Judah" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

make them like his warhorse in battle

Yahweh changes the metaphor for his people from defenseless sheep to a mighty war horse. He speaks of his people as if they were a strong horse in battle. Alternate translation: "will cause them to be strong like war horses in battle" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-simile]]) (See: **Metaphor (p. 288)**)

Zechariah 10:4

General Information:

General Information:

It is unclear whether Yahweh is speaking, or if Zechariah is speaking for Yahweh in verses 3-5.

From Judah will come the cornerstone

"The cornerstone will come from Judah." The most important ruler is spoken of as if he where the main foundation stone of a building. Alternate translation: "One of the descendants of Judah will become the most important ruler" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

the cornerstone & the tent peg & the war bow

This could mean: (1) they may be symbolic language that refers to the Messiah who will come from the tribe of Judah or (2) they may refer to different leaders who will come from Judah. (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Language (p.320)**)

from him will come the tent peg

"the tent peg will come from him." The tent pegs held the ropes that supported tents in which people lived. Here the most important ruler is spoken of as if he where the main peg that holds a tent in place. Alternate translation: "the leader who will hold the nation together will come from Judah" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p. 288)**)

from him will come the war bow

"the war bow will come from him." Here the most important ruler is spoken of as if he where the a war bow that was used in battle. Alternate translation: "the military leader will come from Judah" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

from him will come every ruler together

Alternate translation: "every ruler will come from Judah"

Zechariah 10:5

They will be like warriors & streets in battle

The rulers from Judah are spoken of as if they were victorious warriors. Alternate translation: "They will be mighty in battle, trampling their enemies into the mud of the streets" (See: **Simile (p.315)**) (See: **Simile (p.315)**)

who trample their enemies into the mud of the streets in battle

To trample them into the mud is an idiom that means to completely defeat them. Alternate translation: "who defeat their enemies completely" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Yahweh is with them

Here "with them" is an idiom that means he is present to help them. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will help them" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

they will shame those who ride warhorses

Here shame accompanies and represents defeat. Alternate translation: "they will defeat their enemies who ride warhorses" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 10:6

General Information:

General Information:

In verses 6-12, Yahweh is speaking to the people of Israel.

the house of Judah

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Judah, which included the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. Alternate translation: "Judah" or "the kingdom of Judah" or "the people of Judah" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

the house of Joseph

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Israel. Alternate translation: "Israel" or "the kingdom of Israel" or "the people of Israel" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

I had not cast them off

This speaks of the people as a torn or dirty garment that Yahweh took off and threw away. This symbolizes rejection. Alternate translation: "I had not rejected them" (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/translate-symaction]]) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 10:7

Ephraim will be like a warrior

"Ephraim" refers here to the northern kingdom of Israel. Warriors are strong. Alternate translation: "Ephraim will be very strong" (See: **Simile (p.315)**) (See: **Simile (p.315)**)

their hearts will rejoice as with wine

Here "hearts" refers to the whole person. They will have the same joy as a person who is enjoying drinking wine. Alternate translation: "and they will be very happy" (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-simile]]) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

their children will see and rejoice. Their hearts will rejoice in me!

Alternate translation: "their children will see what has taken place and will be happy because of what Yahweh has done for them!"

Zechariah 10:8

General Information:

General Information:

In verses 6-12, Yahweh is speaking to the people of Israel.

I will whistle

To whistle is to produce a high, shrill sound with air through narrowed lips. It is often done to give a signal to other people, as here.

Zechariah 10:9

I sowed them among the peoples

The exile of the people is spoken of as if they were seed that Yahweh had planted in a distant land. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 10:10

until there is no more room for them

The people will continue to go back to Judah and it will become crowded with no room for any more people to live there. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "and they will completely fill the land"

Zechariah 10:11

General Information:

General Information:

In verses 6-12, Yahweh is speaking to the people of Israel.

I will pass through the sea of their affliction

Scripture often refers to the sea as an image of many troubles and hardships. Here Yahweh speaks of himself accompanying the people to help them go through these afflictions. Alternate translation: "I will go with them and help them as they go through their many afflictions" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

I will strike the waves of that sea

Here to "strike" the waves is an idiom that means he will stop the waves from forming. Stopping the afflictions of his people is spoken of as calming the waves of that sea. Alternate translation: "I will cause the waves of that sea of affliction to stop" (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-idiom]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]]) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

will dry up all the depths of the Nile

Alternate translation: "I will cause the Nile River to lose all its water"

The majesty of Assyria will be brought down

Here "the majesty of Assyria" probably refers to the Assyrian army. Alternate translation: "I will destroy Assyria's proud army" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

the scepter of Egypt will go away from the Egyptians

Here "the scepter of Egypt" refers to the political power of Egypt. Alternate translation: "the power of Egypt to rule other nations will end" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 10:12

I will strengthen them in myself

Alternate translation: "I will cause them to be strong and to believe in me"

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in
Zechariah 1:4. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared"
(See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**)

Zechariah 11

Zechariah 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter unlike the previous one is a warning against the leaders amongst the exiles.

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 poetic song in 11:1-3, 17.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

This chapter uses an extended metaphor of sheep and shepherds to convey Yahweh's dismay at the leaders during the exiles. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Symbolism

The writer uses symbolism. Zechariah is told to become a shepherd. He uses two staffs and names them "Unity" and "Favor." He does this very purposefully. In order to preserve this symbolism, it is important to pay attention to the specific words used. (See: **favor, favorable, favoritism (p.333)**)

Zechariah 11:1

Open your doors, Lebanon, that fire may devour

Not resisting what is about to happen is spoken of as if Lebanon were opening its doors. Here "Lebanon" is a metonym that represents the people of Lebanon. Alternate translation: "People of Lebanon, get ready, because fire will devour" or "People of Lebanon, do not try to stop the fire that will devour" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy]]) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

fire may devour your cedars

Fire completely burning up the cedars is spoken of as if the fire would devour the cedars. Alternate translation: "fire may completely destroy your cedars" or "fire may completely burn up your cedars" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 11:2

Lament, cypress trees, for the cedar trees have fallen

Cypress trees are spoken of as if they could grieve like a human. Alternate translation: "If the trees were people, they would cry out in sorrow. The cypress trees stand alone because the cedars have burned and fallen" (See: **Personification (p.304)**) (See: **Personification (p.304)**)

What was majestic has been devastated

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "The majestic cedar trees are no more" or "The cedar trees were once majestic, but now they are ruined" (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

Lament, you oaks of Bashan, for the strong forest has gone down.

The oaks of Bash are spoken of as if they could grieve like a human. Alternate translation: "If the oak trees in Bashan were people, they would wail, for their thick forests are gone" (See: **Personification (p.304)**) (See: **Personification (p.304)**)

Zechariah 11:3

The shepherds howl

Alternate translation: "The shepherds cry out loudly"

for their glory has been destroyed

Here "their glory" probably represents the rich pastures that the shepherds led their sheep to. Alternate translation: "for their rich pastures are ruined" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

for the pride of the Jordan River has been devastated

Here "the pride" probably represents the forests that grew near the Jordan River. Alternate translation: "because the trees and shrubbery where they lived by the Jordan River are ruined" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p. 294)**)

Zechariah 11:4

General Information:

General Information:

In 11:4-17 is a story about two shepherds. This could mean: (1) Zechariah actually became a shepherd over a flock as a symbolic act showing how Yahweh will treat his people or (2) Zechariah tells a parable that teaches how Yahweh will treat his people. Since it is uncertain which of these meanings is correct, it would be best not to specify either option in the translation. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-symaction]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-parables]]) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.318)**)

watch over the flock set aside for slaughter

Alternate translation: "take care of a flock of sheep that the owners plan to slaughter"

Zechariah 11:5

are not punished

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "no one punishes them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

Zechariah 11:6

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in Zechariah 1:4. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**)

See!

