unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Nehemiah

Version 78

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Introduction to Nehemiah

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Nehemiah

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What is the Book of Nehemiah about?

A Jew named Nehemiah lived in Persia and worked for King Artaxerxes. Nehemiah received a report that the walls around Jerusalem were broken down. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to help rebuild the city walls. The walls around the city helped protect the city against armies and invaders.

How should the title of this book be translated?

The Book of Nehemiah is named for a Jewish leader named Nehemiah. Translators can use the traditional title "Nehemiah." Or they may choose a more complete title, such as "The Book about Nehemiah." (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Why were Israelites not allowed to marry people from other nations?

Foreigners worshiped many false gods. Yahweh did not allow his people to marry foreigners. He knew this would cause the people of Israel to worship false gods. (See: **god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry (p.601)**)

Did all of the people of Israel return to their homeland?

Many of the Jews remained in Babylon instead of returning to the Promised Land. Many of them were successful in Babylon and desired to remain there. However, this meant that they were unable to worship Yahweh in Jerusalem as their ancestors had done. (See: **Promised Land (p.608)**)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How does the Book of Nehemiah use the term "Israel"?

The Book of Nehemiah uses the term "Israel" to refer to the kingdom of Judah. It was mostly made up of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The other ten tribes had ended their loyalty to any kings descended from David. God had

allowed the Assyrians to conquer the other ten tribes and take them into exile around 275 years earlier. As a result, they mixed with other people groups and did not return to the land of Israel. (See: **Israel, Israelites (p.603)**)

Are the events in the Book of Nehemiah told in the order that they actually happened?

Some of the events in the Book of Nehemiah are told in an order that is different than the order in which they actually happened so that they events can be grouped by theme. Translators should pay attention to notes that signal when events are probably out of chronological order.

Nehemiah 1

Nehemiah 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

"The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah:"

This phrase serves as an introduction to this entire book.

Special concepts in this chapter

Repentance

This chapter is a single long record of Nehemiah's repentance on behalf of the people of Israel. (See: **repent, repentance (p.609)**)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

I

In this book, the word "I" always refers to Nehemiah.

Israel

In this book, "Israel" probably does not refer to the northern kingdom of Israel. Neither does it likely refer to the twelve tribes of Israel. Instead, it is probably a reference to Israel in the sense of the surviving people group from the southern kingdom of Judah. At Nehemiah's time, these would be the people from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin who survived the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon in 586 BC and the exile of many of them to Babylon. The other tribes had already been scattered throughout the entire Near East where most of them lost their identity as Israel.

Nehemiah 1:1

Nehemiah the son of Hakaliah

Nehemiah is the name of a man, and Hakaliah is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And it happened

This is a common way of beginning a historical story. Use a natural way of beginning a story about something that actually happened. Alternate translation: "My story begins" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**)

in the month of Kislev

Kislev is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. (See: **Hebrew Months (p.539)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.539)**)

in year 20

This is referring to the number of years that Artaxerxes had been reigning as king. You can include this information if you want to make this clear. Most scholars consider this to be the year 445 BC. Alternate translation: "in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, King of Persia" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

in Susa the citadel

A **citadel** is a fortified castle or palace, usually inside a city. In this case, the city in which this palace was located was also called Susa, because the city was associated with the palace. Since this was where the kings of Persia lived, it was the capital city of their empire. Alternate translation: "the capital city of Susa" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

in Susa

This was the name of a royal city of the Persian kings. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the citadel

This means a "castle" or "palace" or "stronghold," usually inside a city, where a king would live. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 1:2

Hanani

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Hanani, one

The term **brother** is often used figuratively in this book, but here it most likely means that Hanani was Nehemiah's biological brother.

he and men

This was a delegation that had come from one Jewish community to visit another Jewish community in another part of the world. So it's possible that it included women as well as men. Alternate translation: "along with some other people" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p. 598)**)

from Judah

Judah was formerly the southern kingdom of the Israelites. It was now a Persian province. Alternate translation: "the province of Judah" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the Jews who escaped, who were left behind from the captivity

These two phrases mean the same thing. Nehemiah uses them together for clarity to describe one particular group of people, and perhaps also to express his particular concern for them. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "the Jews who had escaped the exile" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

the Jews who escaped, who were left behind from the captivity

These two phrases refer to the same group of people. This could mean: (1) the few Jews who were taken as exiles to Babylon but who later were able to return and live in Jerusalem or (2) the few Jews who had escaped from those who were trying to take them into exile in Babylon and so remained in Jerusalem. It is probably best to translate this in a way that can include both groups. Alternate translation: "the Jews who had escaped the exile and who remained in Jerusalem" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the captivity

Captivity is an abstract noun that refers to the Jews being taken away from their homeland. Judah had been conquered by the Babylonians about 150 years before this. At that time, the Babylonians took many people away from Judah and relocated them to different parts of their empire. About 50 years later, the Persian Empire conquered Babylon and so the Babylonian empire became the Persian empire. The Jews who had been captured by Babylon now lived in Persia, although some had since returned to Judah. You can translate the idea of **captivity** with a phrase such as "the time when the Jews were taken away" or "the time when soldiers forced many Jews to go to Babylon" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

and about Jerusalem

Jerusalem had been the capital city of the kingdom of Judah. Nehemiah was asking specifically about the physical condition of the buildings and walls in the city, in addition to asking about the welfare of the Jewish community in Judah. Alternate translation: "about the condition of Jerusalem" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 1:3

The ones left behind, who were left behind from the captivity

These two statements mean similar things. Nehemiah says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to show his concern for this group. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "the Jews who escaped the exile and remained" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

in the province

Here **province** refers to Judah as an administrative district within the Persian Empire. Hanani is describing Judah by referring to something associated with it, its status as a province. Alternate translation: "in the province of Judah" or "in Judah" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

are in great evil and in reproach

Difficulty and **reproach** mean similar things. Hanani uses them together to emphasize what a desperate situation the people are in. You do not need to repeat both words in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "in a perilous situation" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

are in great evil and in reproach

The abstract noun **difficulty** refers to a situation that is very hard for the people to live in. It describes a situation that is dangerous and insecure for the people in it. You can translate this idea with an adjective such as "bad." Alternate translation: "in a very bad situation" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

and in reproach

Reproach is an abstract noun that describes how other people would see the situation of the Jews. The situation would lead them to say bad things about them. you could translate this idea with a verb such as "mock." Alternate translation: "and people are mocking them." (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

And the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: "armies have broken open the wall of Jerusalem and have set its gates on fire" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

And the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire

The implication is that the people are now defenseless. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "The people living there have no protection." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

have been burned with fire

If saying that something is burned **with fire** is redundant in your language, you can just say, **completely burned**. Alternate translation: "burned down"

Nehemiah 1:4

And it happened that

Nehemiah uses this phrase to introduce the next episode in his story. You do not need to represent it this way in your translation, but use a natural way to introduce a new episode in the story. Alternate translation: "So the next thing I did" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**)

when I heard these words

Here **words** refers to the things that were described by the words. Alternate translation: "after hearing about these things" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

I sat down and wept

Sitting down likely means that Nehemiah stopped going about his usual business because he was so overcome by grief. Alternate translation: "I could do nothing else but grieve" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

and I mourned for days

This means that Nehemiah kept on grieving. He did not get over being upset. The term "days" here suggests "many days" and it is a figurative expression for "a long time." Alternate translation: "I could not stop mourning for a long time." (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

fasting and praying

Fasting means going without food. This was something that Jews often did in connection with prayer. It allowed them to concentrate on their prayers, and it showed how important those prayers were. Alternate translation: "I went without food, and I prayed" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

and praying before the face of

Here **face** is a metonym for the action of seeing, which is a figurative way of referring to a person's notice or attention to something. Nehemiah is saying that he prayed in order to bring these matters to God's notice or attention. Alternate translation: "and I prayed to" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

the God of heaven

Alternate translation: "God, who is in heaven"

Nehemiah 1:5

And I said

Here Nehemiah tells what he prayed. Alternate translation: "Then I prayed"

Ah

Nehemiah uses this word to call on God with strong feeling. Alternate translation: "O" (See: **Exclamations (p.528)**) (See: **Exclamations (p.528)**)

Yahweh

This is the name of God that he revealed to his people in the Old Testament. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the God of heaven

Since Nehemiah is addressing God directly, you can use "you" forms in your translation if that is natural. They should be singular but also respectful. Alternate translation: "you are the God who is in heaven" (See: **Forms of You (p.534)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.534)**)

the great and fearsome God

Great and **fearsome** mean similar things. Nehemiah uses them together to emphasize how much respect God deserves. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could also bring that out in your translation. "Great" refers to how powerful God is objectively. "Fearsome" reflects how people should respond to God's greatness subjectively. They should "fear" God. This does not mean that they should be afraid of him, but that they should show him respect and reverence. Alternate translation: "the great and awesome God" or "the God who deserves total respect" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

who keeps the covenant and covenant faithfulness

Covenant and **covenant faithfulness** mean similar things. Nehemiah says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to emphasize how certain it is that God will keep his promises. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could bring that out in your translation even if you combine the phrases. The "covenant" is God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants. "Covenant faithfulness" is a character quality of God. He is inwardly disposed to keep all of his promises, and so he always does so faithfully. Therefore, you could say something like, "Because of who you are, you always keep your promises faithfully." (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

to those who love him and to those who keep his commandments

Nehemiah is not describing two different groups. These phrases mean similar things. The repetition is used for clarity and emphasis. Nehemiah says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to express that those who love God show this by keeping his commandments. You can translate this so that it is clear that these words describe one group. Alternate translation: "those who love you and keep your commandments" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

to those who love him and to those who keep his commandments

Since Nehemiah is speaking to Yahweh, the pronouns "him" and "his" can be translated as "you" and "your." Alternate translation: "who love you and keep your commandments" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

Nehemiah 1:6

Please let your ear be attentive and your eyes opened

These two phrases mean similar things. Nehemiah says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to urge God to pay attention to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "pay attention to me," otherwise "please listen to me and look at me." (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

your ear & attentive

This request for God's ear to be attentive refers figuratively to the action of listening. In this context, Nehemiah is asking God to listen to his prayer, with the intention that God would do something about the bad situation in Jerusalem. (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

and your eyes opened

This request for God's eyes to be open refers figuratively to the action of seeing. Seeing is a metaphor meaning knowledge, perception, notice, attention, or judgment. In this case, Nehemiah is asking God to pay attention both to him and to the problem in Jerusalem. (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

the prayer of your servant

Nehemiah uses the word servant to refer to himself. This is how a person would address a superior in order to show humility and respect. Alternate translation: "my prayer" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

am praying before your face

Here **face** is a metonym for the action of seeing, which is figurative way of referring to a person's notice or attention to something. Nehemiah is repeating the fact that he is praying in order to bring these matters to God's notice or attention. Alternate translation: "praying to you" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

today

This does not necessarily mean on this particular day, but at this time. Alternate translation: "right now" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

today, day and night

When Nehemiah says that he has prayed both during the day and during the night, he means that he has also prayed at all times in between, that is, constantly. However, he does not mean that he has prayed non-stop all day long and all night long, without doing any other activities such as sleeping or eating. Alternate translation: "constantly," otherwise "during the day and at night" (See: **Merism (p.561)**) (See: **Merism (p.561)**)

the sons of Israel

Here **sons** figuratively means **descendants.** Alternate translation: "on behalf of the people of Israel" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**)

your servants

In this context, the word **servants** refers to the special role that the people of Israel had in the world as a model community of God's followers. Alternate translation: "your chosen people" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And & am confessing on account of the sins of the sons of Israel that we have sinned against you

Here again **sons** means **descendants** and the phrase refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "I must confess the sins that we, the people of Israel, have committed against you" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**)

Even I and the house of my father, we have sinned

Among the Israelites, the expression **father's house** or **house of the father** originally described an extended-family group who lived together. It later came to be used more generally to refer to a larger clan within a tribe. In this expression, the word **house** figuratively describes all the people descended from a particular person. The term views all of those descendants as if they were one household living together. However, since Nehemiah is stressing his sense of personal responsibility here and identifying closely with the people in this group, he may be using the term in its original sense to refer to his nearest relatives. Alternate translation: "Both I and my family have also sinned" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

Nehemiah 1:7

With extreme corruption we have acted corruptly against you

The repetition here is used for emphasis. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. you could combine them into one phrase, with a word like **very** to convey emphasis. Alternate translation: "We have acted very corruptly toward you" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p. 579)**)

With extreme corruption we have acted corruptly against you

You can translate the idea of the abstract noun **corruption** with a verb such as **sinned.** Alternate translation: "We have sinned very much against you" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments

These three words mean basically the same thing. Nehemiah uses the repetition to emphasize how comprehensively the Israelites have disobeyed what God commanded them through Moses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine them into a single phrase. Alternate translation: "the law of Moses" otherwise "the commands and rules and laws" (Note: A doublet can involve the use of more than two words.) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

that you commanded Moses your servant

Moses was the great leader who brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt centuries before and gave them God's law. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "that you gave us many years ago through your servant Moses." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 1:8

Please remember

Here **remember** is an idiom that means to think about someone and consider what action you can take on their behalf. Nehemiah is not suggesting that God has forgotten the promise he made to Moses. Alternate translation: "Please think about" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

the word that you commanded Moses your servant

The pronouns **you** and **your** refer to God and so are singular. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.535)**) (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.535)**)

the word

This refers to a promise that God made while giving the law to the people of Israel through Moses. Alternate translation: "the promise"

If you yourselves act unfaithfully

The pronouns **you** and **yourselves** refer to the Israelite people, and so they are plural. Alternate translation: "If you Israelites" (See: **Forms of You (p.534)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.534)**)

If you yourselves act unfaithfully

Here infidelity in marriage is used as a figurative description of the people of Israel not keeping God's commandments. Alternate translation: "If you Israelites do not keep my commandments" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

I & will scatter you among the peoples

The implication is that God would do this to punish the Israelites for breaking his commandments. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "as a punishment, I will take you from your land and make you live among the other nations" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 1:9

But if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, although your banished ones are

The pronouns **you** and **your** refer to the Israelite people, so they are plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.534)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.534)**)

But if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, although your banished ones are

Return is a figurative way of saying "become loyal again." Alternate translation: "If you become loyal to me again" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and keep my commandments and do them

These two statements mean similar things. They are used together for emphasis. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "start obeying my commandments once more" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

your banished ones

This refers to the exile. Alternate translation: "all of you who were taken away"

at the extremity of heaven

This means "the most distant point under the sky." In this culture the sky was understood to be a solid dome with a flat earth beneath it. The phrase is describing a point beyond which no one could go any farther because they would have reached the edge of the dome of the sky. This is an overstatement because even from the perspective of this culture, no one could really reach such a point. Alternate translation: "places very far away" (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**)

I will gather them and bring them

Since God is actually addressing the Israelites here, you can say "you" in the plural. Alternate translation: "I will bring you back" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

I will gather them and bring them

These two statements mean similar things. They are used together to emphasize that God will definitely keep this promise. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine the phrases. Alternate translation: "I will bring you back" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

to the place where I have chosen to cause my name to dwell there

Here God's name is spoken of as if it were capable of living in a place. The phrase indicates the place from which God chose to start making himself famous throughout the world. You can say something like that as an alternate translation. (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

to the place where I have chosen to cause my name to dwell there

This phrase refers initially to Jerusalem because that was where God chose to put his temple. You could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "to Jerusalem, where I have chosen for my name to remain" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

to the place where I have chosen to cause my name to dwell there

Nehemiah is actually using this phrase to refer to all of Judah. As the book explains later, when the Jews returned there, they each settled in their own former towns, though one in ten of them were recruited to live in Jerusalem. So Judah is being described by something associated with it, the capital city. Alternate translation: "to your homeland of Judah." (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

my name

Here, **name** is a figurative way of referring to the fame or reputation of a person. Their fame is described by something associated with it, how well known their name is and how people react to hearing it. Alternate translation: "reputation" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

Nehemiah 1:10

And they are your servants and your people

The word **they** refers to the Israelite people. Since Nehemiah is speaking on their behalf and including himself, you could say "we" in your translation, If it would be helpful in your language. If your language marks the distinction, "we" should not include the addressee. Alternate translation: "we are your servants, your chosen people" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

And they are your servants and your people

As in 1:6, **servants** refers to the special role that the people of Israel had as a model community of God's followers. So these two phrases are basically saying the same thing. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "we are your chosen people" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

whom you redeemed

This is a reference to the way God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Alternate translation: "you rescued us from slavery in Egypt" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

by your great power and by your strong hand

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Nehemiah uses the repetition to emphasize the intensity of Yahweh's power. Alternate translation: "by your very great strength" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

and by your strong hand

Here, **hand** represents a person's power, strength, or ability. (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 1:11

Ah

As in 1:5, Nehemiah uses this word to call on God with strong feeling. Alternate translation: "O" (See: **Exclamations (p.528)**) (See: **Exclamations (p.528)**)

My Lord, please let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant

Nehemiah calls himself a **servant** and he calls God his **Lord** because this is how a person in his culture would address a superior in order to show humility and respect. See how you translated this in 1:6.

My Lord

This term in Hebrew can be understood as either a noun with a pronoun suffix ("my Lord") or as a simple title ("Lord"). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

please let your ear be attentive

As in 1:6, this phrase refers figuratively to the action of listening. Alternate translation: "please pay careful attention." (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

the prayer of your servant

Alternate translation: "to my prayer" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

the prayer of your servants

Here, **servants** refers to the rest of the Israelite people who were also praying for Yahweh to act on behalf of his people and on behalf of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "and to the prayers of my fellow Israelites"

the ones who delight to fear your name

Here, **name** represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: "who are glad to honor you" or "who are eager to uphold your reputation" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

the ones who delight

To delight in doing something means to be glad to do it and to want to do it. (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

to fear

As in 1:5, **fear** means to show respect and reverence.

And please cause your servant to succeed today, and give him mercies

Once again Nehemiah calls himself a **servant** to show respect to a superior. He then refers to himself in the third person ("give him") to express humility before God. Alternate translation: "make me successful today and let the king be merciful to me" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

And please cause your servant to succeed today, and give him mercies

These two statements mean similar things. Nehemiah says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to emphasize how important it is for him to have God's help. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "grant that the king will have mercy on me" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

today

This does not necessarily mean on this same day. Rather, Nehemiah is praying that God will give him the opportunity to speak with the king soon about helping the Jews in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "soon" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

and give him mercies

Here, **him** refers to Nehemiah, who refers to himself in the third person to express his humility before God. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

before the face of this man

Here, **face** is a figurative way of referring to the action of seeing, and seeing is a figurative way of describing knowledge, perception, notice, attention, or judgment. In this context, Nehemiah is asking God to cause the king to make a favorable decision in response to a request he plans to make. Alternate translation: "Please grant that the king will agree to the request that I am going to make." (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

this man

As we will discover in the next chapter, **this man** refers to Artaxerxes, the king of Persia. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the king" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Now as for me, I was a cupbearer for the king

This is background information about Nehemiah's role in the king's court. Your language may have a special way to mark background information. As a "cupbearer," it was Nehemiah's duty to serve the wine at the king's table, but he was much more than a waiter or butler. When the king gave him this assignment, this showed that he trusted Nehemiah completely to protect him from being poisoned. Nehemiah's work also allowed him to see the king frequently and get to know him. So this was an important office. Alternate translation: "At that time, I was an important official who served the wine at the king's table." (See: **Background Information (p.493)**) (See: **Background Information (p.493)**)

Nehemiah 2

Nehemiah 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins the account of the construction of the wall. Many scholars believe these chapters teach valuable lessons on leadership (Nehemiah 2-6).

Special concepts in this chapter

Nehemiah's character

Apparently, Nehemiah's character made an impression on the king. It was very unusual for a king to be so concerned with one of his servants. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Cultural Customs

In ancient Persia, people thought it was important for their conquered peoples to retain and practice their own cultural customs. It was thought that this independence promoted peace in their vast kingdom. The rebuilding of Jerusalem may have been seen as a way to allow for the Jewish cultural practices.

Yahweh's control

Yahweh is seen as very powerful. He is able to provide for his people even through a foreign king. (See: **people of God (p.607)**)

Nehemiah 2:1

And it happened that

Nehemiah uses this phrase to introduce the next event in his story. You do not need to represent it in your translation unless your language has a similar expression that it characteristically uses. Alternate translation: "Then one day" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**)

in the month of Nisan, in year 20 of Artaxerxes the king

Since there were twelve months in the Hebrew calendar, and it was still the same year in the reign of Artaxerxes, this means that four months had gone by since Hanani came and spoke with Nehemiah. The implication is that Nehemiah had been praying all this time in the way described in chapter 1. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I prayed like this for four months" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

in the month of Nisan

Nisan is the name of the first month of the Hebrew calendar. (See: **Hebrew Months (p.539)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.539)**)

in year 20 of Artaxerxes the king

This is referring to the number of years that Artaxerxes had been reigning as king. Alternate translation: "in year 20 of the reign of Artaxerxes as the king of Persia" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

wine was before his face

Him means King Artaxerxes. Alternate translation: "when it was time to serve him the wine"

wine was before his face

Here, **face** is a figurative way of referring to the presence of a person. This sentence means that a time had come when Nehemiah needed to serve wine to the king. (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And I lifted the wine, and I gave it to the king

Alternate translation: "I poured a cup of wine and gave it to the king"

and I was not unpleasant before his face

In this context, **unpleasant** refers to a person looking sad or upset. Alternate translation: "I did not look sad in his presence" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

and I was not

The context suggests that **I was not** actually means **I had never been.** It seems that King Artaxerxes always wanted his officials to be cheerful in his presence. That is why Nehemaiah became afraid when the king asked him

why he was sad. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say "I had never been" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

before his face

Here, **face** is a figurative way of referring to the presence of a person. Alternate translation: "in his presence" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 2:2

And the king said to me

The king must have noticed that Nehemiah looked sad because he asked about it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "But the king noticed that on this day I did look sad. So he asked me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Why is your face unpleasant

The king refers to Nehemiah by one part of him, his **face**, because the face shows one's emotions. Alternate translation: "Why are you sad" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

Why is your face unpleasant

As in 2:1, **unpleasant** refers to a person looking sad or upset. Alternate translation: "Why are you sad" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Now as for you, you are not sick

Alternate translation: "I can tell that you are not sick."

This is nothing except unpleasantness of heart

This phrase means **sadness of heart.** The king speaks as if Nehemiah's heart were a living thing capable of having emotions. Alternate translation: "You must be very sad inside" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

This is nothing except unpleasantness of heart

You can state this in a positive form: Alternate translation: "This can only be sadness" (See: **Double Negatives (p. 520)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.520)**)

And I was extremely much afraid

The implication is that Nehemiah was very afraid because no one was supposed to look unhappy in the king's presence. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "This made me very afraid, because no one was supposed to look unhappy in the king's presence" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 2:3

May the king live to eternity

Nehemiah is showing honor to King Artaxerxes. Here, **to eternity** is an exaggeration that refers to a long life. Alternate translation: "Long live the king" or "May you have a long life" (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p. 546)**)

May the king live to eternity

Nehemiah addresses the king in the third person as a sign of respect. You can indicate this respect by adding an expression such as "Your Majesty." (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

Why should not my face be unpleasant

Nehemiah is making a statement, not asking a question. He does not expect the king to give him reasons why he should not be sad. Instead, he is using the question form for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am sorry, but I cannot help being sad" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

Why should not my face be unpleasant

Nehemiah refers to himself by one part of him, his **face**, because the face shows one's emotions. Alternate translation: "I have very good reasons to be sad" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

Why should not my face be unpleasant

Here, **unpleasant** refers to a person looking sad or upset. Alternate translation: "I have very good reasons to be sad" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

the city, & is desolate

The city means Jerusalem. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the city of Jerusalem … lies in ruins" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the house of the graves of my fathers

Here, **house** is a figurative way of referring to a place. Alternate translation: "the place where my ancestors are buried" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the house of the graves of my fathers

Here, **fathers** figuratively means **ancestors.** Alternate translation: "the place where my ancestors are buried" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

and its gates have been consumed by fire

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "fire has destroyed its gates" or "our enemies have burned its gates" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Nehemiah 2:4

For what is this you are seeking

Alternate translation: "What do you want me to do for you"

And I prayed

The implication is that Nehemiah prayed to God before he answered the king. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Before I answered him, I prayed" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the God of heaven

Alternate translation: "the God who is in heaven"

Nehemiah 2:5

And I said to the king

Alternate translation: "Then I replied to the king"

If it is good to the king

This is an idiom that means, "If it seems good in your judgment" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

If it is good to the king

Nehemiah speaks to the king in third person as a form of respect. Alternate translation: "If it seems good in your judgment" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

and if your servant is good before your face

Here, **face** could be referring figuratively to the king himself by naming one part of him. What he thought and felt about Nehemiah's request would become evident in his face first, so that would be an appropriate part of him to use to represent all of him. Another possibility is that **face** figuratively means the presence of a person. Alternate translation: "if you are pleased with me" or "as I stand here before you" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

and if your servant is good before your face

Nehemiah refers to himself as **your servant** to show his submission to the king. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

that you would send me to Judah

Nehemiah is really asking for permission to go, rather than asking the king to send him. But as a sign of respect, he speaks as if the king would be taking the initiative. Alternate translation: "please allow me to go to Judah" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

the city of the graves of my fathers

This is similar to 2:3. Alternate translation: "the city where my ancestors are buried"

and I will build it

Nehemiah does not plan to do all of the building himself, but he will be the leader of the work. Alternate translation: "that I and my people may rebuild it" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

Nehemiah 2:6

with the queen sitting beside him

This detail indicates that this was a private meal, since the queen probably did not attend public banquets with the king. The implication is that the private meal gave Nehemiah the opportunity to speak freely. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. See UST. Alternate translation: "This was a private meal, with the queen sitting next to the king" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Until when will be your journey? And when will you return

These two phrases mean the same thing. The king says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to show that he is genuinely interested in Nehemiah's situation. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "How long would you be away?" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

And it was good before the face of the king, and he sent me

The implication is that Nehemiah told the king how long he would need to be away. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I told him how long I would be gone. That was acceptable to him, and he gave me permission to go" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And it was good

As in verse 5, this is an idiom that means, "If it seems like a good idea to you." Alternate translation: "That was acceptable" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

before the face of the king

Nehemiah refers to the king by one part of him, his **face**, likely because the face shows one's emotions. Alternate translation: "to him" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

and he sent me

As in 2:5, Nehemiah was really asking for permission to go, rather than asking the king to send him. But as a sign of respect, he speaks as if the king took the initiative. Alternate translation: "he gave me permission to go"

and I gave to him a time

Alternate translation: "I told him what day I wanted to leave"

Nehemiah 2:7

And I said

Alternate translation: "I also said"

If it is good to the king

Alternate translation: "If it seems like a good idea to you"

to the king

Nehemiah addresses the king in the third person as a sign of respect. Alternate translation: "to you" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

let letters be given to me

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "please give me letters" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

for the governors of

Alternate translation: "that I can show to the governors"

Beyond-the-River

This is the name of the Persian province that lay west of the Euphrates River. Alternate translation: "the province Beyond the River" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

that they will bring me across as far as where I enter into Judah

Nehemiah's request is not for these governors to provide him with transportation. Nehemiah explains in 2:9 that the king did that for him. These letter would instead request the governors to allow him safe passage through their provinces. Alternate translation: "Please tell them to give me safe passage through their provinces to Judah"

Nehemiah 2:8

and a letter to Asaph

Nehemiah is continuing his requests to the king. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Please also write a letter to Asaph for me"

Asaph

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the keeper of

Alternate translation: "the man who takes care of"

the forest that belongs to the king

The implication is that this forest was near where Nehemiah was going to need the wood. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "your royal forest in that area" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the forest that belongs to the king

Nehemiah addresses the king in the third person as a sign of respect. Alternate translation: "your royal forest" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

that he will give to me timbers

Alternate translation: "Please tell him to give me timber"

the citadel, which is for the house

As in 1:1, **citadel** refers to a fortress or stronghold. "House" here figuratively describes the temple as the "house" where God lives. Alternate translation: "the fortress that is near the temple" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

and for the house into which I will enter

Alternate translation: "and for the house that I will live in"

And the king gave to me

Alternate translation: "The king agreed to all of my requests"

according to the good hand of my God upon me

Here, **hand** figuratively represents strength, power, control, or action. In this context, the expression means that God acted toward Nehemiah in a positive and favorable manner. Alternate translation: "because God's favor was upon me" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

according to the good hand of my God upon me

If it would be helpful in your language, you could give this explanation (the reason) before the result that it accounts for, using a connecting word like "so." Alternate translation: "God's favor was upon me, and so the king agreed to all of my requests" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

Nehemiah 2:9

And I came to the governors of Beyond-the-River

Alternate translation: "When I reached the province Beyond the River, I went to see its governors"

Beyond-the-River

This is the name of a Persian province. See how you translated it in 2:7. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and I gave to them the letters of the king

Alternate translation: "I showed them the letters the king had given me."

and I gave to them the letters of the king

The implication is that when the governors saw the letters from the king, they allowed Nehemiah safe passage. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "and they gave me safe passage" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And the king sent with me officers of the army and horsemen

The implication is that the king did this when Nehemiah left for Judah, and that the purpose was to protect him on his journey. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "When I left to travel to Judah, the king sent along some army officers and soldiers riding on horses to protect me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And the king sent with me officers of the army and horsemen

You can put this information first because it happened before Nehemiah showed his letters to the governors. (See: **Order of Events (p.574)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.574)**)

Nehemiah 2:10

And Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah, the servant, the Ammonite, heard

Sanballat was the governor of Samaria, the area right next to Judah. So he was one of the people Nehemiah would have shown a letter from the king authorizing his trip. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "This was how Sanballat the Horonite and his deputy Tobiah the Ammonite learned" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Sanballat the Horonite

Sanballat is the name of a man, and Horonite is the name of his people group. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and Tobiah, & the Ammonite

Tobiah is the name of a man, and Ammonite is the name of his people group. Tobiah's name occurs over a dozen times in the book of Nehemiah. It will be helpful to your readers if you translate it consistently each time. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and Tobiah, the servant

From the role that Tobiah plays in the book, this phrase seems to indicate that he was the official who served directly under Sanballat. Alternate translation: "Tobiah, his deputy"

And it was evil to them, a great evil, that someone had come to seek good for the sons of Israel

The implication is that Sanballat and Tobiah did not want to see Judah become strong again because that would be a threat to the power and influence of Samaria. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And it was evil to them, a great evil

Here **evil** means "bad," so this expression is the opposite of "if it is good to you" in 2:5 and 2:7. Alternate translation: "They thought it was a bad thing, a very bad thing" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And it was evil to them, a great evil

These two short phrases mean almost the same thing. Nehemiah uses them together for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine them. Alternate translation: "they became very upset" or "they did not like it at all" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

that someone had come to seek good for the sons of Israel

To seek good for means "to help." Alternate translation: "that someone had come to help the people of Israel" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

for the sons of Israel

As in 1:6, **sons** means "descendants." Alternate translation: "the people of Israel" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**)

Nehemiah 2:11

And I came to Jerusalem

Here the text might be implying that Nehemiah made it safely to Jerusalem anyway, despite the opposition of Sanballat and Tobiah. Alternate translation: "But I made it safely to Jerusalem despite their opposition." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and I was there three days

This phrase seems to look ahead to the next verse, and you could translate it that way and make it the start of the next sentence. Alternate translation: "After I had been there for three days"

Nehemiah 2:12

And I arose in the night

The implication is that Nehemiah went out to inspect the city walls, as described in 1:13–15(../01/13.md). The implication is also that he did this at night so that no one would know he was doing it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I got up secretly in the night to inspect the city walls." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

myself and a few men with me

The word **men** here could conceivably include both men and women. However, for a nighttime mission through the ruins of the city walls, it's likely that Nehemiah brought along only other men. So in this context you could use a word that indicates that. Alternate translation: "I brought only a few other men with me." (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**)

and I did not tell anyone what my God had been giving to my heart to do for Jerusalem

Probably Nehemiah told at least some people, since he brought a few men with him when he went out to inspect the walls. So "not … anyone" might be an exaggeration that emphasizes the secrecy Nehemiah maintained. Alternate translation: "I did not say publicly what God had led me to do for Jerusalem." (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**)

and I did not tell anyone what my God had been giving to my heart to do for Jerusalem

If it would be helpful in your language, you could give this explanation before describing Nehemiah's nighttime mission, because it is the reason that explains the result of him maintaining so much secrecy. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

what my God had been giving to my heart to do

Here, Nehemiah's **heart** figuratively represents his thoughts and will. Alternate translation: "what God had inspired me to do" or "what God had led me to do" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Now there was no animal with me

The implication is that this was another measure to maintain secrecy. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "To keep things quiet, there were no other animals with me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 2:13

And I went out

Even though he brought a few men with him, Nehemiah says "I" because he was the primary person conducting this inspection. In this narrative, he represents the entire group. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say "we" in your translation to express this meaning. If your language makes this distinction, "we" would not include the addressee. (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

at the gate of the valley

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "at the Valley Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

even to the face of the spring of the dragon

Here, **face** figuratively means the front of an object. This means that the group passed in front of the well. Alternate translation: "we went past the Dragon Well" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

the spring of the dragon

This is the name of a spring-fed well outside Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Dragon Well" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and to the gate of dung

This is the name of another one of the gates of Jerusalem. It seems that rubbish was removed from the city through this gate. Alternate translation: "the Rubbish Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And I was looking intently at the walls of Jerusalem, seeing

Alternate translation: "We made a careful inspection of the walls of Jerusalem"

that they were broken down, and its gates had been consumed by fire

You can use active forms to express the meaning of these two passive verbs. Alternate translation: "which our enemies had broken open, and the wooden gates which they had destroyed with fire" (See: **Active or Passive (p. 484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Nehemiah 2:14

the gate of the spring

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Fountain Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the pool of the king

This is the name of a pool outside Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Royal Pool" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

but there was no place for the animal under me to pass

Alternate translation: "The opening there was so narrow that the animal I was riding could not get through"

Nehemiah 2:15

And I was going up by the wadi at night, and I was looking intently at the wall. And I turned back, and I came in at the gate of the valley, and I returned

Nehemiah continues to speak of himself as representative of the whole group. Alternate translation: "Then we came to" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

And I was going up by the wadi at night, and I was looking intently at the wall. And I turned back, and I came in at the gate of the valley, and I returned

Nehemiah is saying that because they could not continue going along the wall, they had to take a different route. You could use an introductory word like "so" to indicate this. Alternate translation: "So we followed the path of the Kidron Brook" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

And I was going up

Nehemiah continues to speak of himself as representative of the whole group. Alternate translation: "So we followed" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

by the wadi

This refers to the Kidron Brook, which runs along the eastern side of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Kidron Brook" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

at night

The implication may be "even though it was night." The slippery, uneven ground of the path along the brook would have been more dangerous in the dark. (Nehemiah is writing a chronicle of all the things he did to help the Jews, and he records specific things that required risk or sacrifice.) Alternate translation: "even though it was night." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and I was looking intently at the wall

The implication is that from the brook they were able to look up at the wall and see its condition. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "From there we were able to look up at the wall and see its condition." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And I turned back

This likely means not that Nehemiah turned around, but that this route brought him and the other men back to where they started. So they were able to go all the way around the city and inspect the entire wall. Alternate translation: "This route brought us back to where we started."

