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2 Thessalonians

Version 77

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Table of Contents

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2 Thessalonians

Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the book of 2 Thessalonians

Greetings and thanksgiving (1:1-2)
Believers suffer from persecution (1:3-12)

   • God uses persecution to increase faith, love, and endurance in believers (1:3-4)
   • God is just: (1:5-12)
   • God will make believers worthy of his kingdom
   • God will give relief to believers
   • God will punish those who persecute believers

Some believers misunderstand about the second coming of Christ (2:1-12)

   • Christ's return has not yet happened (2:1-2)
   • Instruction about the events that will precede the return of Christ (2:3-12)

Paul's confidence that God will save the Thessalonian believers (2:13-17)

   • Paul calls the Thessalonian believers to "stand firm" (2:13-15)
   • Paul prays that God will comfort them (2:16-17)

Paul requests that the Thessalonian believers pray for him (3:1-5)
Paul give commands about idle believers (3:6-15)
Closing (3:16-17)

Who wrote 2 Thessalonians?

Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians. He was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted believers. After he became a believer, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul is the author of this letter, but he includes Silvanus and Timothy as senders of the letter. Paul wrote this letter while he, Silvanus, and Timothy were staying in the city of Corinth.

What is the book of 2 Thessalonians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the believers in the city of Thessalonica. He encouraged the believers because they were being persecuted. He told them to continue living in a way that pleased God. He also wanted to teach them again about Christ's return. He also warned them that they should not be idle but should work as they wait for Christ to return.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "2 Thessalonians" or "Second Thessalonians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Second Letter to the Church in Thessalonica," or "The Second Letter to the Christians/believers in Thessalonica." (See: **How to Translate Names (p.101)**)

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the "second coming" of Jesus?

Paul wrote much in this letter about Jesus' eventual return to Earth. When Jesus returns, he will judge all mankind. He will also rule over creation. And he will cause there to be peace everywhere. Paul also explained that a "man of lawlessness" will come before Christ's return. This person will obey Satan and cause many people to oppose God. But Jesus will destroy this person when he returns.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What did Paul mean by the expression "in Christ," "in the Lord," etc.?

Paul meant to express the idea of a very close union between Christ and the believers. Please see the introduction to the book of Romans for more details about this kind of expression.

How are pronouns used in this letter?

In this letter, the words "we" and "us" refer to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, unless otherwise noted. If your language differentiates between inclusive and exclusive pronouns, use an exclusive pronoun for these. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.96)**)

In this letter, the words "you" and "your" are plural and refer to the Thessalonian believers. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.99)**)

What are the major issues in the text of the book of 2 Thessalonians?

For the following verses, some ancient manuscripts have a different reading than others. The ULT follows the reading that scholars consider to be the most accurate and puts the other reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in your area that your people are familiar with, consider using the reading that it follows. If not, translators are advised to follow the reading in the ULT. * "and the man of lawlessness is revealed" (2:3). The ULT, UST, and most modern versions read this way. Other versions follow the reading, "and the man of sin is revealed." * "For God chose you as the firstfruits for salvation" (2:13) The ULT, UST, and some other versions read this way. The other reading is, "For God chose you from the first/beginning for salvation."

(See: **Textual Variants (p.147)**)

2 Thessalonians 1

2 Thessalonians 1 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Verses 1-2 formally introduce this letter. Letters in the ancient Near East commonly had introductions of this type in which the sender identified himself, then the recipient, then gave a greeting.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible.

A paradox occurs in verses 4-5 where Paul talks about the Thessalonian believers' faithfulness through persecution as "evidence of the righteous judgment of God." People would not normally think that believing in God while being persecuted is a sign of God's righteous judgment. But the fact that God gave them the ability to persevere in their faith is evidence that God claims them as his own and will judge them as worthy of his kingdom. In verses 5-10, Paul goes on to explain more of God's righteous judgment, that God will reward those who believe in him and that he will punish those who afflict his people. (2 Thessalonians 1:4-5)

Another paradox occurs in verse 9 where Paul describes the penalty for rejecting God as "eternal destruction." Normally when something is destroyed it ceases to exist. But in this case, the people who reject God will experience eternal separation from God, as the verse goes on to explain. Being separated from God destroys all that was enjoyable about their lives, and this continuous destruction is what they experience through eternity. (2 Thessalonians 1:9)

2 Thessalonians 1:1

Silvanus

Silvanus is the Latin form of "Silas." **Silvanus** is the name of a man, the same person listed in the book of Acts as Paul's fellow traveler. If your readers may not know that these two are the same person, you could use the name "Silas" in the text and "Silvanus" in the footnote. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.101)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.101)**)

Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church

You may want to fill in the words necessary to make this a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy send this letter to the church" (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**)

Paul and Silvanus and Timothy

Although Paul wrote this letter, he identifies Silvanus and Timothy as also sending it. This means that they were with him and were in agreement with it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could make that clear, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Here Paul speaks figuratively of the believers as though they were occupying space inside of God and Jesus. This metaphor expresses the idea that believers are spiritually united to God and Jesus. If this might be misunderstood in your language, you could express the meaning in a non-figurative way. Alternative translation: "united to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" or "sharing life with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**)

2 Thessalonians 1:2

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Many languages have different ways to offer good wishes as they greet. Paul greeted his letter recipients with a blessing. Use a form that would be a good wish or blessing in your language. Alternate translation: "We pray that God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace" or "I wish you grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" or "May the grace and peace of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be your portion" or "May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ show grace and give peace to your hearts" (See: **Blessings (p.71)**) (See: **Blessings (p.71)**)

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind **grace** and **peace**, you can express these ideas as verbs or in another way. Alternate translation: "May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be gracious to you and give rest to your inner being" or "…be favorable to you and make you at ease" or "…be kind to you and set your heart at rest" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

2 Thessalonians 1:3

General Information:

General Information:

In verses 3-12, Paul gives thanks for the believers in Thessalonica and prays for them. A heading for this section might be, "Thanks and Prayers." (See: **Section Headings (p.143)**) (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/checking/headings]])

We ought always to give thanks

General Information:

Paul is expressing here that he has a moral obligation to God to give thanks for the believers in Thessalonica. Use a natural expression for this in your language. Alternate translation: "We are bound always to thank" or "We can do no other than to thank" or "We must give thanks continually to"

We ought always to give thanks to God

Paul uses **always** as a generalization meaning "often" or "regularly." Alternate translation: "We should often give thanks to God" (See: **Hyperbole (p.105)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.105)**)

We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers

If your readers might misunderstand his meaning and think that Paul is expressing an obligation only and that he does not actually pray for the Thessalonians, you could express the reality explicitly. Alternate translation: "We always thank God for you, brothers, as we ought" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

brothers

Here, **brothers** means fellow Christians, including both men and women. If your readers understand that it is addressed only to men, you may need to use both the masculine and the feminine forms of that word in your language. If you use a nonfigurative word such as "believers", see that both the genders are addressed. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**)

just as it is fitting

If it is difficult to express **just as it is fitting** in your language or if it is unclear what **it** refers to, consider starting a new sentence here to state it clearly. Alternate translation: "When we give thanks for you we are doing the right thing" or "Giving thanks for you is right for us to be doing" or " … is the right thing to do" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.135)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.135)**)

your faith is increasing greatly

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **faith**, you can express this idea as a verb. Alternate translation: "you believe in Christ more and more" or "you increasingly trust in Christ" or "you rely on Christ more each day" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

the love of each one of you all for one another is increasing

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **love**, you can express this idea as a verb. Alternate translation: "each of you sincerely loves one another more and more" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

one another

Here, **one another** means fellow believers. Alternate translation: "each other" or "each believer" (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.137)**) (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.137)**)

2 Thessalonians 1:4

we ourselves

Here, **ourselves** is added to **we** to emphasize that even the apostle Paul and his associates are boasting about the Thessalonian believers. Alternate translation: "even we" or "we are the ones who" (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.137)**) (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.137)**)

your endurance and faith

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **endurance** and **faith** or if it is unclear how these two terms relate, you can express these same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "how you patiently continue to trust in Jesus" or "how you persevere in believing in the Lord" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

in all your persecutions and afflictions

The two words **persecutions** and **afflictions** are saying very similar things. The repetition is used to emphasize how difficult life has been for the Thessalonian believers. If two words are difficult to find in your language or if your language does not use repetition in this way, you can use one word with this meaning and make the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "as you have been going through all these very difficult times" or "as people make you suffer in all the ways" (See: **Doublet (p.91)**) (See: **Doublet (p.91)**)

faith in all your persecutions

Here **faith in all your persecutions** does not mean to believe in or trust in persecutions. If your readers might be confused by that, you could express it more clearly. Alternate translation: "faith in Jesus Christ during all the times you are persecuted" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

2 Thessalonians 1:5

evidence of the righteous judgment of God, for you to be considered worthy

The **evidence** that Paul is referring to here is the faithful endurance of the Thessalonian believers while suffering persecution, which he mentioned in verse 4. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. It may also be helpful to start a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "Your endurance while suffering is a clear indication of God's righteous judgment, that he considers you worthy" or "Your faithfulness through persecution shows that God is just and right to consider you worthy" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

for you to be considered worthy of the kingdom of God

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "that God will consider you worthy to be part of his kingdom" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

for which you also suffer

Here, **also** could mean: (1) the Thessalonian believers are suffering for the kingdom of God as well as being counted worthy of it. Alternate translation: "being a part of which is also the reason that you are suffering" (2) the Thessalonian believers are suffering along with other believers. Alternate translation: "which is why you are going through sufferings along with many others" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

2 Thessalonians 1:6

if indeed {it is} righteous for God

Paul is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might misunderstand and think that what Paul is saying is not certain, then you can translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since you know that God is just" or "for God is certainly right" (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p. 75)**) (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.75)**)

for God to return affliction to the ones afflicting you

Here, **to return** means to cause someone to experience the same thing that they did to someone else as though the same action were bouncing back onto the people who did that action. Use a natural expression for this kind of reciprocal action. Alternate translation: "for God to afflict those who are afflicting you" or "for God to pay back those who are afflicting you" "for God to do the same to those who are afflicting you" (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**)

to return affliction to the ones afflicting you

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **affliction**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "to afflict those who are afflicting you" or "to trouble those who are troubling you" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

2 Thessalonians 1:7

and relief to you

The words **and relief to you** continue the description of what God is right "to return" to people (verse 6). If this would not be understood in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "and it is righteous for God to give relief to you" (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**)

and relief to you, the ones being afflicted with us

Here, **you who are being afflicted** refers to the Thessalonian believers, and **us** refers to Paul and his associates. Other people are afflicting both groups because of their faith in Jesus. Alternate translation: "and relief to you who are being afflicted just as we are being afflicted" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.135)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.135)**)

relief to you

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **relief**, you can express this idea with a verb or in another way. Alternate translation: "to relieve you" or "to rescue you" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

the ones being afflicted

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: "whom other people are afflicting" or "from the affliction that others are causing you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

at the revealing of the Lord Jesus

Here, **at the revealing** is an indication of the time when the suffering believers will have relief from their suffering. Alternate translation: "at the time when the Lord Jesus is revealed" or "when everyone sees the Lord Jesus coming" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

2 Thessalonians 1:8

taking vengeance on the ones

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **vengeance**, you can express this idea in another way. Since this is part of God's justice, do not use a word that implies that God is doing something illegal or inappropriate. Alternate translation: "punishing the people" or "judging the ones" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

on the ones not having known God

Here, **those who have not known God** refers to those who have refused the relationship with God that he had offered to them. Alternate translation: "on those who did not want to know God" or "on those who have rejected God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

and on the ones not obeying the gospel

The phrase, **not obeying the gospel** could refer to: (1) the same people as **those not having known God**. Alternate translation: "and who are not obeying the gospel" (2) a separate group. Alternate translation: "and also on those who are not obeying the gospel" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

obeying the gospel

The phrase, **obeying the gospel** is an idiom that means to live according to everything that God tells us in the gospel message. Alternate translation: "living according to the message of the gospel" or "heeding the admonitions that are part of the gospel message" (See: **Idiom (p.109)**) (See: **Idiom (p.109)**)

the gospel of our Lord Jesus

Here, Paul is using the general possessive form **of our Lord Jesus** to describe **the gospel**. The specific meaning here is that the gospel is about Jesus. Alternate translation: "the gospel that is about our Lord Jesus" or "the gospel message that tells us about our Lord Jesus" (See: **Possession (p.130)**) (See: **Possession (p.130)**)