Alternate translation: "Listen!" or "Pay attention!"

I myself

The word "myself" is used to emphasize that it is Yahweh who will do these things. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p. 309)**) (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.309)**)

turn over every person into the hand of his neighbor and into the hand of his king

Here "hand" represents power or control. Alternate translation: "allow the people to harm each other and the king will oppress them" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

none of them will I deliver them from their hand

Here "hand" represents power or control. Alternate translation: "I will not save them from those who are harming them" or "I will not rescue them" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 11:7

for those who dealt in sheep

Alternate translation: "for those who bought and sold sheep"

Favor

Other versions of the Bible translate this word as "grace," "beauty," or "pleasant."

Zechariah 11:8

I became impatient with them,

This could mean: (1) "them" refers to the three shepherds or (2) "them" refers to the sheep owners.

Zechariah 11:9

the sheep that are being destroyed—let them be destroyed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the sheep that are perishing—let them perish" or "the sheep that are to wander and get lost—let them get lost" (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

Zechariah 11:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Zechariah 11:11

the covenant was broken

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the covenant ended" (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

knew that Yahweh had spoken

It is implied that those watching knew Yahweh was giving them a message through the breaking of the staff. Alternate translation: "knew that Yahweh had given them a message" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 11:12

thirty pieces of silver

It is implied that this was very little pay for the shepherd. Alternate translation: "only thirty pieces of silver" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

thirty pieces

"30 pieces" (See: **Numbers (p.296)**) (See: **Numbers (p.296)**)

Zechariah 11:13

treasury

This is the place in the temple of Yahweh where the priests kept the money. Many versions of the Bible translate this as "potter." This is the person who would melt metal to make vessels out of it. Here Yahweh would mean that the payment is so small that the shepherd should have the silver melted to show how insulted he was.

the excellent price

Yahweh uses irony to say that this price was very small for a shepherd doing Yahweh's work. Alternate translation: "the ridiculously small amount of money" (See: **Irony (p.283)**) (See: **Irony (p.283)**)

Zechariah 11:14

between Judah and Israel

Here "Judah" represents the people of the southern kingdom and "Israel" represents the people of the northern kingdom. Alternate translation: "between the people of Judah and the people of Israel" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 11:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Zechariah 11:16

I am about to set in place a shepherd in the land

Here "set in place" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "I am about to appoint a shepherd in the land" or "I am about to put a shepherd in charge in the land" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

the fattened sheep

Alternate translation: "the fattest sheep" or "the best sheep"

will tear off their hooves

This was probably done as an act of cruelty.

Zechariah 11:17

May the sword

Here "sword" represents enemies who will attack the shepherd. Alternate translation: "May enemies" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

come against his arm and his right eye

Here "come against" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "strike and wound his right arm and pierce his right eye" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

his arm

Here "arm" represents the power to fight. (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

his right eye

A soldier would use his right eye to look around the shield that he held with his left hand. If his right eye was wounded, he would not be able to see to fight in war. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

his arm wither away

Alternate translation: "his arm waste away" or "his arm become completely useless"

Zechariah 12

Zechariah 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Similar to chapter 11, this chapter is written mainly in prose and is talking about Jerusalem.

Special concepts in this chapter

Prophecy

Verses 10-11 are quoted in the New Testament and apply to Jesus' death on the cross. (See: **cross (p.332)**)

Zechariah 12:1

General Information:

General Information:

These verses begin a section that tells about the coming attack against Jerusalem and how God will rescue the city.

who stretched out the skies

This is a metaphor that speaks of the sky as if it were like a scroll that is rolled up and needs to be stretched out. Alternate translation: "the one who created the sky" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

laid the foundation of the earth

This is a metaphor that speaks of the earth as if it were a building with a foundation. Alternate translation: "put all the earth into place" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

fashions the spirit of mankind within man

This is a metaphor that speaks of the spirit as if it were like clay that a potter shapes. Alternate translation: "creates the human spirit"

Zechariah 12:2

I am about to make Jerusalem into a cup & to stagger about

Yahweh using Jerusalem to punish the surrounding peoples is spoken of as if Yahweh would make Jerusalem a cup full of an alcoholic drink that will cause the surrounding peoples to get drunk and stagger. Alternate translation: "Soon it will be like I make Jerusalem into a cup … to stagger about" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p. 288)**)

into a cup

Here "cup" represents the cup and the contents within the cup. Alternate translation: "into a cup full of wine" or "into a cup full of an alcoholic drink" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

surrounding her

Here "her" refers to the city of Jerusalem. It was common in Hebrew to speak of a city or country as if it were a woman. (See: **Personification (p.304)**) (See: **Personification (p.304)**)

Zechariah 12:3

I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples

Yahweh using Jerusalem to punish the surrounding peoples is spoken of as if he would make Jerusalem a heavy stone. Alternate translation: "It will be like I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 12:4

General Information:

General Information:

These verses continue telling about the coming attack against Jerusalem and how God will rescue the city.

Over the house of Judah I will open my eyes

Opening eyes over someone here is a metaphor for wanting to do good things for that person. Alternate translation: "I will do good things for the house of Judah" or "I will protect the house of Judah" (See: **Metaphor (p. 288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

the house of Judah

Here "house" represents people. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 12:5

say in their hearts

Here "hearts" represents a person's mind. Alternate translation: "think to themselves" or "say to themselves" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

are our strength

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **strength**, you can express the same idea with a verbal form such as "strong" or "encourage." Alternate translation: "make us strong" or "encourage us" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**)

Yahweh of hosts, their God

Alternate translation: "Yahweh of hosts, the God they worship"

Zechariah 12:6

like firepots among wood & standing grain

This simile means Yahweh will enable the leaders of Judah to be strong and able to lead the people to defeat their enemies. Alternate translation: "like firepots among stacked firewood … unharvested stalks of grain standing in a field" (See: **Simile (p.315)**) (See: **Simile (p.315)**)

firepots

clay pots in which ancient people often carried burning coals

flaming torch

a wooden stick that is burning at one end which gives light as one travels or carries fire somewhere

will consume all the surrounding peoples

Completely destroying the peoples is spoken of as if the people of Judah will "devour" them. Alternate translation: "will destroy the surrounding peoples" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

on their right and on their left

Here "right" and "left" represent every direction. Alternate translation: "in every direction" (See: **Merism (p.286)**) (See: **Merism (p.286)**)

Jerusalem will again live in her own place

Here "Jerusalem" represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: "The people of Jerusalem will again live in their own city" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 12:7

General Information:

General Information:

These verses continue telling about the coming attack against Jerusalem and how God will rescue the city.

the tents of Judah

Here "tents" represents homes, and homes represent the people who live in them. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

the house of David

This could mean: (1) the descendants of David or (2) the ruling class of people. (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 12:8

those who are weak among them will be like David

This simile means those who are weak will be strong. Alternate translation: "those who are weak will be strong like David" (See: **Simile (p.315)**) (See: **Simile (p.315)**)

the angel of Yahweh

This is an angel sent by Yahweh to protect the people.