And I turned back

The other men with Nehemiah also followed him. Alternate translation: "This route brought us back to where we started." (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

and I came in at the gate of the valley

Alternate translation: "We re-entered the city through the Valley Gate"

at the gate of the valley

See how you translated the name of this gate in 2:13. Alternate translation: "the Valley Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and I returned

Here the expression probably means "and I went back home." The implication is that no one had seen him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "and I went back home without being seen." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 2:16

Now the prefects

Alternate translation: "the city officials"

until this time I had not yet told

The implication is that Nehemiah had not yet told anyone that he was planning to repair the walls. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "had not yet told … that I was planning to repair the walls." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And & the Jews, or the priests, or the nobles, or the prefects

The implication seems to be that Nehemiah had not said anything privately about his plans to any particular group of leaders. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "I had not even said anything about it privately to the Jewish leaders, the priests, the leading citizens, or the city officials" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And & the Jews

While this expression means "the Jewish people" in most of the book, in the contexts here and in 5:17 it seems to mean "the Jewish leaders." Nehemiah is describing some members of this people group, its leaders, as if they were the whole group. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

or the rest of the doers of the work

This seems to refer to the people who would later rebuild the walls. Alternate translation: "the others who would later do the work of rebuilding the walls" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 2:17

And I said to them

This might imply a contrast between what Nehemiah did previously (kept quiet) and what he did now (told everyone). You could use a word like "but" to indicate this. Alternate translation: "But now I said to them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

You see the evil that we are in

As in 1:3, here the abstract noun **evil** does not refer to something morally bad, but to a difficult situation. You can translate this idea with an adjective such as "desperate." Alternate translation: "You see what a desperate situation we are in" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

You see the evil

Here **you** is plural, referring to all the people mentioned in 2:16. (See: **Forms of You (p.534)**) (See: **Forms of You (p. 534)**)

Jerusalem is desolate and its gates have been burned by fire

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning here using active forms. Alternate translation: "Jerusalem lies in ruins, and our enemies have burned down its gates" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Jerusalem is desolate and its gates have been burned by fire

The implication is, "We need to do something about this!" If it would be helpful in your language, you could add something like that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Come, and let us build the wall of Jerusalem

Come does not mean "come over to this place" but "come on, let's do this!" Nehemiah is issuing both an invitation and a public challenge to everyone who is listening. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could translate his words in a way that reflects this. Alternate translation: "I challenge all of you to join me in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem."

and we will no longer be a reproach

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **reproach**, you can express the same idea with an adjective such as "ashamed." Alternate translation: "so we will no longer be ashamed" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

Nehemiah 2:18

the hand of my God, that it was good upon me

Here hand is a metaphor meaning strength, power, control, or action. In this context, it means that God had been acting toward Nehemiah in a positive and favorable manner. See how you translated the similar expression in 2:8. Alternate translation: "God's favor had been upon me" or "God had been helping me" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the words of the king that he had spoken to me

Alternate translation: "I also told them how the king had given me permission to come."

We will rise up and build

The implication is that the people responded this way after they heard all that God had done for Nehemiah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "When they heard this, they said, 'Let's get going and begin building!'" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

We will rise up and build

In this context, **rise up** means to begin something. This was an enthusiastic response. Alternate translation: "Let's get going and start building!" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And they strengthened their hands for good

The phrase "strengthened their hands" means that they encouraged one another. "For good" refers to the rebuilding project, which they recognized would be a great benefit. Alternate translation: "So they prepared themselves to do this good work" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

their hands

Hand in this context represents a person's strength or power. Alternate translation: "they prepared themselves" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 2:19

Sanballat the Horonite

Sanballat is the name of a man, and Horonite is the name of his people group. See how you translated this in 2:10. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and Tobiah, & the Ammonite

Tobiah is the name of a man, and Ammonite is the name of his people group. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and Tobiah, the servant

See how you translated this in 2:10. Alternate translation: "Tobiah, his deputy"

and Geshem the Arabian

Geshem is the name of a man, and Arabian is the name of his people group. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And & heard

The implication is that these men learned that the Jews in Jerusalem had started to rebuild the city walls. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "learned that we had started to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and they mocked us, and they despised us

These two statements mean similar things. Nehemiah says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to emphasize how contemptuous and dismissive these enemies were being. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "they ridiculed us mercilessly," otherwise "they made fun of us and ridiculed us" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king

These enemies are not asking questions that they expect Nehemiah to answer. They are using the question form to mock him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate their words as statements. Alternate translation: "What you are doing is not going to amount to anything! But you should not be rebelling against the king!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

What is this thing that you are doing

The implication is that this **thing** is really "nothing" at all. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "What you are doing is not going to amount to anything!" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 2:20

And I returned them a word, and I said to them

This might imply a contrast between the intimidation his enemies wanted him to feel and the courage that God gave him. You could use a word like "but" to indicate this contrast. Alternate translation: "But in response I said" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And I returned them a word, and I said to them

These two statements mean similar things. Nehemiah says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to emphasize how firmly he responded to these enemies. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "But I answered them firmly" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

The God of heaven, he will cause us to succeed

Alternate translation: "The God who is in heaven will enable us to complete this project."

and we ourselves, his servants, will rise up and build

As in 1:6, the word **servants** refers to the special role that the people of Israel had in the world as a model community of God's followers. Alternate translation: "we are his chosen people, and we are going to begin rebuilding" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

we & will rise up and build

As in 2:18, **rise up** means to begin something. Alternate translation: "going to begin rebuilding" (See: **Idiom (p. 550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

But for you there is neither share nor right nor memorial in Jerusalem

The terms **share**, **right**, and **memorial** all mean something similar. Nehemiah uses them together for emphasis. The meanings are not entirely certain. "Share" may suggest that the Samaritans are not part of the community. "Right" may mean that they have no legal basis to say what should happen in Jerusalem. "Memorial" could mean that they had have no role in the city's history, or that there is no record of their Israelite ancestry. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these terms. Alternate translation: "But you have absolutely nothing to do with what happens in Jerusalem." (Note: A doublet can involve the use of more than two terms.) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

But for you there is neither share nor right nor memorial in Jerusalem

Depending on their meaning, the terms "share," "right," and "memorial" may be abstract nouns. If so, you could translate the idea behind them with a phrase that expresses their overall meaning. Alternate translation: "But you have absolutely nothing to do with what happens in Jerusalem." (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

Nehemiah 3

Nehemiah 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Priests

The priests worked on rebuilding the city. Normally, the priests were exempt from this type of work. Because they helped, it emphasizes that this is a holy work and something done for Yahweh. (See: [[rc:///*tw/dict/bible/kt/priest]] and [[rc:///*tw/dict/bible/kt/holy]] and **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Cooperation

Everyone worked on this project. Many names are mentioned to emphasize the cooperation between the different families. Each was given a section of the wall to rebuild.

Nehemiah 3:1

And Eliashib the high priest rose up

This chapter records the names of the people who repaired the wall of Jerusalem, and it describes what parts of the wall they worked on. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly at the start of the chapter. (In this book Nehemiah records everything he did to help the people of Judah, and he prays that God will remember him and bless him for what he did. We see in this chapter that he also wants God to remember and bless everyone else who helped.) Alternate translation: "These are the names of the people who helped to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem. Now Eliashib the high priest rose up" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And & rose up

As in 2:18, **rise up** here means to begin something. Alternate translation: "began to" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Eliashib

This is the name of a man. It occurs about a dozen times in the book of Nehemiah. It will be helpful to your readers if you translate it consistently each time. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the high priest

This means that Eliashib was the leader of the priests who conducted worship in the temple and performed many other religious and community functions. Alternate translation: "the priest who was in charge in the temple" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

with his brothers the priests

Here, **brother** could mean Eliashib's biological brothers, but more likely it figuratively refers to the rest of the priests. Alternate translation: "with his fellow priests" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and they built

It is clear from the context that they were not building something brand new. Rather, they were rebuilding the walls that had been knocked down. This expression occurs several times in this chapter. It would be helpful to your readers to translate it consistently. Alternate translation: "rebuilt." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the gate of sheep

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Sheep Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

They themselves consecrated it

Consecrate means to set something apart for a special purpose. The Sheep Gate was the gate closest to the temple. By dedicating it to God, the priests were symbolically dedicating the entire wall to God. The rebuilt wall

would define and protect the city of Jerusalem as the place from which God had chosen to start making himself famous throughout the world, as described in 1:9. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

They themselves consecrated it

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly that by dedicating the Sheep Gate to God, the priests were symbolically dedicating the entire wall to God. Alternate translation: "They dedicated this gate to God as a symbolic way of dedicating the entire wall." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and erected its doors

Its refers to the Sheep Gate. **Erected** means "set up" or "set in place." This expression occurs several times in this chapter. It would be helpful to your readers to translate it consistently. Alternate translation: "set the doors in place."

And they consecrated it as far as the tower of the hundred and as far as the tower of Hananel

In this record of people who helped rebuild the wall, Nehemiah is writing more of a list than a narrative, so he often leaves out one or more words that a sentence normally would have in order to be complete. This sentence seems to mean, "They rebuilt the wall as far as the Tower of the Hundred, and beyond that to the Tower of Hananel. Then they dedicated that part of the wall to God as well." You could say something like that if it would be helpful to your readers. (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

the tower of the hundred & the tower of Hananel

These are the names of two of the towers on the Jerusalem wall. Alternate translation: "the Tower of the Hundred ... the Tower of Hananel" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the tower of the hundred

It is not clear why this tower had this name. The tower could have been 100 cubits high (about 150 feet or about 45 meters), or 100 soldiers may have been stationed there. Since the reason is unknown, it might be best just to call this the "Tower of the Hundred." However, if it would be confusing to your readers not to explain the meaning of the number, you suggest one of these possibilities. Alternate translation: "The Tower of the Hundred Soldiers" or "The Hundred-Cubit Tower." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 3:2

And & built at his hand

Here, **at his hand** is a figurative way of saying "beside him" or "next to him." This expression occurs several times in this chapter. It would be helpful to your readers to translate it consistently. Alternate translation: "next to them" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

the men of Jericho

The word **men** here can include women, and it does seem to include them in this context. Elsewhere in this chapter, 3:12 tells us that "Shallum and his daughters repaired part of the wall." So we know that both men and women worked on this project. Alternate translation: "people from Jericho" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**)

Jericho

Jericho is the name of one of the cities in Judah. We see from this chapter that several cities and towns sent work parties to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Zaccur the son of Imri

Zaccur is the name of a man, and Imri is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:3

Hassenaah

Hassenaah is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the gate of fish

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Fish Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and erected its doors, its bolts, and its bars

This expression occurs several times in this chapter. It would be helpful to your readers to translate it consistently. Alternate translation: "They framed it with wooden beams, they set its doors in place, and they installed bolts and bars"

its bolts, and its bars

Bolts and bars locked the gates securely. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "bolts and bars for locking the gate" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 3:4

strengthened & strengthened & strengthened

Strengthened means "repaired." It refers to repairing the wall, although Nehemiah does not specify this. This expression occurs several times in this chapter. It would be helpful to your readers to translate it consistently. Alternate translation: "repaired the next section of the wall" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

Meremoth, the son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz

Meremoth is the name of a man, Uriah is the name of his father, and Hakkoz is the name of his grandfather. Alternate translation: "Meremoth, the son of Uriah and grandson of Hakkoz" (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Meshullam, the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabel

Meshullam is the name of a man, Berechiah is the name of his father, and Meshezabel is the name of his grandfather. Alternate translation: "Meshullam, the son of Berekiah and grandson of Meshezabel" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Zadok the son of Baana

Zadok is the name of a man, and Baana is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:5

the Tekoites strengthened

These phrases refer to repairing the wall. Alternate translation: "Tekoites repaired the wall" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

the Tekoites

Tekoa is the name of one of the cities in Judah that sent a work party to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The Tekoites are the people who came from this city. Alternate translation: "some people from Tekoa" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

but their nobles

Here Nehemiah is indicating a contrast between what these people should have done and what they actually did. You can use a word like "but" to indicate this. Alternate translation: "But the leading citizens of Tekoa" (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**)

did not bring their necks to the service of their lords

Nehemiah does not state the reason why the nobles did not do the work, but it is implied. Alternate translation: "were too proud to do the work" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

did not bring their necks to the service of their lords

Here, the **neck** represents the entire person, and specifically the person at work. The neck is likely associated with work because in this agrarian culture, draft animals would put their necks into yokes so that they could pull plows and drag loads. Alternate translation: "were too proud to do the work" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

to the service of their lords

Lords here most likely refers to the leaders of Judah, who had asked all the surrounding cities and towns to send work parties to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Another possibility is that the plural form of the word "lord" actually refers to God. Alternate translation: "the work that the leaders of Judah had asked them to do" or "the service of their Lord" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

to the service of

Service is an abstract noun that refers to the work of rebuilding the wall. You can translate the idea behind it with a concrete noun such as "work." (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

Nehemiah 3:6

the gate of old

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Old Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Joiada the son of Paseah

Joiada is the name of a man, and Paseah is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah

Meshullam is the name of a man, and Besodeiah is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:7

Melatiah the Gibeonite

Melatiah is the name of a man. "Gibeonite" means that he was from the city of Gibeon. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and Jadon the Meronothite

Jadon is the name of a man. "Meronothite" probably means that he was from the town of Meronoth. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

men of Gibeon and the Mizpah

Gibeon and Mizpah were two of the cities in Judah that sent work parties to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "other people from Gibeon and from the city of Mizpah" (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

to the seat of authority of the governor of Beyond-the-River

This is where the governor would have stayed when visiting Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "as far as the residence of the governor of the province Beyond the River" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 3:8

Uzziel, the son of Harhaiah

Uzziel is the name of a man, and Harhaiah is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

of the goldsmiths

This means that Uzziel was one of the goldsmiths who worked in Jerusalem. A goldsmith is a person who makes jewelry and other objects from gold. The term "goldsmith" occurs several more times in the chapter, and if you include both the name and the definition here, that would help your readers understand it in its later occurrences. Alternate translation: "He was one of the goldsmiths, the workers who made jewelry and other objects from gold." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Hananiah

Hananiah is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

a son of the perfumers

Son of here is a figurative expression that indicates that a person shares the qualities of something. In this case, the book is describing someone who shares the quality of being a maker of perfume. Alternate translation: "one of the perfumers" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And they restored Jerusalem as far as the broad wall

This is the name of one of the features of the Jerusalem wall. This may have been a place where the wall had been built thicker and stronger for strategic purposes. Alternate translation: "They rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:9

And Rephaiah, the son of Hur, the administrator for half of the district of Jerusalem, strengthened at their hand

In this chapter, when Nehemiah names a person, then names their father, and then describes a role, it is the first person, not their father, who was in that role. It will be helpful to your readers if you make this clear. Alternate translation: "Next to them, Rephaiah the son of Hur repaired part of the wall. Rephaiah ruled half of the district of Jerusalem"

Rephaiah, the son of Hur

Rephaiah is the name of a man, and Hur is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

half of the district of Jerusalem

The city of Jerusalem and the surrounding area seem to have been divided into districts for administration. This is the name of one of those districts. Apparently it was so large and populous that it had been further divided into two parts, each with its own administrator. Alternate translation: "ruled half the district of Jerusalem" (See: **Fractions (p.537)**) (See: **Fractions (p.537)**)

Nehemiah 3:10

Jedaiah the son of Harumaph

Jedaiah is the name of a man, and Harumaph is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)
(See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And & strengthened at their hand, even in front of his house

Alternate translation: "repaired the next part of the wall, which was in front his house"

Hattush the son of Hashabneiah

Hattush is the name of a man, and Hashabneiah is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)
(See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:11

a second section

This expression occurs six times in the chapter. Two of those times, someone who has been named earlier is said to have repaired "a second section," suggesting, "in addition to the one they did previously." But the other four times, the people have not been named earlier. So in those cases it might mean "a further section of the wall," beyond the one just described that someone else worked on. Both of these likely meanings could be accommodated by saying something like "another section of the wall" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

Malkijah the son of Harim

Malkijah is the name of a man, and Malkijah is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and Hasshub the son of Pahath-Moab

Hasshub is the name of a man, and Pahath-Moab is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the tower of ovens

This is the name of one of the towers of the Jerusalem wall. Alternate translation: "the Tower of the Ovens" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:12

Shallum, the son of Hallohesh

Shallum is the name of a man, and Hallohesh is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the administrator for half of the district of Jerusalem

This is the name of one of the districts into which the city and the surrounding area were divided. Since the first half has already been named, you could say as an alternate translation: "Shallum ruled the other half of the district of Jerusalem" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

he and his daughters

Alternate translation: "along with his daughters"

Nehemiah 3:13

the gate of the valley

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Valley Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Hanun

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and the inhabitants of Zanoah

Zanoah is the name of one of the cities in Judah that sent a work party to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the people from Zanoah" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and a thousand cubits

Depending on what would be most helpful to your readers, you could express this either in ancient or modern measurements, "1,000 cubits" or "460 meters" or "1,500 feet." (See: **Biblical Distance (p.496)**) (See: **Biblical Distance (p.496)**)

the gate of dung

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Dung Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:14

the gate of dung

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Dung Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Malkijah, the son of Recab

Malkijah is the name of a man, and Recab is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the district of Beth-Hakkerem

This is the name of one of the districts into which the city and the surrounding area were divided. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:15

the gate of the spring

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Fountain Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Shallun, the son of Kol-Hozeh

Shallun is the name of a man, and Kol-Hozeh is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the district of the Mizpah

This is the name of one of the districts into which the city and the surrounding area were divided. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

He himself was building it and covering it

Alternate translation: "He rebuilt the gate and put a roof over it"

the wall of the pool of the Siloam

Alternate translation: "the wall that surrounded the Pool of Siloam"

at the garden of the king even as far as the stairs descending from the city of David

Alternate translation: "next to the royal garden, as far as the steps that went down from the City of David."

from the city of David

This was one part of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the City of David" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:16

Nehemiah, the son of Azbuk

Nehemiah is the name of a man, and Azbuk is the name of his father. (This is not the same Nehemiah who wrote this book.) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the district of Beth-Zur

This is the name of one of the districts into which the city and the surrounding area were divided. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

as far as in front of the graves of David, and as far as the pool that was made, and as far as the house of the mighty men

Alternate translation: "as far as the place opposite the tombs in the City of David, to the reservoir that the people had made and the army barracks"

Nehemiah 3:17

After him, the Levites strengthened

The Levites were descendants of Levi. They had the special assignment of helping the priests. Alternate translation: "Next to him, some Levites repaired parts of the wall." (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Rehum the son of Bani

Rehum is the name of a man, and Bani is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Rehum the son of Bani

It seems clear from the context that Rehum was a Levite. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "One of them was Rehum the son of Bani." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Hashabiah

Hashabiah is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

at his hand, Hashabiah, & strengthened for his district

This does not mean that Hashabiah repaired this part of the wall for the benefit of his district, but rather that he did it leading a work party from his district. Alternate translation: "led a work party from his district that repaired the next section of the wall"

half of the district of Keilah

This is the name of one of the districts into which the city and the surrounding area were divided. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:18

their brothers strengthened

As in 3:1, **brother** could mean the biological brothers of the Levites mentioned in 3:17. However, more likely it figuratively means other Levites. Alternate translation: "some other Levites repaired more of the wall" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Binnui, the son of Henadad, the administrator for half of the district of Keilah

Here Nehemiah does not say "at their hand" (next to them) or "strengthened" (repaired another section of the wall). Once again he is leaving out some of what a complete sentence would be expected to contain. you could fill in this information. Alternate translation: "Next to them, Binnui the son of Henadad, who ruled the other half of the district of Keilah, repaired more of the wall." (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

Binnui, the son of Henadad

Binnui is the name of a man, and Henadad is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the administrator for half of the district of Keilah

This is the name of one of the districts into which the city and the surrounding area were divided. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:19

Ezer, the son of Jeshua

Ezer is the name of a man, and Jeshua is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the administrator for the Mizpah

Since the district of Mizpah is mentioned in 3:15, this probably means the city of Mizpah. Alternate translation: "Ezer ruled the city of Mizpah" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And & was strengthening a second section

Alternate translation: "repaired another section" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

opposite the ascent to the armory at the angle

Alternate translation: "He started from the place in front of the steps that went up to the armory, and he finished at the place where the wall bends slightly."

Nehemiah 3:20

Baruch the son of Zabbai

Baruch is the name of a man, and Zabbai is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

burned

Here, **burned** is probably a figurative way of saying that Baruch worked with great enthusiasm. You could say that as an alternate translation. (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and strengthened a second section

Alternate translation: "repaired another section" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

from the angle as far as the opening of the house of Eliashib the high priest

Alternate translation: "from the bend in the wall as far as the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest"

Nehemiah 3:21

Meremoth, the son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz

Meremoth is the name of a man, Uriah is the name of his father, and Hakkoz is the name of his grandfather. See how you translated these names in 3:4. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**)

strengthened a second section

Alternate translation: "repaired another section" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

from the opening of the house of Eliashib even as far as the end of the house of Eliashib

Alternate translation: "from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of his house"

Nehemiah 3:22

the priests, the men of the valley

Jerusalem is up on a mountain, so the area around it would be "the valley." Alternate translation: "some priests from the area around Jerusalem"

Nehemiah 3:23

Benjamin and Hasshub strengthened in front of their house

Alternate translation: "repaired a section opposite their house"

Benjamin and Hasshub

Benjamin and Hasshub are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

strengthened beside his house

Alternate translation: "repaired the next section, beside his house"

Azariah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah

Azariah is the name of a man, Maaseiah is the name of his father, and Ananiah is the name of his grandfather. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:24

strengthened a second section

Alternate translation: "repaired another section" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

Binnui the son of Henadad

Binnui is the name of a man, and Henadad is the name of his father. See how you translated these names in 3:18. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

from the house of Azariah as far as the angle and as far as the corner

Alternate translation: "from the house of Azariah to the bend in the wall as far as the bulwark"

Azariah

Azariah is a man, the same one mentioned in verse 23. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:25

Palal the son of Uzai

Palal is the name of a man, and Uzai is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

from opposite the angle and the tower projecting

Here again, Nehemiah leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Alternate translation: "He began at the place opposite the bend in the wall where the watchtower is taller than" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

from the upper house of the king

Here, it is likely that **house** figuratively means palace, referring to where the king had lived. Alternate translation: "the upper palace of the king" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

which is by the court of the guard

Alternate translation: "That is near the place where the guards stayed"

Pedaiah the son of Parosh

Pedaiah is the name of a man, and Parosh is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Pedaiah the son of Parosh

Once again Nehemiah leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Alternate translation: "Next to him, Pedaiah the son of Parosh repaired a section" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

Nehemiah 3:26

And the Nethinim were dwelling in the Ophel, as far as in front of the gate of water to the east and the projecting tower

Yet again Nehemiah leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Alternate translation: "The temple servants who lived on Ophel Hill repaired the wall as far as the eastern side of the Water Gate where there is a tall tower" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

And the Nethinim

The term **Nethinim** describes servants who worked in the temple. Alternate translation: "the temple servants" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

in the Ophel

This is probably the name of a geographic feature, a fortified extension of the hill that the Jerusalem temple was located on. Alternate translation: "Ophel Hill" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 595)**)

the gate of water

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Water Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and the projecting tower

The phrase refers to a tall tower that juts out from the wall. Alternate translation: "a tall tower"

Nehemiah 3:27

strengthened a second section

Alternate translation: "repaired another section of the wall" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

the Tekoites

Tekoa is the name of one of the cities in Judah that sent a work party to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The Tekoites were the people who lived there. See how you translated this name in verse 3:5. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

from in front of the high projecting tower even as far as the wall of the Ophel

Alternate translation: "from opposite the very tall watchtower as far as the wall at Ophel Hill"

Nehemiah 3:28

The priests

This does not mean all the priests. Nehemiah is using the name of the whole group to refer to part of it. Alternate translation: "a group of priests" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

from above the gate of horses

The word **above** is used here because the houses of the priests were likely to have been located at a higher elevation than the Horse Gate. Alternate translation: "starting at the Horse Gate"

the gate of horses

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Horse Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

a man to the front of his house

Here **a man** means "each one." Alternate translation: "Each one repaired the section in front of his own house." (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 3:29

Zadok the son of Immer

Zadok is the name of a man, and Immer is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Shemaiah, the son of Shecaniah

Shemaiah is the name of a man, and Shecaniah is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the keeper of the gate of the east

Alternate translation: "the person who looked after the East Gate" or "the person who opened and closed the East Gate"

the gate of the east

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the East Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 3:30

strengthened a second section

Alternate translation: "repaired another section" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

Hananiah the son of Shelemiah

Hananiah is the name of a man, and Shelemiah is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

with Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph

Hanun is the name of a man, and Zalaph is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

sixth

Alternate translation: "son number six" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

Meshullam the son of Berechiah

Meshullam is the name of a man, and Berechiah is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

in front of his chamber

Alternate translation: "in front of the rooms where he stayed"

Nehemiah 3:31

Malkijah

Malkijah is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

a son of the goldsmiths

As in 3:8, this is a figurative way of saying that Malkijah was one of the goldsmiths. In this figure of speech, the "son of" something shares its qualities. Since the goldsmiths have been mentioned previously (in 3:8, where their work is described), you could say as an alternate translation: "who was another one of the goldsmiths" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

as far as the house of the Nethinim and the merchants

Alternate translation: "as far as the building used by the temple servants and the merchants"

the gate of mustering

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. "Mustering" refers to soldiers assembling to go out to battle. Alternate translation: "the Mobilization Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

even as far as the upper chamber of the corner

Alternate translation: "He built as far as the upper apartments of this building, which were on the corner."