2 Thessalonians 1:9

who will pay the penalty

Here, **who** refers to the people who are not obeying the gospel, not to the Lord Jesus. You may prefer to start a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "Those people will pay the penalty" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.135)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.135)**)

who will pay the penalty

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of the word **penalty**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "who will be punished by God" or "whom God will punish" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

will pay the penalty

Here, the phrase **pay the penalty** is an idiom meaning to suffer the consequences of doing something bad. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "will suffer the consequences" or "will undergo the retribution" (See: **Idiom (p.109)**) (See: **Idiom (p.109)**)

eternal destruction

Here, **eternal destruction** further describes the **penalty** that people will experience if they refuse to "obey the gospel." The **destruction** that these people will experience is **eternal**, that is, it never ends. Therefore, do not translate with the meaning that these people will cease to exist. They will continue to exist, but continually experience the ruin of their lives. If necessary, put this information in a footnote. Alternate translation: "God will punish them eternally" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

away from the face of the Lord

Here, **the face of the Lord** is an idiom meaning the presence of the Lord. Alternate translation: "away from our Lord Jesus" or "separated from the presence of the Lord Jesus" (See: **Idiom (p.109)**) (See: **Idiom (p.109)**)

the glory of his power

Here, the possessive form is describing **power** that has **glory**. If this is not clear in your language, you could use the adjective "glorious" to describe the **power**. Alternate translation: "his glorious power" (See: **Possession (p.130)**) (See: **Possession (p.130)**)

the glory of his power

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the ideas of **glory** and **power**, you can express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "experiencing how magnificent and powerful he is" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

2 Thessalonians 1:10

when he comes on that day

Here, **that day** is the day when Jesus will return to the world. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "on the day when Jesus returns to the world" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

to be glorified by his saints and to be marveled at by all the ones having believed

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: "as his saints glorify him and all those who have believed marvel at him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

to be glorified by his saints and to be marveled at

Here, the two verbs **to be glorified** and **to be marveled at** indicate the result of Jesus' coming, not the purpose. Use a connector here that indicates result. Alternate translation: "as his saints glorify him and all those who have believed marvel at him" or "with the result that his saints will glorify him and all those who have believed will marvel at him" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.80)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.80)**)

to be glorified by his saints and to be marveled at by all the ones having believed

The **saints** and **those who have believed** are one group of people, not two. If your readers might be confused by this, you could combine these into one phrase. Alternate translation: "with the result that all of his saints, that is, the believers, will glorify him and marvel at him" or "as all of his people glorify him and marvel at him"

our testimony to you has been believed

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 have believed our witness when we shared it with you" or "when we testified about the saving power of Jesus Christ, you believed what we said" (See: **Active or Passive (p. 65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

2 Thessalonians 1:11

For this

Here, **for this** connects verse 11 to verse 10, so that verse 11 gives the means or method (prayer for the Thessalonian believers) for reaching the purpose that verse 10 has just described (for Jesus to "be glorified … and marveled at"). Use a natural way in your language for introducing this relationship. Alternate translation: "This is why" or "To this end" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.77)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.77)**)

we also pray always for you

Paul is using **always** as an exaggeration in order to emphasize how often he prays for them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language. Alternate translation: "we also pray regularly for you" or "we continue to pray for you" (See: **Hyperbole (p.105)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.105)**)

of the calling

Here, **calling** refers to God appointing or choosing people to belong to him and to proclaim his message of salvation through Jesus. Alternate translation: "to appoint you to belong to him" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

he may fulfill every desire of goodness and work of faith in power

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind **desire**, **goodness**, **faith**, and **power**, you can express these ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "he may make you able to do all of the good things that you want to do because you trust in Jesus and because God is powerful" or "he may empower you to act on what you believe in order to do good things in every way that you desire, because God is powerful" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

and he may fulfill

Here, **and he may fulfill** adds another reason why Paul and his associates **pray always** for the Thessalonian believers. This part of the sentence assumes some of the words from earlier in the sentence. If this would be misunderstood in your language, you could supply these words from the earlier part of the sentence. Alternate translation: "and we also pray so that he may fulfill" (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**)

2 Thessalonians 1:12

so that

Here, **so that** introduces the purpose for which Paul and his associates pray all of the things mentioned in verse 11. It is a repetition of the same purpose that was given in verse 10, using similar words. Alternate translation: "and we also pray so that" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.77)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.77)**)

the name of our Lord Jesus

Here, **the name of our Lord Jesus** figuratively stands for the person of the Lord Jesus. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "the reputation of our Lord Jesus" or "our Lord Jesus" (See: **Metonymy (p.121)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.121)**)

so that the name of our Lord Jesus might be glorified in you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. This could mean: (1) the Thessalonian believers will glorify Jesus. Alternate translation: "so that you would glorify the name of our Lord Jesus" (2) others will glorify Jesus because of what he has done for the Thessalonian believers. Alternate translation: "so that people would glorify the name of our Lord Jesus because of you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

and you in him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "and Jesus might glorify you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

and you in him

The phrase **and you in him** leaves out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If this would be misunderstood in your language, you could make a complete sentence by supplying these words from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: "and so that you might be glorified in him" or "and so that he might glorify you" (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**)

according to the grace of our God

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **grace**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "according to how exceedingly kind our God and the Lord Jesus Christ are to you" or "as our God and the Lord Jesus Christ continue to abundantly bless you" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ

The phrase translated as **our God and the Lord Jesus Christ** could refer to: (1) two persons of the Trinity, God the Father and Jesus the Son. (2) one person, Jesus, who is both God and Lord. Alternate translation: "our God and Lord, Jesus Christ"

2 Thessalonians 2

2 Thessalonians 2 General Notes

Special Concepts in this Chapter

Man of lawlessness

This person is also called "the son of destruction" and "the lawless one" in this chapter. He is not Satan, but he is empowered by Satan and is the leader of those who do Satan's evil work in the world in the last days. He is certainly one of the "antichrists" mentioned by John (1 John 2:18) and may be the final one, described as a beast in Revelation 13. (See: **antichrist (p.155)**)

Sits in the temple of God

Paul could be referring to the Jerusalem temple that the Romans destroyed several years after he wrote this letter. Or he could be referring to a future physical temple, or to the church as the spiritual temple of God. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:1

General Information:

General Information:

In verses 1-12, Paul exhorts believers not to be deceived about the day Jesus will come back and warns them about the coming man of lawlessness. A heading for this section might be, "The Man of Lawlessness" or "The Deception before Jesus Returns." (See: **Section Headings (p.143)**) (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/checking/headings]])

Now

The word translated **Now** marks a change in topic. You can use a natural way in your language to show that this is a new section with a different topic than the previous section. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.84)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.84)**)

about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering to him

The **coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** and **our gathering to him** are two actions that happen at the same time. You can make this clear in your translation with an appropriate connecting word or phrase. Alternate translation: "regarding the time of our Lord Jesus coming when we will be gathered together unto him" (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.82)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.82)**)

about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering to him

If it is more natural in your language, you could use active verbs for the events of **coming** and **gathering**. Alternate translation: "about the time when our Lord Jesus will come and gather us to himself" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

brothers

Here, **brothers** means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:2

for you not to be quickly shaken in your mind

The phrase **shaken in {your} mind** refers to a person's thoughts being unsettled. You could also express this positively. Alternate translation: "for you to remain firm in your thinking" (See: **Double Negatives (p.88)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.88)**)

and not to be troubled

The phrase **to be troubled** refers to a person's emotions being unsettled. You could also express this positively. Alternate translation: "and remain peaceful when a message comes" or "and keep calm when you hear something" (See: **Double Negatives (p.88)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.88)**)

neither by a spirit nor by a word nor by a letter as if from us

Paul is leaving out some words here that might be necessary in your language. If it is helpful, you could supply these words. Alternate translation: "when you receive a message either by means of a spirit or by means of a spoken word or by means of a written letter that pretends to be coming from us" (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**)

as if from us

Paul is leaving out some words here that might be necessary in your language. If it is helpful, you could supply these words. Alternate translation: "that claims to have come from us" or "trying to deceive you that it is from us" (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**)

as if

Paul is leaving out some words here that might be necessary in your language. If it is helpful, you could supply these words. Alternate translation: "that talks as if" or "that falsely claims that" (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**)

the day of the Lord

Here, **the day of the Lord** refers to the time when Jesus will come back to the earth for all believers.

2 Thessalonians 2:3

May no one deceive you in any way

General Information:

Alternate translation: "Do not permit anyone to fool you" or "Do not believe at all the wrong words that people are telling you about this"

for unless the apostasy comes first

Here, Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the previous verse. Alternate translation: "for the day of the Lord will not come unless the apostasy comes first" (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**)

the apostasy

Here, **the apostasy** refers to a future time when many people will turn away from God. If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express it in another way. Alternate translation: "the time when many people will rebel against God" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

the man of lawlessness is revealed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the man of lawlessness arrives" or "the man of lawlessness makes himself known" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

the man of lawlessness

Paul is using the possessive form to describe a man who is characterized by lawlessness. By this Paul means that this man will oppose all of God's commandments and instructions. If this is not clear in your language, you could express this another way. Alternate translation: "the lawless man" or "the man who opposes God's rule" (See: **Possession (p.130)**) (See: **Possession (p.130)**)

the son of destruction

Here, **son of destruction** is an idiom meaning a person who is destined for destruction. Alternate translation: "the one who will be destroyed" or "the one whom God will destroy" (See: **Idiom (p.109)**) (See: **Idiom (p.109)**)

the son of destruction

God will destroy this person some time after the events of verse 4. If it would be clearer in your language, consider moving this phrase to the end of verse 4. (See: **Order of Events (p.125)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.125)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:4

everything being called god or an object of worship

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "everything that people call God or whatever they worship" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

he himself sits

Here, **he sits** is part of a description of the kinds of things that this person does. If it is confusing in your language to use the present tense for this, you could use the future tense, since this will happen in the future. Alternate translation: "he will sit" (See: **Predictive Past (p.133)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.133)**)

showing that he himself is God

Here, **showing that he himself is God** does not mean that this man is God, but only that he is displaying himself to the world as though he were God. Alternate translation: "showing himself as God" or "attempting to demonstrate to people that he is God"

2 Thessalonians 2:5

Do you not remember that, still being with you, I was telling you these things

Paul is not asking for information here, but is using the question form to remind the Thessalonians of what he taught when he was with them previously. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement. See the UST. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.140)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.140)**)

these things

Here, **these things** refers to the topics that Paul mentioned in verses 3 and 4, including the rebellion against God, the man of lawlessness, and the return of Jesus on the day of the Lord. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 135)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.135)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:6

And now you know the one restraining {him

There are two possibilities for understanding the function of the word **now** here. (1) It goes with **what is restraining him**. Alternate translation: "And you know what is restraining him now" or (2) it goes with **you know**. Alternate translation: "And now you know what is restraining him"

his revealing in his time

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the proper time, when God will allow him to reveal himself" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:7

For

Here, the word translated **For** serves to connect this sentence as a contrast to what Paul has said about **lawlessness**, starting in verse 3. Until here, Paul was talking about lawlessness in the future, but now he wants to clarify that people are already being lawless.Use a natural way in your language for introducing this contrast. Alternate translation: "Now" or "Actually," (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.73)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.73)**)

the mystery of lawlessness is already working

Here, **lawlessness** is characterized as a **mystery** because we cannot understand why people rebel against God's wise instructions unless we understand the spiritual forces at work, which Paul explains here. If your language does not use abstract nouns for these ideas, you can express them in another way. Alternate translation: "people are already mysteriously rebelling against God" or "Satan is already secretly leading people to reject God's laws, as this man will do" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

the one restraining {him

To restrain someone is to hold him back or to keep him from doing what he wants to do. Alternate translation: "the one who has been holding him back"

he comes

Here, **he** refers to the one who is restraining the man of lawlessness. If this is not clear to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the one who restrains the man of lawlessness moves" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.135)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.135)**)

he comes out of the way

Here Paul speaks figuratively of the person who is restraining the man of lawlessness as though he were standing in front of him and blocking his path. If this does not make sense in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor or you could express the meaning in a nonfigurative way. Alternative translation: "he stops restraining him" (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:8

and then the lawless one will be revealed

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 then God will allow the lawless one to show himself" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

with the breath of his mouth

In this figure of speech, **breath** represents the power of God and **mouth** represents the spoken word of Jesus. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "by the power of his spoken word" (See: **Metonymy (p.121)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.121)**)

will kill with the breath of his mouth, and will bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming

These two phrases describe the same event. Paul says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to emphasize how much more powerful Jesus is than the man of lawlessness. If it is confusing for your readers to talk about killing someone and then bringing him to nothing, you could reverse the order of the phrases, as in the UST, or you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: "will destroy by his glorious appearance and with the breath of his mouth" (See: **Parallelism (p.127)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.127)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:9

the arrival of whom is according to a work of Satan

Here, Paul is using the possessive form to describe **work** that **Satan** does. If this is not clear in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Satan will bring this man and will work through him" (See: **Possession (p.130)**) (See: **Possession (p.130)**)

of whom

Here, **whom** refers back to the man of lawlessness. Alternate translation: "of the man of lawlessness"

in all power and signs and false wonders

Here, **all** is hyperbole. It can apply to: (1) only **power**, with the meaning "much" or "great." Alternate translation: "with great power to do signs and false wonders" or (2) **power**, **signs**, and **wonders**, with the meaning "many kinds of." Alternate translation: "with many kinds of power, signs, and false wonders" or (3) a combination of the two. Alternate translation: "with much power to do all kinds of signs and false wonders" (See: **Hyperbole (p.105)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.105)**)

in all power and signs and false wonders

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **power**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "with very powerful signs and false wonders" or "who made him very powerful to do signs and false wonders" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

and signs and false wonders

The words **signs** and **wonders** often occur together and mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize how amazing they are. If your language does not have two words for this or does not use repetition to do this, you can use one word and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "and amazing false miracles" (See: **Doublet (p.91)**) (See: **Doublet (p.91)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:10

all

Here, **all** is hyperbole and could mean: (1) "a high degree of" or (2) "many kinds of" (See: **Hyperbole (p.105)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.105)**)

in all deceit of unrighteousness

Here Paul uses the possessive form to describe **deceit** that results from **unrighteousness**. If the relationship of the words is not clear in your language, you could express it more explicitly. Alternate translation: "because he is so unrighteous, he will be very deceptive" (See: **Possession (p.130)**) (See: **Possession (p.130)**)

in all deceit of unrighteousness to the ones perishing

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **deceit** and **unrighteousness**, you can express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "because he is so unrighteous, he will completely deceive those who are perishing" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

because of which

What follows this phrase is the reason that the people are perishing. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a reason. You may want to start a new sentence here and end what came before it with a period. Alternate translation: "They are perishing because" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.80)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.80)**)

they did not receive the love of the truth

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **love** and **truth**, you can express the same ideas in another way. Also, your language might prefer an expression other than **love** for something as impersonal as **truth**. Alternate translation: "they did not want to consider the true message about Jesus to be important" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

for them to be saved

This phrase could express: (1) the result of receiving the love of the truth. Alternate translation: "and thus be saved" or (2) the purpose of loving the truth. Alternate translation: "so that they could be saved" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.80)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.80)**)

for them to be saved

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who does the action, that would be God. Alternate translation: "for God to save them" or "so that God would save them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:11

because of this

What follows this connector is the result of the action of the people who "did not receive the love of the truth" in verse 10. Use a connector that shows that what the people did in verse 10 is the reason for what follows in this verse. Alternate translation: "for this reason" or "because the people did not receive the love of the truth" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.80)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.80)**)

God is sending to them a working of error for them to believe the lie

Paul is speaking figuratively of **God** allowing something to happen to people as if he is **sending** something to them. Alternate translation: "God is allowing them to think wrongly so that they believe the lies of the man of lawlessness" (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**)

a working of error

Paul is using the possessive form to describe a **working** that is characterized by **error**. This means something that works to produce error in them. Alternate translation: "the ability to think in a wrong way" (See: **Possession (p. 130)**) (See: **Possession (p.130)**)

for them to believe

Here, **for** introduces a purpose clause. Paul is stating the purpose for which God sends the **working of error**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: "so that they may believe" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.77)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.77)**)

for them to believe

Here, **them** refers to the people who "did not receive the love of the truth" in verse 10. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "so that these people may believe" or "in order that the people who did not receive the love of the truth may believe" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.135)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.135)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:12

so that

This phrase introduces a purpose clause. This follows the purpose clause of verse 11, so you may want to link them together. Alternate translation: "and furthermore, so that" or "and therefore" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.77)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.77)**)

they might all be judged

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, that would be God. Alternate translation: "God may judge all of them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

the ones

Here, **those** refers back to the people that Paul has described with similar terms in verse 10. These are the same people who "did not receive the love of the truth" and instead accepted the "deceit of unrighteousness." You may want to start a new sentence here and end what came before with a period. Alternate translation: "Those are the people" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.135)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.135)**)

the ones not having believed the truth, but having taken pleasure in the unrighteousness

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **truth** and **unrighteousness**, you can express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "those who have not believed the true message but have enjoyed doing sinful things" or "those people who have rejected the true message about the Lord and instead have chosen to do what is wrong" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:13

General Information:

General Information:

Paul now changes topics. If you are using section headings, you could put one here before verse 13. Suggested heading: "Paul gives thanks to God for the believers and encourages them." (See: **Section Headings (p.143)**) (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/checking/headings]])

Now

The word translated **Now** marks a change in topic. You can use a natural way in your language to indicate/show that this is a new section with a different topic than the previous section.

we ought always to give thanks

The word **always** is a generalization. This is used to emphasize the importance of the action. If this is not natural in your language, you could use the alternative renderings given. Alternate translation: "we should continually give thanks" or "we must thank God at all times" (See: **Hyperbole (p.105)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.105)**)

we ought

Here, **we** refers to three men, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. If you have exclusive and inclusive first-person pronouns in your language, this should be an exclusive pronoun. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.96)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.96)**)

brothers having been loved by the Lord

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "for the Lord loves you, brothers" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

brothers

Here, **brothers** means fellow Christians, including both men and women. If your readers understand that it is addressed only to men, you may need to use both the masculine and the feminine forms of that word in your language. If you use a nonfigurative word such as "believers", see that both the genders are addressed. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**)

as} firstfruits for salvation

Being among the first people to be saved is spoken of as if the Thessalonian believers were **firstfruits**. Alternate translation: "to be among the first people who believe" or "to be some of the first people whom God was saving" (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**)

as} firstfruits for salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth

If it would be clearer in your language, you could change the abstract nouns **salvation**, **sanctification**, **belief**, and **truth** into verbal forms. Alternate translation: "to be among the first people who believe what is true, and whom God has saved and set apart for himself by his Spirit" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:14

through our gospel

Here, the phrase **through our gospel** does not mean that the gospel belongs to Paul and his companions. It refers to the gospel about Jesus that Paul and his companions preached. Alternate translation: "through the gospel that we preached to you" (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**)

to the acquiring of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ

The phrase **to the acquiring of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ** does not mean that we will take over or divide up the glory of Jesus Christ. It means that the believers will share in Christ's glory. Alternate translation: "so that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" or "in order that you might receive glory like our Lord Jesus Christ" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

to the acquiring of the glory of our Lord

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you can express the same idea with a different form. Alternate translation: "so that you might become glorious like our Lord" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:15

So then

The words **So then** connect this verse with verses 13 and 14 as their logical conclusion. Because God did the wonderful things in those verses, the Thessalonians should do what verse 15 says. Use a natural way to introduce a conclusion in your language. Alternate translation: "Therefore" or "Because God did all of that for you" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.80)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.80)**)

brothers

Here, **brothers** means fellow believers in Jesus, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**)

stand firm

Here, the phrase **stand firm** is used figuratively to mean to not change one's beliefs but, rather, to remain steadfast in what one believes. If this would be unclear in your language, consider using an equivalent expression, or use plain language. Alternate translation: "continue to believe the truth" or "do not give up your faith" (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**)

hold tight to the traditions

Here, **traditions** refers to the truths about Christ that Paul and the other apostles taught. Paul speaks of them figuratively as if his readers could hold on to them with their hands. Alternate translation: "do not give up believing those truths" or "continue to believe the true teachings" (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**)

stand firm and hold tight to

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize the importance of doing this. If your language does not use repetition to do this, you can use one phrase and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "keep on firmly believing" or "do not allow anyone to change your mind in any way about" (See: **Doublet (p.91)**) (See: **Doublet (p.91)**)

you were taught

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "we have taught you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

by word

Here, **by word** is an expression that means that Paul had been present with them and taught them personally. Alternate translation: "by what we said to you in person" or "when we were talking to you." (See: **Synecdoche (p. 145)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.145)**)

by our letter

You can make clear the implicit information that **by our letter** refers to what Paul taught to the Thessalonians in an earlier letter (probably 1 Thessalonians). Alternate translation: "by what we wrote to you in a letter" (See:

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 68)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:16

Now

The word translated **Now** marks a change in topic. You can use a natural way in your language to show that this is a new section with a different topic than the previous section. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.84)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.84)**)

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father

Connecting Statement:

Paul ends this section with a blessing. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father" or "We pray that our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father" (See: **Blessings (p.71)**) (See: **Blessings (p.71)**)

our & our & us

The words **our** and **us** refer to all believers including the writers. If you have exclusive and inclusive first-person plural pronouns in your language, these should be inclusive pronouns. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.96)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.96)**)

our Lord Jesus Christ himself

Here, **himself** gives additional emphasis to the phrase **Lord Jesus Christ**. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this emphasis. Alternate translation: "our Lord Jesus Christ, the very one" (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.137)**) (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.137)**)

gave {us} eternal comfort and good hope

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **comfort** and **hope**, you can express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "always comforts us and has given us good things to hope for" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

through grace

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **grace**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "because of how gracious he is to us" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

2 Thessalonians 2:17

may he comfort and strengthen your hearts

Here, the word **hearts** represents both the emotion and will of a person. If **hearts** does not mean this in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "may he give comfort and strength to your livers" or "may he comfort you and strengthen you" (See: **Metonymy (p.121)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.121)**)

in every good work and word

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the phrase **work and word** with verbs. Alternative translation: "in every good thing that you do and say" or "so that you could do and say everything that is good." (See: **Synecdoche (p.145)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.145)**)

2 Thessalonians 3

2 Thessalonians 3 General Notes

Special Concepts in this Chapter

Idle and lazy persons

In Thessalonica, there apparently was a problem with people in the church who were able to work but refused to do so. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

What should you do if your brother sins?