Zechariah 12:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Zechariah 12:10

I will pour out a spirit of compassion and pleading on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem

Causing the people to be compassionate and to plead is spoken of as if the spirit were a liquid that Yahweh would pour on them. Alternate translation: "I will cause the house of David and inhabitants of Jerusalem to have mercy on others and to pray to me for mercy" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

a spirit of compassion and pleading

Here this means to have a characteristic of compassion and pleading.

the house of David

Here "house" represents descendants. Alternate translation: "the descendants of David" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

the one they have pierced

Alternate translation: "the one whom they stabbed to death"

for an only son

It is understood that the "son" has died. Alternate translation: "for an only son who has died" (See: **Ellipsis (p.259)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.259)**)

Zechariah 12:11

the laments in Jerusalem will be like the laments at Hadad Rimmon

Hadad Rimmon may have been the place where the good King Josiah died of battle wounds after the Battle of Megiddo. It appears that the custom arose to hold periodic mourning there for his death. Some people, however, think that Hadad Rimmon was the name of a false god who was believed to die every year, an event for which his worshipers would go into mourning. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-names]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]]) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

Megiddo

This is the name of a plain in Israel. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

Zechariah 12:12

The land will mourn

This represents all the people living in the land of Judah. Alternate translation: "All the people in the land of Judah will mourn" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

The clan of the house of David & The clan of the house of Nathan

Here "house" represents descendants. Alternate translation: "The descendants of David … The descendants of Nathan" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 12:13

The clan of the house of Levi

Here "house" represents descendants. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Levi" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 12:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Zechariah 13

Zechariah 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written partly in prose and partly in poetry.

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 poetic song in 13:7-9.

Special concepts in this chapter

Zechariah often speaks of the last days by using the phrase "that day" or "in that day." When referencing a future "day," the translator should be aware that it is possible that the author is speaking about the last days. (See: **last day, last days, latter days (p.337)**)

Zechariah 13:1

a spring will be opened & for their sin and impurity

Forgiving the people's sins is spoken of as if a spring of water will wash away their sins. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "it will be like a spring opens … to cleanse their sin and impurity" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive]]) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

a spring

a place where water flows naturally out of the ground

the house of David

Here "house" represents descendants. Alternate translation: "the descendants of David" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 13:2

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in
Zechariah 1:3. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh of hosts has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh of hosts,
have declared" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**)

I will cut off the names of the idols from the land

Causing the people to no longer mention the names of idols is spoken of as if Yahweh would "cut off the names of
the idols from the land." Alternate translation: "I will cause the people to no longer mention the names of the idols"
(See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

they will no longer be remembered

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that
is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "so that they no longer think about the idols" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/
translate/figs-idiom]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive]]) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

I will remove the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land

The prophets may refer to "false prophets." The spirit of impurity is spoken of as if it were physically unclean.
Alternate translation: "I will also remove from the land the false prophets and their evil spirits" (See: **Metaphor (p.
288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 13:3

to prophesy

It is implied that these are false prophecies. Alternate translation: "to prophesy falsely" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

his father and mother who bore him

The phrase "who bore him" describes "his father and mother" in order to express surprise that someone's own parents would treat him in this way. Alternate translation: "his own father and mother" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.254)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.254)**)

You will not live

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "You must die"

you speak lies in the name of Yahweh

Speaking in the name of someone means speaking with his power and authority, or as his representative. Alternate translation: "you claim to speak for Yahweh but you speak lies" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

will pierce

Alternate translation: "will stab and kill him"

Zechariah 13:4

each prophet

This implies false prophets. Alternate translation: "every false prophet" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

no longer wear a hairy cloak

Prophets often wore heavy outer garments made of animal hair. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 13:5

I am a man who works the soil

Alternate translation: "I am a farmer"

the land became my work while I was still a young man

Some versions of the Bible translate this as "a man sold me as a slave when I was young." Alternate translation: "I became a farmer when I was young"

Zechariah 13:6

What are these wounds between your arms?

"How did you get those cuts on your chest?" This refers to the apparent custom of false prophets wounding themselves in their ceremonies. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

he will answer

It is implied that his answer is a lie. Alternate translation: "he will lie to him saying" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 13:7

General Information:

General Information:

Zechariah often wrote prophecy in the form of poetry. Hebrew poetry uses different kinds of parallelism. Here Yahweh begins speaking. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/writing-poetry]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-parallelism]]) (See: **Poetry (p.306)**)

Sword! Rouse yourself against my shepherd

"You, sword! Go and attack my shepherd." Here Yahweh speaks to a sword as if it were a person. Here it represents enemies. Alternate translation: "You, enemies! Go and attack my shepherd" (See: **Personification (p.304)**) (See: **Personification (p.304)**)

my shepherd

This speaks of a servant of Yahweh as if he were a shepherd. Alternate translation: "my servant who is like a shepherd" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in Zechariah 1:3. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh of hosts has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh of hosts, have declared" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.264)**)

the flock will scatter

The people of God are spoken of as if they were sheep. Alternate translation: "my people will run away like sheep" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

I will turn my hand against the lowly ones

The idiom "turn my hand against" means to act hostile towards someone. Alternate translation: "I will attack the lowly ones" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

the lowly ones

This probably refers to all the Israelites who are weak and defenseless.

Zechariah 13:8

that two-thirds of it will be cut off! Those people will perish; only one-third will remain there

People being killed is spoken of as if they are cut off like cloth is cut from a garment or a branch is cut from a plant. Alternate translation: "that two out of every three people will die! Only one person out of three will remain in the land" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-fraction]]) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 13:9

I will bring that third through the fire

Metal is passed through fire in order to purify or harden it. This expression serves here as a metaphor for exposing the people to suffering in order that they may become more faithful to God. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

refine them as silver is refined; I will test them as gold is tested

Refining refers to making precious metals such as silver more pure. Metals such as silver and gold are tested in order to discover how pure or strong they are. Both refining and testing are here metaphors for making the people more faithful to God. (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

They will call on my name

Here "name" represents Yahweh. Alternate translation: "They will call out to me" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 14

Zechariah 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written in prose about Jerusalem during the last days. (See: **last day, last days, latter days (p.337)**)

Special concepts in this chapter

Last days

Zechariah often speaks of the last days by using the phrase "that day" or "in that day." When referencing a future "day," the translator should be aware that it is possible that the author is speaking about the last days.

Zechariah 14:1

General Information:

General Information:

This chapter describes the final war for the city of Jerusalem and how God will save it.

A day for Yahweh is coming when your plunder will be divided in your midst

A future time is spoken of as if "a day is coming." The phrase "will be divided" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Soon Yahweh will judge you, and he will allow your enemies to take all of your possessions and divide if for themselves while you watch" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive]]) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 14:2

I will gather every nation against Jerusalem for battle

Here "every nation" is a generalization that means "many nations." Alternate translation: "I will cause many nations to attack Jerusalem" (See: **Hyperbole (p.274)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.274)**)

the city will be captured

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "your enemies will capture the city" (See: **Active or Passive (p. 238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

The houses will be plundered and the women raped

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Enemies will plunder the houses and rape the women" (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

the remainder of the people will not be cut off from the city

Not removing people from the city is spoken of as if the people will not be "cut off." If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "your enemies will allow the remaining people to stay in the city" (See: **Active or Passive (p. 238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

Zechariah 14:3

General Information:

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save it. In this prophecy, Yahweh is described as a warrior who will come and fight in battle.

as when he wages war on the day of battle

Alternate translation: "just as he fought battles in the past"

Zechariah 14:4

On that day

Alternate translation: "At that time"

his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives

Here "feet" represents Yahweh. Alternate translation: "he will stand on the Mount of Olives" (See: **Synecdoche (p. 322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

The Mount of Olives will be split & by a very great valley

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "The presences of Yahweh will split the Mount of Olives … causing there to be a very great valley" (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

Zechariah 14:5

General Information:

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

you will flee

Here "you" is plural and refers to the people of Jerusalem. (See: **Forms of You (p.266)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.266)**)

between Yahweh's mountains

This refers to the mountains created after the Mount of Olives split in half.