Nehemiah 3:32

And & strengthened between the upper chamber of the corner to the gate of sheep

This brings the description of the repairs back around to where they started. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this explicitly by saying "the last section." Alternate translation: "repaired the last section of the wall, from the corner apartments to the Sheep Gate" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the goldsmiths and the merchants

This does not mean all the goldsmiths and all the merchants. Nehemiah is once again using the names of whole groups to refer to parts of them. Alternate translation: "some of the other goldsmiths, along with some traders" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

to the gate of sheep

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Sheep Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 4

Nehemiah 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Dedication

The people were so dedicated to rebuilding the walls that they worked with their weapons ready for battle right next to them. Even when they were threatened with an attack, they continued to trust in Yahweh. (See: **trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness (p.615)**)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Sanballat uses a series of rhetorical questions. These are intended to show his intense anger against the Israelites. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

Nehemiah 4:1

And it happened

Nehemiah uses this phrase to introduce the next event in his story. You do not need to represent it in your translation unless your language has a similar expression that it characteristically uses. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**)

Sanballat

This is a man's name. See how you translated this in 2:10. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

that, & it burned him, and he was very angry

These two phrases mean similar things. Nehemiah uses the repetition to emphasize how angry Sanballat was. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases and say something like "he became furiously angry" or "he became very angry" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

that, & it burned him, and he was & angry

Here Nehemiah says that Sanballat's anger was a fire that burned inside of him. Alternate translation: "he became furious" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 4:2

And he spoke before the face of

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. The expression means that Sanballat was speaking personally to the other people who are named. Alternate translation: "He said to" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

his brothers

Here, **brother** likely refers figuratively to Sanballat's fellow officials. Alternate translation: "the other provincial officials" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and the army of Samaria

Sanballat was not speaking to the entire army. Nehemiah is figuratively using all of something to mean part of it. He is referring to the officers of the army by the name of the entire army. Alternate translation: "the army officers" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

What are the feeble Jews doing? Will they restore for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish in a day

Sanballat actually is making a series of statements, not asking a series of questions. He does not expect the officials and officers to tell him what the Jews are doing and whether they will succeed. Instead, he is using the question form to mock the Jews. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the ideas in his questions as a series of statements. Alternate translation: "These feeble Jews can accomplish nothing. They will never restore the city for themselves. They will not offer sacrifices. They will not finish the work any time soon." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

Will they sacrifice

The meaning of this phrase is not entirely clear. It could be that Sanballat is speaking of the Jews offering sacrifices to try to entice God to make their project successful. Alternate translation: "They will not get their God to help them"

Will they finish in a day

In this context, the expression "day" means "a short time." Alternate translation: "any time soon" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Will they bring to life the stones from piles of dust, when they have been burned

Here Sanballat is speaking of stones as if they could come to life and stand up straight to form the wall. Alternate translation: "They will not be able to rebuild the city walls from useless stones that were burned and turned into rubble" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

from piles of dust, when they have been burned

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "useless stones that someone has burned and turned into rubble" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Nehemiah 4:3

And Tobiah the Ammonite

This is a man's name. See how you translated this in 2:10. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Yes

This word indicates that Tobiah agrees with Sanballat and that he is going to say something to support him. Alternate translation: "That's right!"

if a fox goes up on what they are building, then he would break down their wall of stones

Tobiah probably does not believe that the wall would really fall down if a fox walked along the top of it. He is exaggerating to mock the work the Jews are doing. You could use a non-figurative expression in your translation instead, such as, "It wouldn't take much to make that wall fall over." However, Tobiah's expression is so colorful that you may want to retain it, but be sure that your readers understand he is exaggerating. Alternate translation: "Tobiah made fun of the Jews by saying, 'That wall they are building is so weak that if a fox climbed up on it, the stones would fall to the ground'" (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**)

Nehemiah 4:4

Hear, our God

Nehemiah starts talking directly to God at this point in the book. The implication is that he heard about what Sanballat and Tobiah were saying, and in response, he prayed the prayer that is recorded here in 2:4-5. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "When I heard about what they were saying, I prayed and said, 'Listen, our God'" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Hear, our God

Nehemiah's prayer here is a particular type of aside. In an aside, someone who is speaking to or about one person or group will pause and speak confidentially to somebody else about them. Often an aside is spoken to the audience of a work about someone who is being addressed within the work. But in this case, Nehemiah pauses from addressing the audience that is hearing his story; he speaks confidentially to God in prayer about two of the characters in the story. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this is a prayer is distinct from the story by making it a direct quotation. (See: **Aside (p.487)**) (See: **Aside (p.487)**)

we are a contempt

The abstract noun **contempt** refers to the way Sanballat and Tobiah regarded the Jews, which led them to make fun of the Jews. You can translate the idea behind this term with a verb like "mocking." Alternate translation: "our enemies are mocking us" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

and cause their taunts to return on their heads

Return on his head is an idiom that means that what a person expected to happen to someone else happens to them instead. Alternate translation: "Make them people whom others will mock" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And give them for plunder in a land of captivity

As in 1:2, the abstract noun **captivity** refers to a conquering army forcing all or some of a captured population to move to a different place. You can translate the idea behind it with verbs such as "capture" and "force." Alternate translation: "Allow their enemies to capture them and force them to go to a foreign land" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

Nehemiah 4:5

And do not cover over their iniquity, and do not wipe out their sin from before your face

These two phrases mean similar things. Nehemiah uses the repetition to emphasize how guilty Sanballat and Tobiah are for opposing the work that God has sent him to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "do not ever forgive them" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

And do not cover over their iniquity

Nehemiah speaks of a person's sins as if they were an object that could be physically hidden. Alternate translation: "do not forgive their sins" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and do not wipe out their sin

Nehemiah speaks of a person's sins as if they were something written that could be erased. Alternate translation: "do not forget their sins" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

from before your face

Here, **face** figuratively means the action of seeing or a person's notice or attention. A person can see what is in front of their face, so in this case the expression means, "from where you can see it" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

for they have provoked anger before the front of the builders

This expression could mean one of the following three things: (1) It could mean that they have made God angry by opposing the work he has commanded Nehemiah to do. Alternate translation: "they have made you become angry." This possibility seems the most likely, since Nehemiah is praying that what these men are trying to do to others will happen to them. (2) It could mean that they have caused others to be angry at the people who are rebuilding the wall. Alternate translation: "they have caused others to be angry at the people who are rebuilding the wall." (3) It could mean that Sanballat and Tobiah have made the builders angry by mocking them. Alternate translation: "they have made the builders become angry"

Nehemiah 4:6

So we built the wall

As in chapter 3, it might be helpful to say "rebuilt." The Jews were not building something brand new. See the note to 3:1.

and all the wall was joined together up to half of it

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: "we filled in the breaks as high as halfway up the wall" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

and all the wall was joined together up to half of it

It appears from the context that this likely took some time and perseverance after Sanballat and Tobiah began to mock and oppose the project. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "after some time, we filled in the breaks" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

up to half of it

"Half" means one part out of two equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.537)**) (See: **Fractions (p.537)**)

And the heart of the people was for working

Here the **heart** figuratively represents the thoughts and the will of the people. Alternate translation: "Everyone was determined to accomplish this." (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 4:7

And it happened

Nehemiah uses this phrase to introduce the next event in his story. You do not need to represent it in your translation unless your language has a similar expression that it characteristically uses. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**)

Sanballat, and Tobiah

This are the names of men. See how you translated them in 2:10. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites

These are the names of people groups. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**)

the health of the walls of Jerusalem was going up

Here Nehemiah is speaking of the wall around Jerusalem as if it were a living thing that was sick because it was broken down. Nehemiah speaks of the repairs to the wall as if the wall is becoming healthy again. Alternate translation: "we were continuing to repair the walls of Jerusalem" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

was going up

Alternate translation: "was increasing"

and the breaks were beginning to be closed

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: "we were continuing to … fill in the gaps" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

that, & it burned them extremely

Here Nehemiah says that the anger of these enemies was a fire that burned inside of them. Alternate translation: "they became very angry" or "they became enraged" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 4:8

to fight against Jerusalem

Here, **Jerusalem** refers to the people who live there. These enemies were not coming to fight against the walls and buildings. Nehemiah is describing the people of Jerusalem figuratively by reference to something associated with them, the city where they live. Alternate translation: "to fight against the people of Jerusalem" (See: **Metonymy (p. 569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

and to make confusion for it

The abstract noun **confusion** refers to the way these enemies hoped that their attack would make the people of Jerusalem not know what to do. The people might disagree among themselves about whether they should keep working on the wall or whether they should discontinue the work to appease the attackers. They might also disagree about how to defend themselves. you could translate the idea behind the term "confusion" with adjectives such as "confused" and "divided." Alternate translation: "They wanted to make the people inside the city confused and divided." (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

Nehemiah 4:9

And we set up a guard on account of them

Alternate translation: "and we put men around the wall to guard the city"

by day and by night

This does not mean that some people went up on the walls to look around at various parts of the day, and others went up at certain times of night. Nehemiah is describing how he maintained a constant guard by speaking of two times when people were on duty, the day and the night, in order to include all the time in between. Alternate translation: "at all times," otherwise "throughout the day and night" (See: **Merism (p.561)**) (See: **Merism (p.561)**)

against their faces

This term could mean two different things: (1) Here, probably **Their faces** figuratively means the front of a group. This likely means that the lookouts would see the front ranks of the army as they approached. Alternate translation: "to spot them as they approached" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**). (2) Here, "their faces" could also be a figurative way of referring to the enemies and their hostile intentions toward the people doing the work. Alternate translations: "against them" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 4:10

And Judah said

Nehemiah is describing the people of Judah figuratively by reference to something associated with them, the name of their province. Alternate translation: "Then the people of Judah started saying" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

The strength of the burden-bearers is failing

Alternate translation: "The people who are carrying the stones are getting worn out"

and & rubble

Alternate translation: "and … burned stone" or "and … broken rock" or "and … unusable stone"

And as for us, we are not able to build the wall

Alternate translation: "We are not going to be able to finish rebuilding the wall"

Nehemiah 4:11

They will not know, and they will not see until when we come into their midst

These two phrases mean similar things. The enemies use the repetition to emphasize how confident they are of launching a surprise attack. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "They will not be expecting an attack until we are right there," otherwise "before they see us and know we are coming, we will rush down on them" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

and they will not see

While the enemies could be referring to the Jews literally not seeing them approach, "seeing" could also be a figuratively way of describing knowledge, notice, or attention. In that case this expression would mean the same thing as "they will not know." Alternate translation: "they will not be expecting" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 4:12

came

The implication is that they came to Jerusalem to speak with the Jewish leaders there. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "came to Jerusalem to speak with us" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the Jews dwelling beside them

Them means the enemies Nehemiah has been talking about, so this expression likely refers to the Jews who lived near Nehemiah and those helping him. But it does not mean all of these Jews, just some who came to Jerusalem. Nehemiah is describing part of this group as if it were the whole group. Alternate translation: "some of the Jews who lived near our enemies" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

that, & they said to us ten times

Here the number 10 is used to represent "many." Alternate translation: "spoke to us many times" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

From all the places where you turn, they are on us

The meaning of this Hebrew phrase is uncertain. However, one explanation that would fit the context is that these exposed Jewish communities sent representatives to Jerusalem to tell Nehemiah that they were afraid of being attacked in their villages. The "places where you return" could mean "anywhere we live," referring to the villages, and "they are on us" could mean that the enemies could attack these undefended towns at any time. Perhaps these representatives were asking Nehemiah to release their able-bodied men from work duty and send them home so they could help defend their families and neighbors. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say something like this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Our enemies could attack us anywhere we live, so let our men return home so they can defend us!" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

From all the places

This phrase likely indicates "in every direction." The word "all" is an exaggeration for emphasis. Alternate translation: "anywhere we live" (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**)

Nehemiah 4:13

And I stationed

If you follow the suggestion in the previous note for translating the last phrase in 4:12, then you could show here that Nehemiah is indicating a contrast between what the representatives wanted him to do and what he actually did. Instead of scattering his forces by sending the men from other towns home, he concentrated them visibly in Jerusalem, expecting that the main attack would come there. Alternate translation: "But" or "Instead"

And I stationed from the lowest of places behind the wall, in the bare places

Alternate translation: "I put guards behind the wall at the places where it was low or where there were gaps in it."

and I stationed the people by families

This does not mean all the people, and it does not mean every member of every family. Nehemiah is figuratively describing part of the people as if they were all of them, and part of each family as if it were the whole family. Chapter 3 describes how Nehemiah organized the work on the wall by family and community groups. He seems to have organized the defense of the city the same way. Alternate translation: "I positioned people from each family" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

and their bows

This means not just bows, but bows and arrows. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 595)**)

Nehemiah 4:14

And I looked

This likely means that Nehemiah literally looked over all the defenses he had put in place. Alternate translation: "After I had inspected everything"

and I rose up, and I said

Since Nehemiah immediately addresses a group of people, the implication is that he gathered them together to speak to them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I summoned … and I told them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and I rose up

In this context, the expression "rose up" likely is a way of saying that Nehemiah took public action, not that he had been sitting or lying down and got up. (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

to the nobles, and to the prefects

See how you translated these terms in 2:16. Alternate translation: "to the leading citizens and the city officials"

the rest of the people

This does not mean all of the other people who lived in Jerusalem, but rather many of them who came to hear Nehemiah speak on this occasion. He is figuratively describing part of the people as if they were all of them. Alternate translation: "many of the other people" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

Do not be afraid of their faces

Here, **face** figuratively describes an entire person by reference to one part, the "face," likely because the face shows what the person is thinking and feeling. Alternate translation: "Do not be afraid of our enemies" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

Remember

In this context, **remember** does not refer to a person recalling something they have forgotten. Rather, it means, "keep in mind." Alternate translation: "keep in mind" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

my great and fearsome Lord

Nehemiah is referring here to Yahweh, the God who promised to bless and protect the Jews as his chosen people. When he says **my**, he is using himself to represent the entire community. Alternate translation: "our great and awesome God" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

great and fearsome

Nehemiah uses this same expression in 1:5. See how you translated it there. Review the note there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "great and glorious" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

your brothers

Here, **brother** could mean biological brothers, but it is more likely that it refers figuratively to a person's relatives, that is, their whole family. Alternate translation: "your families" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 4:15

And it happened & when

Nehemiah uses this phrase to introduce the next event in his story. You do not need to represent it in your translation unless your language has a similar expression that it characteristically uses. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**)

it was known to us

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "we found out about their plans" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

it was known to us

It means the plan of these enemies to launch a surprise attack, as described in 4:11. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "we found out about their plans to launch a surprise attack" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and God had frustrated their counsels

Alternate translation: "and God had kept them from doing what they planned."

that, & all of us returned to the wall, a man to his work

Here, **the wall** means the work on the wall. Nehemiah is describing this work figuratively by referring to something associated with it, the wall that was the object of the work. Alternate translation: "we all went back to working on the wall" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

that, & all of us returned to the wall, a man to his work

The implication is that when the enemies realized the Jews knew about their plans, they decided not to attack. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "They decided not to attack us, and we all went back to working on the wall" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

a man to his work

In this context, **a man** means "each person." It does not refer only to an adult male. Alternate translation: "Each person continued doing the same work as before" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 4:16

from that day

In this context, **day** may not refer to one specific day, but rather to a more general time. Alternate translation: "from that time on" or "after that" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

my young men were doing the work

This expression refers to the servants who worked for Nehemiah. While they probably were young adult males, the expression is specifically envisioning their role and status. Alternate translation: "my servants" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

were doing the work

This refers to the work on the wall. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "worked on the wall" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

half of my young men

Half means one part out of two equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.537)**) (See: **Fractions (p.537)**)

and the bows

As in 4:13, this means not just bows, but bows and arrows. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

And the officials were behind all the house of Judah

This likely means that certain officials literally stood behind the workers and the guards. That is, they were inside the wall and close to it, while the guards stood right at the wall and the workers worked on it. Alternate translation: "Officers stood behind all the workers and guards"

And the officials were behind all the house of Judah

The implication is that the leaders were there to give orders in case there was an attack. But it is likely that Nehemiah also wanted them to offer encouragement and maintain good morale. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Officers stood behind all the workers and guards to encourage everyone and to give orders in case there was an attack" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And the officials

From the context here and the use of this term in 7:2, it appears that these "officials" were responsible for giving commands in military situations. Alternate translation: "and officers"

all the house of Judah

Here, the word **house** describes all the people descended from a particular person. All of the descendants of Judah are being described figuratively as if they were one household living together. So this would ordinarily mean "the people of Judah" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

all the house of Judah

However, in this context, the expression is not referring to all the people of Judah. Nehemiah is figuratively describing part of the people as if they were all of them. He means all of the workers and guards. The expression helps clarify that Nehemiah is no longer speaking just of his own servants, whom had divided into two groups to serve as workers and guards. Alternate translation: "all the workers and guards" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

Nehemiah 4:17

and those who were carrying burdens, the loaders

These two short phrases mean similar things. Nehemiah uses them together for clarity and emphasis. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "and those who carried the heavy loads" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

the loaders, they were doing the work with one of his hands and one grasping weaponry

Here **his hands** means "their hands." This is an exaggeration. The builders and porters did not always work with only one hand. Rather, this means that they always had their weapons with them so that they would be prepared to fight off an attack. Alternate translation: "they always had their weapons with them while they were working on the wall" (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**)

Nehemiah 4:18

And the builders: a man girded his sword to his loins and built

In this context, **a man** means "each person." Alternate translation: "each builder worked with his sword strapped to his side" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And the one who blew the ram's horn was beside me

The implication is that Nehemiah stationed this person next to him so that he could sound a signal if needed. (This becomes clear in 4:20.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly here. Alternate translation: "And I stationed someone next to me who would blow a ram's horn if we needed a signal" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 4:19

And I said

See how you translated these terms in 2:16. Alternate translation: "the leading citizens … the city officials"

the nobles & the prefects

As in 4:14, this does not mean all of the other people who lived in Jerusalem, but rather many of them who came to hear Nehemiah speak on this occasion. He is figuratively describing part of the people as if they were all of them. Alternate translation: "many of the other people" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

The work is great and vast

Great and **vast** mean similar things. Nehemiah uses them together to emphasize the scope of the rebuilding project. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "large-scale" or "huge" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

and we are separated on the wall, a man far from his brother

In this context, **a man** means "each person," and **brother** means "fellow Jew." Alternate translation: "each of us is far apart from our fellow Jews along the wall" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 4:20

the sound of the ram's horn

The implication is that the workers and guards would need to gather together to fight off an attack. The implication is also that while the people were widely scattered, they would all be able to hear the ram's horn even from a distance, and so it would be an effective signal. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say these things explicitly. Alternate translation: "So if we all need to gather in one place to fight off an attack, I will have someone blow a ram's horn there. You will be able to hear this signal from anywhere along the wall." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the ram's horn

See how you translated this in 4:18. Review the explanation there if that would be helpful. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Our God will fight for us

This does not mean that God will fight instead of the Jews, but that God will take their side and help them win. Alternate translation: "God will help us defeat our enemies"

Nehemiah 4:21

So we were doing the work

This means the **work** of rebuilding the wall. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "So we continued to work on rebuilding the wall" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And half of them were grasping spears

"Them" means the men who would otherwise have been working as builders or carrying loads, but who were serving as guards instead. As verses 4:13 and 4:16 make clear, the weaponry included not just spears, but also shields and bows and arrows. So Nehemiah is using "spears" here to refer figuratively to all of the weaponry. Alternate translation: "half of the men served as guards and kept their weapons ready" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

And half of them

Here **half** means one part out of two equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.537)**) (See: **Fractions (p.537)**)

from the rising of the dawn until the coming out of the stars

Nehemiah is referring to the entire day by speaking of two extreme parts of it, the time when first light of morning appears and the time when it becomes dark enough to see the stars, in order to include everything in between. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning with a single phrase. Alternate translation: "at all times," otherwise "from the time when the light of dawn appeared in the morning until the time when the stars appeared at night" (See: **Merism (p.561)**) (See: **Merism (p.561)**)

from the rising of the dawn

This phrase refers to the daily appearance of light rising in the east in the early morning hours prior to the sun rising above the horizon. Alternate translation: "the first light of day"

the coming out of the stars

Here Nehemiah describes the appearing of the stars as if they **came out** of an enclosed container. Alternate translation: "the very beginning of the night" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 4:22

a man

In this context, **a man** means "each person" and more specifically "each worker." As in 4:16, "young man" means servant. Alternate translation: "each worker and his servant" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

in the midst of Jerusalem

This could be referring to workers who had come from nearby cities and towns to help rebuild the wall. It could also include people who lived in the Jerusalem area but whose homes were outside the city, such as local farmers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "spend the night inside Jerusalem and not go home if they live outside the city" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and they will be for us by night a guard and by day a worker

The idea is not that these men would be on guard duty all night and then work all day on the wall. Rather, their presence in the city would mean that a large number of defenders would be ready on short notice if needed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "That way the city will have plenty of defenders even at night, and they can still work on the wall during the daytime"

Nehemiah 4:23

And neither

In this verse Nehemiah is describing something else that was also true of the conditions in Jerusalem during the time period he is describing. You can make this clear in your translation with an appropriate connecting word or phrase. Alternate translation: "At that time, neither" (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**)

nor my brothers

Here **brother** likely refers to Nehemiah's close relatives. Elsewhere in the book he indicates that his brother Hanani lived in the city and that his relatives ate with him at the governor's table (1:2, 5:14, 7:2). Alternate translation: "nor my relatives" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

nor my young men

As in 4:16, this means "my servants." (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

nor the men of the guard who were behind me

This likely refers to the personal bodyguard that the king would have assigned to Nehemiah when he appointed him to be the governor of Judah. (Nehemiah describes this appointment in 5:14.) Alternate translation: "my personal bodyguard" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

or a man his weapon at the water

Here the specific meaning of the Hebrew text is unknown, but Nehemiah is almost certainly leaving out some of the words that a sentence would normally have to have in order to be complete. He says that he and his relatives, servants, and bodyguards did not take off their clothes, **or anyone his weapon at the water.** This could mean that "no one took his weapon off even when he was washing himself" or that "no one took his weapon off even when going to get water." If it would be helpful in your language, you could explain what "at the water" might mean, you could choose one of these possibilities. Alternate translation: "Each of us always had our weapons with us, even when we were washing ourselves." (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

stripped off our clothes, or a man his weapon

In this context, **a man** means **anyone.** (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 5

Nehemiah 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Equality

The rich made money from the poor. The rich oppressed the poor by charging interest on loans. Because Nehemiah wanted to treat everyone fairly, he did not collect any taxes from them. This chapter also emphasizes that it was wrong to enslave a fellow Jew. (See: [[rc://*/tw/dict/bible/other/oppress]])

Governor

Nehemiah was a governmental leader in Jerusalem, but he was not a king. Jerusalem had a great deal of independence, but it was under the authority of the Persian king. The term "governor" reflects this idea, but a different term may be used in translation.

Nehemiah 5:1

And there was

Nehemiah now relates something else that was happening even while the Jews were trying to rebuild the wall and defend themselves against their enemies. You can make this clear in your translation with an appropriate connecting word or phrase. Alternate translation: "Around this same time" (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**)

a great outcry of the people and their wives

Outcry is an abstract noun that refers to the complaints that the poorer Jews made to Nehemiah about how the wealthier and more powerful Jews were treating them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with a verb such as "complain." Since Nehemiah says this was a "great" outcry, involving many serious grievances, you could intensify the verb with an adverb such as "bitterly." Alternate translation: "many of the men and their wives complained bitterly" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 482)**)

the people and their wives

Here, **the people** seems to indicate certain men who lived in Jerusalem, since Nehemiah also mentions their wives. Alternate translation: "many of the men and their wives"

their brothers

Here, **brother** does not seem to mean biological brothers, but to refer figuratively to other members of the same people group. Alternate translation: "their fellow Jews" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

their brothers, the Jews

These two short phrases mean similar things. Nehemiah uses them together to emphasize how inappropriate it was for people to treat members of their own group in the ways described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "their fellow Jews" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p. 523)**)

Nehemiah 5:2

And there were those who said

Verses 2, 3, 4, and 5 do not seem to be different complaints that people brought to Nehemiah separately. Rather, the whole group seems to be complaining that because they need to get food for their families, wealthier and more powerful Jews are exploiting them. They are forcing them to take mortgages and loans and even sell their children into slavery. Nehemiah is probably depicting one speaker after another in the crowd adding details to this picture. You could suggest this to the readers of your translation by introducing these comments with a translation such as, "some of them began to say"

Our sons and our daughters, we are many

Alternate translation: "We have many children"

And let us take grain

This does not mean only grain. The people complaining to Nehemiah are using one kind of food, grain, the staple of their diet, to refer figuratively to all the foods they would need to eat. Alternate translation: "we need food" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

And let us take grain

The implication is that because the families are large, a lot of food is needed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "we need to get a lot of food" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

so we can eat, and we can live

These two short phrases mean similar things. The people use them together to emphasize the urgency and importance of having food. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "to get enough food to stay alive" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

Nehemiah 5:3

And there were those who said

(See the applicable note to 2:2 and **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) Alternate translation: "Others added" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

We are mortgaging our fields and our vineyards and our houses so we can get grain during the famine

It might be helpful to explain to your readers what a **mortgage** is, if you think they might not know. Alternate translation: "We have had to promise to give someone our fields, vineyards, and houses if we do not pay back the money we borrowed. We had to borrow the money to buy food during this time when food is scarce." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 5:4

And there were those who said

Different people in the crowd apparently continue to add details to the complaint. Alternate translation: "Still others said"

We have borrowed silver

Silver here means "money." Nehemiah is describing money figuratively by reference to the commodity that is being used as a means of exchange, silver. Alternate translation: "We have had to borrow money" (See: **Metonymy (p. 569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

for the tribute of the king on our fields and our vineyards

Tribute means "taxes" here. Alternate translation: "the taxes that the king commanded us to pay on our fields and our vineyards" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 5:5

And now

This term indicates that the sentence that follows is a further development of the thought from the previous sentence. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.513)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.513)**)

our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers, our sons are as their sons

Here the Jews are insisting that they are of the same Jewish descent as the other Jews and that they of the same importance as the others. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Yet our families are Jews just like the other Jews' families, and our children are just as important to us as their children are to them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers, our sons are as their sons

These two phrases mean similar things. The people complaining to Nehemiah are using the repetition to emphasize how shameful it is for the wealthy and powerful to sell their own fellow Jews into slavery. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "And we are Jews, just like the people who are doing these things to us!" (See **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers, our sons are as their sons

You could move this sentence to the end of the verse, since it is the culmination of the argument.

our brothers

Here, **brother** figuratively describes the Jews who are exploiting their poor and vulnerable fellow Jews. Alternate translation: "And we are Jews, just like the people who are doing these things to us!" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And behold

Behold is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use some emphatic term or expression in your language that would have this same effect.

we are putting our sons and our daughters into bondage as slaves. There are those even of our daughters who have been put into bondage

In this context, the construction **are putting** likely indicates that the poor are on the verge of selling their children into slavery. The next sentence shows that they have already done this in some instances. It appears that in this culture, in dire situations, girls were sold before boys, perhaps because they could become either domestic servants or concubines. A concubine was a woman who was both a slave and a secondary wife to her master. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this statement that way. Alternate translation: "We are on the verge of selling our children into slavery. In fact, we have already sold some of our daughters as servants and concubines." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and there is nothing to God in our hand, for our fields and our vineyards belong to others

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases because the second phrase gives the reason why the first phrase is true. Alternate translation: "because our creditors took the fields and vineyards we pledged as security for loans, there is nothing else we can do in this situation." (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

and there is nothing to God in our hand

There is nothing to God in our hand is an idiom that means that the speaker does not have the power to do what they are describing. Alternate translation: "there is nothing else we can do in this situation" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

for our fields and our vineyards belong to others

The implication is that when the poor could not pay back their loans, their creditors took the fields and vineyards they had pledged as collateral. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "because our creditors took the fields and vineyards we pledged as security for loans." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 5:6

And it burned me extremely

Here Nehemiah says that his anger was a fire that burned inside of him. Alternate translation: "I got very angry" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

when I heard their outcry and these words

Outcry is an abstract noun that refers to complaints that the poorer Jews made to Nehemiah about how the wealthier and more powerful Jews were treating them. You can translate the idea behind this word with a verb such as "complain." Alternate translation: "when I heard how they were complaining" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

their outcry and these words

These two short phrases mean similar things. They are used together to emphasize the urgency and severity of these complaints. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "everything that they were complaining about" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

Nehemiah 5:7

And my heart reigned over me

Here Nehemiah is speaking about his heart as if it were a living thing that could act like a king and rule over him. However, he is not saying that his feelings commanded his actions. (He says in the previous verse that he became very angry, but in the next verse he describes acting in a careful and deliberate manner.) Instead, this means that his heart "took counsel" with him, the way a king would take counsel with advisors. In effect, Nehemiah is saying that he talked the matter over with himself. Alternate translation: "I thought hard about what to do" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

And my heart reigned over me

Here, the **heart** figuratively represents the thoughts and the will. Alternate translation: "I thought hard about what to do" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and I contended

Contended is a technical term that means "to bring charges." It means to initiate a lawsuit that would require the defendants to answer for themselves publicly, in the presence of their fellow citizens. Alternate translation: "Then I brought charges"

the nobles & the prefects

See how you translated these terms in 2:16. Alternate translation: "the leading citizens and the city officials"

You are lending interest

This expression means to charge interest when loaning money to another person. Alternate translation: "You are charging interest" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

interest, a man against his brother

The Law of Moses specifically forbade charging interest on a loan to a fellow Jew. So this was not just an exploitive business practice, it was a violation of God's Law. The rich and powerful Jews would certainly have been expected to know this. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "You are charging interest on loans to your fellow Jews. You know that is forbidden in the Law of Moses." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

a man against his brother

In this context, "a man" means "each person." It does not mean only an adult male. (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

a man against his brother

Here, **brother** could conceivably include even biological brothers, but in context it likely refers figuratively to fellow Jews. Alternate translation: "to your fellow Jews" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And I put forth a great assembly against them

This means that, as part of conducting the lawsuit against these wealthy and powerful Jews, Nehemiah brought together a large group of their fellow citizens to hear the charges against them. This group was the "assembly." Alternate translation: "I put them on trial in front of their fellow citizens" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

And I put forth a great assembly against them

To present the events in chronological order, if that would be helpful to your readers, you could put this before the previous sentence, which describes the first charge that Nehemiah brought at this trial. (See: **Order of Events (p. 574)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.574)**)

Nehemiah 5:8

We ourselves, & have bought back

We likely means Nehemiah and his relatives, as in 4:23. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "My relatives and I have bought back" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

We & have bought back our brothers, the Jews, the ones who were sold to the nations

To present the events in chronological order, if that would be helpful to your readers, you could put the information that some Jews had to sell themselves into slavery before the information that Nehemiah and his relatives bought their freedom. Alternate translation: "Whenever our Jewish relatives have had to sell themselves into slavery to people from other nations … we have been buying them back" (See: **Order of Events (p.574)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.574)**)

according to our ability

Alternate translation: "to the best of our ability"

our brothers, the Jews

These two short phrases mean similar things. They are used together to emphasize that buying them back was an honorable and expected action. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "our Jewish relatives" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

our brothers

Here, **brother** likely refers figuratively to fellow Jews. Alternate translation: "our fellow Jews" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the Jews, the ones who were sold

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: "our fellow Jews have had to sell themselves" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

But even you yourselves are selling your brothers, and they are being bought back by us

This means that they are selling their family members, both men and women, as slaves to their fellow Jews. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Now you are selling your own people to be slaves of your fellow Jews, so that they might later sell them back to us" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the ones who were sold to the nations

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: "who people had sold as slaves to the nations" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

But even & yourselves

This is an emphatic expression. Nehemiah uses it to show how serious the offense is. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this emphasis in some way in your translation. Alternate translation: "you are actually"

you & are selling your brothers

This means that the creditors were selling the debtors into slavery to recover the money they owed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "you are actually selling your fellow Jews into slavery to get back the money they owe you" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

your brothers

Here, **brother** likely refers figuratively to fellow Jews. Alternate translation: "your fellow Jews" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and they are being bought back by us

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: "They are some of the very people we have been buying back!" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Then they were silent, and they did not find a word

The implication is that the accused said nothing because they knew that Nehemiah's charges were true. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "They knew that these charges were true, so they were silent. They could not answer a single word." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Then they were silent, and they did not find a word

These two phrases mean similar things. Nehemiah uses the repetition to emphasize how completely guilty the accused people were. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "there was absolutely nothing they could say in response." (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

Nehemiah 5:9

This thing that you are doing is not good

In this context, **good** does have a moral connotation. Nehemiah is saying more than that this is not a good idea. Alternate translation: "What you are doing is wrong!"

Should you not walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies

Nehemiah is making a statement, not asking a question. He does not expect the accused to give him reasons why they should not obey God. Instead, he is using the question form to emphasize how important it is for these wealthy and powerful Jews to stop doing these wrong things. Alternate translation: "You really ought to live your life in a way that honors God!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

Should you not walk in the fear of our God

In this context, **fear** does not mean to be afraid. It means to show respect and reverence, specifically by obeying instead of disobeying. Alternate translation: "live your life in a way that honors God" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

you & walk

Here, **walk** is an idiom that describes a person's conduct in life. Alternate translation: "live your life" (See: **Idiom (p. 550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies

This may be a reference to the way the enemies of the Jews were already mocking them, or to the way they would mock them if they learned of what was happening. It could mean both things. Alternate translation: "Otherwise, our enemies will mock us even more"

because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies

Reproach is an abstract noun that refers to the way the enemies of the Jews were mocking them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the same idea with a verb such as "mock." Alternate translation: "to keep the nations who are our enemies from mocking us" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 482)**)

the nations, our enemies

These two short phrases mean similar things. Nehemiah uses them together to emphasize the identity and hostility of the people who are opposing the Jews. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine them. Alternate translation: "our enemies" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

Nehemiah 5:10

Also, even I, my brothers, and my young men

As in 4:23, this means, "I myself, my relatives, and my servants." The term "brother" here likely includes one or more of Nehemiah's biological brothers, but more generally it refers figuratively to his close relatives. Alternate translation: "I myself, my relatives, and my servants" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

are lending against them silver and grain

The implication is that Nehemiah and his companions are lending without charging any interest. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "have been lending money and grain to those in need without charging interest" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

silver

Silver here means "money." Nehemiah is describing money figuratively by reference to the commodity that is being used as a means of exchange, silver. Alternate translation: "money" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p. 569)**)

Please, let us forsake this interest

It is clear from the context that **us** in this sentence does not mean Nehemiah and his companions, but rather the entire Jewish community, of which they are a part. Nehemiah could say to the defendants, accusingly, "You must stop charging interest!" But he includes himself and the entire community as a way of being encouraging rather than condemning. (This would be a use of "we/us" that includes the addressees. You should make this clear in your translation if your language makes that distinction.) Alternate translation: "All of us should stop charging interest on loans."