In this chapter, Paul teaches that Christians need to live in a way that honors God. Christians should also encourage one another and hold each other accountable for what they do. The church is also responsible for encouraging believers to repent if they sin. (See: [[rc:///*tw/dict/bible/kt/repent]] and [[rc:///*tw/dict/bible/kt/sin]])

2 Thessalonians 3:1

General Information:

General Information:

In verses 1-5, Paul asks the believers to pray for him and his companions and encourages them. A heading for this section might be, "Pray for Us." (See: **Section Headings (p.143)**) (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/checking/headings]])

Finally

Here, the word **Finally** marks a change in topic. To **pray** is not the final instruction that Paul gives but it is how Paul opens the last section of his letter where he will discuss a few remaining matters. Alternate translation: "One more thing" or "So, continuing on" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.84)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.84)**)

brothers

Here, **brothers** means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**)

us

The pronoun **us** refers to Paul and his companions. If you have exclusive and inclusive first person pronouns in your language, this should be an exclusive pronoun. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.96)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.96)**)

might run

Paul speaks of God's **word** spreading as if it were running from place to place. He is comparing the rapid spread of God's word to a person who takes good news to others. Alternate translation: "might spread rapidly" or "might be heard by many people" (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**)

and might be glorified

You can state this in active form, if the passive construction is not natural in your language. Alternate translation: "and that many people would honor it" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

just as also with you

This phrase leaves out some words that many languages might need to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "just as also happened with you" or "which is exactly what you did" (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.93)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:2

we might be rescued

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God may save us" or "God may rescue us" (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.65)**)

perverse and evil

These two terms mean basically the same thing and are used together to emphasize the amount of evil. If your language does not use repetition to do this or if you do not have two words for these attributes, you can use one phrase and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "very wicked men" or "many wicked men" (See: **Doublet (p.91)**) (See: **Doublet (p.91)**)

for not everyone {has} the faith

The phrase **not everyone** is a negative understatement that emphasizes how rare faith is. If this is confusing in your language, you can express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: "for only some people believe in the Lord" or "for people who believe in Jesus are few" (See: **Litotes (p.111)**) (See: **Litotes (p.111)**)

has} the faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "believes in Jesus" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:3

who will strengthen

The word **strengthen** here refers to spiritual strength, not physical strength. If your readers might misunderstand this, it can be made clear in your translation. Alternate translation: "who will strengthen you spiritually" or "who will make you inwardly strong" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

the evil one

This could mean: (1) the evil being Satan. Alternate translation: "Satan" or (2) evil in general. Alternate translation: "evil"

2 Thessalonians 3:4

We are also confident

The phrase **We are also confident** may be confusing in some languages. If that is the case in your language, you could translate this as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "We also have faith" or "We also trust" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.123)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.123)**)

We are also confident in the Lord about you

This could mean: (1) Paul has confidence in the Thessalonian believers because of the close relationship that they have with the Lord Jesus. In this case, Paul is speaking figuratively of this relationship as if they were inside the Lord Jesus. Alternative translation: "Because you are united to the Lord, we are also confident" (See: **Metaphor (p. 115)**) (2) Paul has confidence in the Lord Jesus, that he will cause them to do what is right. Alternative translation: "Because we trust in the Lord Jesus to enable you, we are also confident" (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:5

may the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the endurance of Christ

Here, **hearts** stands for a person's thoughts or mind. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "may the Lord cause you to understand the love of God and the endurance of Christ" or "may the Lord help you to know the love of God and the endurance of Christ" (See: **Metonymy (p.121)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.121)**)

to the love of God and to the endurance of Christ

Paul speaks of God's **love** and Christ's **endurance** as if they were destinations on a path. If your readers would not understand this figure of speech, you could express the meaning in a nonfigurative way. Alternate translation: "to know how much God loves you and the endurance that Christ supplies you" (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**)

to the love of God and to the endurance of Christ

Here, **love of God** can mean (1) the love that comes from God. Alternate translation: "to know how much God loves you" or (2) the love that people give to God. Alternate translation: "to love God more" (See: **Possession (p.130)**) (See: **Possession (p.130)**)

to the endurance of Christ

Here, **endurance of Christ** can mean (1) the endurance that Christ gives to his people. Alternate translation: "to experience the endurance that Christ gives you" or (2) the endurance that Christ had through his suffering. Alternate translation: "to know how much Christ has endured for you" (See: **Possession (p.130)**) (See: **Possession (p.130)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:6

General Information:

General Information:

In verses 6-15, Paul gives the believers some final instructions about working and not being idle. A heading for this section might be, "Believers Must Work." (See: **Section Headings (p.143)**) (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/checking/ headings]])

Now

The word translated **Now** marks a change in topic. You can use a natural way in your language to show that this is a new section with a different topic than the previous section. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.84)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.84)**)

brothers, & brother

Here, the words **brothers** and **brother** refer to fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters … brother or sister" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**)

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Here, **name** figuratively stands for the person of Jesus Christ. It can also mean "with the authority of." If using this term figuratively is not clear in your language, you could express it directly. Alternate translation: "as if our Lord Jesus Christ himself were speaking" or "with the authority that our Lord Jesus Christ has given us" (See: **Metonymy (p.121)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.121)**)

our

Here, **our** refers to all believers. If you have exclusive and inclusive first-person plural pronouns in your language, this should be an inclusive pronoun. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.96)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.96)**)

walking disorderly

Here Paul speaks figuratively of people who are not living well as if they walk in a haphazard manner. If your readers would not understand this metaphor, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in a nonfigurative way. Alternative translation: "who is living in a bad way" or "who is not living correctly" (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**)

the traditions

Here, **the traditions** refers to the teachings that the apostles received from Jesus and are passing along to all believers. Alternate translation: "the teachings" or "the instructions"

2 Thessalonians 3:7

to imitate us

The phrase **to imitate** may be a difficult word to translate in your language. In that case, you could make this explicit. Alternate translation: "to act the way that my fellow workers and I act" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

we did not behave disorderly among you

Paul uses a double negative to emphasize the positive. If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "we lived among you as those who had much discipline" or "we worked diligently when we were with you" (See: **Double Negatives (p.88)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.88)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:8

bread

Paul refers to **bread** here because it was the most common and basic food for them. If your readers would not be familiar with **bread** or if that is a kind of food that would be considered unusual or extravagant, you could use a general expression for ordinary food. Alternate translation: "food" or "anything" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.149)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.149)**)

working night and day

Here, **night and day** form a merism, which means "all the time." If it would be helpful in your language to explain that they did not work without taking any rest whatsoever, then you could make the meaning clear. Alternate translation: "working throughout that time with little rest" or "we worked almost continuously" (See: **Merism (p. 113)**) (See: **Merism (p.113)**)

in toil and hardship

Here, **toil** and **hardship** have very similar meanings. Paul used this repetition to emphasize that they worked very hard. If you do not have two similar words that you can use here or if it would be unnatural for you to use such repetition, you could emphasize this in another way. Alternate translation: "with great effort" or "in very difficult circumstances" (See: **Doublet (p.91)**) (See: **Doublet (p.91)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:9

not because we do not have authority, but

Paul uses a double negative to emphasize the positive. If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "and we certainly have the right to receive food from you, but instead we worked for our food" (See: **Double Negatives (p.88)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.88)**)

we might offer ourselves {as} an example to you

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **example**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "we might show you the right way in order for you" or "we might demonstrate the way to live for you" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

to imitate

See how you translated **imitate** in verse 7.

2 Thessalonians 3:10

If anyone is not willing to work, do not even let him eat

You can state this in positive form, if this form is difficult to understand in your language. Alternate translation: "If a person wants to eat, he must work" (See: **Double Negatives (p.88)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.88)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:11

some walking idly

Here, **walking** stands for behavior in life. you can use an equivalent metaphor from your culture, if it is available. Otherwise, you could express the meaning in a nonfigurative way. Alternate translation: "some who are living idle lives" or "some who are being lazy" (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.115)**)

but meddling

Meddlers are people who interfere in the affairs of others without being asked to help. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.149)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.149)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:12

with quietness

Here, **with quietness** is the opposite of meddling. Paul exhorts the meddlers to stop getting involved in other people's affairs. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **quietness**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "in a quiet and peaceful manner" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.63)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:13

But

Paul here uses the word **But** to contrast the lazy believers with the hardworking believers. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: "Concerning" (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.73)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.73)**)

you

The word **you** refers to all the Thessalonian believers, so it should be in plural form. (See: **Forms of You (p.98)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.98)**)

brothers

Here, **brothers** means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p. 152)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:14

our word

Paul is figuratively referring to his command to the Thessalonian believers as a **word**. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "our instructions" (See: **Metonymy (p.121)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.121)**)

note this one

Paul wants the Thessalonians to notice who this person is. Alternate translation: "point out that person" or "make sure everyone knows who he is" (See: **Idiom (p.109)**) (See: **Idiom (p.109)**)

so that he may be put to shame

Paul instructs believers to avoid lazy believers as a disciplinary action. If necessary, you could make this explicit to make the meaning clear. Alternate translation: "in order that he will know that his laziness is wrong" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:15

a brother

Although the term **brother** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: "a fellow believer" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.152)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:16

General Information:

General Information:

In verses 16-18, Paul makes closing remarks to the believers at Thessalonica. A heading for this section might be, "Closing Remarks." (See: **Section Headings (p.143)**) (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/checking/headings]])

Now

The word translated **Now** marks a change in topic. You can use a natural way in your language to show that this is a new section with a different topic than the previous section. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.84)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.84)**)

may the Lord of peace himself give you

Paul ends the letter with blessings that are also prayers. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing or prayer in your language. Alternate translation: "I pray that the Lord of peace himself may give you" (See: **Blessings (p.71)**) (See: **Blessings (p.71)**)

the Lord of peace himself

Here, **himself** emphasizes that the Lord is the source of peace and that he will personally give peace to believers. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.137)**) (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.137)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:17

This greeting {is} in my own hand—Paul—which is a sign in every letter. In this manner I write

Alternate translation: "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, which I do in every letter, as a sign that this letter is truly from me because this is how I write"

is} in my own hand

Here, the phrase **in my own hand** is an idiom meaning "in my own handwriting." If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "I myself am writing" (See: **Idiom (p.109)**) (See: **Idiom (p.109)**)

In this manner I write

Paul makes it clear that this letter is from him and is not a forgery. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "you could know that the letter is from me because this is how I write" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.68)**)

2 Thessalonians 3:18

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ {be} with you all

Paul ends the letter with one more blessing. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: "I pray that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will be with you all" (See: **Blessings (p.71)**) (See: **Blessings (p.71)**)

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Version 77

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: 2 Thessalonians 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:7; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:2; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:12

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.

Next we recommend you learn about: "

Abstract Nouns *(UTA PDF)*
Word Order *(UTA PDF)*

Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 1:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:2

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: 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Thessalonians 2 General Notes; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Thessalonians 3 General Notes; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Thessalonians 3:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:17

Blessings

Description

Blessings are short sayings that people use to ask God to do something good for another person. In the Bible, the person saying the blessing speaks or writes directly to the person who will receive the blessing. The person who says the blessing does not directly speak to God, but it is understood that God is the one who will do the good thing mentioned. It is also understood that God hears the blessing, whether he is mentioned by name or not.

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Each language has its own ways of saying blessings. There are many blessings in the Bible. They need to be translated in the way that people say blessings in your language, so that people recognize them as blessings and understand what one person wants God to do for another.

Examples From the Bible

In the Bible, people often said a blessing when they met someone or when they were leaving someone or sending someone off.

In the book of Ruth, when Boaz meets his workers in the fields, he greets them with a blessing:

> Then behold, Boaz coming from Bethlehem! And he said to the reapers, "Yahweh be with you." And they said to him, "May Yahweh bless you." (Ruth 2:4 ULT)

Similarly, when Rebekah leaves her family, they say farewell with a blessing:

> They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them." (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

In a similar way, the writers of letters in the New Testament often wrote a blessing at the beginning of their letters as well as at the end. Here are examples from the beginning and end of Paul's second letter to Timothy:

> Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. (2 Tim 1:2 ULT) The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

Translation Strategies

Find out how people say blessings in your language. Collect a list of common blessings, noting the form of the verb, the use of certain words, and the words that are not used in a blessing but would normally be in a sentence. Also find out what differences there might be between blessings that people use when they are speaking to each other and when they are writing to each other.

If translating a blessing literally would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing that. If not, here are some options:

Add a verb if that is natural in your language.
Mention God as the subject of a blessing if that is natural in your language.
Translate the blessing in a form that is natural and clear in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add a verb if that is natural in your language.

> The Lord with your spirit. The grace with you. (2 Tim 4:22, literal from the Greek)

In the Greek of this verse, there is no verb 'be.' However, in blessings in English, it is natural to use a verb. The idea that the 'grace' from God will be or remain with the person is implied in Greek.

The Lord **be** with your spirit. Grace **be** with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

(2) Mention God as the subject of a blessing if that is natural in your language.

If people expect a blessing to refer to God in your language, you might have to provide 'God' as the subject or as the source of the blessing. In Greek and Hebrew, usually God is not explicitly mentioned in the blessing, but it is implied that God is the one acting to show his kindness to the person being addressed.

> The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

The Lord be with your spirit. **May God give** grace to you.

> They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them." (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, may **God grant that** you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may **God empower** your descendants **to** possess the gate of those who hate them."

(3) Translate the blessing in a form that is natural and clear in your language.

Here are some ideas for ways that people might say a blessing in their language.

> The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

May the Lord be with your spirit. May God cause his grace to be with you.

May you have God's presence with you. May you experience grace from God.

> "Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them." (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

"Our sister, we pray to God that you may be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and appeal to him that your descendants may possess the gate of those who hate them."

"Our sister, by God's power you will be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and your descendants will possess the gate of those who hate them."