Azel

This is the name of a town or village east of Jerusalem. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

You will flee just as you fled

Here "You will" refers to the people of Jerusalem. But, "you fled" refers to their ancestors since this describes an event that happened many years earlier. Alternate translation: "You will flee just as your ancestors fled" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah

Here "in the days" is an idiom that refers to the time when Uzziah was king. Alternate translation: "when Uzziah was king of Judah" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

the holy ones

This probably refers to God's angels.

Zechariah 14:6

General Information:

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

On that day

Alternate translation: "At that time"

there will be no light

It is implied that there will be no light from the sun. Alternate translation: "there will be no light from the sun" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 14:7

a day known only to Yahweh

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "only Yahweh knows when that day will begin" or "only Yahweh knows when that time will begin" (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.238)**)

Zechariah 14:8

living waters

This normally means running or flowing water, rather than still or stagnant water. (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

the eastern sea

This refers to the Dead Sea, which is east of Jerusalem.

the western sea

This refers to the Mediterranean Sea.

Zechariah 14:9

General Information:

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

there will be Yahweh, the one God, and his name alone

Here "name" represents Yahweh's reputation or character. Alternate translation: "people will know that Yahweh is the only true God" or "people will only worship Yahweh, the one true God" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 14:10

All the land

It is implied that this is the land of Judah. Alternate translation: "All the land of Judah" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Arabah

This is the name of a plain in the Jordan River Valley. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

Geba

This is the name of a town on the northern border of Judah. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

Rimmon

This is the name of a town south of Jerusalem. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

Jerusalem will continue to be raised up

This contrasts Jerusalem, which will remain at a higher elevation, to the surrounding area, which is lower in elevation. The contrast can be indicated by adding the word "but." This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But, Jerusalem will remain high up" (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/grammar-connect-words-phrases]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive]]) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.250)**)

the Benjamin Gate & the first gate & the Corner Gate

These are names of gates in the northeast part of city wall of Jerusalem. This could mean: (1) "the first gate" and "the Corner Gate" refer to the same gate or (2) "the first gate" and "the Corner gate" are separate gates. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/translate-names]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]]) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 270)**)

the Tower of Hananel

This refers to a strong point in the city defenses on the northern wall. It was probably built by a man named Hananel. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.270)**)

the king's winepresses

This probably refers to the place where wine was made for the royal family. It was located in the southwest part of Jerusalem. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 14:11

Jerusalem will live in safety

Here "Jerusalem" represents the people. Alternate translation: "The people will live safely in Jerusalem" (See:
Metonymy (p.294)) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Zechariah 14:12

General Information:

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

even as they are standing on their feet

"while they are still standing up." This emphasizes how quickly their flesh will rot away. They will not even have time to lie down.

Zechariah 14:13

that great fear from Yahweh will come among them

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **fear**, you can express the same idea with a verbal form such as "terrified." Alternate translation: "Yahweh will cause the people to be very terrified" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.236)**)

Each one will seize the hand of another, and the hand of one will be raised up against the hand of another

These are idioms that refer to being hostile towards another person. Alternate translation: "Each person will grab someone, and they will fight each other" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Zechariah 14:14

General Information:

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

Judah will also fight against Jerusalem

Here "Judah" and "Jerusalem" represent the people that live there. Alternate translation: "Even the other people in Judah will fight against the people of Jerusalem" (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.294)**)

Judah will also fight against Jerusalem

Some versions of the Bible read, "Judah will also fight at Jerusalem."

They will gather the wealth

Alternate translation: "They will capture all the valuable possessions"

in great abundance

Alternate translation: "in great quantities"

Zechariah 14:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Zechariah 14:16

General Information:

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

that came against Jerusalem

Here "came against" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "that attacked Jerusalem" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

will instead go up from year to year

Alternate translation: "will instead go to Jerusalem every year"

the Festival of Shelters

Alternate translation: "the Festival of Tabernacles" or "the Festival of Booths" or "the Festival of Tents"

Zechariah 14:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Zechariah 14:18

A plague from Yahweh will attack the nations

Causing people to suffer from a plague is spoken of as if the plague would attack the people like an army. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will cause a plague among the people of the nations" (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.288)**)

Zechariah 14:19

General Information:

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

Zechariah 14:20

General Information:

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

the bells of the horses will say

Alternate translation: "the inscription on the bells of the horses will say"

the basins in Yahweh's house

These basins were used for boiling meat in the courtyard of the temple. Alternate translation: "the cooking pots in the courtyard of the temple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

will be like the bowls before the altar

It is implied that the basins will be sacred like the bowls used for catching the blood of the sacrifices. Alternate translation: "will be as sacred as the bowls used at the altar" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

Zechariah 14:21

every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be set apart to Yahweh of hosts

Various types of pots and utensils were made especially to be used in the temple for the worship of Yahweh and for the sacrifices. These were considered special, not to be used for anything else.

traders will no longer be in the house of Yahweh

It was the custom for traders to sell the people things they needed in order to make proper sacrifices to Yahweh in the temple. Alternate translation: "people will no longer buy or sell things in the courtyard of the temple of Yahweh" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.241)**)

traders

Some versions of the Bible translate "traders" as "Canaanites."

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Version 76

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: Zechariah 7:9; Zechariah 8:8; Zechariah 8:16; Zechariah 8:19; Zechariah 12:5; Zechariah 14:13

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:

> 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)*

- 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.

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.

"

Referenced in: Zechariah 5:7; Zechariah 5:11; Zechariah 6:14; Zechariah 8:12; Zechariah 9:4; Zechariah 11:2; Zechariah 11:5; Zechariah 11:9; Zechariah 11:11; Zechariah 14:2; Zechariah 14:4; Zechariah 14:7

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: Zechariah 1:10; Zechariah 1:11; Zechariah 1:15; Zechariah 1:16; Zechariah 2:4; Zechariah 2:8; Zechariah 2:13; Zechariah 3:8; Zechariah 3:10; Zechariah 4:6; Zechariah 4:7; Zechariah 4:10; Zechariah 6:2; Zechariah 6:15; Zechariah 7:5; Zechariah 8:2; Zechariah 8:3; Zechariah 8:4; Zechariah 8:7; Zechariah 8:11; Zechariah 8:13; Zechariah 8:16; Zechariah 8:19; Zechariah 8:20; Zechariah 8:23; Zechariah 9:10; Zechariah 10:2; Zechariah 11:11; Zechariah 11:12; Zechariah 11:17; Zechariah 13:3; Zechariah 13:4; Zechariah 13:6; Zechariah 14:5; Zechariah 14:6; Zechariah 14:10; Zechariah 14:20; Zechariah 14:21

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.

The metric values in the table below are close but not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact length from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Metric Measure
handbreadth	8 centimeters
span	23 centimeters
cubit	46 centimeters
"long" cubit	54 centimeters
stadia	185 meters

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.
If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as ".46 meters" or even as "46 centimeters," readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say "half a meter," "45 centimeters," or "50 centimeters."
Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word "about" to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as "about ten kilometers" from Jerusalem.
When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use "about" in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

Translation Strategies

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)
(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 25:10 below.

> They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half. (Exodus 25:10 ULT)

(1) Use the measurements given in the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)

> > "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half kubits**; its width will be **one kubit and a half**; and its height will be **one kubit and a half**."