Nehemiah 5:11

Please, & return to them

This is worded as a polite request, but it is really a demand. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express it with an imperative. "Give them back"

even today

This does not necessarily mean on this same day, but without waiting. Alternate translation: "Do it right away!" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

and a hundred of

In this context, this expression means "the hundredth part," or one per cent. In this culture, this was likely charged monthly, so it would have amounted to 12% annual interest. In an economy that was based more on commodities than on cash, this would have been an exorbitant amount. If your culture typically calculates interest at an annual rate, you could express it that way here to help your readers understand the likely meaning. Alternate translation: "the 12% annual interest" (See: **Fractions (p.537)**) (See: **Fractions (p.537)**)

the silver

Silver means "money" here, as in verse 10. Alternate translation: "money" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

are lending against them

Alternate translation: "charging them" or "making them pay" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 5:12

And they said

They means the leading citizens and the city officials. Alternate translation: "These leaders replied"

We will return

The implication is that they will return the fields, vineyards, olive orchards, and houses that they took from the poor, as Nehemiah demanded in 5:11. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "We will give back their fields, vineyards, olive orchards, and houses" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and we will seek nothing from them

Alternate translation: "And we will stop charging them interest"

we will do according to what you say

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this statement first, since it is the reason for the results that follow, the return of property and the cancelling of interest. Alternate translation: "Yes, we will do what you say" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p. 506)**)

And I called the priests, and I caused them to swear to do according to this word

The implication is that the priests would have these leaders swear an oath before God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Then I called the priests, and I made the leaders swear to God in front of them that they would do what they had promised." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 5:13

I shook out my bosom

Bosom here refers figuratively to Nehemiah's robe. It refers specifically by association to the part that he could gather together in front of him to form a pouch. Alternate translation: "I shook out the folds of my robe" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

I shook out my bosom

Nehemiah gathered his robe together in front of him, the way someone would if they wanted to carry something in its folds. Then he flung the robe open and shook it, so that anything that was in it would have scattered. By doing this, he demonstrated symbolically to the Jewish leaders what would happen to them if they broke the promise they made. Alternate translation: "I shook out the folds of my robe" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

Thus may God shake out from his house and from his labor every man who does not cause this word to stand. And thus may he be shaken out and emptied

Alternate translation: "In the same way, may God take away the home and all the possessions of anyone who does not keep this promise"

every man

In this context, this expression means "anyone." It could include women as well as men. Alternate translation: "anyone" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**)

cause this word to stand

The **word** means the promise that the leaders have made and the oath they have taken to confirm it. Nehemiah is speaking of this promise figuratively as if it were a living thing that could stand, that is, stay in place rather than go away. Alternate translation: "keep this oath" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

from his house and from his labor

These two short phrases mean similar things. They are used together to express the totality of what a person owns. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine them. Alternate translation: "everything he owns" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

and from his labor

Labor here figuratively refers to the "fruits of labor," that is, the possessions that a person acquires through labor. Alternate translation: "all his possessions"

And thus may he be shaken out and emptied

This sentence repeats the meaning of the previous one. Nehemiah uses the repetition for emphasis. You would not need to use the same repetition in your translation if it were already clear that Nehemiah is speaking emphatically in the first sentence. However, you could also rephrase the meaning. Alternate translation: "Yes, may that person be separated from everything he owns" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

shaken out and emptied

These two short phrases mean similar things. They are used together to emphasize how completely Nehemiah wants God to punish anyone who breaks the oath. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "be separated from everything he owns" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

all the assembly

This means everyone who was there, both the leaders who were the defendants and the citizens Nehemiah had gathered to hear the charges against them. Alternate translation: "everyone who was there"

Amen

This is an expression that means, "Truly, it is so." It expresses agreement with what someone has just said. You could express the meaning with a phrase such as, "We agree!" Or you could use the Hebrew term and explain its meaning: "Amen! It is true." (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And they praised Yahweh

Alternate translation: "they worshipped God"

and the people did according to this word

The people means "the Jews." "This word" means the promises they made. Alternate translation: "After that, none of the Jews took houses or fields to guarantee loans, and none of them charged interest"

Nehemiah 5:14

Also

As explained in the note to 3:1, in this book, Nehemiah is recording everything that he did to help the people of Judah. He hopes and prays that God will bless him for what he did. He has just described how he rescued the poor from foreclosures and interest. Now he is going to describe something further that he did to help them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Here is something else I did to help the people" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

from the day that he appointed me to be their governor in the land of Judah, from year 20 & of Artaxerxes the king

This is background information that helps explain what Nehemiah will say next. Alternate translation: "Artaxerxes, the king of Persia, had appointed me to be the governor of the province of Judah during the twentieth year of his reign"

from the day & even until year 32 of Artaxerxes the king

Alternate translation: "During the twelve years from that time until the thirty-second year of his reign"

from the day

This is an idiom that means "from the time." Alternate translation: "from that time" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

from year 20 even until year 32

Alternate translation: "from the 20th year until the 32nd year of the reign of Artaxerxes as king" or "from year 20 until year 32 in the reign of Artaxerxes as king" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

twelve years

Alternate translation: "12 years" or "during those 12 years" (See: **Numbers (p.571)**) (See: **Numbers (p.571)**)

I myself did not eat the bread of the governor, nor did my brothers

As Nehemiah explains in the next verse, he recognized that the people were poor and could not afford to provide very much for the expenses of the governor. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly here. Alternate translation: "Because I knew that the people were poor and could not afford to pay for it, I did not accept the governor's food allowance, and I did not use it to feed my relatives"

I myself did not eat & did

Alternate translation: "I did not accept"

the bread of the governor

Nehemiah is using bread to refer figuratively to the entire food allowance that he was entitled to as the governor of Judah. He is describing all the food by the name of one part of it, the bread. Alternate translation: "the food that the people provided for the governor" or "the governor's food allowance" (See **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

nor & my brothers

As in 4:23, **brother** here likely refers to Nehemiah's actual brother Hanani and the other close relatives who were with him. Alternate translation: "and I did not use it to feed my relatives" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 5:15

But the former governors who were before my face

Former and **before my face** mean similar things. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine them. Alternate translation: "The men who were governors before me" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

were before my face

Here **face** figuratively describes an entire person by reference to one part of them, the "face." Alternate translation: "before me" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

had been heavy on the people

Here Nehemiah speaks figuratively as if these governors had been a great burden that the people were carrying, making their lives very difficult. Alternate translation: "made life very difficult for the people" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and they took from them bread and wine, after forty silver shekels

After indicates that the supplies of bread and wine were in addition to the money. Nehemiah is likely describing what the former governors required of the people each day. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "They demanded that they supply them with bread and wine and forty silver shekels every day." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

forty silver shekels

In ancient times, a silver shekel weighed about 11 grams or about a third of an ounce. You could try to express this in terms of modern money values, but if you did, that could cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate over time, since those values can change from year to year. Instead, you could say something general like "40 silver coins," or give the equivalent weight, or use the biblical term in the text and give the weight in a note. (See: **Biblical Money (p.499)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.499)**)

forty silver shekels

Alternate translation: "forty silver shekels" or "40 pieces of silver" (See: **Numbers (p.571)**) (See: **Numbers (p.571)**)

Also, their young men had acted dominantly over the people

Alternate translation: "Even their servants oppressed the people."

But I myself did not do thus, from the face of the fear of God

In this sentence, If it would be helpful in your language, you could put the reason before the result. Alternate translation: "But because of my fear of God, I did not take the food" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

from the face of the fear of God

Here, **face** figuratively represents Nehemiah's personal perception. "Fearing" God does not mean being afraid of God, but recognizing that God deserves respect and honor. Nehemiah is speaking of this perception figuratively, as if this recognition was always directly in front of him in a place where he could see it. He means that he was always aware of it. Alternate translation: "because I knew I needed to respect God" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 5:16

I held fast to the work of this wall

Nehemiah describes himself figuratively as **holding fast to**, meaning "holding onto," the work of rebuilding the wall. This means that he was devoted to it, and he did not pursue other interests, including ones that could have made money for him. Alternate translation: "I devoted myself to the work of rebuilding of the wall" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and we did not buy a field

We likely refers to Nehemiah and his relatives, since he mentions his servants next.

and we did not buy a field

Nehemiah is using the term **field** figuratively to describe any kind of real property that he and his relatives might have bought. Verse 11 shows that this could have included not just fields but also things like vineyards, olive orchards, and houses. He is describing all real property by reference to one kind, a field. Alternate translation: "My relatives and I did not buy any property" (See **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

and we did not buy a field

The implication is that they could have bought property cheaply because the poor were so desperate. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "My relatives and I did not buy any property, even though we could have gotten it cheaply because the poor were so desperate" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And all my young men were gathered there for the work

There means at the wall, and **for the work** means the work of rebuilding the wall. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "I gathered all of my servants there to work on the wall" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p. 484)**)

Nehemiah 5:17

Now the Jews

While this expression means "the Jewish people" in most of the book, in the context here and in 2:16 it seems to mean "Jewish leaders." Nehemiah is describing some members of this people group, its leaders, as if they were the whole group. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders" (See **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

and the prefects

See how you translated this term in 2:16. Alternate translation: "city officials" (See **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

were 150 men at my table

Nehemiah is using the word **table** to refer to the act of feeding people. He is describing that act figuratively by reference to something associated with it, the table that the food was served on. Alternate translation: "every day I was responsible to feed 150 Jewish leaders and officials" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

with the ones coming to us from the nations that were around us

This likely refers to Jews who lived in other countries but who came to Jerusalem. Their own communities may have sent them as representatives, or they may have come on their own for business or personal reasons. Alternate translation: "and we also fed the Jewish visitors who came from other countries around us" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 5:18

And what was made for one day was one bull, six choice sheep, and birds were made for me

Nehemiah seems once again to be leaving out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. He probably means something like, "What was prepared for one day is as follows: One bull, six choice sheep, and birds; that is what was prepared for me." You could simplify the sentence for your readers by not including "were prepared for me" again at the end. Alternate translation: "Each day I told my servants to prepare one ox, six good sheep, and various kinds of poultry" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

And what was made for & day was one

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "Each day I told my servants to prepare" or "Each day I told my servants to serve us the meat from" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

and birds

It is likely that the birds were domesticated rather than wild, and if it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term that indicates this. Alternate translation: "and various kinds of poultry" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

and between ten days all kinds of wine in abundance

Nehemiah is once again leaving out some words that a sentence would ordinarily need to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you express the meaning more fully. Alternate translation: "Every ten days I also had my servants bring in an abundant supply of various kinds of wine" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

and between ten days

This expression means "every ten days." (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

wine in abundance

Alternate translation: "enough wine for everyone"

So with this I did not seek the bread of the governor

As in 5:14, "the bread of the governor" means "the governor's food allowance." The implication is that, at his own expense, Nehemiah paid for all of the things he has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "I paid for all of these things at my own expense. I did not accept the governor's food allowance"

the bondage was heavy on this people

The abstract noun **bondage** refers to the way the people were struggling to survive in difficult times. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind it with a verb such as "struggle." Alternate translation: "I knew that the people were struggling to survive" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

the bondage was heavy on this people

Here Nehemiah is speaking of bondage or struggle as if it were a great burden that the people were carrying, making their lives very difficult. Alternate translation: "I knew that the people were struggling to survive" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the bondage was heavy on this people

You can put this before Nehemiah's statement that he did not accept the governor's food allowance, because it gives the reason why he refused it. Alternate translation: "I knew that the people were struggling to survive, so I did not accept the governor's food allowance." (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

Nehemiah 5:19

Remember me, my God, for good

As in 4:4, here Nehemiah speaks directly to God. You could indicate this by putting this verse in quotation marks. Review the note at 4:4 about asides like this if that would be helpful. (See: **Aside (p.487)**) (See: **Aside (p.487)**)

Remember me, & for good

To remember someone **for good** is an idiom that means to reward someone with good things for the good that they have done. (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Remember me, my God, for good

In this context, **remember** means to think about someone and consider what action you can take on their behalf. Nehemiah is not suggesting that God has forgotten him. Alternate translation: "think of me" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

all that I have done for this people

Nehemiah is once again leaving out some words that a sentence would ordinarily need. He is asking God to do good things for him because of all the good things he has done for the people of Judah as their governor. Alternate translation: "reward me because of all the good that I have done for the people of Judah"

Nehemiah 6

Nehemiah 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The building of the wall is completed in this chapter.

The ULT sets the lines in 6:6-7 farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because they are part of a long quotation.

Special concepts in this chapter

Miracle

Completing this city wall in only 52 days was considered proof that God had helped the Jews, especially given the opposition that they had experienced from the people in surrounding areas.

Nehemiah 6:1

And it happened

Nehemiah uses this phrase to introduce the next event in his story. You do not need to represent it in your translation unless your language has a similar expression that it characteristically uses. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**)

it was heard

This means that these enemies learned somehow that the wall was finished. Perhaps someone came and told them, or perhaps they received a written report. Nehemiah figuratively uses hearing, one means of discovering things, to describe these men learning this. Alternate translation: "when our enemies learned" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

when it was heard & and by the rest of our enemies

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "when our enemies learned" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

by Sanballat and Tobiah

These are the names of men. See how you translated them in 2:10. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and by Geshem

This is the name of a man and his people group. See how you translated these names in 2:19. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

I had built the wall

As in 4:14, Nehemiah is using himself to represent the entire community that he is a part of. Alternate translation: "that we had finished rebuilding the wall" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

although

This term expresses a weak contrast between the sentence that comes before and the sentence that comes after. There was no break in the wall except for the spaces where the doors had not yet been hung in the gates. Alternate translation: "however" (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**)

until that time I had not set up the doors in the gates

Once again Nehemiah is using himself to represent the entire community that he is a part of. Alternate translation: "we had not yet put the doors in the gates" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

Nehemiah 6:2

that & sent to me

Alternate translation: "sent me a messenger to me"

Come, and let us appoint a time to meet together

These enemies use the word **come** to encourage Nehemiah to accept their invitation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the word as something other than an imperative to make the message sound inviting. Alternate translation: "We would like to arrange to meet with you"

among the villages in the valley of Ono

Ono is the name of a place about twenty miles from Jerusalem. It is down from the mountains towards the Mediterranean coast, so it can be described as a "valley" or "plain." Alternate translation: "in one of the villages in the plain of Ono" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And they were thinking to do evil to me

In this context, **evil** means "harm." Alternate translation: "they wanted to harm me" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And they were thinking to do evil to me

The implication is that Nehemiah figured this out even though in their invitation these enemies pretended to be sincere. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "But I recognized that they were saying this because they wanted to harm me." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 6:3

I am doing a great work

Nehemiah is once again using himself to represent the whole community and its work of rebuilding of the wall. Alternate translation: "We are doing a great work" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

and I am not able to go down

Nehemiah does not mean that he is physically unable to travel to Ono. He means that he cannot leave his supervision of the work for the several days it would take to travel there and back. Alternate translation: "I am not able to travel while it is going on"

to go down

Nehemiah uses the word **down** because the plain of Ono is at a lower elevation than Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "meet with you"

Why should the work stop while I abandon it and go down to you

Nehemiah is making a statement, not asking a question. He does not expect Sanballat and Geshem to give him reasons why the work should stop as he travels to meet with them. Instead, Nehemiah is using the question form to emphasize how important it is for the work of rebuilding the walls to continue. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his question as a statement. Alternate translation: "I cannot let the work stop and come down to you" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

and go down to you

The word **down** is used here because the plain of Ono where they were requesting Nehemiah to come is at a lower elevation than Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 6:4

And they sent to me according to this word four times

Alternate translation: "They sent me the same message four times"

and I turned them back

Turned them back means **refused them** The implication is that Nehemiah did this each time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "and each time I refused them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

according to this word

Alternate translation: "for this same reason"

Nehemiah 6:5

Then Sanballat sent his young man to me a fifth time according to this word

Alternate translation: "Sanballat sent his servant to me with this same message for a fifth time" or "this was time number five that Sanballat sent his servant to me with this same message" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

and an opened letter was in his hand

This means that this fifth message was written in a letter, but the letter was unsealed. Alternate translation: "This time the message was written, but it was not sealed"

and an opened letter was in his hand

As a diplomatic communication, the letter should have been sealed. Because it was not, others could read it and spread its contents among the people of the region. It appears that Sanballat deliberately left the letter unsealed to pressure Nehemiah to meet with him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Sanballat left the letter unsealed so that others would find out what it said, because he wanted to pressure me to meet with him" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 6:6

In it was written

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "The letter said" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

It is heard among the nations, & that

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "The rumor in the region is" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

and Gashmu is saying

The claim appears to be that Geshem has investigated these rumors and told Sanballat that they are true. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "and Geshem confirms that it is true" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and Gashmu

Gashmu here is an alternate form of the name **Geshem** found in 6:1. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the name as **Geshem** here as well. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

you and the Jews are thinking to rebel, therefore you are building the wall

This means specifically that the Jews would rebel against Artaxerxes, the Persian king, who was currently ruling them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "you and the Jewish people are rebuilding the wall because you are planning to rebel against King Artaxerxes" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and the Jews

Here this expression means **the Jewish people** specifically the ones living in Judah and Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Jewish people"

And you are becoming a king over them

Alternate translation: "They are also saying that you intend to make yourself the king of the Jews"

Nehemiah 6:7

And also

This phrase indicates that what follows is more of the report that Sanballat claims he is hearing from the people in the surrounding countries. If it would be helpful in your language, you could put something in your translation to indicate this. Alternate translation: "These people are also saying that" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p. 513)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.513)**)

you have set up prophets to call out concerning you in Jerusalem

Alternate translation: "you have appointed prophets to make this proclamation about you in Jerusalem"

saying, 'A king is in Judah

The proclamation can be presented as a direct quotation. "Saying" can be represented by the quotation marks and whatever punctuation your language uses to introduce a quotation. Alternate translation: "The Jews now have a king of their own"

And now

This is not a reference to time. Sanballat is using this expression to introduce a further inference. Alternate translation: "certainly"

it will be heard by the king according to these words

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "King Artaxerxes will certainly hear these reports" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

it will be heard by the king according to these words

The implication is that when Artaxerxes hears these reports, he will be very angry with Nehemiah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "King Artaxerxes will certainly hear these reports, and when he does, he will be very angry with you" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And now

This is not a reference to time. Sanballat is using this expression to introduce his conclusion. This term expresses that the sentences that came before provide the reason for the sentence that comes after. Alternate translation: "Therefore" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

come, and let us consult together

As in 6:2, "come" is a word of encouragement rather than a command. Alternate translation: "So we really should meet together and talk about this"

Nehemiah 6:8

And I sent to him

Alternate translation: "I sent a message back to him"

No such thing has been done according to these words that you are saying

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "I have not done any of the things you have written" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

but you are inventing them out of your own heart

Here, the **heart** figuratively represents someone's thoughts and feelings. Sanballat's thoughts and feelings, in turn, represent him as a person. Alternate translation: "you have made all this up in your own imagination" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

but

This term expresses a contrast between the clause that comes before and the clause that comes after. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**)

Nehemiah 6:9

For all of them were frightening us

This likely means, "they were all trying to frighten us." The implication is that Nehemiah recognized that this was the motive behind the letters. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "I knew that they were all just trying to frighten us" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

saying

Alternate translation: "They were thinking"

Their hands will drop from the work

Here, **hand** figuratively represents strength, power, control, or action. Alternate translation: "The workers will stop doing the work on the wall" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Their hands will drop from the work

The implication is that the enemies expected the Jews to become so afraid of being accused of rebelling for rebuilding the wall that they would stop doing that. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "The Jews will become so afraid that they will stop working on the wall" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

from the work

This means specifically the work on the wall. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "working on the wall" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and it will not be done

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who will do the action. Alternate translation: "they will never finish rebuilding it" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

So now, strengthen my hands

Nehemiah speaks directly to God once again here. This instance is like the one in 4:4, where Nehemiah records what he prayed at the time of the events he is describing. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this by introducing the prayer with a phrase such as "so I prayed," by presenting the prayer as a direct quotation, and by having Nehemiah address God directly at the beginning. Alternate translation: "So I prayed, 'O God, give me courage'" (See: **Aside (p.487)**) (See: **Aside (p.487)**)

strengthen my hands

Here the strength of a person's hands figuratively stands for the courage they are feeling inside. Alternate translation: "strengthen me" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 6:10

Now as for me

Nehemiah uses this phrase to introduce something else that happened around this same time. Alternate translation: "Around this time" (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**)

I entered the house of

Alternate translation: "I went to visit"

Shemaiah, the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel

Shemaiah is the name of a man, Delaiah is the name of his father, and Mehetabel is the name of his grandfather. Alternate translation: "Shemaiah, the son of Delaiah and grandson of Mehetabel" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and he was confined

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: "he was not leaving his house." (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

and he was confined

Nehemiah does not say why Shemaiah was not leaving his house. He could have been sick or he could have been ceremonially unclean, so you might choose not to specify any reason. However, the context suggests that Shemaiah may have been trying to symbolize that it was not safe for Jewish leaders to go around in public. A man by the name of Shemaiah is listed in 10:8 as one of the priests who signed the community agreement. This could be the same person since he has access to the temple and is therefore likely a priest. If it would be helpful in your language, you could suggest this reason explicitly. Alternate translation: "He was a priest, and he was trying to show that it was not safe for Jewish leaders to go out in public, so he was not leaving his house" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

Let us appoint a time to meet in the house of God, in the midst of the temple

Shemaiah seems to be proposing that he and Nehemiah move their meeting to the temple, suggesting that they are not even safe in his house. Alternate translation: "We are not safe even here. We need to go into the temple, to the sacred place inside the temple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

in the house of God, in the midst of the temple

These two phrases mean similar things. Shemaiah uses the repetition to emphasize the danger he is suggesting they are in. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "into the temple" (See **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

the house of God

Shemaiah is referring to the temple figuratively as the "house of God," as if it were God's dwelling place. Alternate translation: "the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And let us shut the doors of the temple

This means to not just close the doors but lock them. Alternate translation: "and lock the doors"

for they are coming to kill you

Shemaiah does not say who these people are. It would be possible to say something based on what can reasonably be inferred. For example, "Your enemies have hired people to kill you." However, the vagueness seems to be part of Shemaiah's strategy to frighten Nehemiah. So it might be more effective to leave this indefinite. Alternate translation: "because people are trying to kill you"

Yes, at night they are coming to kill you

Shemaiah's confidence in the detail of "at night" seems designed to make Nehemiah even more afraid because this means that the killers will come in the dark when he is asleep, so he won't be able to protect himself. It could be helpful to your readers for your translation to reflect this confidence. Alternate translation: "I know that one night they are going to come and kill you"

Nehemiah 6:11

And I said

Alternate translation: "I responded"

Should a man such as I run away

Nehemiah is making a statement, not asking a question. He does not expect Shemiah to tell him whether or not he should run away. Instead, Nehemiah is using the question form to emphasize that he is not going to do what Shemaiah has suggested. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "A man like me would not run away." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

And who, such as I, is it that could go in to the temple and live

Once again Nehemiah is making a statement, not asking a question. He does not expect Shemiah to tell him whether going into the temple would save his life. Alternate translation: "A man like me would not go into the temple just to hide to stay alive." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

And who, such as I, is it that could go in to the temple and live

It is not entirely clear what Nehemiah means by this. He could be saying that he should not go into the temple because he is not a priest. However, the Bible records instances of other people who were not priests going into the temple to seek sanctuary. So Nehemiah may be saying instead that because he is the governor he is too well known to escape from assassins by hiding in the temple. You could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Besides, I am the governor, and everyone knows me, so I could not save my life by trying to hide in the temple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

I will not go in

Alternate translation: "I refuse to do it!"

Nehemiah 6:12

And I recognized, and behold

The term "behold" is used to focus attention on the words that follow. Within this episode as a whole, it creates the impression of Nehemiah suddenly realizing something that had not been clear to him before. Alternate translation: "All of a sudden I realized"

God had not sent him

Shemaiah seems to have been pretending that God had revealed to him prophetically that people would be coming secretly at night to kill Nehemiah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "God had not given Shemaiah a prophetic message for me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

But he spoke the prophecy against me, for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him

Alternate translation: "Instead, he was saying these things to hinder my work because Tobiah and Sanballat had paid him to say them"

Nehemiah 6:13

For this purpose he was hired, so that I would be afraid

This is the reason why Nehemiah's enemies had hired Shemaiah; because they wanted to cause Nehemiah to be afraid. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "The reason they had hired him was to scare me. They hoped that as a result" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p. 506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

For this purpose

This term introduces the purpose for the sentence contained in the verse. (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.503)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.503)**)

and I would do thus and sin

This phrase expresses the goal for the sentence contained in the verse. (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.503)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.503)**)

and I would do thus and sin

It is not entirely clear why Nehemiah says it would have been a sin for him to hide in the temple since it was a time-honored tradition in Israel to allow people to seek sanctuary there. Perhaps the explanation is that Nehemiah knew God had sent him to Judah on a special mission to help and protect the Jewish community there. And so, if he had abandoned that mission to save his life, he would have been disobeying God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say something like that explicitly. Alternate translation: "They were hoping they could make me sin by abandoning my responsibilities and hiding in the temple." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And it might become an evil name to them, so that they could reproach me

Here, **name** is a figurative way of referring to the fame or reputation of a person. If he hid in the temple to save his own life, Nehemiah would get a bad reputation as a coward who was concerned only for himself. Alternate translation: "this would give me a bad reputation, and they could say bad things about me to everyone" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

so that

This term expresses that the clause that comes after is the goal for the clause that comes before. (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.503)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.503)**)

Nehemiah 6:14

My God

As in 4:4 and 6:9, Nehemiah records here what he prayed at the time of the events he is describing. You can indicate this by introducing these words as a prayer and presenting the prayer as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "So I prayed, 'My God … '"

remember Tobiah, and Sanballat according to these deeds of his

His refers to both Sanballat and Tobiah. In this context, "remember" means to think about someone and consider what action you should take in their regard. Nehemiah is not suggesting that God has forgotten about Tobiah and Sanballat. Alternate translation: "treat Tobiah and Sanballat the way they deserve for what they have done" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

and also Noadiah the prophetess, and the rest of the prophets who are frightening me

Alternate translation: "Do the same for the female prophet Noadiah and all the other prophets who are trying to make me afraid"

Noadiah

This is the name of a woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 6:15

And the wall was finished

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: "We finished rebuilding the wall" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

on 25 of Elul

Elul is the sixth month of the Hebrew calendar. Alternate translation: "on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Elul" (See: **Hebrew Months (p.539)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.539)**)

on 25 of Elul

Alternate translation: "on day 25 of the month of Elul" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p. 576)**)

on day 52

Alternate translation: "after working on it for 52 days" (See: **Numbers (p.571)**) (See: **Numbers (p.571)**)

Nehemiah 6:16

And it happened

Nehemiah uses this phrase to introduce the next event in his story. You do not need to represent it in your translation unless your language has a similar expression that it characteristically uses. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**)

when all our enemies heard

This means that these enemies learned by some means that work had been completed. Nehemiah figuratively uses hearing, one means of discovering things, to describe the enemies learning this. Alternate translation: "when all of our enemies learned" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

when all our enemies heard

This means specifically, "When all our enemies learned that we had completed the rebuilding in such a short time." If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

that, & all the nations that were around us were afraid, and they fell extremely in their eyes

These two phrases mean similar things. Nehemiah uses the repetition to emphasize how intimidated the people in the surrounding countries felt. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "they thought much less of themselves" or "they lost confidence in themselves," otherwise "they became afraid and felt humiliated" (See **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p. 579)**)

and they fell extremely in their eyes

Here, **fell** is a figurative way of saying "become less." (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and they fell extremely in their eyes

Here, **eyes** stand for "seeing," and "seeing" figuratively means judgment. This means that these people were no longer so great or powerful in their own estimation. Alternate translation: "they lost confidence in themselves" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And they knew that this work was done by our God

You can put this right before the statement that the enemies were afraid and thought less of themselves, because it is the reason that explains that result. Alternate translation: "They realized that our God had helped us complete this work" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

this work was done by our God

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "our God had helped us complete this work" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Nehemiah 6:17

Also, in those days

Nehemiah uses this phrase to introduce something else that was happening at the same time as the other events he has just described. Alternate translation: "During this time" (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**)

in those days

The term **days** is used figuratively here to refer a particular period of time. Alternate translation: "at this time" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

the nobles of Judah

See how you translated this term in 2:16. Alternate translation: "the leading citizens of Judah"

were multiplying their letters

The implication is these citizens were sending information to Tobiah about Nehemiah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "sent many messengers with letters to Tobiah to give him information about me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and those belonging to Tobiah were coming to them

Here Nehemiah speaks of Tobiah's letters as if they could come on their own to the people he was answering. Alternate translation: "Tobiah sent letters" or "Tobiah sent many messengers with letters" (See: **Personification (p. 582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

and those belonging to Tobiah were coming to them

The implication is that Tobiah was sending back instructions to his allies. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Tobiah sent many messengers with letters back to them with instructions" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Tobiah

This is the name of a man. See how you translated it in 2:10. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 6:18

For many in Judah were masters of oath to him

This means that many Judeans were "owners of oaths" to Tobiah. That is, they had sworn oaths to be loyal to him. Alternate translation: "Many people in Judah had sworn an oath to be loyal to him" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

For many in Judah were masters of oath to him

You can put this information last in the verse because it is a result, and the rest of the verse gives the reason why the people swore these oaths. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah the son of Arah

This statement means that Tobiah was married to the daughter of Shecaniah. The implication is that Shecaniah was a powerful and influential member of the community. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Tobiah was married to the daughter of a powerful and influential member of the community, Shecaniah the son of Arah" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

of Shecaniah the son of Arah

Shecaniah is the name of a man, and Arah is the name of his father. This is probably the same Shecaniah who is mentioned in 3:29. See how you translated his name there. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And Jehohanan his son had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah

The implication is that Meshullam was another powerful and influential member of the community. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Tobiah's son Jehohanan was married to the daughter of another powerful and influential man, Meshullam the son of Berechiah" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And Jehohanan

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

his son

His means that Jehohanan was the son of Tobiah.

had taken the daughter of

Alternate translation: "was married to the daughter of"

Meshullam the son of Berechiah

Meshullam is the name of a man, and Berechiah is the name of his father. He is mentioned in 3:4 and 3:30. See how you translated his name there. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 6:19

they were saying his good deeds before my face

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. Alternate translation: "told me personally about Tobiah's good deeds" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

they were

They means the people who were loyal to Tobiah.

and they were taking out my words to him

Taking out here is an idiom that means these people were "reporting" Nehemiah's responses to Tobiah. Alternate translation: "and then told him about my responses" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 7

Nehemiah 7 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Genealogy

The people who returned from Persia were counted according to their families. Nehemiah ensured that those who lived in Jerusalem had a completely Jewish ancestry.

Different lists

This list is paralleled in Ezra 2. The lists do contain some differences in numbers. This is probably due to the timing of their counting. They were likely counted at different times.