"

Referenced in:

Connect — Contrast Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate a contrast relationship?*

Contrast Relationship

Description

A contrast relationship is a logical relationship in which one event or item is in contrast or opposition to another.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In Scripture, many events did not happen as the people involved intended or expected them to happen. Sometimes people acted in ways that were not expected, whether good or bad. Often it was God at work, changing the events. These events were often pivotal. It is important that translators understand and communicate these contrasts. In English, contrast relationships are often indicated by the words "but," "although," "even though," "though," "yet," or "however."

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, **but** God used the evil for good! (Story 8 Frame 12 OBS)

Joseph's brothers' evil plan to sell Joseph is contrasted with God's good plan to save many people. The word "but" marks the contrast.

> For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? **Yet** I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:27 ULT)

Jesus contrasts the proud way that human leaders behave with the humble way that he behaves. The contrast is marked by the word "yet."

> The hill country will also be yours. **Though** it is a forest, you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders, for you will drive out the Canaanites, even **though** they have chariots of iron, and even **though** they are strong. (Joshua 17:18 ULT)

It was unexpected that the Israelites, who had been slaves in Egypt, would be able to conquer and lay claim to the promised land.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses contrast relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

(1) If the contrast relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a connecting word or phrase that is more specific or more clear.
(2) If it is more clear in your language to mark the other clause of the contrast relationship, then use a connecting word on the other clause.
(3) If your language shows a contrast relationship in a different way, then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the contrast relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a connecting word or phrase that is more specific or more clear.

> For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? **Yet** I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:27 ULT)

>> For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? **Unlike that person**, I am among you as one who serves.

(2) If it is more clear in your language to mark the other clause of the contrast relationship, then use a connecting word on the other clause.

> The hill country will also be yours. **Though** it is a forest, you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders, for you will drive out the Canaanites, even **though** they have chariots of iron, and even **though** they are strong. (Joshua 17:18 ULT)

>> The hill country will also be yours. It is a forest, **but** you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders. They have chariots of iron, and they are strong, **but** you will drive out the Canaanites.

(3) If your language shows a contrast relationship in a different way, then use that way.

> {David} found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. **However**, Solomon built the house for him. **But** the Most High does not live in houses made with hands. (Acts 7:46-48a ULT)

>> [David] found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. **But** it was, Solomon, **not David**, who built the house for God. **Even though Solomon built him a house**, the Most High does not live in houses made with hands.

"

Referenced in:

Connect — Factual Conditions

Conditional Relationships

Conditional connectors connect two clauses to indicate that one of them will happen when the other one happens. In English, the most common way to connect conditional clauses is with the words, "if … then." Often, however, the word "then" is not stated.

Factual Conditions

Description

A Factual Condition is a condition that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true in the speaker's mind. In English, a sentence containing a Factual Condition can use the words "even though," "since," or "this being the case" to indicate that it is a factual condition and not a hypothetical condition.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not state something as a condition if it is certain or true. Translators from these languages may misunderstand the original languages and think that the condition is uncertain. This would lead to mistakes in their translations. Even if the translators understand that the condition is certain or true, the readers may misunderstand it. In this case, it would be best to translate it as a statement of fact rather than as a conditional statement.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> "**If** Yahweh is God, worship him!" (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

> Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you keep changing your mind? **If Yahweh is God**, follow him. But if Baal is God, then follow him." Yet the people did not answer him a word. (1 Kings 18:21 ULT)

This sentence has the same construction as a hypothetical condition. The condition is "if Yahweh is God." If that is true, then the Israelites should worship Yahweh. But the prophet Elijah does not question whether or not Yahweh is God. In fact, he is so certain that Yahweh is God that later in the passage he pours water all over his sacrifice. He is confident that God is real and that he will burn even an offering that is completely wet. Over and over again, the prophets taught that Yahweh is God, so the people should worship him. The people did not worship Yahweh, however, even though He is God. By putting the statement or instruction into the form of a Factual Condition, Elijah is trying to get the Israelites to understand more clearly what they should do.

> "A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?" says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)

Yahweh has said that he is a father and a master to Israel, so even though this sounds like a hypothetical condition because it begins with "if," it is not hypothetical. This verse begins with the proverb that a son honors his father. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh. The other proverb in the verse says that a servant honors his master. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh, so it seems that he is not their master. But Yahweh is the master. Yahweh uses the form of a hypothetical condition to demonstrate that the Israelites are wrong. The second part of the condition that should occur naturally is not happening, even though the conditional statement is true.

Translation Strategies

If using the form of a hypothetical condition is confusing or would make the reader think that the speaker doubts what he is saying in the first part of the sentence, then use a statement instead. Words such as "since" or "you know that …" or "it is true that …" can be helpful to make the meaning clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

"**If** Yahweh is God, worship him!" (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

> "**It is true that** Yahweh is God, so worship him!"

"A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?" says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)

> "A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **Since** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **Since** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?"

"

Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 1:6

Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

> This page answers the question: *How can I translate a goal (purpose) relationship?*

Goal (or Purpose) Relationship

Description

A Goal Relationship is a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first event. In order for something to be a goal relationship, someone must do the first event with the intention that it will cause the second event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In Scripture, the goal or purpose may be stated either first or second. But in some languages, the goal or purpose must always occur in the same position (either first or second) in order for that logical relationship to be understood. You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between the two parts and communicate those accurately in your language. This may require changing the order of the two events. It may also require specific words to indicate that one is the goal or purpose of the other. Words commonly used to indicate a goal relationship in English are "in order to," "in order that" or "so that." It is important that the translator recognize the words that signal a goal relationship and translate that relationship in a natural way.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> She became angry and falsely accused Joseph **so that he was arrested and sent to prison**. (Story 8 Frame 5 OBS)

The goal or purpose of the woman's false accusation was to get Joseph arrested and sent to prison.

> Meanwhile Gideon, his son, was threshing out wheat at the winepress **in order to hide from the presence of Midian**. (Judges 6:11b ULT)

Here the prepositional phrase begins with "in order to."

> Now if I have found favor in your eyes, show me your ways **so that I may know you and continue to find favor in your eyes**. Remember that this nation is your people. (Exodus 33:13 ULT)

Moses wants God to show him God's ways for the goal or purpose of Moses knowing God and continuing to find favor with God.

> Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean**, and do not rebuke her! (Ruth 2:16 ULT)

The goal or purpose of Boaz instructing the men to pull out the grain from their bundles and leave it was for Ruth to gather (glean) it.

> The shepherds said to each other, "Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us." (Luke 2:15 ULT)

The purpose of going to Bethlehem was to see the thing that had happened. Here the purpose is not marked and might be misunderstood.

> "… if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17b ULT)

The goal of keeping the commandments is to enter into life.

> Do not turn from it to the right or to the left **so that you may be wise** in everything in which you walk. (Joshua 1:7c ULT)

The purpose of not turning away from the instructions that Moses gave to the Israelites was so that they would be wise.

> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

The purpose of the vine growers killing the heir was so they could take his inheritance. They state both events as a plan, joining them only with "and." Then the word "so" marks the reporting of the first event, but the second event (the goal or purpose) is not stated.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses Goal or Purpose relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

(1) If the construction of the Goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.
(2) If the order of the statements makes the Goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the construction of the goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.

> "Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean**, and do not rebuke her!" (Ruth 2:16 ULT)
>
>> "Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **so that she can glean it**, and do not rebuke her!"

> The shepherds said to each other, "Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us." (Luke 2:15 ULT)
>
>> The shepherds said to each other, "Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem **so that we can see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us."

(2) If the order of the statements makes the goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

> "… if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17bULT)
>
>> "… keep the commandments if you want **to enter into life**." or: "… keep the commandments **so that you can enter into life**."

> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

(1) and (2)

> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

>> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **so that we can take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him **so that they could take over his inheritance**.

"

Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:12

Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the reason-result relationship?*

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, of chunks of text.

Reason-and-Result Relationships

Description

A reason-and-result relationship is a logical relationship in which one event is the **reason** or cause for another event. The second event, then, is the **result** of the first event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

A reason-and-result relationship can look forward — "I did Y because I wanted X to happen." But usually it is looking backward — "X happened, and so I did Y." Also, it is possible to state the reason either before or after the result. Many languages have a preferred order for the reason and the result, and it will be confusing for the reader if they are in the opposite order. Common words used to indicate a reason-and-result relationship in English are "because," "so," "therefore," and "for." Some of these words can also be used to indicate a goal relationship, so translators need to be aware of the difference between a goal relationship and a reason-and-result relationship. It is necessary for translators to understand how the two events are connected, and then communicate them clearly in their language.

If the reason and result are stated in different verses, it is still possible to put them in a different order. If you change the order of the verses, then put the verse numbers together at the beginning of the group of verses that were rearranged like this: 1-2. This is called a Verse Bridge.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> The Jews were amazed, **because** Saul had tried to kill believers, and now he believed in Jesus!
> (Story 46 Frame 6 OBS)

The **reason** is the change in Saul — that he had tried to kill people who believed in Jesus, and now he himself believed in Jesus. The **result** is that the Jews were amazed. "Because" connects the two ideas and indicates that what follows it is a reason.

> Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves.
> (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

The **reason** is the great storm, and the **result** is that the boat was covered with the waves. The two events are connected by "so that." Notice that the term "so that" often indicates a goal relationship, but here the relationship is reason-and-result. This is because the sea cannot think and therefore does not have a goal.

> God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which
> he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

The **result** is that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. The **reason** is because he rested on the seventh day from his work.

> "Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God." (Luke 6:20b ULT)

The **result** is that the poor are blessed. The **reason** is that the kingdom of God is theirs.

> But he raised up in their place their sons that Joshua circumcised, being uncircumcised,
> **because** they had not been circumcised on the way. (Joshua 5:7 ULT)

The **result** is that Joshua circumcised the boys and men who had been born in the wilderness. The **reason** was that they had not been circumcised while they were journeying.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses reason-and-result relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

(1) If the order of the clauses is confusing for the reader, then change the order.
(2) If the relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a more clear connecting word.
(3) If it is more clear to put a connecting word in the clause that does not have one, then do so.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which
> he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

(1) God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done in his creation. **That is why** he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

> Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20 ULT)

(1) The kingdom of God belongs to you who are poor. **Therefore**, the poor are blessed.

(2) Blessed are the poor, **because** yours is the kingdom of God.

(3) **The reason that** the poor are blessed **is because** yours is the kingdom of God.

> Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves.
> (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

(1) Behold, the boat was covered with the waves **because** a great storm arose on the sea.

(2) Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **with the result that** the boat was covered with the waves.

(3) Behold, **because** a great storm arose on the sea, the boat was covered with the waves.

> **Since** he was not able to find out anything for certain because of the noise, he ordered that he
> be brought into the fortress. (Acts 21:34b ULT)

(1) The captain ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress, **because** he could not tell anything because of all the noise.

(2) **Because** the captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

(3) The captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, **so** he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

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Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:15

Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

Time Relationships

Some connectors establish time relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate clauses with a simultaneous time relationship?*

Simultaneous Clause

Description

A simultaneous clause is a time relationship that connects two or more events that occur at the same time.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate in many different ways that events occur simultaneously. These ways may vary based on whether or not something is causing the events to occur simultaneously. Connecting words that may indicate simultaneous events are words such as "while," "as," and "during." Often the Bible does not state a relationship between the events but simply says they occurred at the same time. It is important that you (the translator) know when a time relationship is implied and when it is not implied so that you can communicate it clearly. A simultaneous clause communicates that events happened at the same time but it does not indicate that one event caused the other. That would be a reason-and-result relationship.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> Joseph served his master well, **and** God blessed Joseph. (OBS Story 8 Frame 4)

Two events happened while Joseph was a slave to a wealthy government official: Joseph served well, and God blessed Joseph. There is no indication of a reason-and-result (cause and effect) relationship between the two, or that the first event happened, and then the second event happened.

> But in truth I say to you that there were many widows in Israel **during** the days of Elijah. (Luke 4:25b ULT)

The connecting word "**during**" tells us clearly that two things happened at the same time, but one event did not cause the other.

> And the people were waiting for Zechariah, **and** they were wondering at his delaying in the temple. (Luke 1:21 ULT)

The people were both waiting and wondering at the same time. The general connector "**and**" indicates this.

> **While** they were looking intensely into heaven **as** he was going up, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing. (Acts 1:10 ULT)

Three events happened at the same time — the disciples looking, Jesus going up, and two men standing. The connector words "**while**" and "**as**" tell us this.