(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

> > "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement. For example, if you measure things using the standard meter length, you could translate it as below.

> > "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

> > "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half cubits (one meter)**; its width will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**; and its height will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**."

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

> > "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; [1] its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; [2] and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

The footnotes would look like:

> "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; [1] its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; [2] and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

The footnotes would look like:

> [1] two and a half cubits [2] one cubit and a half

"

Referenced in: Zechariah 5:2

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

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]]

probably differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

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[1], and 220 liters[2] of seed will yield only 22 liters[3]."

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: Zechariah 5:6

Connecting Words and Phrases

Description

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: Zechariah 14:10

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)

When the phrase that modifies a noun is a relative clause (a phrase that starts with a word such as "who" or"which"), 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 the added phrase 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 phrase 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.

> You must surely open your hand to your brother, **to your needy and to your poor** in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:11 ULT)

The phrases "to your needy and to your poor" give further information about "your brother." They do not refer to a separate group of people.

> How 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. He was not distinguishing one woman named Sarah from another woman named Sarah who was a different age.

> 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.

> 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.

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)
>
>> **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)

> Can Sarah bear a son **even when she is 90 years old**?
>
> You must surely open your hand to your brother, **to your needy and to your poor** in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:11 ULT)
>
> You must surely open your hand to any of **your needy and poor brothers** in your land.

(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.

You must surely open your hand to your brother, **to your needy and to your poor** in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:11 ULT)

> You must surely open your hand to your brother **who is needy and poor** in your land.

"

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Double Negatives* *(UTA PDF)*

Doublet

Description

We are using the word "doublet" to refer to two words or phrases that are used together and either mean the same thing or mean very close to the same thing. Often they are joined with the word "and." Unlike Hendiadys, in which one of the words modifies the other, in a doublet the two words or phrases are equal and are used to emphasize or intensify the one idea that is expressed by the two words or phrases.

> This page answers the question: *What are doublets and how can I translate them?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)*

A very similar issue is the repetition of the same word or phrase for emphasis, usually with no other words between them. Because these figures of speech are so similar and have the same effect, we will treat them here together.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages people do not use doublets. Or they may use doublets, but only in certain situations, so a doublet might not make sense in their language in some verses. People might think that the verse is describing two ideas or actions, when it is only describing one. In this case, translators may need to find some other way to express the meaning expressed by the doublet.

Examples From the Bible

> He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

The bolded words mean the same thing. Together they mean the people were spread out.

> He attacked two men **more righteous** and **better** than himself. (1 Kings 2:32b ULT)

This means that they were "much more righteous" than he was.

> You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

This means that they had decided to lie, which is another way of saying that they intended to deceive people.

> ... like of a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

This means that he was like a lamb that did not have any defect—not even one.

> Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, **"Master! Master!** We are perishing!" (Luke 8:24 ULT)

The repetition of "Master" means that the disciples called to Jesus urgently and continually.

Translation Strategies

If a doublet would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, consider these strategies.

(1) Translate only one of the words or phrases.
(2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words or phrases and add a word that intensifies it such as "very" or "great" or "many."
(3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language's ways of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate only one of the words.

> You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

> > "You have decided to prepare **false** things to say."

(2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words and add a word that intensifies it such as "very" or "great" or "many."

> He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

> > "He has one people **very spread out**."

(3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language's ways of doing that.

> … like a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

> > • English can emphasize this with "any" and "at all."

> > "… like a lamb **without any blemish at all**."

> Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, **"Master! Master!** We are perishing!" (Luke 8:24 ULT)

> > Then they approached {and} woke him up, **urgently shouting, "Master!** We are perishing!"

"

Referenced in: Zechariah 1:6; Zechariah 2:6; Zechariah 4:6; Zechariah 9:9; Zechariah 9:10

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis[1] 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:

> 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)*

> 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:

> 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.

English has a punctuation symbol which is also called an ellipsis. It is a series of three dots (…) used to indicate an intentional omission of a word, phrase, sentence or more from text without altering its original meaning. This translationAcademy article is not about the punctuation mark, but about the concept of omission of words that normally should be in the sentence.

"

Referenced in:

Exclamations

Description

Exclamations are words or sentences that show strong feeling such as surprise, joy, fear, or anger. In the ULT and UST, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end. The mark shows that it is an exclamation. The situation and the meaning of what the people said helps us understand what feelings they were expressing. In the example below from Matthew 8, the speakers were terribly afraid. In the example from Matthew 9, the speakers were amazed, because something happened that they had never seen before.

> This page answers the question: *What are ways of translating exclamations?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Sentence Types (UTA PDF)*

> Save us, Lord; we are about to die! (Matthew 8:25b ULT)

> When the demon had been driven out, the mute man spoke. The crowds were astonished and said, "This has never been seen before in Israel!" (Matthew 9:33 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages have different ways of showing that a sentence communicates strong emotion.

Examples From the Bible

Some exclamations have a word that shows feeling. The sentences below have "Oh" and "Ah." The word "oh" here shows the speaker's amazement.

> **Oh**, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33 ULT)

The word "Alas" below shows that Gideon was very frightened.

> When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, "**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)

> Some exclamations start with a question word such as "how" or "why," even though they are not questions. The sentence below shows that the speaker is amazed at how unsearchable God's judgments are.

> **How** unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

Some exclamations in the Bible do not have a main verb. The exclamation below shows that the speaker is disgusted with the person he is speaking to.

> You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is "is" or "are."
(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling.
(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.
(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.
(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is "is" or "are."

> You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

>> "You **are** such a worthless person!"

> Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

>> "Oh, the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God **are** so deep!"

(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling. In the first suggested translation below, the word "wow" shows that they were astonished. In the second suggested translation, the expression "Oh no" shows that something terrible or frightening has happened.

> They were extremely astonished, saying, "He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." (Mark 7:37 ULT)

>> "They were extremely astonished, saying, '**Wow**! He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'"

> Alas, oh my Lord Yahweh! For because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face! (Judges 6:22b ULT)

>> "**Oh no**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"

(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.

> "**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)

>> "Lord Yahweh, **what will happen to me**? For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" "**Help**, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"

(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

> How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

>> "His judgments are **so** unsearchable and his ways are **far** beyond discovering!"

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

> When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, "**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)

>> Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. **He was terrified** and said, "**Alas**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"

"

Referenced in:

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."

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)

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.

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.

"

Referenced in: Zechariah 1:3; Zechariah 1:4; Zechariah 2:5; Zechariah 2:10; Zechariah 5:4; Zechariah 8:6; Zechariah 8:11; Zechariah 8:17; Zechariah 10:12; Zechariah 11:6; Zechariah 13:2; Zechariah 13:7

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.

> 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)*

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_younum.

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses a singular form of "you" even though he is speaking to a crowd. For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

• 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 or she is talking to. People use the **formal** form of "you" when speaking to someone who is older, or has higher authority, or is someone they do not know very well. People use the **informal** form when speaking to someone who is not older, or does not have higher authority, or is a family member or close friend.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_youform.

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

• Forms of "You" — Formal or Informal

Masculine and Feminine

Some languages have a **masculine** form and a **feminine** form of the word for "you." People use the **masculine** form when speaking to a man or boy and the **feminine** form when speaking to a woman or girl.

English does not make any of the above distinctions, so they are absent in the ULT. Please be aware of this and use the appropriate forms of "you" if your language does make any of these distinctions.

"

Referenced in: Zechariah 6:15; Zechariah 14:5

Hebrew Months

Description

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**[1] you must humble yourselves and do no work.