Nehemiah 7:1

And it happened

This expression introduces a new event in the story. You do not need to represent it in your translation unless your language has a similar expression that it characteristically uses. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**)

when the wall was built

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: "when we had finished the wall" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

and I had set up the doors

As in 4:14 and 6:1,, Nehemiah is using himself to represent the entire community that he is a part of. Alternate translation: "and we had put the doors in the gates" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

that, & the gatekeepers and the ones who sang and the Levites were appointed

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Nehemiah may have done this personally, or the people in charge of each of these groups may have done it. Because of the uncertainly, a good approach might be to say "we" to indicate the community. Alternate translation: "we assigned the gatekeepers and singers and Levites to their tasks" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

the gatekeepers

These were people who were assigned to each gate of Jerusalem. They were responsible for controlling access to the city. They would open and close the gates at times and for reasons set by the city administrators. For example, Shemaiah the son of Shecaniah is named in 3:29 as the keeper of the East Gate. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

and the ones who sang

This means vocal musicians who led in worship, in processions, and ceremonies, producing music and chants that emphasized and enhanced the occasion. Alternate translation: "singers" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 7:2

And I gave Hanani, my brother, and Hananiah, & charge over Jerusalem

Alternate translation: "I appointed two men to help me govern Jerusalem, my brother Hanani and Hananiah"

Hanani, my brother

As in 1:2, **brother** here most likely indicates that Hanani was Nehemiah's biological brother. Alternate translation: "my brother Hanani"

Hanani

This is the name of a man. See how you translated it in 1:2(See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Hananiah

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the official for the citadel

Alternate translation: "who was in charge of the fortress"

For he was according to a faithful man

He means Hananiah. "He was as a faithful man" is a way of saying "he was such as only a faithful man would be." Alternate translation: "I appointed Hananiah because he was trustworthy"

and he feared God more than many

Here, **fear** does not mean to be afraid of God, but to show God reverence and respect. Alternate translation: "because he showed God more reverence and respect than most people do" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p. 550)**)

Nehemiah 7:3

Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "Do not order the gates of Jerusalem to be opened" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened

Hanani and Hananiah would not have opened the gates physically themselves. Rather, they would have ordered this to be done. Alternate translation: "Do not order the gates of Jerusalem to be opened" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

until the sun becomes hot

Here Nehemiah probably uses the heat of the sun to represent the light of the sun. His intent is to open the gates some time after the sun rises regardless of how hot the sun shines on any particular day. Alternate translation: "until broad daylight" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

until the sun becomes hot

The implication is that the gatekeepers should not open the gates at sunrise, as would have been customary, because the enemies of the Jews could launch a surprise attack in the dim light before most of the city was up and ready for the day. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "until broad daylight. That way we will be able to see anything our enemies are doing" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And while they are still standing, let them shut the doors, and they must bar them

They means the gatekeepers, and "standing" means keeping guard. Alternate translation: "Order the doors to be shut and locked while the gatekeepers are still on guard"

And set up watches for those who dwell in Jerusalem, a man in his watch, and a man in front of his house

In this context, **a man** means **each man.** It is likely that adult males were intended for this dangerous night duty. "A man in his watch" means that each man should take a turn, and "a man in front of his house" means that each man should keep watch in his own neighborhood. Alternate translation: "Have the men who live in Jerusalem take turns keeping watch in their own neighborhoods" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 7:4

Now the city was wide on two hands and great

These two short phrases mean similar things. Nehemiah uses them together to emphasize how large Jerusalem was. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine them. Alternate translation: "The city of Jerusalem covered a large area" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

was wide on two hands

Here, **hand** figuratively means "side." The image is that if you stood in the city, there would be a lot of it on both sides of you. Alternate translation: "covered a large area" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

and the people were few in the midst of it

Alternate translation: "but not many people lived there"

And there were no built houses

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "the people had not yet rebuilt the houses" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Nehemiah 7:5

And my God gave to my heart

The implication is that registering the people was a first step toward filling Jerusalem with people again, a process that Nehemiah will describe in chapter 11. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "as a first step towards filling Jerusalem with people again, God led me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And my God gave to my heart

As in 2:12, Nehemiah's **heart** figuratively represents his thoughts and will. Alternate translation: "God inspired me" or "led me" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and I gathered together

This word indicates that what Nehemiah did was in response to the situation just described. Alternate translation: "so I gathered together" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

the nobles and the prefects

See how you translated these terms in 2:16. Alternate translation: "the leading citizens and the city officials" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

and the people

In context, this likely means "the other people living in the city."

to be enrolled by genealogy

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "and to register them by genealogies" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

to be enrolled by genealogy

Alternate translation: "to be enrolled according to their family histories"

And I found the book of the genealogy for the ones who came up at the first

This means a list of the first group of Jews who had returned from exile, about a hundred years earlier. Alternate translation: "I also found a book containing the records of the first group of people who had returned to Jerusalem from the exile." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

And I found written in it

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: "I found that those people had written the following in it" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Nehemiah 7:6

the sons of the province

The document speaks here of the province of Judah as if it were the ancestor of all the Jews who lived there. Alternate translation: "the people from the province of Judah" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

the province

The province means the province of Judah. The document is referring to Judah by something associated with it, its status as a province. (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

the ones who went up

Went up means "traveled from Babylon back to Judah," since that involves going from a river valley up into the mountains. Alternate translation: "returned to Judah from Babylon" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

from the captivity of the exiles, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon exiled

Captivity and **exile** are abstract nouns. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind them with verbs. Alternate translation: "Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, captured their ancestors and took them away" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

from the captivity of the exiles

Captivity and **exile** mean basically the same thing. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "after being taken away" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

a man to his city

Here, **a man** means "each one" or "each person" Alternate translation: "They went to live in the same towns where their families had lived before."

Nehemiah 7:7

the ones who came with

This phrase introduces a list of the men who led this group back to Judah. Alternate translation: "The leaders of this group were"

Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah

These are the names of twelve men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**)

The number of the men of the people of Israel

In keeping with the practices of the time, the totals in the list that follows likely include just the men and not also the women and children. While all of these people were from Judah, they were from the Israelite people group. Alternate translation: "This is how many men came back from each Israelite clan and town"

Nehemiah 7:8

The sons of Parosh were 2, 172

This means, "From the descendants of Parosh, 2,172 returned." To help make this clear for your readers, you could say something like "returned" throughout verses 8–45, after the name of each group and the number that is given.

The sons of Parosh

Sons figuratively means "descendants" Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Parosh" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Parosh

Parosh is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:9

The sons of Shephatiah

Sons figuratively means "descendants" Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Shephatiah" (See:
Metaphor (p.563)) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Shephatiah

Shephatiah is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:10

The sons of Arah

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Arah" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Arah

Arah is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:11

The sons of Pahath-Moab, of the sons of Jeshua and Joab

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Pahath-Moab who were descendants of Jeshua and Joab" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Pahath-Moab, & Jeshua and Joab

Pahath-Moab is the name of a man, and Jeshua and Joab are the names of two of his descendants. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:12

The sons of Elam

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Elam" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Elam

Elam is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:13

The sons of Zattu

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Zattu" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Zattu

Zattu is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:14

The sons of Zakkai

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Zakkai" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Zakkai

Zakkai is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:15

The sons of Binnui

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Binnui" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Binnui

Binnui is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:16

The sons of Bebai

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Bebai" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Bebai

Bebai is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:17

The sons of Azgad

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Azgad" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Azgad

Azgad is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:18

The sons of Adonikam

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Adonikam" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Adonikam

Adonikam is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:19

The sons of Bigvai

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Bigvai" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Bigvai

Bigvai is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:20

The sons of Adin

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Adin" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Adin

Adin is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:21

The sons of Ater, of Hezekiah

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Ater who were descendants of Hezekiah" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Ater

Ater is the name of a man, and Hezekiah is the name of one of his descendants. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:22

The sons of Hashum

Sons figuratively means **descendants.** Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Hashum" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Hashum

Hashum is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:23

The sons of Bezai

Sons figuratively means **descendants.** Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Bezai" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Bezai

Bezai is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:24

The sons of Hariph

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Hariph" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Hariph

Hariph is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:25

The sons of Gibeon

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Gibeon" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Gibeon

Gibeon is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:26

Bethlehem and Netophah

Bethlehem and Netophah are the names of towns. Alternate translation: "from the towns of Bethlehem and Netophah" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:27

Anathoth

Anathoth is the name of a town. Alternate translation: "from the town of Anathoth" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:28

Beth Azmaveth

Beth Azmaveth is the name of a town. Alternate translation: "from the town of Beth Azmaveth" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:29

Kiriath Jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth

Kiriath Jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth are the names of towns. Alternate translation: "from the towns of Kiriath Jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:30

Ramah and Geba

Ramah and Geba are the names of towns. Alternate translation: "from the towns of Ramah and Geba" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:31

Michmas

Michmas is the name of a town. Alternate translation: "from the town of Michmas" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:32

Bethel and Ai

Bethel and Ai are the names of towns. Alternate translation: "from the towns of Bethel and Ai" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:33

the & Nebo

Nebo is the name of a town. Alternate translation: "from another town called Nebo" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:34

the other Elam

Elam is the name of a town. Alternate translation: "from another town called Elam" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the & Elam

The document speaks here of the town of Elam as if it were the ancestor of all the people who lived there. It is saying figuratively that these men were from families that had originally lived in that town. Alternate translation: "from another town called Elam" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

Nehemiah 7:35

The sons of Harim

The document speaks here of the town of Harim as if it were the ancestor of all the people who lived there. It is saying figuratively that these men were from families that had originally lived in that town. Alternate translation: "from the town of Harim" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

Harim

Harim is the name of a town. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:36

The sons of Jericho

The document speaks here of the city of Jericho as if it were the ancestor of all the people who lived there. It is saying figuratively that these men were from families that had originally lived in that city. Alternate translation: "from the city of Jericho" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

Jericho

Jericho is the name of a city. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:37

The sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono

The document speaks here of the towns of Lod, Hadid, and Ono as if they were the ancestors of all the people who lived in them. It is saying figuratively that these men were from families that had originally lived in those towns. Alternate translation: "from towns of Lod, Hadid, and Ono" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p. 582)**)

Lod, Hadid, and Ono

Lod, Hadid, and Ono are the names of towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:38

The sons of Senaah

The document speaks here of the town of Senaah as if it were the ancestor of all the people who lived there. It is saying figuratively that these men were from families that had originally lived in that town. Alternate translation: "from the town of Senaah" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

Senaah

Senaah is the name of a town. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:39

The priests

Alternate translation: "This is how many men returned from each family of priests"

the sons of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Jedaiah who were descendants of Jeshua" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Jedaiah, & Jeshua

Jedaiah is the name of a man, and Jeshua is the name of one of his descendants. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

of the house of Jeshua

Here, the word **house** describes all the people descended from a particular person. The document is describing all of the descendants of Jeshua figuratively as if they were one household living together. Alternate translation: "who were descendants of Jeshua" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

Nehemiah 7:40

the sons of Immer

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Immer" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Immer

Immer is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:41

the sons of Pashhur

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Pashhur" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Pashhur

Pashhur is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:42

the sons of Harim

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Harim" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Harim

Harim is the name of a man. Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Harim" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:43

The Levites

Alternate translation: "Some of the descendants of Levi also returned."

the sons of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, of the sons to Hodevah

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel, who were descended from Hodevah" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Jeshua, of Kadmiel, & to Hodevah

Jeshua and Kadmiel are men's names, and Hodevah is the name of their ancestor. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:44

The ones who sang

As in 7:1, this refers to vocal musicians who led in worship, in processions, and ceremonies, producing music and chants that emphasized and enhanced the occasion. Alternate translation: "singers" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

The ones who sang

Alternate translation: "Some of the descendants of the singers also returned."

the sons of Asaph

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Asaph" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Asaph

Asaph is a man's name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:45

The gatekeepers

See how you translated this term in 7:1. Alternate translation: "Some of the descendants of the gatekeepers also returned"

the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, the sons of Shobai

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Shallum, & Ater, & Talmon, & Akkub, & Hatita, & Shobai

These are the names of six men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:46

The Nethinim were

As in 3:26, the term "Nethinim" describes servants who worked in the temple. Alternate translation: "the temple servants" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

The Nethinim were

Alternate translation: "Some of the descendants of the temple servants also returned"

the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Ziha, & Hasupha, & Tabbaoth

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:47

the sons of Keros, the sons of Sia, the sons of Padon

Sons figuratively means "descendants." If you continue the sentence from 7:46, you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Keros, Sia, Padon," (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 7:48

the sons of Lebana, the sons of Hagaba, the sons of Shalmai

Sons figuratively means "descendants." If you continue the sentence from 7:46, you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Lebana, Hagaba, Shalmai," (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 7:49

the sons of Hanan, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar

Sons figuratively means "descendants." If you continue the sentence from 7:46, you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Hanan, Giddel, Gahar," (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 7:50

the sons of Reaiah, the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda

Sons figuratively means "descendants." If you continue the sentence from 7:46, you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda," (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 7:51

the sons of Gazzam, the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah

Sons figuratively means "descendants." If you continue the sentence from 7:46, you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Gazzam, Uzza, Paseah," (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 7:52

the sons of Besai, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephushesim

Sons figuratively means "descendants." If you continue the sentence from 7:46, you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Besai, Meunim, Nephushesim," (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 7:53

the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur

Sons figuratively means "descendants." If you continue the sentence from 7:46, you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur," (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 7:54

the sons of Bazluth, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha

Sons figuratively means "descendants." If you continue the sentence from 7:46, you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha," (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 7:55

the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Temah

Sons figuratively means "descendants." If you continue the sentence from 7:46, you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Barkos, Sisera, Temah," (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 7:56

the sons of Neziah, the sons of Hatipha

Sons figuratively means "descendants." If you continue the sentence from 7:46, you can just list the names of these two men, and end the series in this verse. Alternate translation: "Neziah, and Hatipha." (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 7:57

The sons of the servants of Solomon were

By **servants of Solomon**, this document does not mean officials who served in Solomon's court. Rather, this phrase refers to people whom Solomon first conscripted as laborers. They were descendants of the groups that were living in the land of Canaan before the Israelites occupied it. They and their descendants remained conscripted laborers under later kings. You could call these people "the laborers that King Solomon first conscripted." Alternate translation: "laborers who had worked for the kingdom" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

The sons of the servants of Solomon were

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "Some of the descendants of the laborers who had worked for the kingdom also returned." (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the sons of Sotai, the sons of Sophereth, the sons of Perida

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "They were from the descendants of Sotai, Sophereth, Perida" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Sotai, & Sophereth, & Perida

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:58

the sons of Jaala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel

Sons figuratively means "descendants." If you continue the sentence from 7:57, you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Jaala, Darkon, Giddel," (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 7:59

the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth Hazzebaim, the sons of Amon

Sons figuratively means "descendants." If you continue the sentence from 7:57, you can just list the names of these four men and end the series in this verse. Alternate translation: "Shephatiah, Hattil, Pochereth Hazzebaim, and Amon" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 7:60

All the Nethinim and the sons of the servants of Solomon were 392

Alternate translation: "Altogether 392 men returned who were descendants of temple servants or of laborers who had worked for the kingdom"

Nehemiah 7:61

And these are the ones who went up

As in 7:6, "went up" means "traveled from Babylon back to Judah," since that involves going from a river valley up into the mountains. Alternate translation: "Some others returned to Judah from Babylon" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon, and Immer

These are the names of five towns in Babylonia. Alternate translation: "who had been living in the towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon, and Immer." (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

but they were not able to tell

Alternate translation: "They had no records to prove"

the house of their fathers and their seed, whether they were from Israel

These two longer phrases mean similar things. The second phrase explains the meaning of the first for clarity and emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "that their ancestors had been Israelites," otherwise "what clan they were from or who their ancestors were, whether they were really Israelites" (See **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

the house of their fathers and their seed

These two short phrases mean similar things. They are used together to emphasize that accurate records would be required to prove a person's lineage. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "what their lineage was" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p. 523)**)

the house of their fathers and their seed

Among the Israelites, the expression **father's house** or **house of the father** originally described an extended clan. It later came to be used more generally to refer to a larger clan within a tribe. (For example, the two expressions are used interchangeably in Exodus 6:14, "These were the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, were Hanok, Pallu, Hezron, and Karmi. These were the clan ancestors of Reuben.") In this expression, the word **house** figuratively describes all the people descended from a particular person. The term views all of those descendants as if they were one household living together. Alternate translation: "what clan they were from" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and their seed

Here, **seed** is a metaphor meaning "offspring." It is a comparison: Just as plants produce seeds that grow into many more plants, so people can have many offspring. In the Bible, the term refers most often to a person's descendants. But here it is describing the ancestors of these people, that is, "whose seed they were." Alternate translation: "who their ancestors were" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 7:62

The sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda, were 642

Alternate translation: "Altogether 642 men returned who were from the descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda"

The sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "They were from the descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Delaiah, & Tobiah, & Nekoda

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 7:63

And from the priests

Alternate translation: "Some of the men who returned from those towns were descendants of the priests"

the sons of Habaiah; the sons of Hakkoz; the sons of Barzillai

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "They were from the descendants of Habaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Habaiah; & Hakkoz; & Barzillai

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Barzillai the Gileadite

Barzillai is the name of a man, and Gileadite means that he was from the region of Gilead. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

who took a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite

Alternate translation: "Barzillai married a woman who was one of the descendants of Barzillai the Gileadite"

from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite

Daughters figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "the descendants of Barzillai the Gileadite" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and he was called by their name

Alternate translation: "and he took the name of her clan as his own name"

Nehemiah 7:64

These ones sought their record among the ones who were enrolled by genealogy, but it was not found

Alternate translation: "They were not able to find any mention of their names in the lists of people who were descendants of the priests"

And they were desecrated from the priesthood

Alternate translation: "So they were not allowed to serve as priests."

Nehemiah 7:65

the Tirshatha

This was the formal Persian title of the governor. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the title and then explain it. Alternate translation: "The Tirshatha, that is, the governor" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

And the Tirshatha said to them that they must not eat from the holiest holy food

In this case, **the holy of holies** does not refer to the inmost part of the Temple. Rather, it refers to the most sacred part of the food offerings, which was reserved for the priests. Alternate translation: "told them that they would not be allowed to eat the most sacred food" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

until the priest stood with Urim and Thummim

Here, **stand** is a figurative way of saying that a person has assumed the duties of their office. The priest means specifically the high priest, since he had the objects described. Alternate translation: "Until the high priest was once again on duty" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

with Urim and Thummim

This was a pair of objects that the high priest kept in the breastpiece of his robe. It is unknown exactly what type of objects they were, but they were used to answer yes-or-no questions and to decide between two alternatives. If the priest, without looking, pulled out the Urim, that meant one answer, while if he pulled out the Thummim, that meant the other answer. If it would be helpful in your language, you could describe these objects by their function rather than by their names. Alternate translation: "and could use the sacred objects to decide their cases." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 7:66

All the assembly, as one, was 42, 360

Alternate translation: "The total number of men who returned was 42,360"

Nehemiah 7:67

apart from their male servants and their female servants, these were 7, 337

Alternate translation: "not counting their 7,337 male and female servants"

and for them, the men who sang and the women who sang were 245

This is a different group from "the ones who sang" in 7:44. Those were Levites who sang in connection with Israel's worship. The group here is a class of servants who were employed to provide music for public and private events. Alternate translation: "and the 245 male and female singers they employed." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 7:68

The horses were 736. The mules were 245

Alternate translation: "The group also brought back with them 736 horses, 245 mules"

Nehemiah 7:69

The camels were 435. The donkeys were 6, 720

Alternate translation: "435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys."

Nehemiah 7:70

the heads of the fathers

This seems to be an abbreviated way of saying "the heads of father's houses." The full expression "father's house" or "house of the father" is used in verse 61. See how you translated it there, and review the note there if that would be helpfull. Alternate translation: "some of the clan leaders" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

the heads of

Head here is a figurative way of saying "leader." Alternate translation: "the leaders of" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

gave to the treasury

Even though in the book of Nehemiah **the work** typically means the work of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, in this document it refers to the work of re-establishing the temple. That was the project that Zerubbabel and the group that returned under his leadership worked on. Alternate translation: "gave gifts towards the costs of re-establishing the temple" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

The Tirshatha gave to the treasury 1,000 gold darics, 50 basins, 530 tunics of priests

Alternate translation: "The Tirshatha, that is, the governor, donated to the temple treasury 1,000 gold coins, 50 bowls to be used in the temple, and 530 garments for the priests to wear"

The Tirshatha

As in 7:65, this was the formal Persian title of the governor. Alternate translation: "The Tirshatha, that is, the governor" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

1,000 gold darics

In ancient times, a gold daric weighed about 8 or 8.5 grams or about a quarter of an ounce. You could try to express this in terms of modern money values, but if you did, that could cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate over time, since those values can change from year to year. Instead, you could say something general like "1,000 gold coins," or give the equivalent weight, or use the biblical term in the text and give the weight in a note. (See: **Biblical Money (p.499)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.499)**)

50 basins

These were large, flat bowls that were used in the temple to collect the blood of sacrifices. When the Law called for some of this blood to be sprinkled on the altar, in the air, or on a person or a garment, that would be done from one of these bowls. Alternate translation: "50 bowls to be used in the temple" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

530 tunics of priests

These were the special garments that priests would wear while performing their duties in the temple. Alternate translation: "530 garments for the priests to wear" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 7:71

And some from the heads of the fathers gave to the treasury of the work

As in 7:70, **the heads of the fathers** seems to be an abbreviated way of saying "the heads of father's houses." See how you translated that expression in 7:61, and review the note there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "Some of the clan leaders donated to the temple treasury" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

And some from the heads of

Head here is a figurative way of saying "leader." Alternate translation: "leaders" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

20,000 gold darics

See the note about **darics** in verse 7:70. Alternate translation: "20,000 gold coins" (See: **Biblical Money (p.499)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.499)**)

and 2, 200 silver minas

In ancient times, a silver mina weighed about half a kilogram or about 1.25 pounds. However, as in the case of darics, it would probably be best to say something general like "2,200 silver bars," or give the equivalent weight, or use the biblical term and give the equivalent weight in a note. (See: **Biblical Money (p.499)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.499)**)

Nehemiah 7:72

And what the remnant of the people gave was 20,000 gold darics, and 2,000 silver minas, and 67 tunics of priests

See the notes in 7:70 and 7:71 about "darics," "minas," and "tunics." Alternate translation: "The rest of the people donated 20,000 gold coins, 2,000 silver bars, and 67 garments for the priests to wear" (See: **Biblical Money (p.499)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.499)**)

Nehemiah 7:73

And & dwelt

At the end of 7:72, Nehemiah stops quoting from the document about the first group of people who returned to Judah. The story now goes on to tell what happened next. You could introduce this verse with a word or phrase that indicates this. Alternate translation: "And so … dwelt" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

the priests, and the Levites, and the gatekeepers, and the ones who sang, and some from the people, and the Nethinim, and all Israel

Five of the groups in this list are also named in the document about the people who returned from exile: the priests (verses 39–43), the Levites (verse 43), the gatekeepers (verse 45), the singers (verse 44), and the temple servants (verses 46–56). You can use those same names for these groups here. It is not immediately clear who "some from the people" are, and why they are not included in "all Israel." You could just say "many ordinary people." However, there is very similar list in 10:28 that names these same five groups and also describes people who dedicated themselves to following the law of God. That would unfortunately not have included all of Israel at this point, so that may be the distinction that is in view here. Alternate translation: "the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants, some people who dedicated themselves to follow the law, and the rest of the Israelites" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

And & dwelt in their cities. And the seventh month came, and the sons of Israel were in their cities

The rebuilding of the wall was completed that year near the end of Elul, the sixth month of the Hebrew calendar. The implication is that everyone who had come to Jerusalem to work on the wall was then allowed to return home. Within about a week, by the beginning of the seventh month, they were all back home. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "So … returned to their homes, because the rebuilding of the wall had been completed. By the beginning of the next month, they were all back home." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the seventh month

Alternate translation: "month seven" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

Nehemiah 8

Nehemiah 8 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Reading of the law

During the exile, the Hebrew language was no longer spoken. Only the priests and Levites still understood it. Ezra read the book of the law to the people in Hebrew and the Levites walked among the crowd translating it into Aramaic for the people to understand. (See: [[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/priest]] and [[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/lawofmoses]])

Festival of Shelters

After they heard Ezra read the law of Moses, the people obeyed it by making temporary shelters for themselves with tree branches. They did this to remember that their ancestors slept in shelters when they came out of slavery in Egypt.

Nehemiah 8:1

all the people

The word **all** is a generalization that indicates that everyone who was able and available came to Jerusalem for this occasion. By "the people," Nehemiah means the groups he described in the previous verse who had come back to live in Judah and Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "The people of Judah" (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**)

And & gathered as one man

Verses 8 and 9 explain that the people had gathered for a festival, and 8:2 states that this was the first day of the seventh month, which means that the people had gathered in Jerusalem for the Festival of Trumpets. In the Law of Moses, Yahweh had commanded the people to observe this celebration on this date. If it would be helpful to your readers to know why the people came together on this day, you could say that specifically. Alternate translation: "gathered in Jerusalem in a huge crowd for a special celebration known as the Festival of Trumpets." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

as one man

As one man is an idiom that means "as if they were a single person," that is, all in once place at the same time. Alternate translation: "gathered in a huge crowd" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

to the open area

This means a "plaza" or "square" in the city where there were no buildings and so where public events like this could be held. Alternate translation: "in the square" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

is before the face of the gate of water

Here, **face** figuratively means the front of an object. Alternate translation: "in front of the Water Gate" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

the gate of water

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. See how you translated it in 3:26. Alternate translation: "the Water Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And they said to Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses

They means the crowd, though they likely made this request to Ezra through their leaders. The implication is that they wanted him not just to bring the book forward, but to read to them from it out loud (as 8:3 indicates he did). This was because they wanted to learn what was in it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "The crowd had asked Ezra the scribe to read to them from a scroll that contained the Law of Moses because they wanted to know what it commanded." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And they said to Ezra

Since the rest of the chapter describes arrangements that the leaders must have made in advance, the crowd, once it gathered, did not start shouting spontaneously for Ezra to come forward and read. Rather, they had made this request in advance. Alternate translation: "And the crowd had asked Ezra" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

to Ezra the scribe

This introduces Ezra as a new character in the story. The expression "the scribe" identifies him as a teacher who had carefully studied the Law of Moses. Since he is a new participant, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could call him something like "a man named Ezra, who was a teacher of the Law of Moses" (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.556)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.556)**)

to Ezra the scribe

The biblical book of Ezra indicates that this man returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon 13 years before Nehemiah did. He led many reforms in the community. But in this book, Nehemiah does not say whether Ezra had remained in the city all that time, or whether he had gone back to Babylon and had recently returned to Jerusalem again. Even if your language, in telling a story, ordinarily accounts for how a person came to be on the scene, it might be best not to try to address that question here in your translation. Even though Nehemiah seems to expect that his readers will know where Ezra had been, Nehemiah does not say specifically where he was, and so the answer is unknown. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the book of the law of Moses

This **book** was most likely a scroll, and it most likely contained what is now known as the Torah or the "five books of Moses." Alternate translation: "a scroll that contained the law of Moses" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

which Yahweh had commanded Israel

Alternate translation: "These were the commandments that Yahweh had told Israel to follow"

Nehemiah 8:2

Ezra the priest

This information serves to introduce Ezra further. In addition to being a teacher and learned student of the Law of Moses, he was also a priest whose duties would have included offering sacrifices in the temple and helping people make sure they were following the law in everyday matters. It might be helpful to your readers to explain that here because it shows why Ezra would have been such an effective teacher for everyone on this occasion. Alternate translation: "Ezra was also a priest who served in the temple and helped people follow the law" (See: Introduction of New and Old Participants and **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And & brought the law before the face of the assembly

Here, **face** figuratively means the front of a group. Alternate translation: "He read the law out loud in front of the whole crowd." (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

of both men and women and all who were understanding to hear

All who were understanding to hear is an idiom that means "everyone who could hear with understanding," that is, "who understood what they were hearing." This phrase likely refers to children and it would mean "children who were old enough to understand." Alternate translation: "for the men, the women, and the children who were old enough to understand." (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

on day one of the seventh month

Since Nehemiah does not say otherwise, the implication is that this happened in the same year that the wall was rebuilt. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "He did this on the first day of the seventh month of that same year." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

on day one of the seventh month

Alternate translation: "On day 1 of month 7" (See: **Hebrew Months (p.539)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.539)**)

Nehemiah 8:3

And he read it aloud

Here, **it** means the book of the Law of Moses.

before the face of the open area that is before the face of the gate of water

Here, **face** figuratively means the front of both places, the square and the gate. Alternate translation: "from the front of the square that is in front of the Water Gate" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

the gate of water

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. See how you translated it in 3:26 and 8:1. Alternate translation: "the Water Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

from the light until the middle of the day

The light means sunrise, that is, the time of morning when the sun itself becomes visible above the horizon. "The middle of the day" means noon. Alternate translation: "from sunrise until noon" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

from the light until the middle of the day

Verse 8:7 explains that other teachers circulated within the crowd to answer questions that people had about what Ezra was reading. It is unlikely that they did this while he was still talking. Instead, he probably paused from time to time to allow this. So this expression is actually referring to a whole time period by describing its beginning and ending, but it does not mean that the activity took place without interruption the whole time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning with a single phrase. Alternate translation: "throughout the morning" (See: **Merism (p.561)**) (See: **Merism (p.561)**)

in front of the men and the women, and the ones who were understanding

This is the same group that was described in 8:2. Many of the phrases here in verse 3 echo similar phrases in verse 2. The repetition emphasizes the importance and solemnity of this occasion. However, you do not need to repeat this phrase a second time in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers.

And the ears of all the people listened

Here, Nehemiah uses the **ears** of the people to represent the people themselves, in the act of listening. Alternate translation: "all the people listened carefully" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

Nehemiah 8:4

on a platform of wood

As 8:5 explains, this was a raised platform that allowed the large crowd to see and hear Ezra as he read. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly here. Alternate translation: "a raised wooden platform" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

that they had made for the purpose

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say who built this platform, and what the purpose was. Alternate translation: "that the people had built so that they could see and hear Ezra as he read" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

beside him & on his right hand

Here, **hand** is a metonym that means "side." Alternate translation: "next to him, on his right side" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Uriah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah

These are the names of six men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and from his left

Alternate translation: "and next to him, on his left side"

Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malkijah, and Hashum, and Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, Meshullam

These are the names of seven men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**)

Nehemiah 8:5

And Ezra opened the book before the eyes of all the people, for & higher than all the people

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the first phrase gives the reason for the result that is described in the second phrase. Alternate translation: "Ezra was up on the platform above the people, so they were able to see him when he opened the book." (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

before the eyes of all the people

Here, Nehemiah uses the **eyes** of the people to represent the people themselves, in the act of observing. Alternate translation: "where all the people could see" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

all the people stood

The people stood up as a symbolic way of showing respect for Yahweh and his law. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the people stood up to show their respect for Yahweh and his law" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

all the people

In this verse, **all** is not a generalization as it is in verse 1. Rather, it means **all the people who were there.** Alternate translation: "the people"

Nehemiah 8:6

And Ezra blessed Yahweh the great God

This means that before Ezra read from the law, he prayed out loud. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Before he read from the law, Ezra prayed to Yahweh, the great God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And all the people answered, "Amen! Amen

Since the people lifted their hands to show that they were joining Nehemiah in prayer, they would have done this before they said "Amen" at the end of his prayer. If it would be helpful in your language, you could describe the events in that order. Alternate translation: "The people lifted their hands to show that they were praying with Ezra, and when he finished praying, they shouted, 'Amen! Amen!'" (See: **Order of Events (p.574)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.574)**)

Amen! Amen

As in 5:13, **Amen** is a Hebrew word that means, "Truly, it is so." The word expresses agreement with what someone has just said. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express that meaning with a phrase such as, "We agree!" Or you could use the Hebrew term and explain what it means in this context: "Amen! Yahweh is truly great!" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

with their hands uplifted

In ancient Israel, lifted hands were the posture of prayer. By this gesture, the people showed that they were joining Nehemiah in prayer before he read from the law. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

And they knelt and prostrated themselves to Yahweh, nostrils to the ground

Nostrils here represent the nose, and the nose represents all of the face. Alternate translation: "they knelt down and then lay down with their faces on the ground to worship Yahweh." (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

Nehemiah 8:7

And Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah

These are the names of thirteen men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**)

and the Levites

This expression could mean something like, "yes, the Levites," indicating that all of these men were Levites. That means that they were descendants of Levi and had a special assignment, helping the priests. Alternate translation: "who were Levites."

were causing the people to understand the law. And the people were in their place

The implication is that Ezra paused regularly throughout the morning to allow this. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "explained the meaning of the Law to the people as they stood in their places in the crowd. Ezra paused regularly to allow this." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 8:8

And they read aloud carefully from the book, from the law of God

This probably indicates that each of the Levites who circulated among the crowd likely had his own written copy of the Law of Moses and used that to teach the people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Each of these Levites had his own the scroll of the law of God and read aloud from it"

carefully

The exact meaning of this Hebrew term is unknown. This expression could mean that the Levites read loudly and clearly so that the groups they were talking to within the crowd could hear and understand them. It could also mean that they went over one section at a time with the people, after Ezra had read that section to everyone. It might also imply that the people could not understand the language in which the book of the Law was written, so the Levites needed to interpret it into the language that the people could understand. However, none of these possibilities are certain. Alternate translation: "clearly" or "one section at a time"

from the book, from the law of God

These two phrases mean similar things. You do not need to repeat both of them in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "from the Law of Moses" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p. 523)**)

and set the interpretation

The exact meaning of this phrase in Hebrew is unknown. Most likely, it means either: (1) that the Levites were interpreting from one language into another, because the people could not understand the language in which the book of the Law was written, or (2) that the Levites were explaining the meaning of the Law to the people because it was difficult to understand. Alternate translateion: "and they explained what it meant" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

the interpretation

Interpretation is an abstract noun that refers to the meaning of the Law of Moses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind it with a phrase that uses a verb such as "mean." Alternate translation: "what it meant" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

And they understood the reading

Here **they** refers to the people in the crowd. Alternate translation: "That way the people in the crowd could understand what Ezra was reading"

Nehemiah 8:9

Nehemiah, who was the Tirshatha

As in 7:65 and 7:70, **Tirshatha** is the formal Persian title of the governor. If it would be helpful in your language, you could simply say "governor," or you could state the title and then explain it. Alternate translation: "Nehemiah the governor" or "Nehemiah the Tirshatha (that is, the governor)" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah, who was the Tirshatha

This is the first time that Nehemiah appears as a character while someone else is telling the story. Previously in the book, he has been the one telling the story, and so he has referred to himself as "I." To give him more of an introduction here, you could say something like, "Nehemiah, who was the governor" or "Nehemiah, who was the Tirshatha (that is, the governor)." (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.556)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.556)**)

and Ezra, the priest, the scribe

Here the book repeats some background information to remind readers who Ezra was. Alternate translation: "Ezra, who was a priest and a scribe" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

and the Levites who were causing the people to understand

See how you translated this phrase in 8:7. Alternate translation: "The Levites who were explaining the meaning of the Law to the people."