Translation Strategies

If the way that the simultaneous clauses are marked also is clear in your language, then translate the simultaneous clauses as they are.

(1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that the simultaneous clauses are happening at the same time, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.
(2) If it is not clear which clause the simultaneous clause is connected to, and that they are happening at the same time, mark all of the clauses with a connecting word.
(3) If your language marks events as simultaneous in a different way than using connecting words, then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Below, each Bible verse will be restated in three different ways, according to the translation strategies in the list above. Each restatement will have the same number as the translation strategy that it is using.

> And the people were waiting for Zechariah, **and** they were wondering at his delaying in the temple. (Luke 1:21 ULT)

(1) Now **while** the people were waiting for Zechariah, they were wondering at his delaying in the temple.

(2) Now **while** the people were waiting for Zechariah, they were **also** wondering at his delaying in the temple.

(3) Now the people were waiting for Zechariah, wondering at his delaying in the temple.

> **While** they were looking intently into heaven **as** he was going up, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing. (Acts 1:10 ULT)

(1) And **during the time** they were looking intently into heaven **while** he was going up, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing.

(2) And **while** they were looking intently into heaven **as** he was going up, suddenly, **at that same time** two men stood by them in white clothing.

(3) They were looking intently into heaven; he was going up **when** they saw two men standing by them in white clothing.

"

Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 2:1

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: 2 Thessalonians 2:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:16

Double Negatives

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each express the meaning of "not." Double negatives mean very different things in different languages. To translate sentences that have double negatives accurately and clearly, you need to know what a double negative means in the Bible and how to express this idea in your language.

> This page answers the question: *What are double negatives?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Parts of Speech* *(UTA PDF)*
> *Sentence Structure* *(UTA PDF)*

Description

Negative words are words that have in them the meaning "not." Examples in English are "no," "not," "none," "no one," "nothing," "nowhere," "never," "nor," "neither," and "without." Also, some words have prefixes or suffixes that mean "not," such as the bolded parts of these words: "**un**happy," "**im**possible," and "use**less**." Some other kinds of words also have a negative meaning, such as "lack" or "reject," or even "fight" or "evil."

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each have a negative meaning.

> We did this **not** because we have **no** authority … (2 Thessalonians 3:9a ULT)
>
> And this was **not** done **without** an oath! (Hebrews 7:20a ULT)
>
> Be sure of this—the wicked person will **not** go **un**punished. (Proverbs 11:21a ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Double negatives mean very different things in different languages.

- In some languages, such as English, a second negative in a clause cancels the first one, creating a positive sentence. So, "He is not unintelligent" means "He is intelligent."
- In some languages, such as French and Spanish, two negative words in a clause do not cancel each other to become a positive. The Spanish sentence, "No vi a nadie," literally says "I did not see no one." It has both the word 'no' next to the verb and 'nadie,' which means "no one." The two negatives are seen as in agreement with each other, and the sentence means, "I did not see anyone."
- In some languages, a double negative creates a stronger negative statement.
- In some languages, a double negative creates a positive sentence, but it is a weak statement. So, "He is not unintelligent" means, "He is somewhat intelligent."
- In some languages, including the languages of the Bible, a double negative can produce a stronger positive meaning than a simple positive statement. So, "He is not unintelligent" can mean "He is very intelligent." In this case, the double negative is actually the figure of speech called litotes.

Biblical Greek can do all of the above. So to translate sentences with double negatives accurately and clearly in your language, you need to know what each double negative means in the Bible and how to express the same idea in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The Greek of John 15:5 says:

> χωρὶς ἐμοῦ **οὐ** δύνασθε ποιεῖν **οὐδέν**
> Without me **not** you can do **nothing**

We cannot reproduce this double negative in the English ULT because in English, a second negative in a clause cancels the first one. In English, and perhaps in your language, we need to choose only one of the negatives and say either:

Without me, you can do **nothing**.
or:
Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

> … in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

This means "in order to be fruitful."

> A prophet is **not without** honor (Mark 6:4 ULT)

This means "a prophet is honored."

> I do **not** want you to be **ignorant**. (1 Corinthians 12:1)

This means "I want you to be knowledgeable."

Translation Strategies

If the way that the double negative is used in the Bible is natural and has the same meaning as in your language, consider using it in the same way. Otherwise, you could consider these strategies:

(1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.
(2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives.
(3) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a stronger negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives and add a strengthening word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.

> For we do **not** have a high priest who **cannot** feel sympathy for our weaknesses. (Hebrews 4:15a ULT)
>
> > "For we have a high priest who can feel sympathy for our weaknesses."

> … in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)
>
> > "… so that they may be fruitful."

(2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives.

> χωρὶς ἐμοῦ **οὐ** δύνασθε ποιεῖν **οὐδέν**
> Without me **not** you can do **nothing** (John 15:5)
>
> > Without me, you can do **nothing**.
> > or:
> > Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

(3) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a stronger negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives and add a strengthening word.

> …ἰῶτα ἓν ἢ μία κεραία **οὐ μὴ** παρέλθη ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου (Matthew 5:18)
> …iota one or one serif **not not** may pass away from the law
>
> > …**not even** one iota or one serif may pass away from the law
> > or:
> > …**certainly no** iota or serif may pass away from the law

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Next we recommend you learn about:
Verbs *(UTA PDF)*

"

Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 2:2; 2 Thessalonians 3:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:10

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: 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:2; 2 Thessalonians 3:8

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: 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:1
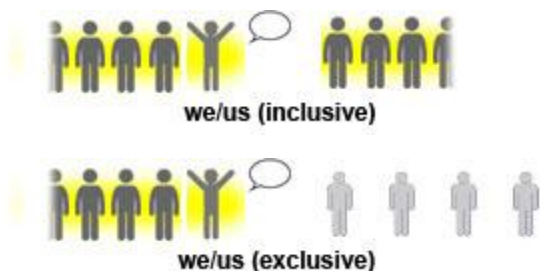
Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also true for "us," "our," "ours," and "ourselves." Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these. Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms for these words will need to understand what the speaker meant so that they can decide which form to use.

> This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Pronouns (UTA PDF)*

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive "we" and the exclusive "we" refer to.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for "we." If your language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of "we," then you will need to understand what the speaker meant so that you can decide which form of "we" to use.

Examples From the Bible

Exclusive

> They said, "There are not more than five loaves of bread and two fish with us—unless **we** go and buy food for all these people." (Luke 9:13 ULT)

In the second clause, the disciples are talking about some of them going to buy food. They were speaking to Jesus, but Jesus was not going to buy food. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" would use the **exclusive** form there.

> **We** have seen it, and **we** bear witness to it. **We** are announcing to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and which has been made known to **us**. (1 John 1:2 ULT)

John is telling people who have not seen Jesus what he and the other apostles have seen. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **exclusive** forms in this verse.

Inclusive

> The shepherds said one to each other, "Let **us** now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to **us**." (Luke 2:15b ULT)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said "us," they were including the people they were speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

> Now it happened that on one of those days, he indeed got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let **us** go over to the other side of the lake." So they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULT)

When Jesus said "us," he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Next we recommend you learn about:

When Masculine Words Include Women (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in:

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: 2 Thessalonians 3:13

Forms of 'You' — Singular

Description

Some languages have a **singular** form of "you" for when the word "you" refers to just one person, and a **plural** form for when the word "you" refers to more than one person. Translators who speak one of these languages will always need to know what the speaker meant so they can choose the right word for "you" in their language. Other languages, such as English, have only one form, which people use regardless of how many people it refers to.

> This page answers the question: *How do I know if the word 'you' is singular?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Parts of Speech* *(UTA PDF)*
> *Forms of You* *(UTA PDF)*
> *Pronouns* *(UTA PDF)*

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. These languages all have both a singular form of "you" and a plural form of "you." When we read the Bible in those languages, the pronouns and verb forms show us whether the word "you" refers to one person or more than one. When we read the Bible in a language that does not have different forms of you, we need to look at the context to see how many people the speaker was speaking to.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators who speak a language that has distinct singular and plural forms of "you" will always need to know what the speaker meant so they can choose the right word for "you" in their language.
- Many languages also have different forms of the verb depending on whether the subject is singular or plural. So even if there is no pronoun meaning "you," translators of these languages will need to know if the speaker was referring to one person or more than one.

Often the context will make it clear whether the word "you" refers to one person or more than one. If you look at the other pronouns in the sentence, they will help you know the number of people the speaker was speaking to. Sometimes Greek and Hebrew speakers used the singular form of "you" even though they were speaking to a group of people. (See Forms of 'You' — Singular to a Crowd.)

Examples From the Bible

> But he said, "All these things **I** have kept from my youth." But when he heard this, Jesus said to him, "One thing is still lacking to **you**. All things, as much as **you** have, **sell** all and **distribute** to the poor, and **you** will have treasure in heaven—and **come**, **follow** me." (Luke 18:21-22 ULT)

The ruler was speaking about just himself when he said "I." This shows us that when Jesus said "you" he was referring only to the ruler and he used the singular form. So languages that have singular and plural forms of "you" need the singular form here, as well as for the verbs "sell," distribute," "come," and "follow."

> The angel said to him, "**Dress yourself** and **put on your** sandals." So he did that. He said to him, "**Put on your** outer garment and **follow** me." (Acts 12:8 ULT)

The angel used singular forms here and the context makes it clear that he was speaking to one person and that only one person did what the the angel commanded. So languages that have singular and plural forms of "you" would need the singular form here for "yourself" and "your." Also, if verbs have different forms for singular and plural subjects, then the verbs "dress," "put on," and "follow" need the form that indicates a singular subject.

> All the ones {who are} with me greet **you**. **Greet** the ones loving us in faith. Grace {be} with all of **you**. (Titus 3:15 ULT)

Paul wrote this letter to one person, Titus, so most of the time the word "you" in this letter is singular and refers only to Titus. In this verse, the first "you" is singular, so the greeting is for Titus, as well as the instruction to greet the others there. The second "you," however, is plural, so the blessing is for Titus and for all of the believers there in Crete.

> "Having gone, **search** carefully for the young child, and after **you** have found him, **report** to me so that I also, having come, might worship him." (Matthew 2:8 ULT)

Since Herod is speaking to all of the learned men, the word "you" and the commands "search" and "report" are plural.

Strategies for finding out how many people "you" refers to

(1) Look at the notes to see if they tell whether "you" refers to one person or more than one person.
(2) Look at the UST to see if it says anything that would show you whether the word "you" refers to one person or more than one person.
(3) If you have a Bible that is written in a language that distinguishes "you" singular from "you" plural, see which form of "you" that Bible has in that sentence.
(4) Look at the context to see how many people the speaker was talking to and who responded.

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (UTA PDF)

Referenced in: Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

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 2 Thessalonians; 2 Thessalonians 1:1

Hyperbole

Description

A speaker or writer can use exactly the same words to say something that he means as completely true, or as generally true, or as a hyperbole. This is why it can be hard to decide how to understand a statement. For example, the sentence below could mean three different things.

It rains here every night.

The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.
The speaker means this as a **generalization** if he means that it rains here most nights.
The speaker means this as a **hyperbole** if he wants to say that it rains more than it actually does, usually in order to express a strong attitude toward the amount or frequency of rain, such as being annoyed or being happy about it.

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: 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

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: 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:17

Litotes

Description

Litotes is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses a strong positive meaning by negating a word or phrase that means the opposite of the meaning that he intends. For example, someone could intend to communicate that something is extremely good by describing it as "not bad." The difference between a litotes and a double negative is that a litotes heightens the positive meaning beyond what a plain positive statement would do, and a double negative does not. In the example above, the literal meaning of "not bad," taken as a plain double negative, would be "acceptable" or even "good." But if the speaker intended it as a litotes, then the meaning is "very good" or "extremely good."

> This page answers the question: *What is litotes?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)*

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use litotes. People who speak those languages might not understand that a statement using litotes actually strengthens the positive meaning. Instead, they might think that it weakens or even cancels the positive meaning.

Examples From the Bible

> For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**, (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

By using litotes, Paul emphasized that his visit with them was **very** useful.

> Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

By using litotes, Luke emphasized that there was a **lot** of excitement or anxiety among the soldiers about what happened to Peter. (Peter had been in prison, and even though there were soldiers guarding him, he escaped when an angel let him out. So they were very agitated.)