The footnote would look like:

> [1] 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: Zechariah 1:1; Zechariah 1:7; Zechariah 7:1; Zechariah 7:3

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** 1

The footnote would look like:

> > [1] Most versions say "Saul" here, but most of the time in the Bible he is
> > called "Paul."

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

> But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

> > But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write "Saul" where the source text has "Saul" and "Paul" where the source text has "Paul."

> a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

> > a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

> > [1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

> But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

> > But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

> It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)

> > It came about in Iconium that **Paul**[1] and Barnabas entered together into
> > the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

> > [1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

"

Next we recommend you learn about:

Copy or Borrow Words *(UTA PDF)*

Referenced in: Introduction to Zechariah; Zechariah 1:1; Zechariah 1:7; Zechariah 6:10; Zechariah 6:11; Zechariah 6:14; Zechariah 7:2; Zechariah 12:11; Zechariah 14:5; Zechariah 14:10

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.

> 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)*

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.

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:

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:

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)

- 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.")

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**

"

Referenced in: Zechariah 1:1; Zechariah 1:7; Zechariah 1:10; Zechariah 1:11; Zechariah 1:15; Zechariah 3:4; Zechariah 3:7; Zechariah 4:8; Zechariah 4:14; Zechariah 5:3; Zechariah 5:9; Zechariah 6:5; Zechariah 6:9; Zechariah 7:1; Zechariah 7:4; Zechariah 7:8; Zechariah 8:1; Zechariah 8:9; Zechariah 8:13; Zechariah 8:18; Zechariah 9:6; Zechariah 10:5; Zechariah 10:11; Zechariah 11:16; Zechariah 11:17; Zechariah 13:2; Zechariah 13:7; Zechariah 14:5; Zechariah 14:8; Zechariah 14:13; Zechariah 14:16

Introduction of New and Old Participants

Description

The first time that people or things are mentioned in a story, they are **new participants**. After that, whenever they are mentioned, they are **old participants**.

> Now **there was a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus** … **This man** came to Jesus at night … Jesus replied and said to **him** … (John 3:1, 2a, 3a)

<div style="border">

This page answers the question: *Why cannot the readers of my translation understand who the author was writing about?*

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

Parts of Speech *(UTA PDF)*
Writing Styles *(UTA PDF)*

</div>

The first bolded phrase introduces Nicodemus as a new participant. After being introduced, he is then referred to as "This man" and "him" when he has become an old participant.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In order to make your translation clear and natural, it is necessary to refer to the participants in such a way that people will know if they are new participants or participants that they have already read about. Different languages have different ways of doing this. You must follow the way that your language does this, not the way that the source language does this.

Examples From the Bible

New Participants

Often the most important new participant is introduced with a phrase that says that he existed, such as "There was a man," as in the example below. The phrase "There was" tells us that this man existed. The word "a" in "a man" tells us that the author is speaking about him for the first time. The rest of the sentence tells where this man was from, who is family was, and what his name was.

> **Now there was a man** from Zorah, of the families of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. (Judges 13:2a ULT)

A new participant who is not the most important participant is often introduced in relation to the more important person who was already introduced. In the example below, Manoah's wife is simply referred to as "his wife." This phrase shows her relationship to him.

> Now there was one man from Zorah, of the families of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. **His wife** was barren and she had never given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULT)

Sometimes a new participant is introduced simply by name because the author assumes that the readers know who the person is. In the first verse of 1 Kings, the author assumes that his readers know who King David is, so there is no need to explain who he is.

> Now King David was old, he had advanced in the days, and they covered him with the garments, but it was not warm enough for him. (1 Kings 1:1 ULT)

Old Participants

A person who has already been brought into the story can be referred to with a pronoun after that. In the example below, Manoah is referred to with the pronoun "his," and his wife is referred to with the pronoun "she."

> **His wife** was barren and **she** had never given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULT)

Old participants can also be referred to in other ways, depending on what is happening in the story. In the example below, the story is about bearing a son, and Manoah's wife is referred to by the noun phrase "the wife."

> The angel of Yahweh appeared to **the wife** and he said to her ... (Judges 13:3a ULT)

If the old participant has not been mentioned for a while, or if there could be confusion between participants, the author may use the participant's name again. In the example below, Manoah is referred to by his name, which the author has not used since verse 2.

> Then **Manoah** prayed to Yahweh. (Judges 13:8a ULT)

Some languages place an affix on the verb that tells something about the subject. In some of those languages, people do not always use noun phrases or pronouns for old participants when they are the subject of the sentence. The marker on the verb gives enough information for the listener to understand who the subject is. (See Verbs.)

Translation Strategies

(1) If the participant is new, use one of your language's ways of introducing new participants.
(2) If it is not clear to whom a pronoun refers, use a noun phrase or name.
(3) If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the participant is new, use one of your language's ways of introducing new participants.

> Then Joseph, who was called Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated as Son of Encouragement), a Levite from Cyprus by birth ... (Acts 4:36-37 ULT) — Starting the sentence with Joseph's name when he has not been introduced yet might be confusing in some languages.
>
>> There was a man from Cyprus who was a Levite. His name was Joseph, and he was given the name Barnabas by the apostles (that is, being interpreted, Son of Encouragement). There was a Levite from Cyprus whose name was Joseph. The apostles gave him the name Barnabas, which means Son of encouragement.

(2) If it is not clear who a pronoun refers to, use a noun phrase or name.

> And it happened that when he was praying in a certain place, when he stopped, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1 ULT) — Since this is the first verse in a chapter, readers might wonder who "he" refers to.
>
>> It happened when **Jesus** finished praying in a certain place, that one of his disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."

(3) If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.

> Joseph's master took Joseph and put him in prison, in the place where all the king's prisoners were put, and Joseph stayed there. (Genesis 39:20) — Since Joseph is the main person in the story, some languages might prefer the pronoun.

> Joseph's master took **him** and put **him** in prison, in the place where all the
> king's prisoners were put, and **he** stayed there in the prison.

"

Next we recommend you learn about:

Pronouns — When to Use Them *(UTA PDF)*

Referenced in: Zechariah 2:3

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: Zechariah 9:2; Zechariah 11:13

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.

> 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)*

> "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)

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: Zechariah 5:9; Zechariah 8:7; Zechariah 8:10; Zechariah 12:6

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.

"

Referenced in: Zechariah 1:3; Zechariah 1:4; Zechariah 1:11; Zechariah 1:16; Zechariah 1:21; Zechariah 2:5; Zechariah 2:7; Zechariah 2:10; Zechariah 2:11; Zechariah 2:12; Zechariah 2:13; Zechariah 3:2; Zechariah 3:8; Zechariah 3:9; Zechariah 4:7; Zechariah 5:3; Zechariah 5:4; Zechariah 6:12; Zechariah 7:11; Zechariah 7:14; Zechariah 8:6; Zechariah 8:12; Zechariah 8:21; Zechariah 9:8; Zechariah 9:11; Zechariah 9:12; Zechariah 9:13; Zechariah 9:15; Zechariah 9:16; Zechariah 10:3; Zechariah 10:4; Zechariah 10:6; Zechariah 10:9; Zechariah 10:11; Zechariah 11 General Notes; Zechariah 11:1; Zechariah 12:1; Zechariah 12:2; Zechariah 12:3; Zechariah 12:4; Zechariah 12:6; Zechariah 12:10; Zechariah 13:1; Zechariah 13:2; Zechariah 13:7; Zechariah 13:8; Zechariah 13:9; Zechariah 14:1; Zechariah 14:18

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.