Today is holy; it belongs to Yahweh

As a note to verse 8:1 explains, this particular holiday was the Festival of Trumpets. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "This is a holy day, set apart to worship Yahweh. It is the Festival of Trumpets." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Today is holy; it belongs to Yahweh

These two phrases mean similar things. The leaders were reminding the people that this was one of the festival days that Yahweh had told them to set apart as special times of worship and celebration. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "This is a special day for worshiping Yahweh." (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

Do not mourn and do not weep

The leaders are saying that since this is a day for celebration, it is not appropriate for the people to be weeping. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this connection by beginning this sentence with a word such as "so." Alternate translation: "So do not mourn or cry." (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

Do not mourn and do not weep

Mourn and **weep** mean the same thing. The leaders use both words together to emphasize that the people should be cheerful, not sad, on a festival day. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these words in a single expression. Alternate translation: "So you should not be crying" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

all the people were weeping after they heard the words of the law

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this sentence first in the verse, since it gives the reason for the results that are described in the rest of the verse. Alternate translation: "The people in the crowd began to weep when they heard what was in the Law of Moses." (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

all the people were weeping after they heard the words of the law

The implication is that the people began to weep because they recognized that they had not been obeying what God had commanded them in the Law of Moses. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "The people in the crowd began to weep when they heard what was in the Law of Moses, because they recognized that they had not been obeying what it commanded." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

all the people

This is a generalization that indicates there was great weeping among the people. Alternate translation: "the people in the crowd" (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**)

Nehemiah 8:10

And he said to them

The story does not specify who said this. However, it is probably either Nehemiah or Ezra, since they are named at the beginning of the previous verse. And since what follow are instructions for how to observe a religious occasion, it is most likely Ezra. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could suggest that. Alternate translation: "Ezra told them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Go, eat the fat and drink the sweet

This could mean, "Go home" and do this, since the people would likely have their holiday meals at home. Or it could figuratively mean, "Go ahead" and do this, even though you are feeling sad. Alternate translation: "Go home and celebrate with a good meal" or "Go ahead, celebrate with a good meal." (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

eat the fat and drink the sweet

The fat and **the sweet** are figurative ways of referring to food and drink that is particularly tasty and shared in celebrations. The speaker is describing this food and drink by things associated with it, the fatness and the sweetness. Alternate translation: "Celebrate with a good meal." (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

eat the fat and drink the sweet

Eating and drinking are used together here to convey a single idea, celebrating. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine them into a single phrase. Alternate translation: "Celebrate with a good meal." (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "Share some of your meal with those who have not prepared anything for themselves" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared

This may actually refer to the poor and indicate that they would not be able to afford rich food and drink. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "share some of your meal with the poor, who cannot afford rich food and drink." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

for today is holy, belonging to our Lord

These two phrases mean similar things. As in 8:9, together they mean, "This is a special day for worshiping our Lord." If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases like that. (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

for today is holy, belonging to our Lord

If it would be helpful in your language, you could move this phrase to the beginning of the quotation because it gives the reason for the resulting actions that are described in the rest of the quotation. You could also connect this phrase to the ones that would then follow with a word like "so," to show the connection. Alternate translation: "Today is a holy day set apart to worship our Lord. So … " (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p. 506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

And do not grieve

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this same idea with an active form, and you could say what is causing the action. Alternate translation: "You have recognized that you have not obeyed the Law of Moses, but do not let that make you sad" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

for, the joy of Yahweh, it is your strength

The implication is that if a person is truly sorry for disobeying, Yahweh does not want that person to fear punishment or to grieve for the way they have offended. Instead, Yahweh wants them to be encouraged that they can live in a new way and to be happy about that. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "because Yahweh wants you to be happy and encouraged about living in a new way" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the joy of & your strength

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the ideas behind the abstract nouns **joy** and **strength** with adjectives. Alternate translation: "happy … encouraged" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

Nehemiah 8:11

caused all the people to be silent

These are two overstatements that emphasize how encouraging the Levites were trying to be. **All the people** does not mean everyone in the crowd, but those who were crying. **Be silent** does not mean "say nothing" or "make no noise," but "stop crying." (Certainly the Levites hoped that these people would soon be talking and laughing with others at celebration meals.) Alternate translation: "encouraged the people who were weeping to stop crying" (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**)

Hush, for today is holy. And do not grieve

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put your translation of "for today is holy" first since it gives the reason for the resulting actions in the other two phrases. You could also show the connection by using a word such as "so." Alternate translation: "This is a day of celebration, so stop crying now, and do not be sad" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

Hush

This is a word that signals to a person that they should be quiet. If your language has a similar expression, you can use it in your translation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could also give the meaning in this context. Alternate translation: "Shhh" or "Stop crying now"

And do not grieve

If you expressed the idea behind this phrase with an active form in 8:10 and you said there what was causing the action, you would not need to repeat that information here. Alternate translation: "do not be sad" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Nehemiah 8:12

And all the people went to eat and to drink and to send away portions and to make a great rejoicing

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put the last phrase at the beginning of the sentence since it gives the reason for the rest of the actions. Alternate translation: "So the people celebrated by eating and drinking and sharing with the poor" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

to eat and to drink

The implication is that they enjoyed the special food and drink described in 8:10. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "eating rich foods and drinking sweet drinks" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

to eat and to drink

Eating and drinking are used together here to convey a single idea, celebrating. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine them into a single phrase. Alternate translation: "celebrating with festive meals" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

and to send away portions

The implication is that they sent these portions to the poor, who would not have been able to afford rich food and drink, as described in 8:10. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "sharing with the poor" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and to make a great rejoicing

The abstract noun **rejoicing** can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "and to rejoice greatly" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

for they understood the words that had been made known to them

The implication is that the leaders helped the people recognize that being able to understand Yahweh's law should be a source of joy and encouragement to them. They should not be sad or discouraged because they had disobeyed in the past, because now they would know how to obey. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "because now that they were able to understand God's law, they would be able to obey it in the future" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

for they understood the words that had been made known to them

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this phrase at the beginning of the verse since it gives the reason for the rest of the actions that the verse describes. You could show the connection by using a word like "so" after this phrase. Alternate translation: "the people realized that they would be able to obey God's law in the future

because now they were able to understand it. So … ” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

they understood the words that had been made known to them

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “they understood God’s law when Ezra and the Levites explained it to them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Nehemiah 8:13

And on the second day

Alternate translations: "On day 2" or "On the next day" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p. 576)**)

were gathered to

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "gathered to meet with" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

the heads of the fathers of all the people

As in 7:70, this seems to be an abbreviated way of saying "the heads of father's houses." The full expression "father's house" or "house of the father" is used in 7:61. See how you translated it there, and review the note there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "some clan leaders from throughout Judah" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

the heads of

Head here is a figurative way of saying "leader." Alternate translation: "leaders" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Ezra the scribe

Here the book repeats some background information to remind readers who Ezra was. Alternate translation: "Ezra, who was a scribe" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

even to give attention to the words of the law

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this phrase at the beginning of the verse, since it gives the reason for the rest of the actions that the verse describes. You could show the connection by using a word like "so" after this phrase. Alternate translation: "the people realized that they needed to understand God's law much better. So … " (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

even to give attention to the words of the law

The implication is that while the people realized this, they also realized it would not be practical for large crowds to gather in Jerusalem every day so that all the people could receive Ezra's teaching at once. Instead, they asked the family and religious leaders in Judah to meet with Ezra and learn from him so that they could then pass the teachings along. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "The people realized that they needed to understand God's law much better, so they asked their family and religious leaders to meet with Ezra and learn more things from him that they could then pass along." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 8:14

And they found written in the law that Yahweh commanded by the hand of Moses

Found does not mean that these leaders were looking for something, but that they learned this as they were studying with Ezra. Alternate translation: "they learned that in the Law, Yahweh had commanded through Moses" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And they found written in the law that Yahweh commanded by the hand of Moses

Because it was already the seventh month, it seems likely that Ezra showed this passage to the leaders intentionally because it was something they could and should obey immediately. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Ezra showed them something that Yahweh had commanded through Moses that they could do right away" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

by the hand of Moses

Here, **hand** figuratively represents control and action. Alternate translation: "through Moses" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

that the sons of Israel should live in huts during the feast in the seventh month

This refers to the commandment establishing the Festival of Tabernacles. The purpose of this festival was to remind the Israelites that their ancestors had lived in temporary shelters when they traveled through the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "The people of Israel should live in temporary shelters during the Festival of Tabernacles to remind them that their ancestors lived in shelters when they traveled through the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan"

the sons of Israel

Sons here figuratively means **descendants.** In this context it includes both men and women. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

should live in huts

As 8:15 explains, these **huts** or temporary shelters were to be made from leafy tree branches. The people were supposed to live in these shelters as their home for a week. This was a way of remembering and celebrating the way Yahweh had protected their ancestors when they had only temporary shelters to live in. Alternate translation: "stay in temporary shelters"

during the feast in the seventh month

This means the Festival of Tabernacles, which Yahweh commanded the people to celebrate in the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

in the seventh month

This means the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. Alternate translation: "month 7" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p. 576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

Nehemiah 8:15

and that they should cause others to hear and cause a sound to pass

These two phrases mean similar things. They describe how the family and religious leaders were supposed to send a message to everyone in Judah. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "they should publicly proclaim" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

throughout all their cities and in Jerusalem

Here the story describes the whole population of the province of Judah by referring to its smaller cities and towns and to its large capital city of Jerusalem. The expression includes everything in between these two extremes. Alternate translation: "to everyone in Judah," otherwise "both in Jerusalem and in all the towns" (See: **Merism (p. 561)**) (See: **Merism (p.561)**)

Go out to the mountain, and bring branches of olive, and branches of oil trees, and branches of myrtle, and branches of palms, and branches of leafy trees, to make huts, as it is written

This is the content of the message that the leaders sent out to the people of Judah. Alternate translation: "The Law of Moses commands us to go out into the hill country and get branches from olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make shelters"

to the mountain

The phrase can refer either to a single mountain or to a range of mountains and hills, which seems to be the meaning here. In this case one mountain would be used figuratively to represent the entire range. Alternate translation: "into the hill country" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

as it is written

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say what is doing the action. Alternate translation: "as the Law of Moses commands us to do" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Nehemiah 8:16

And the people went out and brought

Here the story is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. The meaning is clear from the context. Alternate translation: "the people went out and got branches" (See: **Ellipsis (p. 525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

and made huts for themselves, a man on his roof

In this context, **a man** is an idiom that means "each person" and likely "each family." It does not mean only an adult male. Alternate translation: "and each family built shelters on their roofs" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

on his roof

In this culture, roofs were flat and were reached by stairs that led up to them from outside the house. So a shelter could stand on the flat roof and the family could use it as a temporary home. Alternate translation: "on their flat roofs" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and in their courtyards

In this culture, houses were built around an open courtyard. So a shelter could be set up there, within the walls of the house. Alternate translation: "and in the courtyards within the walls of their homes" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and in the courtyards of the house of God

As in 6:10, here the book speaks of the temple figuratively as the "house of God," as if it were God's dwelling place. Alternate translation: "and in the temple courtyards" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and in the open area of the gate of water

Here the story is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. The meaning is clear from the context, since this same location is described in 8:1 and 8:3. Alternate translation: "and in the square in front of the Water Gate" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

the gate of water

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. See how you translated it in 3:26, 8:1, and 8:3. Alternate translation: "the Water Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and in the open area of the gate of Ephraim

Here the story is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. The meaning is clear from the context. Alternate translation: "and in the square in front of the Ephraim Gate" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

the gate of Ephraim

This is the name of another one of the gates of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Ephraim Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 8:17

all the assembly, the ones who returned from the captivity

These two phrases mean similar things. They refer to the people of Judah who had returned to their homeland from the exile. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "all the people of Judah who had returned home from exile" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

the assembly

The Old Testament often uses this expression to refer figuratively to the main body of the people of Israel. The expression envisions the way God called them out of Egypt and brought them together as a nation. At this point in their history, this main body was the people who had returned to Judah from exile. Alternate translation: "all the people of Judah who had returned home from exile" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the sons of Israel had not done thus from the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day

Alternate translation: "the people of Israel had never before celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles by living in shelters, going all the way back to the time of Joshua the son of Nun"

from the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day

Since it was Joshua who led the people of Israel into the land of Canaan, his time was the earliest time when they could have celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles to commemorate the journey from Egypt to Canaan. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "from the time that Joshua the son of Nun had first led them into this land until the present day" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

from the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day

Here the story is describing an entire time period by speaking of its beginning and ending in order to include everything in between. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning with a single phrase. Alternate translation: "for the entire time they had lived in this land" (See: **Merism (p.561)**) (See: **Merism (p.561)**)

from the days of Joshua the son of Nun

The term **day** is used figuratively here to refer to a period of time. Alternate translation: "from the time of Joshua the son of Nun" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Joshua the son of Nun

Joshua is the name of a man, and Nun is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the sons of Israel

Sons here figuratively means "descendants." In this context it includes both men and women. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And there was extremely great rejoicing

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **rejoicing** with an adjective. Alternate translation: "the people were very joyful" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

Nehemiah 8:18

And he read aloud from the book of the law of God

He means Ezra, as stated explicitly in 8:3 and 8:13. The implication is that Ezra continued to read to the family and religious leaders who had asked him to keep teaching them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Each day throughout the festival, Ezra continued to read to the leaders from the Law of Moses" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

day by day

This is an idiom that means **each day** or **every single day.** (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

from the first day to the last day

The story is describing the entire festival by speaking of two extreme parts of it, its first day and its last day. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning with a single phrase. Alternate translation: "throughout the entire festival" (See: **Merism (p.561)**) (See: **Merism (p.561)**)

And they made a seven-days feast, and on the eighth day an assembly, according to the ordinance

They means the people of Judah. The **ordinance** refers to the command in the Law of Moses to end the Festival of Tabernacles by gathering all of the Israelites together for a closing ceremony after seven days. Alternate translation: "The people of Judah celebrated the Festival of Tabernacles for seven days, and on the eighth day they held a closing ceremony together, as the Law of Moses commanded" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and on the eighth day

Alternate translation: "on day 8" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

Nehemiah 9

Nehemiah 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter and the next one form a single section.

Special concepts in this chapter

Prayer to God

The people prayed and thanked God for his care for them and the blessings he gave to them. They also confessed their sin of disobeying him. (See: [[rc:///*tw/dict/bible/kt/bless]] and [[rc:///*tw/dict/bible/kt/confess]] and **sin, sinful, sinner, sinning (p.611)**)

Learning from their ancestor's mistakes

This chapter teaches that the Jews learned from the mistakes of their ancestors. They became determined to worship Yahweh alone, to not intermarry with other peoples, and to worship Yahweh as the law of Moses instructed them. (See: **law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God (p.605)**)

Recalling the great power of God

It was common to recall the great things God did for Israel. This is a reminder to Israel of God's power. It is intended to bring the people to repentance and proper worship of Yahweh. (See: **repent, repentance (p.609)**)

Nehemiah 9:1

And on day 24 of this month

This month means the seventh month of that year according to the Hebrew calendar, as specified in 8:2 and 8:14. The Law of Moses said to observe the Festival of Tabernacles from the fifteenth through the twenty-second days of that month. The implication is that after that joyful celebration, the people were given one full day to rest and prepare for the gathering that this chapter describes. It had a different and more solemn purpose. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "On the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month of that year, two days after the joyful Festival of Tabernacles had ended" (See: **Hebrew Months (p.539)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.539)**)

And on day 24 of this month

Alternate translation: "On day 24 of month 7" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

the sons of Israel were gathered

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel gathered together" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

the sons of Israel were gathered

The implication is that people from all the cities and towns the province of Judah gathered together again in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "people from all over Judah gathered together again in Jerusalem" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the sons of Israel

Sons here figuratively means "descendants." In this context it includes both men and women, and it refers specifically to the Israelites who were now living in Judah. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel" or "people from all over Judah" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and in sackcloth, and dust was upon them

The people did these things to show symbolically how sorry they were for their sins. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "The people refrained from eating, wore rough clothing, and put dust on their heads to show that they were sorry for their sins" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

and dust was upon them

Them in this sentence refers to the people, but it does not mean that they covered themselves entirely in dust. The story is using the whole person to refer figuratively to one part of the person, the head, which is where people in this culture put dust to express sorrow. Alternate translation: "the people … put dust on their heads" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

Nehemiah 9:2

And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all the sons of a foreigner

The Israelites were conducting this ceremony as a special act of repentance for how they and their ancestors had disobeyed God. They were acknowledging how they had failed to fulfill the special assignment God had given them of modeling the blessings of living according to his ways, so it would not have been appropriate for people from other nations to take part in the ceremony. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "The people of Israel did not allow anyone from any other nation to take part in this ceremony because it was going to be a time of repentance for how they and their ancestors had disobeyed Yahweh" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the seed of Israel

Here, **seed** is a metaphor meaning **offspring.** It is a comparison: Just as plants produce seeds that grow into many more plants, so people can have many offspring. So the term refers figuratively to a person's descendants. Here it means the descendants of Israel. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

from all the sons of a foreigner

Sons here figuratively means **descendants.** Alternate translation: "all people from other nations" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And they stood, and they confessed concerning their sins and the iniquities of their fathers

Here, **stood** probably does not mean "standing up," since the next verse says that they "rose up," which probably means that they got up from kneeling. As they were showing sorrow for their sins, they would likely have knelt to worship God, as in 8:6. So **stood** probably means instead that they remained in place, by implication for some time, and made a thorough confession. Alternate translation: "they remained in place as they confessed all the wrong things that they and their ancestors had done" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

their fathers

Fathers here figuratively means "ancestors." Alternate translation: "their ancestors" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 9:3

And they rose up in their place

Rose up here likely means **stood up.** As in 8:5, the people would have stood up to show respect as they listened to the reading from the Law of Moses. Alternate translation: "Then the people stood up where they were" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

and they read aloud the book of

The people themselves did not read from the book. **They** here likely means Ezra and the Levites, who read similarly to the crowd that gathered on the occasion described in 8:1–12. Alternate translation: "as their leaders read to them"

the book of the law of Yahweh their God

This is another of the various ways that this story describes a book containing the Law of Moses. Alternate translation: "from the Law of Moses" or "from the law that Yahweh had given through Moses" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

a fourth of the day, and a fourth of the day

In this culture the day and the night were each divided into four equal parts of three hours each. So this means that the people listened to a reading of the Law for three hours, and then they spent the next three hours in prayer and confession. Alternate translation: "for three hours, and then for another three hours" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 9:4

And Jeshua rose up on the stairs of the Levites, and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, Kenani

The name of the stairs suggests that the men listed were Levites. That is, they were descendants of Levi who had the special assignment of helping the priests. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could suggest this in your translation. Alternate translation: "Eight Levites named Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Kenani climbed up the stairs leading to the platform" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And & rose up on the stairs of the Levites

In context, the **stairs of the Levites** seem to be stairs that led up to the platform that was built for the occasion described in chapter 8, or to another platform or platforms similar to it that allowed religious leaders to be seen and heard during large gatherings. The stairs likely had this name because they enabled the Levites to move back and forth from up on the platform to down among the people. Here, they also serve as a raised platform of their own on which the Levites can stand and be seen and heard. Alternate translation: "climbed up onto the stairs to the platform" or "the stairs that had been built for the Levites" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

And & rose up on

Rose up in this context seems to mean that these men climbed up onto the stairs and stood on them. Alternate translation: "climbed up onto" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And & rose up

It seems that in this verse the story is describing something that happened during the second three-hour period, at the same time as the people were praying and confessing. You could indicate this with an introductory phrase. Alternate translation: "While the people were doing this" (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p. 511)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**)

Jeshua & and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, Kenani

These are the names of eight men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And they cried out with a loud voice to Yahweh their God

The implication is that they did this to offer public prayers of confession on behalf of the people, and perhaps also to guide the people to pray themselves on particular topics. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "They prayed to Yahweh their God on behalf of the people, speaking loudly so that everyone could hear them." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 9:5

the Levites

This phrase indicates that the eight men listed were Levites. If you said in your translation that the eight men listed in 8:4 were also Levites, here you could say, "Eight more Levites named."

Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, Pethahiah

These are the names of eight men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Rise up

Here, **rise up** seems to mean "get up from a kneeling posture." This would have symbolized that a new part of the ceremony was beginning. The people were to move from sorrowful confession to a resolute and joyful rededication of their community to God. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

Bless Yahweh your God from eternity to eternity

The Levites speak these words to the people. They are not telling the people to praise God during all the time from eternity past to eternity future. Rather, they are using an idiom, "from eternity to eternity," to mean that Yahweh is the God who has always existed and will always exist. If it would be helpful in your language, you could put it in those terms. Alternate translation: "Praise Yahweh, your God, who has always existed and will always exist" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And may they bless your glorious name

In this sentence, the Levite who is speaking turns abruptly from addressing the people to addressing God. (**Your** in the previous sentence meant the people, while **your** here refers to God.) This is somewhat like the places earlier in the book where Nehemiah stops addressing his readers and speaks directly to God in prayer. However, here the people are meant to hear and do what is being described. So If it would be helpful in your language, you could express these as words that continue to be directed to the people, as in the previous sentence. Alternate translation: "Praise his glorious name" (See: **Aside (p.487)**) (See: **Aside (p.487)**)

And may they bless your glorious name

As in 1:9, **name** is a figurative way of referring to the fame or reputation of a person. This is described by something associated with it, how well known someone's name is and how people react to hearing it. God's reputation, in turn, is based on what he has done and what this reveals about who he is, and so his "name" would also represent that. Alternate translation: "praise you for who you are and what you have done" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

which is exalted above all blessing and praise

Here God's name is described in a spatial metaphor as being higher than or lifted up above blessing and praise. This means figuratively that all of the things that people could do to honor and praise God could never be sufficient to acknowledge how much honor and praise he actually deserves. Alternate translation: "we can never bless you and praise you as much as you deserve" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

above all blessing and praise

Blessing and **praise** are abstract nouns that refer to the act of openly honoring someone for their character and actions. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind these words with the verb forms of these words. Alternate translation: "we can never bless you and praise you as much as you deserve" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

above all blessing and praise

In this context, **blessing** and **praise** mean basically the same thing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these words. Alternate translation: "we can never acknowledge you sufficiently" (See: **Doublet (p. 523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

Nehemiah 9:6

You alone are he, Yahweh

At the end of the previous verse, the Levites started speaking to God, but they still meant for the people to hear their words and do what they said. Now the Levites are addressing God directly in prayer. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this with an introductory phrase. Alternate translation: "Then these Levites prayed to God and said, 'Yahweh, you are the only true God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

You alone are he, Yahweh

This means **you alone are the one** or **you are the only one.** Alternate translation: "You, Yahweh, are the only true God" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

the heavens, the heavens of the heavens

In the ancient Hebrew cosmology, the first phrase likely referred to the sky, which was envisioned as a solid dome above the earth (see the note to 1:9). The second phrase likely referred to the realm beyond the sky, which was understood to be the dwelling place of God. Alternate translation: "the sky and everything beyond it" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

and all their host

Host means army. The "host of heaven" is likely a figurative expression for the stars, which seem like a large army in the sky. However, this phrase might refer to heavenly beings which dwell in heaven with God. Alternate translation: "and all the stars" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and you cause all of them to live

Them means everything living on the land and in the seas. Alternate translation: "You give life to all of these creatures" or "you are the one who created all of these living things"

and the host of the heavens prostrates themselves to you

Earlier in the sentence, the **host of heaven** was a figurative way of describing the stars as if they were an army. Now here, the stars themselves figuratively represent the angels of heaven. Alternate translation: "all the angels bow down and worship you" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 9:7

You are he, Yahweh, the God who chose Abram

Alternate translation: "You, Yahweh, are the God who chose Abram"

chose Abram

Abram was the ancestor of the Israelites. God chose to make him and his descendants a community that would model for the whole world the blessings of living according to his ways. The Levites mention this first because it is the very beginning of the Israelites' history as God's chosen people. They will describe the rest of this history, up to their present day, in the rest of their prayer. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain this. Alternate translation: "chose Abram to be the ancestor of your people" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Abram

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Also, you brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees

Throughout their prayer, the Levites assume that the people listening will understand the significance of the details they mention for the Israelites' history as God's chosen people. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could give the reason why God brought Abram out of this city. Alternate translation: "He was living among the Chaldean people in the city of Ur, but you told him to leave there and go to a land that you would give to his descendants" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

from Ur of the Chaldees

This is the name of a city and a people group. Alternate translation: "the city of Ur, where the Chaldean people lived" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Also, you made his name 'Abraham

Once again the Levites assume that their listeners will understand the significance of this detail. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could give the reason why God changed Abram's name to Abraham. Alternate translation: "You changed his name to Abraham, 'father of a multitude,' because he would be like a father to many nations" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 9:8

Also, you found his heart faithful before your face

Here, **found** is an idiom for someone discovering something to be true. It does not mean that God was looking for something he had lost. Alternate translation: "You recognized that he was completely loyal to you" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Also, you found his heart faithful before your face

Here, Abraham's **heart** figuratively represents his thoughts and will, that is, his inner being. Alternate translation: "You recognized that he was completely loyal to you" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Also, you found his heart faithful before your face

Here, **face** is a metaphor for a person's perception, referring figuratively to God's perception of Abraham. Alternate translation: "You recognized that he was completely loyal to you" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and cut with him the covenant

To **cut** a covenant is a Hebrew idiom for making a solemn agreement with a person. The expression comes from the way animals were cut into pieces during covenant ceremonies to show what the parties wanted God to do to anyone who broke the agreement. But the meaning here is idiomatic. It is not a direct reference to such a ceremony, but only to the making of the covenant. Alternate translation: "you made an agreement with him" or "you made a promise to him" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

to give the land of & to give to his seed

Seed is a metaphor meaning **offspring.** Alternate translation: "to give his descendants the land" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites

These are the names of six people groups. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and you have caused your words to stand

As in 5:13, **words** means the promises that God made to Abraham, and **stand** means stay in place rather than go away. The Levites are speaking of God's promises figuratively as if they were a living thing that could move around or not. Alternate translation: "you have kept all of your promises" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

for you are righteous

Alternate translation: "because you always do what is right"

Nehemiah 9:9

And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and you heard their cry at the sea of reeds

Here the Levites are describing how, centuries later, God rescued their ancestors, Abraham's descendants, from slavery in Egypt. In this verse they describe that entire experience generally by reference to its first episode and its final episode, to include everything in between. (In 9:10 and 9:11 they will add further specific details.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could describe the entire experience in a single phrase here. (However, you could also explain these episodes separately. See the next two notes.) Alternate translation: "You rescued our fathers from slavery in Egypt by defeating Pharaoh" (See: **Merism (p.561)**) (See: **Merism (p.561)**)

And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt

Affliction is an abstract noun that refers to the way the Israelites suffered when Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, forced them to serve him as slaves. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind it with a verb such as "suffer." Alternate translation: "you saw how badly our ancestors were suffering as slaves in Egypt" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt

The implication is that God not only saw how the Israelites were suffering, but also was moved to action out of compassion for them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "you saw how badly our ancestors were suffering as slaves in Egypt, and so you delivered them from slavery" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

our fathers

Fathers here figuratively means "ancestors." Alternate translation: "our ancestors" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and you heard their cry at the sea of reeds

The Levites continue to rehearse the details of Israelite history without explaining their significance because they assume their listeners will already understand this. This is a reference to something that happened after God had freed their ancestors from slavery and they had left Egypt. Pharaoh regretted letting them go and pursued them with his army. Helplessly trapped against the shores of the Red Sea as Pharaoh's army approached, the Israelites cried out to God for rescue. Alternate translation: "you answered their prayer when they cried to you for help from the shores of the Red Sea" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and you heard their cry

Heard is an idiom that means that God both heard and answered the Israelites' prayer in the way described in 9:11. Alternate translation: "you answered their prayer" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

the sea of reeds

This is the name of a body of water near Egypt. Alternate translation: "the Red Sea" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 9:10

And you gave signs and wonders to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all the people of his land

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain why God did this. Alternate translation: "You did amazing things that were signs to Pharaoh, his officials, and the people of Egypt that you are the one true God and that they should not have enslaved your people" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And you gave signs and wonders

Signs and **wonders** are words that mean similar things. They both describe powerful things that God did. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these words. Alternate translation: "you did miracles" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

because you knew that they were acting presumptuously toward them

They means Pharaoh, his officials, and the people of Egypt. **Them** means the Israelites. If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this sentence first in the verse since it gives the reason for the results that are described in the rest of the verse. You could show the connection by using a word like "so" after this sentence. Alternate translation: "You knew that Pharaoh, his officials, and the people of Egypt were oppressing our ancestors, and so" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

And you made for yourself a name, as it is this day

As in 9:5, **name** is a figurative way of referring to the fame or reputation of a person. Alternate translation: "When you did this, you won the reputation that you sill have today" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

Nehemiah 9:11

And you split open the sea before their face

In 9:10 the Levites provided more specific details about how God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. In this verse they focus on the details of the final episode in the deliverance experience. Still, they assume that their readers will be familiar with these details and understand their significance. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain these details more fully. Alternate translation: "When the Israelites left Egypt, Pharaoh pursued them with his army, and they were trapped by the shores of the Red Sea. But you opened up the sea in front of them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And & the sea

As in 9:9, this refers to the Red Sea, a body of water near Egypt. Alternate translation: "the Red Sea" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

before their face

Here, **face** figuratively refers the front of a group. Alternate translation: "in front of them" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

and they passed through the midst of the sea on the dry land

They refers to the Israelites. Alternate translation: "so that they were able escape through the Red Sea by walking on dry ground"

And you cast their pursuers into the depths

This is a figurative way of describing how that God made the waters of the Red Sea come back over the Egyptian army so that all of its soldiers were drowned. It was as if God had thrown them into deep water. Alternate translation: "but you made the waters come back and drown the army that was chasing them" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

their pursuers

Alternate translation: "the soldiers of the Egyptian army, who were chasing them" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

like a stone in mighty waters

In this image, the Levites describe God throwing the Egyptians into the sea the way a person would throw a stone into water. The picture is that, just as a stone would disappear completely under the water, the Egyptian soldiers did the same. Alternate translation: "They disappeared completely, the way a stone would that was thrown into deep water" (See: **Simile (p.588)**) (See: **Simile (p.588)**)

Nehemiah 9:12

And you led them with a pillar of cloud by day, and with a pillar of fire by night to shine for them on the way in which they should go

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases since the first phrase gives the reason for the result that is described in the second phrase. Alternate translation: "To show the people the way that they should go, you sent a pillar of cloud to go ahead of them during the day and a pillar of fire to light up the way at night" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

And you led them with a pillar of cloud by day, and with a pillar of fire by night to shine for them on the way in which they should go

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain why did this. Alternate translation: "To get from Egypt to the land you had promised them, the Israelites had to cross a trackless desert. To show them what way they should go, you went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire by night. The pillar of fire lit up the way ahead" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 9:13