> But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are **not the least** among the leaders of Judah, for from you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel. (Matthew 2:6 ULT)

By using litotes, the prophet emphasized that Bethlehem would be a **very important city**.

Translation Strategies

If the litotes would be understood correctly, consider using it.

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

> For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**. (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)
>
> > "For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you **did much good**."

> Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)
>
> > "Now when it became day, there was **great excitement** among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter."
> > or:
> > "Now when it became day, the soldiers were **very concerned** because of what had happened to Peter."

"

Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 3:2

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: 2 Thessalonians 3:8

Metaphor

Description

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

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

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

> This page answers the question: *What is a metaphor and how can I translate a Bible passage that has one?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Figures of Speech* *(UTA PDF)*
> *Simile* *(UTA PDF)*

The Parts of a Metaphor

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

Every metaphor has three parts:

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

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

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

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

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

Passive Metaphors

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

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

Patterned Pairs of Concepts Acting as Metaphors

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

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

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

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

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

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

Active Metaphors

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

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

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

> And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox …" (Luke 13:32a ULT)

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

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

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

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

Purposes of Metaphor

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

Translation Principles

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

The example above has two related metaphors. The Topic(s) are "we" and "you," and the Image(s) are "clay" and "potter." The similarity between a potter and God is the fact that both make what they wish out of their material.

The potter makes what he wishes out of the clay, and God makes what he wishes out of his people. The Idea being expressed by the comparison between the potter's clay and "us" is that **neither the clay nor God's people have a right to complain about what they are becoming**.

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> > "And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **wood**. You are our **carver**; and we all are the work of your hand." "And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **string**. You are the **weaver**; and we all are the work of your hand."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> I will make you to become **fishers of men**. (Mark 1:17b ULT)
>
> > I will make you to become **people who gather men**. Now you gather fish.
> > I will make you **gather people**.

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

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Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:7; 2 Thessalonians 2:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:11

Metonymy

Description

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which an item (either physical or abstract) is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. A metonym is a word or phrase used as a substitute for something that it is associated with.

> This page answers the question: *What is a metonymy?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)*

> ... and **the blood** of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin. (1 John 1:7b ULT)

The blood represents Christ's death.

> And he took **the cup** in the same way after supper, saying, "**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20 ULT)

The cup represents the wine that is in the cup.

Metonymy can be used

- as a shorter way of referring to something
- to make an abstract idea more meaningful by referring to it with the name of a physical object associated with it

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible uses metonymy very often. Speakers of some languages are not familiar with metonymy and they may not recognize it when they read it in the Bible. If they do not recognize the metonymy, they will not understand the passage or, worse yet, they will get a wrong understanding of the passage. Whenever a metonym is used, people need to be able to understand what it represents.

Examples From the Bible

> The Lord God will give to him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

A throne represents the authority of a king. "Throne" is a metonym for "kingly authority," "kingship," or "reign." This means that God would make him become a king who would follow King David.

> Then immediately his **mouth** was opened (Luke 1:64a ULT)

The mouth here represents the power to speak. This means that he was able to talk again.

> Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

The word "wrath" or "anger" is a metonym for "punishment." God was extremely angry with the people and, as a result, he would punish them.

Translation Strategies

If people would easily understand the metonym, consider using it. Otherwise, here are some options.

(1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.
(2) Use only the name of the thing the metonym represents.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.

> And he took the cup in the same way after the supper, saying, "**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20 ULT)

>> He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, "**The wine in this cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

This verse also contains a second metonym: The cup, (representing the wine it contains) also represents the new covenant made with the blood Christ shed for us.

(2) Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.

> The Lord God will give him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

>> "The Lord God will give him **the kingly authority** of his father, David." or:
>> "The Lord God will **make him king** like his ancestor, King David."

> Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

>> "Who warned you to flee from God's coming **punishment**?"

To learn about some common metonymies, see Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies.

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Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 1:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:14

Nominal Adjectives

Description

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

> This page answers the question: *How do I translate adjectives that act like nouns?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)*

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

The adjective "rich" comes before the word "man" and describes "man."

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

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

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

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

>> Blessed are **people who are meek**.

"

Referenced in:

Order of Events

Description

In the Bible, events are not always told in the order in which they occurred. Sometimes the author wanted to discuss something that happened at an earlier time than the event that he just talked about. This can be confusing to the reader.

> This page answers the question: *Why are some events not listed in the order they happened, and how do I translate them?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Writing Styles (UTA PDF)*
> *Verbs (UTA PDF)*

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers might think that the events happened in the order that they are told. It is important to help them understand the correct order of events.

Examples From the Bible

> He even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

This could sound like John baptized Jesus after John was locked up in prison, but John baptized Jesus before John was locked up in prison.

> Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed after them. But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

This could sound like Joshua gave the order not to shout after the army had already started their march, but he had given that order before they started marching.

> Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

This sounds like a person must first open the scroll and then break its seals, but the seals that lock the scroll must be broken before the scroll can be unrolled.

Translation Strategies

(1) If your language uses phrases or time words to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using one of them.
(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that. (See the section on "Aspect" of Verbs.)
(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occurred, consider reordering the events so they they are in that order. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6). (See Verse Bridges.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses phrases, time words or tenses to show that an event happened before the one just mentioned, consider using one of them.

> 20 he even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

> > 20 But then Herod ... had John locked up in prison. 21 **Before John was put in prison,** while all the people were being baptized by John, Jesus also was baptized.

> Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

> > Who is worthy to open the scroll **after** breaking its seals?

(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that.

> Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

> > 8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets 10 But Joshua **had commanded** the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout."

(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occur, consider reordering the events. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6).

> 8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

> > 8,10 Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout." Then just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets...

> Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

> > Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?

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

Next we recommend you learn about:
Background Information *(UTA PDF)*
Connecting Words and Phrases *(UTA PDF)*
Introduction of a New Event *(UTA PDF)*
Verse Bridges *(UTA PDF)*

"

Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 2:3

Parallelism

Description

Parallelism is a poetic device in which two phrases or clauses that
are similar in structure or idea are used together. The following
are some of the different kinds of parallelism.

> This page answers the question: *What is parallelism?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)*

   • The 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: 2 Thessalonians 2:8

Possession

Description

In English, the grammatical form that commonly indicates possession is also used to indicate a variety of relationships between people and objects or people and other people. In English, that grammatical relationship is shown by using the word "**of**," by using **an apostrophe and the letter "s"**, or by using a **possessive pronoun**. The following examples are different ways to indicate that my grandfather owns a house.

> This page answers the question: *What is possession and how can I translate phrases that show it?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)*
>
> *Sentence Structure (UTA PDF)*

- the house **of** my grandfather
- my grandfather **'s** house
- **his** house

Possession is used in Hebrew, Greek, and English for a variety of situations. Here are a few common situations that it is used for.

- Ownership — Someone owns something.
    - The clothes of me - my clothes — The clothes that I own

- Social Relationship — Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.
    - The mother of John — John's mother - the woman who gave birth to John, or the woman who cared for John
    - A teacher of Israel - Israel's teacher — a person who teaches Israel

- Association — A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.
    - The sickness of David - David's sickness — the sickness that David is experiencing
    - the fear of the Lord — the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord

- Contents — Something has something in it.
    - a bag of clothes — a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes

- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.
    - my head — the head that is part of my body
    - the roof of a house — the roof that is part of a house

In some languages there is a special form of possession, termed **inalienable possession.** This form of possession is used for things that cannot be removed from you, as opposed to things you could lose. In the examples above, *my head* and *my mother* are examples of inalienable possession (at least in some languages), while *my clothes* or *my teacher* would be alienably possessed. What may be considered alienable vs. inalienable may differ by language. In languages that mark the difference, the expression of inalienable possession and alienable possession will be different.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between two ideas represented by the two nouns when one is in the grammatical relationship of possessing the other.
- Some languages do not use grammatical possession for all of the situations that your source text Bible might use it for.

Examples From the Bible

Ownership — In the example below, the son owned the money.

> The younger son ... wasted his wealth by living recklessly. (Luke 15:13b)

Social Relationship — In the example below, the disciples were people who learned from John.

> Then **the disciples of John** came to him. (Matthew 9:14a ULT)

Association — In the example below, the gospel is the message associated with Paul because he preaches it.

> Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, from the seed of David, according to **my gospel**, (2 Timothy 2:8 ULT)

Material — In the example below, the material used for making the crowns was gold.

> On their heads were something like **crowns of gold.** (Revelation 9:7b)

Contents — In the example below, the cup has water in it.

> For whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink ... will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

Part of a whole — In the example below, the door was a part of the palace.

> But Uriah slept at **the door of the king's palace.** (2 Samuel 11:9a ULT)

Part of a group — In the example below, "us" refers to the whole group and "each one" refers to the individual members.

> Now to **each one of us** grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (Ephesians 4:7 ULT)

Events and Possession

Sometimes one or both of the nouns is an abstract noun that refers to an event or action. In the examples below, the abstract nouns are in **bold** print. These are just some of the relationships that are possible between two nouns when one of them refers to an event.

Subject — Sometimes the word after "of" tells who would do the action named by the first noun. In the example below, **John baptized people**.

> The **baptism of John**, was it from heaven or from men? Answer me. (Mark 11:30)

In the example below, **Christ loves us**.

> Who will separate us from the **love of Christ**? (Romans 8:35)

Object — Sometimes the word after "of" tells who or what something would happen to. In the example below, **people love money**.

> For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10a ULT)

Instrument — Sometimes the word after "of" tells how something would happen. In the example below, God would **punish people by sending enemies to attack them with swords**.

> Then be afraid of the sword, because wrath brings **the punishment of the sword**. (Job 19:29a ULT)

Representation — In the example below, John was baptizing people who were repenting of their sins. They were being baptized to show that they were repenting. Their **baptism represented their repentance**.

> John came, baptizing in the wilderness and preaching **a baptism of repentance** for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 1:4 ULT)

Strategies for learning what the relationship is between the two nouns

(1) Read the surrounding verses to see if they help you to understand the relationship between the two nouns.
(2) Read the verse in the UST. Sometimes it shows the relationship clearly.
(3) See what the notes say about it.

Translation Strategies

If possession would be a natural way to show a particular relationship between two nouns, consider using it. If it would be strange or hard to understand, consider these.

(1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.
(2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.
(3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.

> On their heads were something like **crowns of gold.** (Revelation 9:7b)
>
> > "On their heads were **gold crowns**"

(2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.

> Whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink … will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)
>
> > Whoever gives you a **cup that has water in it** to drink … will not lose his reward.

> Wealth is worthless on **the day of wrath.** (Proverbs 11:4a ULT)
>
> > Wealth is worthless on **the day when God shows his wrath**. or: Wealth is worthless on the **day when God punishes people because of his wrath**.

(3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb. (In the example below, there are two possession relationships, "punishment of Yahweh" and "your God.")

> Notice that I am not speaking to your children, who have not known or seen **the punishment of Yahweh your God.** (Deuteronomy 11:2a ULT)
>
> > Notice that I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen **how Yahweh, the God whom you worship, punished the people of Egypt**.

> You will only observe and see the **punishment of the wicked**. (Psalms 91:8 ULT)
>
> > You will only observe and see **how Yahweh punishes the wicked**.

> You will receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. (Acts 2:38b ULT)
>
> > You will receive the **Holy Spirit, whom God will give to you**.

"

Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:5

Predictive Past

Description

The predictive past is a figure of speech that uses the past tense to refer to things that will happen in the future. This is sometimes done in prophecy to show that the event will certainly happen. It is also called the prophetic perfect.

> This page answers the question: *What is the predictive past?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)*
>
> *Verbs (UTA PDF)*

> Therefore my people have gone into captivity for lack of understanding; their honored leaders go hungry, and their common people have nothing to drink. (Isaiah 5:13 ULT)

In the example above, the people of Israel had not yet gone into captivity, but God spoke of their going into captivity as if it had already happened because he had decided that they certainly would go into captivity.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

Readers who are not aware of the past tense being used in prophecy to refer to future events may find it confusing.

Examples From the Bible

> Now Jericho was tightly closed because of the sons of Israel. No one went out and no one came in. Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:1-2 ULT)

> For to us a child has been born, to us a son has been given; and the rule will be on his shoulder. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)

In the examples above, God spoke of things that would happen in the future as if they had already happened.