"

Referenced in: Zechariah 1:12; Zechariah 1:16; Zechariah 1:17; Zechariah 2:10; Zechariah 3:7; Zechariah 3:9; Zechariah 4:9; Zechariah 5:3; Zechariah 6:6; Zechariah 6:8; Zechariah 6:15; Zechariah 7:2; Zechariah 7:7; Zechariah 7:10; Zechariah 7:12; Zechariah 8:2; Zechariah 8:13; Zechariah 8:15; Zechariah 8:19; Zechariah 8:21; Zechariah 8:22; Zechariah 9:1; Zechariah 9:2; Zechariah 9:4; Zechariah 9:5; Zechariah 9:7; Zechariah 9:8; Zechariah 9:10; Zechariah 9:13; Zechariah 9:15; Zechariah 10:3; Zechariah 10:5; Zechariah 10:6; Zechariah 10:11; Zechariah 11:3; Zechariah 11:6; Zechariah 11:14; Zechariah 11:17; Zechariah 12:2; Zechariah 12:4; Zechariah 12:5; Zechariah 12:6; Zechariah 12:7; Zechariah 12:10; Zechariah 12:12; Zechariah 12:13; Zechariah 13:1; Zechariah 13:3; Zechariah 13:9; Zechariah 14:9; Zechariah 14:11; Zechariah 14:14

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: Zechariah 11:12

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 is a list of workers that God gave to the church in their order.

> 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)*

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)*

"

Parallelism

Description

> 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)*

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)

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: Zechariah 3:7; Zechariah 9:9; Zechariah 9:17

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.

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:

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)

- The same root word used as both a verb and as a noun:

> Your old men will **dream dreams** (Joel 2:28 ULT)
>
> Yahweh,...**light lightning** and scatter them (Psalm 144:5-6 ULT)

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: Zechariah 13:7

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 it's own place**."

"

Referenced in: Zechariah 11:6

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 orignal 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: Zechariah 1:5; Zechariah 1:6; Zechariah 3:2; Zechariah 4:5; Zechariah 4:10; Zechariah 4:13; Zechariah 7:5; Zechariah 7:6; Zechariah 7:7

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: Zechariah 4:1; Zechariah 7:12; Zechariah 9:14; Zechariah 9:15; Zechariah 9:16; Zechariah 10:2; Zechariah 10:5; Zechariah 10:7; Zechariah 12:6; Zechariah 12:8

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: Zechariah 2:9; Zechariah 11:4

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, [1] terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had large iron teeth; [2] it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had ten horns. [3]
>
> The footnotes would look like:
>
> > [1] The animal is a symbol for a kingdom. [2] The iron teeth is a symbol for the kingdom's powerful army. [3] The horns are a symbol of powerful kings.

"

Referenced in:

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 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

> *Metonymy (UTA PDF)*
>
> *Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies (UTA PDF)*

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Metonymy (UTA PDF)*
>
> *Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies (UTA PDF)*

"

Referenced in: Zechariah 1:18; Zechariah 2:1; Zechariah 2:13; Zechariah 4:9; Zechariah 5:1; Zechariah 5:5; Zechariah 5:9; Zechariah 6:1; Zechariah 9:10; Zechariah 10:7; Zechariah 14:4

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: Zechariah 1:8

unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 76

Christ, Messiah

Facts:

The terms "Messiah" and "Christ" mean "Anointed One" and refer to Jesus, God's Son.

- Both "Messiah" and "Christ" are used in the New Testament to refer to God's Son, whom God the Father appointed to rule as king over his people, and to save them from sin and death.
- In the Old Testament, the prophets wrote prophecies about the Messiah hundreds of years before he came to earth.
- Often a word meaning "anointed (one)" is used in the Old Testament to refer to the Messiah who would come.
- Jesus fulfilled many of these prophecies and did many miraculous works that proves he is the Messiah; the rest of these prophecies will be fulfilled when he returns.
- The word "Christ" is often used as a title, as in "the Christ" and "Christ Jesus."
- "Christ" also came to be used as part of his name, as in "Jesus Christ."

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated using its meaning, "the Anointed One" or "God's Anointed Savior."
- Many languages use a transliterated word that looks or sounds like "Christ" or "Messiah." (See: How to Translate Unknowns)
- The transliterated word could be followed by the definition of the term as in, "Christ, the Anointed One."
- Be consistent in how this is translated throughout the Bible so that it is clear that the same term is being referred to.
- Make sure the translations of "Messiah" and "Christ" work well in contexts where both terms occur in the same verse (such as John 1:41).

(See also: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Son of God, David, Jesus, anoint)

Bible References:

- 1 John 5:1-3
- Acts 2:35
- Acts 5:40-42
- John 1:40-42
- John 3:27-28
- John 4:25
- Luke 2:10-12
- Matthew 1:16

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:7** The **Messiah** was God's Chosen One who would save the people of the world from sin.
- **17:8** As it happened, the Israelites would have to wait a long time before the **Messiah** came, almost 1,000 years.
- **21:1** From the very beginning, God planned to send the **Messiah**.
- **21:4** God promised King David that the **Messiah** would be one of David's own descendants.
- **21:5** The **Messiah** would start the New Covenant.
- **21:6** God's prophets also said that the **Messiah** would be a prophet, a priest, and a king.

- **21:9** The prophet Isaiah prophesied that the **Messiah** would be born from a virgin.
- **43:7** "But God raised him to life again to fulfill the prophecy which says, 'You will not let your **Holy One** rot in the grave.'"
- **43:9** "But know for certain that God has caused Jesus to become both Lord and **Messiah**!"
- **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."
- **46:6** Saul reasoned with the Jews, proving that Jesus was the **Messiah**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4899, G33230, G55470

"

Referenced in: Introduction to Zechariah

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: Introduction to Zechariah

cross

Definition:

In Bible times, a cross was an upright wooden post stuck into the ground, with a horizontal wooden beam attached to it near the top.

- During the time of the Roman Empire, the Roman government would execute criminals by tying or nailing them to a cross and leaving them there to die.
- Jesus was falsely accused of crimes he did not commit and the Romans put him to death on a cross.
- Note that this is a completely different word from the verb "cross" that means to go over to the other side of something, such as a river or lake.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated using a term in the target language that refers to the shape of a cross.
- Consider describing the cross as something on which people were killed, using phrases such as "execution post" or "tree of death."
- Also consider how this word is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: crucify, Rome)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 1:17
- Colossians 2:15
- Galatians 6:12
- John 19:18
- Luke 9:23
- Luke 23:26
- Matthew 10:38
- Philippians 2:8

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **40:1** After the soldiers mocked Jesus, they led him away to crucify him. They made him carry the **cross** on which he would die.
- **40:2** The soldiers brought Jesus to a place called "the Skull" and nailed his arms and feet to the **cross**.
- **40:5** The Jewish leaders and the other people in the crowd mocked Jesus. They said to him, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the **cross** and save yourself! Then we will believe you."
- **49:10** When Jesus died on the **cross**, he received your punishment.
- **49:12** You must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died on the **cross** instead of you, and that God raised him to life again.

Word Data:

- Strong's: G47160

"

Referenced in: Zechariah 12 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: Zechariah 11 General Notes

high priest, chief priests

Definition:

The term "high priest" refers to a special priest who was appointed to serve for one year as the leader of all of the other Israelite priests. In New Testament times, some other priests were also considered very important Jewish religious leaders, with authority over other priests and the people. These were the chief priests.