And you came down on the mountain of Sinai and spoke with them

Came down is a way of saying that God appeared to the people. Since God spoke to them from heaven, he did not actually come down from heaven to earth. So this is a figurative expression. Alternate translation: "you appeared to the people of Israel at Mount Sinai, where you spoke to them from heaven" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p. 550)**)

the mountain of Sinai

This is the name of a mountain. Alternate translation: "Mount Sinai" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

just judgments and laws of truth, good statutes and commandments

Just judgments and **laws of truth** mean similar things. The expressions **good statutes** and **commandments** also mean something similar to each other and to the first two expressions. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine all of these phrases into one comprehensive phrase. Alternate translation: "many trustworthy instructions about how to live in the right way," otherwise "instructions and rules that are just and reliable, and laws and commands that are good" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

judgments

This term refers to Yahweh giving the Israelites instructions in the law. It may or may not include a sense of Yahweh passing sentence as a judge. Alternate translation: "instructions"

Nehemiah 9:14

And you made known to them your holy sabbath

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain what the Sabbath was. Alternate translation: "You commanded them to set apart the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath, a special day for rest and worship" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

sabbath

This is the name of a religious observance. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And you charged them with commandments, and statutes, and a law

Commandments, **statutes**, and **law** mean similar things. Together they are a comprehensive description of the Law of Moses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine them in a single phrase. Alternate translation: "You told them to obey everything you had commanded," otherwise "you gave them commands and rules and laws" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

by the hand of Moses

Here, **hand** figuratively represents control and action. Alternate translation: "you gave them to Moses to give to the people" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

your servant

The Old Testament often describes Moses by the title "servant of Yahweh." While Moses was also God's servant in a more literal sense, this title is a figurative expression that indicates that God used Moses to give his law to his people, the way a master would have a servant deliver a message. Alternate translation: "your special messenger" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 9:15

And you gave to them bread from heaven for their hunger

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases since the first phrase gives the reason for the resulting action that is described in the second phrase. Alternate translation: "because they were hungry, you provided a special food for them" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

And you gave to them bread from heaven for their hunger

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain why the people were hungry. Alternate translation: "because they were hungry in the desert where no crops could grow, you provided a special food for them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And & bread from heaven

This is a figurative way of describing the special food that God provided for the Israelites in the desert. Because it had not grown from the ground, it was as if God had sent it from heaven. The Israelites gave this food the name "manna." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could call it by this name after providing a non-figurative description. Alternate translation: "and a special food, manna." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

And & bread from heaven

This expression used bread to refer figuratively to food in general. It describes all food by the name of one kind of food, bread. Alternate translation: "special food" (See **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

and you brought out for them water from a rock for their thirst

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases since the first phrase gives the reason for the resulting action that is described in the second phrase. Alternate translation: "because they were thirsty, you made water flow out of a rock for them to drink" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

and you brought out for them water from a rock for their thirst

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain why the people were thirsty. Alternate translation: "because they were thirsty in the desert where there was no water, you made water flow out of a rock for them to drink" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And you said to them to go in to possess

Alternate translation: "you commanded them to enter and occupy"

the land that you had raised your hand to give to them

In this culture, a person would raise their hand when they swore an oath. Here the Levites are describing the action of swearing an oath figuratively by referring to the gesture associated with that action, raising a hand. Alternate translation: "the land that you swore to give them" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

the land that you had raised your hand to give to them

The Levites assume that their listeners will understand that this means the land of Canaan. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the land of Canaan, which you swore to give them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 9:16

But they and our fathers, they acted presumptuously

They could mean the Israelites at the time of Moses, and **our fathers** could mean the Israelites after the time of Moses. However, the next verse says that the people who showed this pride and stubbornness disobeyed God's command to enter Canaan and instead chose a leader to take them back to Egypt. So this expression could also mean "they, yes, our fathers." Alternate translation: "they, our own ancestors, were arrogant"

and our fathers

Fathers here figuratively means **ancestors.** Alternate translation: "our ancestors" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And they stiffened their neck and did not listen

These two phrases mean similar things. The Levites are using the repetition to acknowledge how serious it was that their own ancestors disobeyed God's command. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "they stubbornly refused to obey," otherwise "they were proud and stubborn, so they refused to obey" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

And they stiffened their neck

This is a figurative way of saying that the people stubbornly refused to obey. (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and did not listen to your commandments

Listen in this context is an idiom that means not just to hear a commandment, but to obey it. Alternate translation: "They refused to obey what you commanded them to do." (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 9:17

And they refused to hear

Alternate translation: "And they would not obey"

And they refused to hear

This is a reference to the command that is described in 9:15. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "they would not obey your command to enter and occupy the land of Canaan" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and they did not remember your wonderful deeds that you performed with them

The implication is that if they had done this, they would not have been afraid to go into Canaan and fight to take possession of it. They would have realized that the same God who defeated Pharaoh to deliver them from slavery could also defeat the nations living in Canaan. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "They did not remember the miracles that you had done to deliver them from Egypt, and so they were afraid that the nations that lived in Canaan would defeat them." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And they stiffened their neck

As in 9:16, this is a metaphor meaning that the people stubbornly refused to obey. (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and in their rebellion chose a head in order to return to their servitude

The Israelites would know that this referred to their ancestors wanting to return to Egypt. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "they disobeyed God and appointed a leader to take them back to Egypt, where they had been slaves" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

a head

Head here is a figurative way of saying "leader." Alternate translation: "leader" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

in order to return to their servitude

Servitude is an abstract noun that refers to the condition of slavery that the Israelites experienced in Egypt. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with a concrete noun such as "slave." Alternate translation: "back to Egypt where they had been slaves" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

are a God of forgiveness

Forgiveness is an abstract noun that represents a readiness not to hold a person's offenses against them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with a verb such as "forgive." Alternate translation: "a God who is always ready to forgive" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

gracious and compassionate

Gracious and **compassionate** mean similar things. The Levites use them together to emphasize how merciful God is. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these words into a single expression. Alternate translation: "genuinely merciful," otherwise "who acts kindly and mercifully toward us" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

long of nostrils

This is a figurative way of saying that a person does not lose their temper easily or quickly. Alternate translation: "very patient" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and abounding in covenant faithfulness

Faithfulness is an abstract noun that describes the quality of a person who will dependably keep their word and fulfill their responsibilities. **Covenant faithfulness** refers specifically to God keeping all the promises he made to the people of Israel. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with an expression such as "keep promises." Alternate translation: "you always keep the promises you make to your people" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

and abounding in covenant faithfulness

Here the Levites speak of this quality of Yahweh as if it were an abundant food crop that he could share with people. Alternate translation: "who loves his people very much" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and you did not forsake them

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could elaborate on what this means. Alternate translation: "so you did not abandon them there in the desert" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 9:18

Even when they made for themselves a calf image and said, 'This is your God who brought you up from Egypt

The Levites continue to recount details of Israelite history and assume that their listeners will understand the significance of these details. This was a particularly grievous act of disobedience, which is why the Levites say "even when." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance in your translation. Alternate translation: "Even when the Israelites made an idol in the shape of a calf and gave it credit for delivering them from slavery in Egypt, right at Mount Sinai where you were giving Moses the Ten Commandments" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and they performed great blasphemies

Blasphemy means to worship or honor something other than God as divine. The Old Testament stresses repeatedly that this is offensive and insulting to God. Alternate translation: "When they did this, they insulted you horribly" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 9:19

Nehemiah 9:19

still you, in your great mercies, did not forsake them in the wilderness

Alternate translation: "Even so, because you are always merciful, you did not abandon them in the desert"

He did not take away the pillar of cloud from over them by day to lead them on the way, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine for them and on the way in which they should go

See how you translated the similar sentence in 10:12. If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases since the first phrase gives the reason for the result that is described in the second phrase. Alternate translation: "To show the people the way that they should go, the pillar of cloud continued to go ahead of them during the day, and the pillar of fire continued to light up the way ahead at night" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

Nehemiah 9:20

And & your good spirit

This seems to be a reference to God in person. If your language uses capitalization or some other convention to indicate that a word is referring to God, you could use it here. Alternate translation: "your good Spirit"

And you did not withhold your manna from their mouth, and you gave them water for their thirst

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of the phrases in each clause since in both cases the first phrase gives the reason for the result that is described in the second phrase. Alternate translation: "Because they were hungry, you continued to feed them with manna, and because they were thirsty, you gave them water" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

And & your manna

This was the special food that Yahweh provided for the Israelites in the desert. See the note in 9:15. Alternate translation: "special food" or "that special food, manna" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

you did not withhold & from their mouth

Here the Levites describe being nourished by food by referring figuratively to something associated with it, the mouth that eats the food. If it would be helpful in your language, you could describe this more generally. Alternate translation: "you continued to feed them"

you did not withhold & from their mouth

This is a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word with a word that is the opposite of the intended meaning. Alternate translation: "you generously gave them manna" (See: **Litotes (p.559)**) (See: **Litotes (p.559)**)

Nehemiah 9:21

And you sustained them forty years in the wilderness; they did not lack

The first phrase is implicitly giving a reason for the result that is described in the second phrase. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that explicit. "Because you took care of them for forty years in the desert, they did not lack anything all that time." (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

and their feet did not swell

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain why the feet of the Israelites would otherwise have swollen as they traveled through the desert. Alternate translation: "their feet did not swell up, even though they were walking all the time" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 9:22

And you gave to them kingdoms and peoples

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly how Yahweh did this. Alternate translation: "You helped our ancestors to defeat stronger armies so that they could conquer kingdoms and the people who lived in them"

And you gave to them kingdoms and peoples

Kingdoms and **peoples** mean similar things. They are two different ways of describing the groups that the Israelites defeated. The repetition emphasizes how remarkable it was for Yahweh to enable the Israelites to defeat these stronger opponents. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these words into a single expression. Alternate translation: "you enabled them to defeat the nations that were living there" (See: **Doublet (p. 523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

and you allocated to them as far as the corners

Here the land of Canaan is described figuratively as if it were a regular shape that had defined corners. Alternate translation: "you enabled them to possess every part of the land" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the land of Sihon, even the land of the king of Heshbon

These two phrases mean the same thing. The repetition is used for clarity. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "the land over which King Sihon ruled from the city of Heshbon" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

and the land of Og, the king of Bashan

Alternate translation: "Bashan, the land where King Og ruled"

Sihon, & Og

These are the names of two kings. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Heshbon, & Bashan

These are names of the places where these two kings ruled. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 9:23

And you multiplied their sons like the stars of the heavens

Their refers to the Israelites. This is a comparison, a figure of speech that says the number of children the Israelites had was like the number of stars in the sky. Alternate translation: "You enabled them to have as many children as there are stars in the sky" (See: **Simile (p.588)**) (See: **Simile (p.588)**)

And you multiplied their sons like the stars of the heavens

This is an exaggeration for emphasis. Alternate translation: "You enabled them to have a very large number of children" (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**)

And & their sons

Sons here figuratively means "descendants." In this context it includes both boys and girls. Alternate translation: "and children" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And you brought them to the land that you said to their fathers to enter in order to possess it

This is the same **land** described in verse 15, the land of Canaan. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "You brought them back to the land of Canaan, the land that you had commanded the previous generation to enter and occupy" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

to their fathers

While **fathers** figuratively means "ancestors" throughout much of this prayer, in this case the word is intended more literally. It means the previous generation of Israelites, who had disobeyed when God told them the first time to occupy the land. But since both men and women were involved in the disobedience, you could use a term that would not limit the meaning to men, if it would be helpful in your language. Alternate translation: "to the previous generation" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**)

Nehemiah 9:24

And the sons went in and possessed the land, and before their face you subdued the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites

These two phrases mean similar things. The Israelites of the next generation possessing the land is equivalent to Yahweh defeating its inhabitants when the Israelites fought against them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "You enabled the next generation of Israelites to defeat the people who were living in the land of Canaan so that they could occupy the land themselves" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

the sons

This means literally the children of the generation that refused to enter the land. But since both men and women were involved in occupying the land, you could use a term that would not limit the meaning to men, if it would be helpful in your language. Alternate translation: "the next generation of Israelites" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.598)**)

and before their face you subdued the inhabitants of the land

Here, **face** figuratively means the front of a group, in this case the Israelite army that was fighting against the Canaanites. Alternate translation: "when the Israelites opposed them in battle, you defeated the people who were living in the land" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites

These two phrases mean similar things. The repetition is used for clarity. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: "the Canaanites who lived there," otherwise "the people who lived here in this land, the descendants of Canaan" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

And you gave them into their hands, and their kings, and the peoples of the land, to do with them according to their will

The Levites continue to recount details of Israelite history and assume that their listeners will understand the significance of these details. This sentence means, "You gave the Canaanites into the hands of the Israelites, that is, you gave their kings and the Canaanite people into the hands of the Israelites." The implication is that once the Israelites had defeated the armies that the kings were leading, they could then do anything they wanted with the people who were living in the land. In other words, Yahweh gave the kings "into their hands" by defeating them, and as a result, the people were "in their hands" to do with whatever they wanted. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "You enabled them to defeat the armies that the Canaanite kings were leading, and then they could do whatever they wanted with the people of Canaan" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And you gave them into their hands

Here, **hand** figuratively represents power and control. To give something into a person's hand is to give that person control over that thing. Alternate translation: "enabled the Israelites to defeat them" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 9:25

And they captured fortified cities and fat ground

They means the Israelites who were entering Canaan.

and fat ground

This means land that can produce abundantly and make its inhabitants fat (as described later in this verse). The rich character of the soil is being described figuratively by something associated with it, the well-fed character of the people it sustains. Alternate translation: "fertile land" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

And they possessed

This means that, from people who had already built or planted them, they took possession of the things on the list that follows. Alternate translation: "they took possession of"

hewn cisterns

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. (This verse is not saying that the Israelites did three things, captured cities, possessed houses, and dug cisterns.) Alternate translation: "cisterns that someone else had already dug" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

cisterns

Cisterns are underground reservoirs where people store water. In this area they were typically hewn out of the underlying rock. Alternate translation: "water storage areas" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

and food trees

This means trees that grow things that are good to eat. In this area, these would have included both fruit and nut trees. Alternate translation: "and fruit and nut trees" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

and were satisfied

It is clear from the context that this was likely true literally, but this statement could also be a figurative way of saying that just as a person who has more than enough to eat stops being concerned, so the Israelites became complacent and stopped thinking about Yahweh. Alternate translation: "and they became complacent" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 9:26

And they disobeyed and rebelled against you

Disobeyed and **rebelled** mean similar things. The Levites use them together to emphasize how serious an offense it was for the Israelites to turn against Yahweh after he had blessed them so greatly. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these words. Alternate translation: "they turned against you" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

and they cast your law behind their back

The Levites are saying that figuratively the Israelites treated the law as if it were a worthless item that a person would toss away. Alternate translation: "They considered your law worthless and paid no attention to it" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

testified against them

Alternate translation: "warned them about all the wrong things they were doing"

And they performed great blasphemies

As in 9:18, **blasphemy** means to worship as divine or give honor to something other than God. This is likely a reference to the way the Israelites started worshiping other gods. (That is why the prophets needed to try to "bring them back" to Yahweh.) Alternate translation: "they worshiped other gods" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 9:27

And you gave them into the hand of their adversaries

Here, **hand** figuratively represents power and control. Alternate translation: "you allowed their enemies to defeat them" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and they harassed them

They means the enemies, and **them** means the Israelites. Alternate translation: "The enemies of the Israelites made them suffer"

And, according to your many mercies

Alternate translation: "because of your great mercy" or "because you are very merciful"

you gave to them saviors

This is a reference to the time in Israelite history when God sent the judges to lead the Israelite tribes in fighting back against their enemies. Alternate translation: "you sent the judges to rescue them" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

and they saved them from the hand of their adversaries

Here, **hand** figuratively represents power and control. Alternate translation: "they rescued them from their enemies" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 9:28

And after rest belonged to them, they returned to doing evil before your face

This sentence draws a contrast between how the Israelites should have responded when God delivered them and how they actually responded. You could begin the sentence with a word like "but" or "however" or "nevertheless" to indicate this contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p. 501)**)

And after rest belonged to them

Rest is an abstract noun that indicates that the Israelites had relief from suffering and that there was no more war in the land after they defeated their enemies. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the same idea with a different phrase. Alternate translation: "after they had defeated their enemies" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

they returned to doing evil before your face

Here, **face** seems to refer figuratively to a person's opinion or judgment, by association with the way they use the eyes in their face to see things and the way their facial expression shows what they think of those things. So this would mean that the Israelites did things that Yahweh considered to be wrong. Alternate translation: "they went back to doing things that you consider wrong" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And you left them to the hand of their enemies, and they oppressed them

Here, **hand** figuratively represents power and control. Alternate translation: "you allowed their enemies to defeat them, and they ruled over them harshly" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And you left them

This phrase indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: "and so you left them" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

And they returned and cried out to you

They means the Israelites. **Returned** and **cried out** mean similar things. Both terms describe how the Israelites realized that they should have remained loyal to Yahweh and that they desperately needed his help. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use one expression for both terms. Alternate translation: "The Israelites asked you again to help them" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

according to your mercies

Alternate translation: "because of your mercy" or "because you are merciful"

Nehemiah 9:29

And you testified against them

Yahweh did not personally tell the Israelites all the wrong things they were doing. Rather, as 9:26 explains by using the same expression, Yahweh sent prophets to do this. The Levites are describing the prophets figuratively by association with Yahweh, whose message they were bringing. Alternate translation: "you sent prophets to warn the Israelites about all the wrong things they were doing" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

to bring them back to your law

The prophets were actually trying to make the people loyal to Yahweh himself once again by calling them to obey Yahweh's law. The Levites are describing Yahweh by reference to something associated with him, his law. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "to make them loyal to you once again" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

and did not listen to your commandments

As in 9:16, **listen** in this context is an idiom that means not just to hear a command, but to obey it. If your language has a word for "listen" that also means "obey," you could use it here. Alternate translation: "did not heed your commands" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And, concerning your judgments, they sinned against them

The people were actually sinning against Yahweh himself. The Levites are describing Yahweh by reference to something associated with him, his "judgments," meaning the instructions in his law. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "they sinned against you by disobeying your instructions" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

And, concerning your judgments

As in 9:13, this term refers to Yahweh giving the Israelites instructions in the law. It may or may not include a sense of Yahweh passing sentence as a judge. Alternate translation: "And concerning your instructions"

which, if a person does, then he will live by them

Live here does not mean physically live or die. Rather, "live" figuratively means to be spiritually alive in relationship with God and to be happy and blessed as a result. The difference between being alive in this way and being separated from God is like the difference between being alive and being dead. Alternate translation: "If a person follows your law, then he is spiritually alive and happy and blessed" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**)

And they gave a stubborn shoulder, and stiffened their neck

These are images of an ox refusing to allow its owner to put a yoke on its shoulders. Here they are a metaphor that represents the people being stubborn. Alternate translation: "They became stubborn" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and did not hear

Like **listen** earlier in this verse, "hear" in this context is an idiom that means not just to hear a command, but to obey it. If your language has a word for "hear" that also means "obey," you could use it here. Alternate translation: "did not heed" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 9:30

And you continued with them many years

Alternate translation: "you put up with them for a long time"

many years

This is a figurative expression for "a long time." The Levites are describing time figuratively by referring to something associated with it, the years in which time is measured. Alternate translation: "for a long time" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

and you testified against them with your spirit by the hand of your prophets

As in 9:20, **spirit** here seems to be a reference to God in person. If your language uses capitalization or some other convention to indicate that a word is referring to God, you could use it here. Alternate translation: "you spoke through the prophets by your Spirit to warn the Israelites about all the wrong things they were doing"

by the hand of your prophets

This is a figurative way of saying that God had the prophets deliver his message to the Israelites the way a servant would carry a message in his hand. Alternate translation: "through the prophets" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

but they did not give an ear

The Levites are describing the act of listening figuratively here by reference to something associated with it, the ear that hears. Alternate translation: "but they refused to listen" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

but they did not give an ear

Listening in this context means not just to hear but to obey. Alternate translation: "but they refused to obey" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands

Here, **hand** represents power and control. See how you translated this expression in verse 27, where it occurs twice. Alternate translation: "you allowed the neighboring peoples to defeat them" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And you gave them

This word indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: "As a result, you gave them" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

Nehemiah 9:31

But, in your & mercies

This sentence draws a contrast between what God could have done to the people, based on what they deserved, and what God actually did in his mercy. You could begin the sentence with a word like "but" or "however" to indicate this contrast. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

But, in your many mercies

As in 9:27, alternate translation: "because you are very merciful"

you did not make a complete end of them, and you did not forsake them

These two phrases do not describe separate things. They mean something similar. They describe what the people deserved for refusing to obey Yahweh. The first phrase describes what the people would have experienced in their lives. They would have been completely destroyed. The second phrase describes what they would have experienced in their relationship with Yahweh. He would have given up on them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "You did not abandon them to complete destruction" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

and you did not forsake them

Alternate translation: "you did not give up on them"

gracious and merciful

Gracious and **merciful** mean similar things. The Levites use them together to emphasize that God did not punish the Israelites the way they deserved. You do not need to repeat both words in your translation if that would make the meaning less clear for your readers. Alternate translation: "very merciful" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

Nehemiah 9:32

So now

This phrase indicates that the Levites believe that what they are about to ask for should be the results of what they have just described. Specifically, because he is merciful, God helped the Israelites in the past even though they did not deserve it. And so the Levites are praying for God to be merciful and help the Israelites now even though they do not deserve it. Alternate translation: "and that is why we are praying this now" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

the great, mighty, and fearsome God

As in 1:5, **great** and **fearsome** mean similar things. "Mighty" also means something similar. The Levites use all of these words together to emphasize how much respect God deserves. You do not need to repeat all three words in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could also bring that out in your translation. "Great" and "mighty" refer to how powerful God is objectively. "Fearsome" reflects how people should respond to God's greatness subjectively. They should "fear" God. This does not mean that they should be afraid of him, but that they should show him respect and reverence. Alternate translation: "the God who deserves total respect" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**. A doublet can involve the use of more than two words.) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

who keeps the covenant and covenant faithfulness

As in 1:5, **covenant** and **covenant faithfulness** mean similar things. The Levites said the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to emphasize how certain it is that God will keep his promises. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could bring that out in your translation even if you combine the phrases. The "covenant" is God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants. "Covenant faithfulness" is a character quality of God. He is inwardly disposed to keep all of his promises, and he always does so faithfully. So you could say something like, "you always keep your promises faithfully because of who you are." (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

do not let all the hardship be little before your face

Here the Levites speak figuratively of something being small to mean that it is insignificant and not worthy of being noticed and addressed. Alternate translation: "do not regard our sufferings as insignificant" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

do not let all the hardship be little before your face

As in 9:28, **face** refers figuratively to a person's opinion or judgment, by association with the way they use the eyes in their face to see things and the way their facial expression shows what they think of those things. So the Levites would be praying that God would not regard their suffering as insignificant. Alternate translation: "do not regard our sufferings as insignificant" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

the hardship & that has found us

Here the Levites speak of the suffering that the Israelites have experienced as if it were a living thing that has looked for them and found them in order to cause them harm. Alternate translation: "the sufferings we have experienced" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

the hardship & that has found us

Hardship is an abstract noun that refers to the suffering that the Israelites have experienced as a result of being conquered and dominated by foreign nations. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind it with a verb such as "suffer." Alternate translation: "how much we have suffered" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

and our fathers

Fathers here figuratively means **ancestors.** Alternate translation: "our ancestors" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

from the days of the kings of Assyria until this day

The implication is that the Levites are talking about the suffering that the Israelites have experienced specifically because foreign nations have conquered them, beginning with the Assyrians who first conquered the northern part of Israel. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "from the time Israel was first conquered by the Assyrian kings until now" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

from the days of the kings of Assyria until this day

This is a figure of speech in which the Levites are describing an entire time period by reference to its beginning and end, in order to include everything in between. Alternate translation: "the entire time we have been under foreign domination" (See: **Merism (p.561)**) (See: **Merism (p.561)**)

Nehemiah 9:33

And you are righteous concerning all that has come upon us

Here the word **righteous** refers to God's actions as being a reflection of his righteous character. Alternate translation: "we acknowledge you have done the right thing in allowing all this to happen to us"

all that has come upon us

Here the Levites speak of the suffering that the Israelites have experienced as if it were a living thing that has come up to them in order to cause them harm. Alternate translation: "everything we have suffered" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

For you have acted faithfully; but as for us, we have acted wickedly

If it would be helpful in your language, you could place this sentence before the previous one since it gives the reason for the results that are described in that other sentence. You could show the connection by using a word like "so" after this sentence. Alternate translation: "You have always done what you said you would do, and you have never abandoned us. But we have done many wrong things. And so" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

Nehemiah 9:34

and our fathers

Fathers here figuratively means "ancestors." Alternate translation: "our ancestors" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

have not done your law. And they have not attended to your commandments or to your testimonies

These two phrases mean similar things. The Levites use the repetition to confess how completely the people have disobeyed what God told them to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "have completely disobeyed everything you told them to do" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

And they have not attended to

Not paying attention to a command, like not listening to it, is a figurative way of saying not obeying it. Alternate translation: "have disobeyed" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

your commandments or to your testimonies

These two terms mean similar things. You do not need to repeat both of them in your translation if that would make the meaning less clear for your readers. Alternate translation: "everything you told them to do" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

or to your testimonies that you testified against them

As in 9:26, 9:29, and 9:30, this expression means to warn someone about what they are doing. So here it is referring to "the warnings that you gave them to warn them." You do not need to repeat the idea of "warn" twice in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "the many warnings you gave them"

Nehemiah 9:35

And as for them, they did not serve you in their kingdom

Them means the people and their leaders, as listed in 9:32 and 9:34. **Serve** is another way of saying "obey." The implied meaning is that the Israelites did not obey Yahweh even when they had a kingdom of their own, before other nations conquered them. Alternate translation: "They did not obey you even while they had a kingdom of their own" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and in your great goodness that you gave to them

Goodness is an abstract noun that refers to all the good things that God gave to the Israelites. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind it with an adjective such as "good." Alternate translation: "even while they enjoyed the good things you gave them" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

and in the wide and fat land

These two terms mean similar things. They both indicate that the land God gave to the Israelites was good for growing crops. There was a lot of room in it, and the soil was good. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these terms. Alternate translation: "the fertile land" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

and in the & and fat land

As in 9:25, "fat" means land that can produce abundantly and feed its inhabitants well. The rich character of the soil is being described figuratively by something associated with it, the well-fed character of the people it sustains. Alternate translation: "fertile land" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

that you gave before their face

Here, **face** figuratively means the front of a person. This expression is saying that God "put this land right in front of" the Israelites, emphasizing that God enabled them to defeat their enemies to get it. It was a gift from God, not something that the Israelites got for themselves. Alternate translation: "that you freely gave to them" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And they did not turn away from their evil deeds

Here, **turning away from** something is a figurative expression that means giving it up. Alternate translation: "they would not stop doing wrong things" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 9:36

Behold

Behold is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use some emphatic term or expression in your language that would have this same effect.

today

This does not necessarily mean on this particular day, but rather at this time. Alternate translation: "This is how things are now" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

to our fathers

Fathers here figuratively means "ancestors." Alternate translation: "our ancestors" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

its fruit and its goodness

These two expressions mean similar things. They both refer to the crops that grow in the land the Israelites were promised. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these expressions. Alternate translation: "all the good things that grow here" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

its fruit

This means all the crops of the land, not just the fruit that grew on the trees. The Levites are using one particular food to refer figuratively to all food. (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

its goodness

Goodness is an abstract noun that refers to the tasty and nourishing food that grows in the land. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind it with a different phrase. Alternate translation: "the good things that grow here" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

Behold

Behold is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use some emphatic term or expression in your language that would have this same effect.

Nehemiah 9:37

And its great produce

Produce (pró-duce) is an abstract noun that refers to the crops that grow in the land. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind it with a verb such as "produce" (pro-dúce). Alternate translation: "all that this land produces" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

belongs to the kings whom you have given to be over us in our sins

The implication is that foreign kings now rule over the Israelites because Yahweh is punishing the Israelites for disobeying him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the kings who now rule over us because you are punishing us for disobeying you" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

belongs to the kings whom you have given to be over us & and to be ruling over our bodies and over our livestock

These two phrases mean similar things. In each phrase, the Levites are describing how foreign kings now rule over the Israelites. The second phrase intensifies the first by specifying that the Israelites serve these kings as slaves, and that the Israelites do not even own the animals they work with. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that might be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "You have allowed foreign kings to rule over us as slaves who own nothing" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

according to their will

Alternate translation: "as they see fit"

Nehemiah 9:38

And in all of this

This phrase indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the actions that the people are taking in response to everything that the Levites have just said. That is, they are doing this because they and their ancestors had disobeyed and Yahweh had punished them. Alternate translation: "In light of all this" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

we are cutting a faithful covenant

The word **faithful** here does not mean that the covenant will act in a certain way, but that the people themselves are promising to be faithful to this covenant. Alternate translation: "we are making a covenant that we promise to keep"

we are cutting a & covenant

As in 9:8, to "cut" a covenant is a Hebrew idiom for making a solemn agreement with a person. Review the note there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "we are making a covenant" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

and writing even on a sealed document our leaders, our Levites, our priests

The implication is that the Israelites had scribes write this covenant on a scroll, the leaders wrote their names on it representing all the people, and then the Israelites sealed the document to make it official and to preserve it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "We are writing this covenant on a scroll. The community leaders, the Levites, and the priests will sign it. And then we will seal it" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

our leaders

This means the community leaders. From the document itself, it appears that these included both Nehemiah as the governor (10:1) and various tribal and extended-family leaders (10:14–27).

Nehemiah 10

Nehemiah 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter concludes the passage beginning in chapter 9.

Special concepts in this chapter

The vow

By signing this document, the people vowed or agreed to obey God, not to buy things on the Sabbath, and to pay their temple tax. (See: [[rc:///*tw/dict/bible/kt/vow]] and [[rc:///*tw/dict/bible/kt/sabbath]] and **temple, house, house of God (p.613)**)

Nehemiah 10:1

And on the sealed documents were

Alternate translation: "These are the names that the leaders signed on the scroll before it was sealed."

Nehemiah, the Tirshatha, the son of Hakaliah

As in 7:65 and 7:70, this was the formal Persian title of the governor. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the title and then explain it. Alternate translation: "Nehemiah son of Hakiliah, the Tirshatha (that is, the governor)" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah, & the son of Hakaliah, and Zedekiah

As in 1:1, Nehemiah is the name of a man, and Hakaliah is the name of his father. Zedekiah is also the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and Zedekiah

This could mean the same man who is called "Zadok the scribe" in 13:13. That man seems to have been the official secretary for Nehemiah. Other documents from this time suggest that the name of the scribe would have come second in a list like this, right after the government official in charge. Alternate translation: "Zedekiah the scribe" or "Zedekiah the secretary." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 10:2

Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:3

Pashhur, Amariah, Malkijah

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:4

Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluk

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:5

Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:6

Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:7

Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:8

Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

These were the priests

Alternate translation: "These are the names of the priests who signed the covenant."

These were the priests

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could place this sentence at the beginning of verse 2 since it introduces the list of priests. That way the list of priests would be like the list of Levites in verses 9–13 and the list of leaders in verses 14–27. Both of those lists have an introductory phrase like this at the beginning. Alternate translation: "These are the names of the priests who signed the covenant" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

Nehemiah 10:9

And the Levites were

Alternate translation: "These are the names of the Levites who signed the covenant."