> But even Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them, saying, "Look! The Lord came with thousands and thousands of his holy ones." (Jude 1:14 ULT)

Enoch was speaking of something that would happen in the future, but he used the past tense when he said "the Lord came."

Translation Strategies

If the past tense would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

(1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.
(2) If it refers to something in the immediate future, use a form that would show that.
(3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.

> For to us a child **has been born**, to us a son **has been given**. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)

> > For to us a child **will be born**, to us a son **will be given**.

(2) If it refers to something that would happen very soon, use a form that shows that.

> Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:2 ULT)

>> Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I **am about to deliver** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers."

(3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

> Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:2 ULT)

>> Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I **am delivering** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers."

"

Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 2:4

Pronouns — When to Use Them

Description

When we talk or write, we use pronouns to refer to people or things without always having to repeat the noun or name. Usually, the first time we refer to someone in a story, we use a descriptive phrase or a name. The next time we might refer to that person with a simple noun or by name. After that we might refer to him simply with a pronoun as long as we think that our listeners will be able to understand easily to whom the pronoun refers.

> This page answers the question: *How do I decide whether or not to use a pronoun?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Pronouns (UTA PDF)*
> *Sentence Structure (UTA PDF)*

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

In John 3, Nicodemus is first referred to with noun phrases and his name. Then he is referred to with the noun phrase "this man." Then he is referred to with the pronoun "him."

Each language has its rules and exceptions to this usual way of referring to people and things.

- In some languages, the first time something is referred to in a paragraph or chapter, it is referred to with a noun rather than a pronoun.
- The main character is the person whom a story is about. In some languages, after a main character is introduced in a story, he is usually referred to with a pronoun. Some languages have special pronouns that refer only to the main character.
- In some languages, marking on the verb helps people know who the subject is. (See Verbs.) In some of these languages, listeners rely on this marking to help them understand who the subject is. Speakers will use a pronoun, noun phrase, or proper name only when they want either to emphasize or to clarify who the subject is.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- If translators use a pronoun at the wrong time for their language, readers might not know about whom the writer is talking.
- If translators too frequently refer to a main character by name, listeners of some languages might not realize that the person is a main character, or they might think that there is a new character with the same name.
- If translators use pronouns, nouns, or names at the wrong time, people might think that there is some special emphasis on the person or thing to which it refers.

Examples From the Bible

The example below occurs at the beginning of a chapter. In some languages it might not be clear to whom the pronouns refer.

> Then Jesus entered into the synagogue again, and there was a man who had a withered hand. Some people watched **him** closely to see if **he** would heal **him** on the Sabbath so that they might accuse **him**. (Mark 3:1-2 ULT)

In the example below, two men are named in the first sentence. It might not be clear whom "he" in the second sentence refers to.

> Now after some days had passed, **King Agrippa** and Bernice came down to Caesarea to pay their respects to **Festus**. After **he** had been there for many days, Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul. (Acts 25:13-14)

Jesus is the main character of the book of Matthew, but in the verses below he is referred to four times by name. This may lead speakers of some languages to think that Jesus is not the main character. Or it might lead them to think that there is more than one person named Jesus in this story. Or it might lead them to think that there is some kind of emphasis on him, even though there is no emphasis.

> At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath." But **Jesus** said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?" Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.
(2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.

> Again **he** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **him** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath. (Mark 3:1-2)
>
> > Again **Jesus** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **Jesus** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath.

(2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

> At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath." But **Jesus** said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?" Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

This may be translated as:

> > At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **him**, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath." But **he** said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?" Then **he** left from there and went into their synagogue.

"

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: 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:16

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: 2 Thessalonians 2:5

Section Headings

Decisions about Section Headings

One of the decisions that the translation team will have to make is whether or not to use section headings. Section headings are like titles to each section of the Bible that begins a new topic. The section heading lets people know what that section is about. Some Bible translations use them, and others do not. You (the translator) may want to follow the practice of the Bible in the national language that most people use. You will also want to find out what the language community prefers.

This page answers the question: *What kind of section headings should we use?*

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

Acceptable Style *(UTA PDF)*
Consistent Punctuation *(UTA PDF)*
Complete Versification *(UTA PDF)*

Using section headings requires more work, because you will need either to write or to translate each one in addition to the text of the Bible. It will also make your translation of the Bible longer. But section headings can be very helpful to your readers. Section headings make it much easier to find where the Bible talks about different topics. If a person is looking for something in particular, he can just read the section headings until he finds one that introduces the topic that he wants to read about. Then he can read that section.

If you have decided to use section headings, then you will need to decide which kind to use. Again, you should find out which kind of section heading the language community prefers. You may also choose to follow the style of the national language. Be sure to use a kind of section heading that the people will understand is not part of the text that it introduces. The section heading is not a part of the Bible; it is just a guide to the different parts of the Bible. You might be able to make this clear by putting a space before and after the section heading and by using a different font (style of letters) or a different size of letters. See how the Bible in the national language does this, and test different methods with the language community.

Kinds of Section Headings

There are many different kinds of section headings. Here are some different kinds, with examples of how each one would look for Mark 2:1-12:

- Summary statement: "By healing a paralyzed man, Jesus demonstrated his authority to forgive sins as well as to heal." This tries to summarize the main point of the section, and so it gives the most information in a full sentence.
- Explanatory comment: "Jesus heals a paralyzed man." This is also a full sentence, but gives just enough information to remind the reader which section follows.
- Topical reference: "Cure of a paralytic." This tries to be very short, only giving a label of a few words. This might save space, but it is probably only useful for people who already know the Bible well.
- Question: "Does Jesus have authority to heal and forgive sins?" This one creates a question that the information in the section answers. People who have a lot of questions about the Bible may find this especially helpful.
- "About" comment: "About Jesus healing a paralyzed man." This kind of heading explicitly tells the reader what the section is about. This may be the one that makes it easiest to see that the heading is not a part of the words of the Bible.

As you can see, it is possible to make many different kinds of section headings, but they all have the same purpose. They all give the reader information about the main topic of the section of the Bible that follows. Some headings are shorter, and some headings are longer. Some give only a little information, and some give more information. You may want to experiment with the different kinds, and ask people which kind they think is most helpful for them.

"

> *Language Community Evaluation Questions (UTA PDF)*
> *Publishing (UTA PDF)*

Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:16

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: 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:17

Textual Variants

Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However, people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, or some mistook one word for another that looked like it. Occasionally, they added

> This page answers the question: *Why does the ULT have missing or added verses, and should I translate them?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Choosing a Source Text (UTA PDF)*
> *Original Manuscripts (UTA PDF)*

words or even whole sentences, either by accident or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles include some of these sentences that were added. In the ULT, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

Bible scholars have read many old copies and compared them with each other. For each place in the Bible where there was a difference, they have figured out which wordings are most likely correct. The translators of the ULT based the ULT on wordings that scholars say are most likely correct. Because people who use the ULT may have access to Bibles that are based on other copies, the ULT translators have sometimes included information about some of the differences between them, either in the ULT footnotes or in the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes.

Translators are encouraged to translate the text in the ULT and to write about added sentences in footnotes, as is done in the ULT. However, if the local church really wants those sentences to be included in the main text, translators may put them in the text and include a footnote about them.

Examples From the Bible

Matthew 18:10-11 ULT has a footnote about verse 11.

> [10] See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. [11] [1]
>
> [1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

John 7:53-8:11 is not in the best earliest manuscripts. It has been included in the ULT, but it is marked off with square brackets ([ ]) at the beginning and end, and there is a footnote after verse 11.

> 53 [Then everyone went to his own house … 11 She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."] [2]
>
> [2] Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

Translation Strategies

When there is a textual variant, you may choose to follow the ULT or another version that you have access to.

(1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The translation strategies are applied to Mark 7:14-16 ULT, which has a footnote about verse 16.

> [14] He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. [15] There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." [16] [1]
>
> [1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.

> [14] He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. [15] There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." [16] [1]
>
> > [1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

> [14] He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. [15]There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man. [16] If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." [1]
>
> > [1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

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Next we recommend you learn about:

Chapter and Verse Numbers (UTA PDF)
Original Manuscripts (UTA PDF)
Terms to Know (UTA PDF)
The Original and Source Languages (UTA PDF)

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"

Referenced in: Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

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: 2 Thessalonians 3:8; 2 Thessalonians 3:11

When Masculine Words Include Women

In the Bible, sometimes the words "men," "brothers," and "sons" refer only to men. At other times, those words include both men and women. In those places where the writer meant both men and women, you (the translator) need to translate it in a way that does not limit the meaning to men.

> This page answers the question: *How do I translate "brother" or "he" when it could refer to anyone, male or female?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Pronouns (UTA PDF)*
> *Generic Noun Phrases (UTA PDF)*

Description

In some languages a word that normally refers to men can also be used in a more general way to refer to both men and women. For example, the Bible sometimes says "brothers" when it refers to both brothers and sisters.

Also in some languages, the masculine pronouns "he" and "him" can be used in a more general way for any person if it is not important whether the person is a man or a woman. In the example below, the pronoun is "his," but it is not limited to males.

> A wise son makes **his** father rejoice but a foolish son brings grief to **his** mother. (Proverbs 10:1 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- In some cultures words like "man," "brother," and "son" can only be used to refer to men. If those words are used in a translation in a more general way, people will think that what is being said does not apply to women.
- In some cultures, the masculine pronouns "he" and "him" can only refer to men. If a masculine pronoun is used, people will think that what is said does not apply to women.

Translation Principles

When a statement applies to both men and women, translate it in such a way that people will be able to understand that it applies to both.

Examples From the Bible

> Now we want you to know, **brothers**, the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 8:1 ULT)

This verse is addressing the believers in Corinth, not only men, but **men and women**.

> Then said Jesus to his disciples, "If anyone wants to follow me, **he** must deny **himself**, take up **his** cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

Jesus was not speaking only of men, but of **men and women**.

Caution: Sometimes masculine words are used specifically to refer to men. Do not use words that would lead people to think that they include women. The words below are specifically about men.

> Moses said, 'If **someone** dies, not having children, **his brother** must marry **his** wife and have children for **his brother**.' (Matthew 22:24 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If people would understand that that masculine words like "man," "brother," and "he" can include women, then consider using them. Otherwise, here are some ways for translating those words when they include women.

(1) Use a noun that can be used for both men and women.
(2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.
(3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use nouns that can be used for both men and women.

> The wise **man** dies just like the fool dies. (Ecclesiastes 2:16b ULT)
>
>> "The wise **person** dies just like the fool dies." "Wise **people** die just like fools die."

(2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.

> For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia. (2 Corinthians 1:8) — Paul was writing this letter to both men and women.
>
>> "For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers and sisters**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia."

(3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

> "If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

English speakers can change the masculine singular pronouns, "he," "himself," and "his" to plural pronouns that do not mark gender, "they," "themselves," and "their" in order to show that it applies to all people, not just men.

>> "If **people** want to follow me, **they** must deny **themselves**, take up **their** cross, and follow me."

"

Referenced in:

unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 77

antichrist

Definition:

The term "antichrist" refers to a person or teaching that is against Jesus Christ and his work. There are many antichrists in the world.

- The apostle John tells us that a person is the antichrist if he deceives people by saying that Jesus is not the Messiah or if he denies that Jesus is both God and human.
- The Bible also teaches that there is a general spirit of antichrist in the world that opposes Jesus' work.
- The beast in chapter 13 of the New Testament book of Revelation is often identified as the ultimate antichrist. This person or being will attempt to destroy God's people, but he will be defeated by Jesus.
- The apostle Paul refers to this person as "the man of lawlessness" (2 Thess 2:3) and to the general spirit of antichrist in the world as "the secret power of lawlessness" (2 Thess 2:7).

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate this term could include a word or phrase that means "Christ-opposer" or "enemy of Christ" or "person who is against Christ."
- The phrase "spirit of the antichrist" could also be translated as "spirit that is against Christ" or "attitude of spreading lies about Christ" or "spirit that teaches lies about Christ."
- Also consider how this term is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: Christ, tribulation)

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:18
- 1 John 2:22
- 1 John 4:3
- 2 John 1:7

Word Data:

- Strong's: G05000

"

Referenced in: 2 Thessalonians 2 General Notes

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