- The high priest had special responsibilities. He was the only one who was permitted to go into the most holy part of the tabernacle or the temple to offer a special sacrifice once per year.
- The Israelites had many priests, but only one high priest at a time.
- After high priests retired, they still kept the title, along with some of the responsibilities of the office. For example, Annas was still referred to as high priest during the priesthood of Caiaphas and others.
- The chief priests were responsible for everything needed for the worship services at the temple. They were also in charge of the money that was given to the temple.
- The chief priests were higher in rank and power than the ordinary priests. Only the high priest had more authority.
- The chief priests were some of Jesus' main enemies and they strongly influenced the Roman leaders to arrest and kill him.

Translation Suggestions:

- "High priest" could be translated as "supreme priest" or "highest ranking priest."
- The term "chief priests" could be translated as "head priests" or "leading priests" or "ruling priests."

(See also: Annas, Caiaphas, priest, temple)

Bible References:

- Acts 5:27
- Acts 7:1
- Acts 9:1
- Exodus 30:10
- Hebrews 6:19-20
- Leviticus 16:32
- Luke 3:2
- Mark 2:25-26
- Matthew 26:3-5
- Matthew 26:51-54

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:8** No one could enter the room behind the curtain except the **high priest**, because God lived there.
- **21:7** The Messiah who would come would be the perfect **high priest** who would offer himself as a perfect sacrifice to God.
- **38:3** The Jewish leaders, led by the **high priest**, paid Judas thirty silver coins to betray Jesus.
- **39:1** The soldiers led Jesus to the house of the **high priest** in order for the **high priest** to question him.
- **39:3** Finally, the **high priest** looked directly at Jesus and said, "Tell us, are you the Messiah, the Son of the living God?"
- **44:7** The next day, the Jewish leaders brought Peter and John to the **high priest** and the other religious leaders.

- **45:2** So the religious leaders arrested Stephen and brought him to the **high priest** and the other leaders of the Jews, where more false witnesses lied about Stephen.
- **46:1** The **high priest** gave Saul permission to go to the city of Damascus to arrest Christians there and bring them back to Jerusalem.
- **48:6** Jesus is the Great **High Priest**. Unlike other priests, he offered himself as the only sacrifice that could to take away the sin of all the people in the world. Jesus was the perfect **high priest** because he took the punishment for every sin that anyone has ever committed.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7218, H1419, H3548, G07480, G07490

"

Referenced in: Zechariah 3 General Notes; Zechariah 6 General Notes

iniquity

Definition:

The term "iniquity" is a word that is very similar in meaning to the term "sin," but may more specifically refer to conscious acts of wrongdoing or great wickedness.

- The word "iniquity" literally means a twisting or distorting (of the law). It refers to major injustice.
- Iniquity could be described as deliberate, harmful actions against other people.
- Other definitions of iniquity include "perversity" and "depravity," which are both words that describe conditions of terrible sin.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "iniquity" could be translated as "wickedness" or "perverse actions" or "harmful acts."
- Often, "iniquity" occurs in the same text as the word "sin" and "transgression" so it is important to have different ways of translating these terms.

(See also: sin, transgress, trespass)

Bible References:

- Daniel 9:13
- Exodus 34:5-7
- Genesis 15:14-16
- Genesis 44:16
- Habakkuk 2:12
- Matthew 13:41
- Matthew 23:27-28
- Micah 3:10

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H1942, H5753, H5758, H5766, H5771, H5932, H5999, H7562, G00920, G00930, G04580, G38920, G41890

"

Referenced in: Zechariah 5 General Notes

last day, last days, latter days

Definition:

The term "the last days" refers generally to the time which begins with the first coming of Jesus and ends with his second coming and the final day of judgement. The Bible also calls the final day of judgement "the last day." The phrase "the latter days" is sometimes used in the Bible with the same meaning as the phrase "the last days" but other times it can refer only to a time that is after the time in which the speaker is speaking but before the first coming of Jesus. The term "the last day" refers to the day of final judgement.

- This time period of "the last days" will have an unknown duration.
- The "the last day" is a time of judgment upon those who have turned away from God.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "the last days" can also be translated as "the final days" or "the end times."
- The term "the last day" can also be translated as "the final day."
- In some contexts, this could be translated as "end of the world" or "when this world ends."

(See also: day of the Lord, judge, turn, world)

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 3:3-4
- Daniel 10:14-15
- Hebrews 1:2
- Isaiah 2:2
- James 5:3
- Jeremiah 23:19-20
- John 11:24-26
- Micah 4:1

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0319, H3117, G20780, G22500

"

Referenced in: Introduction to Zechariah; Zechariah 13 General Notes; Zechariah 14 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

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Referenced in: Zechariah 3 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: Zechariah 1 General Notes; Zechariah 6 General Notes; Zechariah 9 General Notes

redeem, redeemer, redemption

Definition:

The term "redeem" refers to buying back something or someone that has been previously owned or held captive. A "redeemer" is someone who redeems something or someone.

- God gave laws to the Israelites about how to redeem people or things. For example, someone could redeem a person who was in slavery by paying the price so that the slave could go free. The word "ransom" also refers to this practice.
- If someone's land had been sold, a relative of that person could "redeem" or "buy back" that land so that it would stay in the family.
- These practices show how God redeems people who are in slavery to sin. When he died on the cross, Jesus paid the full price for people's sins and redeemed all those who trust in him for salvation. People who have been redeemed by God are set free from sin and its punishment.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term "redeem" could also be translated as "buy back" or "pay to free (someone)" or "ransom."
- The term "redemption" could be translated as "ransom" or "freedom payment" or "buying back."
- The words "ransom" and "redeem" have basically the same meaning, so some languages may have only one term to translate both these words. The word "ransom," however, can also mean the payment necessary to "redeem" something or someone. The term "redeem" never refers to the actual payment itself.

(See also: free, ransom)

Bible References:

- Colossians 1:13-14
- Ephesians 1:7-8
- Ephesians 5:16
- Galatians 3:13-14
- Galatians 4:5
- Luke 2:38
- Ruth 2:20

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1350, H1353, H6299, H6302, H6304, H6306, H6561, H7069, G00590, G06290, G18050, G30840, G30850

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Referenced in: Zechariah 10 General Notes

Yahweh of hosts, God of hosts, host of heaven, host of the heavens, Lord of hosts

Definition:

The terms "Yahweh of hosts" and "God of hosts" are titles that express God's authority over the thousands of angels who obey him.

- The term "host" or "hosts" is a word that refers to a large number of something, such as an army of people or the massive number of stars. It can also refer to all the many spirit beings, including evil spirits. The context makes it clear what is being referred to.
- Phrases similar to "host of the heavens" refer to all the stars, planets and other heavenly bodies.
- In the New Testament, the phrase, "Lord of hosts" means the same as "Yahweh of hosts" but it cannot be translated that way since the Hebrew word "Yahweh" is not used in the New Testament.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate "Yahweh of hosts" could include, "Yahweh, who rules all the angels" or "Yahweh, the ruler over armies of angels" or "Yahweh, the ruler of all creation."
- The phrase "of hosts" in the terms "God of hosts" and "Lord of hosts" would be translated the same way as in the phrase "Yahweh of hosts" above.
- Certain churches do not accept the literal term "Yahweh" and prefer to use the capitalized word, "LORD" instead, following the tradition of many Bible versions. For these churches, a translation of the term "LORD of hosts" would be used in the Old Testament for "Yahweh of hosts."

(See also: angel, authority, God, lord, Lord, Lord Yahweh Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Zechariah 13:2

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H3068, H6635, G29620, G45190

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Referenced in: Zechariah 8 General Notes

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