And the Levites were

From the contexts in which the names of these men appear elsewhere in the book of Nehemiah, it seems that they were leaders of the Levites. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "These are the names of the Levites who signed the covenant. First, their leaders" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

even Jeshua, the son of Azaniah

Jeshua is the name of a man, and Azaniah is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Binnui, & Henadad

Binnui and Henadad are both names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Binnui, from the sons of Henadad

Sons here figuratively means **descendants** Alternate translation: "Binnui, one of the descendants of Henadad" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Kadmiel

Kadmiel is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:10

also their brothers

Here, **brother** likely refers figuratively to the rest of the Levites who signed the covenant as fellow Levites of the three leaders. Alternate translation: "Next, their fellow Levites" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan

These are the names of five men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:11

Mika, Rehob, Hashabiah

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:12

Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:13

Hodiah, Bani, Beninu

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:14

The heads of the people were

Alternate translation: "These are the names of the community leaders who signed the covenant"

The heads of the people were

Here, **head** is a figurative way of saying "leader." Alternate translation: "community leaders" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani

These are the names of five men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:15

Bunni, Azgad, Bebai

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:16

Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:17

Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:18

Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:19

Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:20

Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:21

Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:22

Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:23

Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:24

Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:25

Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:26

Ahiah, Hanan, Anan

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:27

Malluk, Harim, Baanah

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 10:28

And the rest of the people

This means everyone else in the groups that are listed next, even if they did not sign the covenant personally. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "And everyone else in the following groups, whether or not they signed their name on the scroll" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the gatekeepers

This means the people who were responsible to open and close the gates that controlled access to the city and the temple. See how you translated this term in 7:1. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 595)**)

the ones who sing

As in 7:1, this means vocal musicians who led in worship, in processions, and ceremonies, producing music and chants that emphasized and enhanced the occasion. Alternate translation: "the singers" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

the Nethinim

As in 3:26, the term **Nethinim** describes servants who worked in the temple. Alternate translation: "the temple servants" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

and all the ones who were separating themselves from the peoples of the lands to the law of God

This could mean one of two things. (1) It could be referring to people from other nations who had converted and become Jews. Alternate translation: "people from other nations who had become Jews and would now obey the law of God" (2) It might not be a reference to a distinct group, but rather a description of something that was true of everyone from any of the previously named groups who agreed to the covenant. As in 9:2, it would be a description of how the Israelites needed to reject the influence and practices of other people groups in order to follow the law of God faithfully. Alternate translation: "that is, everyone who resolved to reject foreign influences and obey the law of God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**.) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the ones who were separating themselves from the peoples of the lands

Separate is a figurative way of describing the act of rejecting an influence, as if this were a physical separation. In 9:2 the separation actually was physical (only Israelites could attend that assembly), but here it would be figurative. Alternate translation: "resolved to reject foreign influences" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

their sons and their daughters, all who were knowing, being able to understand

Like the similar phrases in 8:2 and 8:3, this is likely an idiom that refers to children who could understand what the covenant was about. Alternate translation: "their children who were old enough to understand the covenant" or "all who were old enough to understand what promising to obey God meant" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 10:29

were clinging to

Here, **clinging to** is a figurative way of describing people who did not actually sign the scroll, as their leaders did, but who agreed with them and joined in the same purpose. Alternate translation: "agreed with" or "joined in the same purpose with" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

their brothers

Here, **brother** likely means figuratively that the leaders who signed the scroll were fellow Jews of the rest of the people. Alternate translation: "their fellow Jews" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

their nobles

See how you translated this term in 2:16. Alternate translation: "the leading citizens"

and were entering into a curse and into an oath

Here the story describes the covenant figuratively by two things associated with it. As part of the covenant, the people swore an oath to keep its terms, and they also said that anyone who broke its terms should be cursed. (That is, God should punish them.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning behind this figure. Alternate translation: "they made a serious agreement" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

and were entering into a curse and into an oath

Entering is a figurative way of saying that the people became parties to this agreement with God. The expression speaks as if the covenant were something that the people could physically go inside of, in order to become a part of it. Alternate translation: "they became parties to the covenant" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

to walk in the law of God

As in 5:9, **walk** is an idiom that describes a person's conduct in life. Alternate translation: "to live their lives in obedience to the law of God" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

which was given by the hand of Moses

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "which Moses gave to the people" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

by the hand of Moses

Here, as in 9:14, **hand** figuratively represents control and action. Alternate translation: "Moses gave to the people" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Moses the servant of God

As in 9:14, Moses is called the **servant** of God. While Moses was also God's servant in a more literal sense, this title is a figurative expression in the Old Testament that indicates that God used Moses to give his Law to his people the

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way a master would have a servant deliver a message. Alternate translation: "your special messenger" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and to keep and to do

Keep and **do** mean similar things. The repetition emphasizes the people's resolve to keep God's law. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these terms. Alternate translation: "carefully follow" (See: **Doublet (p. 523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

all the commandments of Yahweh our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes

As in 1:7, **commandments**, **judgments**, and **statutes** mean basically the same thing. They refer to provisions in the Law of Moses. Here again the repetition emphasizes the people's resolve to obey everything in God's law. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine them into a single phrase. Alternate translation: "everything Yahweh our Lord has commanded," otherwise "the commands, rules, and laws of Yahweh our Lord" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**. A doublet can involve the use of more than two words.) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

Nehemiah 10:30

and that we would not give our daughters to the peoples of the land, and we would not take their daughters for our sons

These two phrases mean similar things. They both indicate that the Jews are promising here not to let their children marry people from the other groups living in the area. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "We promise that we will not allow any one of our children to marry someone from another people group" (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.579)**)

we would & give

Here and through to the end of this chapter, the pronoun "we" includes Nehemiah and the Jewish people, but not the readers of this book. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.530)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.530)**)

to the peoples of the land

This refers to other people groups who live in the land and who do not worship Yahweh. The implication is that intermarriage with these groups would lead the Israelites to compromise their loyalty to Yahweh. Alternate translation: "the people of this land who do not worship Yahweh" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 10:31

and, on the sabbath & we would not take from the peoples of the land, the ones bringing goods and all kinds of grain to sell on the day of the sabbath

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that is described in the first phrase. Alternate translation: "If people from other groups bring goods or grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy any from them." (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

on the sabbath

The implication is that the Israelites are promising not to buy anything because the Sabbath is a day for rest and worship, not for buying and selling. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "on the Sabbath, we will not buy any from them, because Yahweh has told us not to buy or sell on the Sabbath" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

or on a holy day

Alternate translation: "on a festival day" or "during a festival"

and we would leave alone the seventh year

Here the covenant leaves out one or more words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. **Leave alone** means "leave our fields alone," that is, do not plant or harvest any crops, and **the seventh year** means "in the seventh year." Alternate translation: "we will not grow anything in our fields every seventh year" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

and we would leave alone the seventh year

The seventh year refers to the commandment in the Law of Moses to allow fields to rest one year out of every seven. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "We will leave our fields alone and not work them during the seventh year, because the law commands us not to grow any crops then." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the seventh year

Alternate translation: "year seven" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

and we would leave alone & and interest of every hand

This could mean one of several things. (1) As in 5:7–12, it could be a promise not to charge any interest on loans to fellow Israelites. (2) It could mean that during the seventh year, no loan payments would be collected. (3) It could mean that during the seventh year, all debts would be cancelled. Alternate translation: "we will not charge interest on loans to our fellow Israelites" or "during the seventh year, we will not collect loan payments" or "during the seventh year, we will cancel all the debts of our fellow Israelites."

and interest of every hand

Here, **hand** seems to refer figuratively to a debt by reference to something associated with it, the way debts were formalized by the borrower grasping the hand of the lender. Alternate translation: "interest on any debt" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

Nehemiah 10:32

Also, we caused to stand for us commandments

As in 5:13, the covenant speaks figuratively of the commitments the people are making as if they were living things that could **stand**, that is, stay in place rather than go away. The people are saying that they will make sure this commitment does not "go away." Alternate translation: "we are making a firm commitment" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

to give over us

Alternate translation: "each one of us will contribute" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

a third of a shekel

In ancient times, a silver shekel weighed about 11 grams or about a third of an ounce. You could try to express this in terms of modern money values, but if you did, that could cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate over time since those values can change from year to year. Instead, you could give the equivalent weight or use the biblical term in the text and give the weight in a note. Alternate translation: "a third of a shekel each year" or "four grams of silver each year" (See: **Biblical Money (p.499)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.499)**)

a third of a shekel

A **third** means one part out of three equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.537)**) (See: **Fractions (p.537)**)

for the service of the house of our God

The abstract noun **service** describes all the things needed for worship in the temple, as listed in the next verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "everything that is needed for worship in the temple" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

the house of our God

As in 6:10 and 8:16, here the covenant speaks of the temple figuratively as the **house of God**, as if it were God's dwelling place. Alternate translation: "the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

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Nehemiah 10:33

for the bread in rows

This refers to the 12 unleavened cakes made of fine flour that the law required to be set out freshly every Sabbath day in two rows of six on the table in the Holy Place. This is sometimes called the "showbread." Alternate translation: "the bread that is set out in rows" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 595)**)

and the continual offering, and for the continual burnt offering

This likely refers to a grain offering and an animal offering that were burned on the temple altar each day. Alternate translation: "the daily grain and animal offerings" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

the sabbaths, the new moons, for the appointed times

This actually refers to the offerings that would be made at these times. The offerings are being described figuratively by something associated with them, the occasions on which they are offered. Alternate translation: "offerings made on the Sabbath, on the new moon festival, and during other festivals" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

and for the holy things

This likely refers to offerings that would be dedicated and offered to God on behalf of the people on other occasions. Alternate translation: "and offerings needed for any other occasion" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

and for the sin offerings to cover over for Israel

As Nehemiah does in 4:5, the covenant speaks here of sins as if they were an object that could be physically hidden. Alternate translation: "offerings made to ask God to forgive the sins of Israel" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and all the work of the house of our God

This seems to refer to the ongoing work of cleaning, maintaining, and repairing all of the furnishings and equipment used in the temple worship. Alternate translation: "and anything else needed to maintain worship in the temple" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

the house of our God

Here again the covenant speaks of the temple figuratively as the **house of God**, as if it were God's dwelling place. Alternate translation: "the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 10:34

And we cast lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people: concerning the offering of pieces of wood, to bring them to the house of our God, for the house of our fathers

Alternate translation: "We agree to determine by lot what time each year the various extended families among the priests, the Levites, and the people will be responsible for bringing an offering of wood to the temple."

And we cast lots among

A **lot** was a physical object that was used in various ways to make a selection among different possibilities. Use the term in your language that would best describe such an object for your readers. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

to the house of our God

Here again the covenant speaks of the temple figuratively as the "house of God," as if it were God's dwelling place. Alternate translation: "the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

for the house of our fathers

This seems to be an abbreviated way of saying "our father's houses." The full expression "father's house" or "house of the father" is used in 7:61. See how you translated it there, and review the note there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "taking turns by clan" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

year by year

This is an idiom that means "each year" or "every year." (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

for burning

Burning is an abstract noun that describes how the wood these families agreed to bring to the temple would be used for fuel for the sacrifices offered on the altar. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind it with a verb such as "burn." You could also say who would do the action. Alternate translation: "for the Levites to burn" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

as written in the law

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "as the law commands" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Nehemiah 10:35

the firstfruits of our soil

Here the covenant speaks figuratively of the soil of the land as if it were a tree that would bear fruit. Alternate translation: "the first crops that grow in our fields" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

year by year

This is an idiom that means **each year** or **every year.** (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

to the house of Yahweh

The covenant continues to speak of the temple figuratively as the **house of God**, as if it were God's dwelling place. Here the expression is modified slightly and it says **Yahweh** instead of **our God.** Alternate translation: "to the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 10:36

and the firstborns of our sons and our livestock, & even the firstborns of our herds and our flocks, to bring them to the house of our God

Firstborn means specifically the firstborn male offspring in every case, as the law specifies. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain that the law required the Israelites to bring the firstborn males from their families to the temple for a different reason than the reason for which it required them to bring the firstborn males from among their domesticated animals. Alternate translation: "We promise to bring our firstborn sons to the temple to dedicate them to God, and we promise to bring the first male offspring of all of our animals to the temple so that the priests can offer them to God as sacrifices" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

as written in the law

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "as the law commands" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

to the house of our God, & in the house of our God

The covenant continues to speak of the temple figuratively as the **house of God**, as if it were God's dwelling place. Alternate translation: "the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

to the priests, the ones who minister in the house of our God

These two phrases mean the same thing. The covenant uses the repetition for clarity. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "the priests who serve in the temple" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

Nehemiah 10:37

And & the first of our dough and our offerings, and the fruit of every tree, wine, and oil

The words **the first of** at the start of this list apply to every item on the list. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could repeat that idea throughout the list. Alternate translation: "the first of the flour that we make, a first portion of the food offerings we bring to the temple, the first fruit from each of our fruit trees, and the first of the wine and oil that we produce each year" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

our dough

Possible meanings are that this refers to: (1) dough made from coarse flour, (2) coarse flour, or (3) ground grain. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

to the chambers of the house of our God

This phrase explains where the people are agreeing to deliver the items on the preceding list, which are special contributions for the priests. Alternate translation: "to the rooms where things are stored in the temple" or "to the storehouses in the temple" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

the house of our God

The covenant continues to speak of the temple figuratively as the "house of God," as if it were the place where God lived, since God's presence was in the temple. Alternate translation: "the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and a tithe of our soil

Here, the covenant speaks figuratively of the soil as a way of referring to the crops that grow in the soil. Alternate translation: "one tenth of the crops that grow in our fields" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

and a tithe of

This means a tenth (1/10) or one part out of ten equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.537)**) (See: **Fractions (p.537)**)

And they, the Levites, will be the ones receiving tithes in all the cities of our labor

This phrase explains where the people are agreeing to deliver this tithe of crops, which is a special contribution for the Levites. Alternate translation: "The Levites can collect this contribution of one tenth of our crops right in the cities where we live and work"

in all the cities of our labor

The abstract noun **labor** refers to how the people would work the land in order to grow crops. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind it with a verb such as **work.** Alternate translation: "the cities where we live and work" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

Nehemiah 10:38

And a priest who is a son of Aaron will be with the Levites when the Levites receive tithes

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain why a priest will be present. Alternate translation: "a priest will be present to supervise when the people give their tithes to the Levites" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

a priest who is a son of Aaron

Here the book repeats some background information to remind readers who the priests were. Alternate translation: "one of the priests, who are descendants of Aaron" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

who is a son of Aaron

Son here figuratively means "descendant." Alternate translation: "a descendant of Aaron" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

when the Levites receive tithes

If it would be helpful in your language, you could state from whom the Levites will receive these tithes. Alternate translation: "when the people give their tithes to the Levites" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

when & receive tithes. & a tithe of the tithe

A "tithe" means a tenth (1/10) or one part out of ten equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.537)**) (See: **Fractions (p.537)**)

And the Levites will bring a tithe of the tithe to the house of our God

The implication is that in the way the Levites will help support the priests, in the same way the people will support the priests through the tithes described in verse 37. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the Levites will bring one tenth of the tithes they receive to the temple, to help support the priests" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

to the house of our God

The covenant continues to speak of the temple figuratively as the **house of God**, as if it were God's dwelling place. Alternate translation: "the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

to the chambers of the house of the treasury

Like the similar phrase in 10:37, this phrase explains where the Levites are to deliver the ten percent of the tithes that they will contribute. Alternate translation: "to the rooms where things are stored in the temple" or "the rooms in the temple treasury" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 10:39

the chambers

This is an abbreviated way of saying "the chambers of the house of the treasury" as in 10:38. Alternate translation: "the rooms where things are stored in the temple" or "the rooms in the temple treasury" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

the sons of Israel and the sons of Levi

Sons here figuratively means "descendants." The term is referring to the groups that were descended from the men named Israel and Levi. Alternate translation: "the Israelites and the Levites" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And there shall be the vessels for the sanctuary, and the priests, the ones who are ministering, and the gatekeepers, and the ones who sing

There means in those same storerooms. The phrase **the vessels for** at the start of this list applies to every item on the list. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could repeat that idea throughout the list. Alternate translation: "In those same rooms we will also store equipment for the temple, equipment that the priests use when they are on duty, tools that the gatekeepers use, and instruments for the musicians" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

the vessels for

Here the covenant uses one type of equipment that the storerooms would hold, **vessels** or "jars" or "containers," to refer figuratively to all the different types of equipment on the list in this verse. Alternate translation: "equipment" (See **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

And we shall not neglect the house of our God

This is a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that is the opposite of the intended meaning. Alternate translation: "we will make sure that we provide for the temple" (See: **Litotes (p.559)**) (See: **Litotes (p.559)**)

the house of our God

The covenant continues to speak of the temple figuratively as the **house of God**, as if it were God's dwelling place. Alternate translation: "the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 11

Nehemiah 11 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The places where the Jews lived

Some people lived in Jerusalem, but most people lived in villages and towns away from Jerusalem. They lived there in order to farm the land and raise their animals. The city with its walls was there to provide all of the people with protection if enemies attacked them.

Nehemiah 11:1

cast lots

As in 10:34, a **lot** was a physical object that was used in various ways to make a selection among different possibilities. Use the term in your language that would best describe such an object for your readers. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

one out of ten

This means "one out of ten people." (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

in Jerusalem the holy city

Here the book repeats some background information to remind readers about the special status that Jerusalem had, which was why it was so important for that city to be well populated. As in 1:9, the list is acknowledging Jerusalem as the place from which God chose to start making himself famous throughout the world, and as the city where God chose to put his temple. Alternate translation: "Jerusalem, the special city that God chose" (See **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

and nine hands were in the cities

Here the list is using the term **hand** to refer figuratively to an entire person. Alternate translation: "the other nine out of ten people remained in the cities and towns where they had been living" (See **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

Nehemiah 11:2

all the men

In this context, **a man** means "everyone." Alternate translation: "everyone who" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p. 550)**)

Nehemiah 11:3

the heads of the province

Head here is a figurative way of saying **leader.** Alternate translation: "provincial leaders" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And in the cities of Judah

This sentence explains a contrasting idea before the story goes on to develop the idea that the previous sentence introduces. This chapter is a list of the provincial leaders, priests, Levites, gatekeepers, temple servants, and singers who lived in Jerusalem. The previous sentence introduces the first part of that list, but before the list gives the names of the provincial leaders, it explains that most of the people who had returned to the province of Judah kept on living on their ancestral lands in other cities and towns. You could begin this sentence with a word like "but" to indicate this contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**)

And in the cities of Judah & in their cities

These two phrases mean the same thing and you do not need to repeat both of them if that would be confusing for your readers.

a man on his property

In this context, **a man** means "each person," and the expression may be understood to indicate "each family." Alternate translation: "each family on its own property" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Israel

Here the list refers to all of the Israelites figuratively as if they were a single person, their ancestor, Israel. Alternate translation: "the Israelites" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

and the Nethinim

As in 3:26, the term **Nethinim** describes servants who worked in the temple. Alternate translation: "the temple servants" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

and the sons of the servants of Solomon

Sons figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "the descendants of the laborers who had worked for the kingdom" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the servants of Solomon

As in 7:57, this phrase refers to people whom Solomon first conscripted as laborers. They and their descendants remained conscripted laborers under later kings. Review the note to 7:57 if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "laborers who had worked for the kingdom" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 11:4

And & in Jerusalem

This sentence provides further information about the situation the book is describing here. In addition to the people who were living in various other cities and towns in the province of Judah, there were other people already living in Jerusalem. So the city was not empty, but it did need to be more fully populated. You could use a word like "moreover" to show that this is further background information. (See: **Background Information (p.493)**) (See: **Background Information (p.493)**)

from the sons of Judah and from the sons of Benjamin

Sons here figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "some people from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Those from the sons of Judah were

Sons here figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "those from the tribe of Judah" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Athaiah, the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalalel

These are the names of six men. In this context, **son** means literally that the next man named is the father of the man just named. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Athaiah

The implication is that Athaiah was one of the leaders of the people from the tribe of Judah who lived in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Their leader, Athaiah" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

from the sons of Perez

Sons here figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "one of the descendants of Perez" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 11:5

and Maaseiah, the son of Baruch, the son of Kol-Hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah

These are the names of seven men. In this context, **son** means literally that the next man named is the father of the man just named. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and Maaseiah

The implication is that Maaseiah was another leader of the people from the tribe of Judah who lived in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "another leader, Maaseiah" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

a son of the Shiloni

Most likely, the Shiloni were the clan descended from Judah's son Shelah. Here the phrase **son of** indicates that Maaseiah shared in the quality of belonging to this clan. Alternate translation: "one of the descendants of Shelah" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 11:6

All the sons of Perez, the ones dwelling in Jerusalem, were 468 men of strength

Alternate translation: "The total number of the descendants of Perez who settled in Jerusalem who were able to fight in the army was 468"

the sons of Perez, the ones dwelling in Jerusalem

Sons here figuratively means **descendants.** Alternate translation: "the descendants of Perez who lived in Jerusalem" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

were 468 men of strength

The abstract noun **strength** refers to the way these men were able to use weapons and fight to defend the city if necessary. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind it with a verb such as *fight. Alternate translation: "468 men who were able to fight in the army" (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-abstractnouns]])* (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

were 468

Alternate translation: "four hundred and sixty-eight" (See: **Numbers (p.571)**) (See: **Numbers (p.571)**)

Nehemiah 11:7

the sons of Benjamin

Sons here figuratively means **descendants.** Alternate translation: "the people from the tribe of Benjamin" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the sons of Benjamin

This means specifically the people from the tribe of Benjamin who lived in Jerusalem. The list is speaking in abbreviated form here. Alternate translation: "the people from the tribe of Benjamin who lived in Jerusalem" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

Sallu, the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jeshaiah

These are the names of eight men. In this context, **son** means literally that the next man named is the father of the man just named. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Sallu

The implication is that Sallu was one of the leaders of the people from the tribe of Benjamin who lived in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Their main leader was Sallu" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 11:8

and after him, Gabbai, Sallai

After is a figurative way of saying that these two men were also leaders, but they were subordinate to Sallu. Alternate translation: "Two other leaders who assisted him were Gabbai and Sallai" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Gabbai, Sallai

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

928

As in 11:6, the number given represents the total number of men from this tribe who were able to use weapons and fight to defend the city if necessary. The list is speaking in abbreviated form here. Alternate translation: "The total number of the men from the tribe of Benjamin living in Jerusalem who were able to fight in the army was 928." (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

928

Alternate translation: "nine hundred and twenty-eight men" (See: **Numbers (p.571)**) (See: **Numbers (p.571)**)

Nehemiah 11:9

And Joel the son of Zichri

Joel is the name of a man, and Zichri is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

was the overseer for them

This means that when these men from the tribe of Benjamin formed a fighting unit, Joel was their commander. Alternate translation: "the commander of the troops from the tribe of Benjamin" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

And Judah, the son of Hassenuah

Judah is the name of a man, and Hassenuah is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

was the second over the city

This phrase could mean a number of things. (1) Since this list does not name the person who was first in charge of the city, and it also does not describe other parts of the city and who was responsible for them, this phrase most likely means that Judah was second in command, after Joel, over the forces that would be formed from men living in the city. If that is the meaning, then the list is describing these troops figuratively by reference to something associated with them, the city they would come from. (2) However, it could mean that Judah was something like the deputy mayor of the whole city. (3) It could also mean that Judah was responsible for one part of the city. Alternate translation: "second in command over troops from the city" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

Nehemiah 11:10

From the priests

The implication is that this next section of the list will name the men who were leaders of the priests. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Here are the names of the leaders of the priests who settled in Jerusalem" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Jedaiah the son of Joiarib

Jedaiah is the name of a man, and Joiarib is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Jakin

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 11:11

Seraiah, the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub

These are the names of six men. In this context, **son** means literally that the next man named is the father of the man just named. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the leader of the house of God

This is background information that helps identify Seraiah further. Alternate translation: "the priest in charge of the temple" (See: **Background Information (p.493)**) (See: **Background Information (p.493)**)

the house of God

Here the list speaks of the temple figuratively as the **house of God** as if it were God's dwelling place. Alternate translation: "the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 11:12

and their brothers, who were doing the work for the house, were 822

Alternate translation: "The total number of their fellow priests who were serving in the temple was 822"

and their brothers

Here, **brother**, is a figurative way of saying "fellow priest," although it is possible that some of the biological brothers of Joiarib, Jakin, and Seraiah were included in this group. Alternate translation: "their fellow priests" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

who were doing the work for the house

Here, **house** is an abbreviated way of saying "house of God," and that is a figurative way of referring to the temple. Alternate translation: "who served in the temple" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

were 822

"eight hundred and twenty-two men" (See: **Numbers (p.571)**) (See: **Numbers (p.571)**)

and Adaiah

The implication is that Adaiah was another leader of the priests who settled in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Another leader of the priests who settled in Jerusalem was Adaiah" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and Adaiah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malkijah

These are the names of seven men. In this context, **son** means literally that the next man named is the father of the man just named. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 11:13

and his brothers, the heads of fathers

In this case, **his brothers** seems to be a figurative way of saying "his fellow leaders," since the list specifies that these associates of Adaiah were leaders of clans. Alternate translation: "the family leaders who helped him" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the heads of fathers

As in 7:70 and 8:13, this seems to be an abbreviated way of saying "the heads of father's houses." The full expression "house of the father" or "father's house" is used in 7:61. See how you translated it there, and review the note there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "clan leaders" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

the heads

Here, **head** is a figurative way of saying **leader.** Alternate translation: "leaders" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

were 242

It seems unlikely that there were 242 family leaders assisting Adaiah. Rather, in context, this seems to be the number of priests that Adaiah and the family leaders who helped him were responsible for. Alternate translation: "they were responsible for 242 priests" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

were 242

"two hundred and forty-two men" (See: **Numbers (p.571)**) (See: **Numbers (p.571)**)

and Amashsai

The implication is that Amashsai was another leader of the priests who settled in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Another leader of the priests who settled in Jerusalem was Amashsai" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and Amashsai, the son of Azarel, the son of Ahzai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer

These are the names of five men. In this context, "son" means literally that the next man named is the father of the man just named. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 11:14

and their brothers, mighty men of strength, were 128

The implication is that this is the total number of priests that Amashsai was responsible for. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Amashsai was responsible for 128 priests who were capable of working in the temple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and their brothers

Here, in context, **brothers** is a figurative way of saying "fellow priests" as in 11:12, althoughit is possible that some of the biological brothers of Amashsai were included in this group. **Their** is plural because it is describing this group in reference to all of the other priests, not just to Amashsai. Alternate translation: "their fellow priests" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

mighty men of strength

In this context, the abstract noun **strength** likely refers to the way these men were physically capable of doing the required work in the temple. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind it with an adjective such as "capable." Alternate translation: "men who were capable of working in the temple" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

were 128

Alternate translation: "one hundred and twenty-eight" (See: **Numbers (p.571)**) (See: **Numbers (p.571)**)

And & was overseer for them

This appears to mean that while Amashsai was responsible overall for this group of priests, Zabdiel supervised their day-to-day work. Alternate translation: "Zabdiel was their supervisor" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Zabdiel the son of Haggedolim

Zabdiel is the name of a man, and Haggedolim is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 11:15

And from the Levites

The implication is that this next section of the list will name the men who were leaders of the Levites. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Here are the names of the leaders of the Levites who settled in Jerusalem. One of them was" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Shemaiah, the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni

These are the names of five men. In this context, **son** means literally that the next man named is the father of the man just named. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 11:16

and Shabbethai and Jozabad

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

from the heads of the Levites

Head here is a figurative way of saying **leader.** Alternate translation: "who were also leaders of the Levites" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

were over the work outside of the house of God

Here the list speaks of the temple figuratively as the **house of God** as if it were God's dwelling place. **Outside** refers to all of the duties that Levites had that did not involve working inside the temple itself. (For example, collecting offerings, as described in 10:37–38.) Alternate translation: "supervised all the work that the Levites did outside the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 11:17

and Mattaniah, the son of Mika, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph

These are the names of four men. In this context, **son** means literally that the next man named is the father of the man just named. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and Mattaniah

The implication is that Mattaniah was another leader of the Levites who settled in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Another leader of the Levites who settled in Jerusalem was" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the head of the beginning who offered the thanksgiving prayer

Head here is a figurative way of saying **leader.** Alternate translation: "the director of the Levite choir" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the head of the beginning

This expression seems to indicate that Mattaniah told the Levite musicians who sang in the temple when to begin singing; that is, he was the director of their choir. As the choir director, he would have done many other things as well. For example, he would keep the tempo, have the choir sing louder or softer, and tell the choir when to stop singing. Here the list is describing the work of directing the choir figuratively by reference to one aspect of it, starting the singing. Alternate translation: "the director" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

who offered the thanksgiving prayer

Here the book is describing the choir figuratively by reference to one kind of thing it was associated with, the prayers of thanksgiving that it sang. Alternate translation: "of the choir" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

who offered the thanksgiving prayer

While the list says that Mattaniah offered this prayer really, the whole choir did so with him as its director. The list is referring to the entire choir figuratively by the name of one member, Mattaniah. Alternate translation: "of the choir" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

and Bakbukiah, & and Abda

The implication is that Bakbukiah and Abda were further leaders of the Levites who settled in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Two other leaders of the priests who settled in Jerusalem were" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and Bakbukiah

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

second from his brothers

Here, **brother** likely refers figuratively to the other the Levites in this division. The expression means that Bakbukiah was another leader who assisted Mattaniah with the Levite choir. It could also possibly mean that he directed a second group of singers. Alternate translation: "who assisted Mattaniah with the Levite choir" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

second

Alternate translation: "the next in command" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

and Abda, the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun

These are the names of four men. In this context, **son** means literally that the next man named is the father of the man just named. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 11:18

All the Levites in the holy city were 284

Alternate translation: "The total number of Levites who settled in Jerusalem was 284"

in the holy city

As in 11:1, this phrase describes Jerusalem as the place from which God chose to start making himself famous throughout the world, and as the city where God chose to put his temple. Alternate translation: "Jerusalem, the special city that God chose" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

were 284

Alternate translation: "two hundred and eighty-four" (See: **Numbers (p.571)**) (See: **Numbers (p.571)**)

Nehemiah 11:19

And the gatekeepers

The implication is that this next section of the list will name the men who were leaders of the gatekeepers. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Here are the names of the leaders of the gatekeepers who settled in Jerusalem:" followed by the list of names. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And the gatekeepers

This means the people who were responsible to open and close the gates that controlled access to the city or perhaps the temple. See how you translated this term in 7:1. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Akkub, Talmon

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and their brothers, the ones who guarded at the gates, were 172

The list is speaking in abbreviated form here. Alternate translation: "These leaders and their fellow gatekeepers amounted to a total of 172 gatekeepers who settled in Jerusalem." (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

and their brothers, the ones who guarded at the gates

Here, in context, **brother** seems to be a figurative way of saying "fellow gatekeepers," although it is possible that some of the biological brothers of Akkub and Talmon were included in this group. Alternate translation: "their fellow gatekeepers" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

were 172

Alternate translation: "one hundred and seventy-two men" (See: **Numbers (p.571)**) (See: **Numbers (p.571)**)

Nehemiah 11:20

And the rest of Israel

Here the list figuratively refers to all of the Israelites by something associated with them, the name of their ancestor, Israel. Alternate translation: "all the other the Israelites" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p. 569)**)

were in all the cities of Judah, a man in his inheritance

In this context, **a man** means "each person," and as in 11:3, it may be understood to indicate "each family." Alternate translation: "continued to live in all the other cities of Judah, each family on its own ancestral land" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

a man in his inheritance

The abstract noun **inheritance** refers to the land that was passed down through the generations in each Israelite family. The Levites did not have territory of their own, but they had some towns and surrounding pasturelands as their property. Alternate translation: "each family on its own ancestral land" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

Nehemiah 11:21

And the Nethinim

The term **Nethinim** describes servants who worked in the temple. Alternate translation: "the temple servants" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

in the Ophel

This is probably the name of a geographic feature, a fortified extension of the hill that the Jerusalem temple was located on. See how you translated this term in 3:26-27. Alternate translation: "Ophel Hill" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

and Ziha and Gishpa

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

were over the Nethinim

This is a figurative way of saying that Ziha and Gishpa were the leaders of this group. Alternate translation: "were the leaders of the temple servants" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 11:22

And the overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was

Alternate translation: "the supervisor of the Levites who settled in Jerusalem"

Uzzi, the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Mika

These are the names of five men. In this context, **son** means literally that the next man named is the father of the man just named. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

from the sons of Asaph

Sons here figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "who were descendants of Asaph" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the ones who sang

Here the list supplies some background information that reminds readers what the Levites in the temple were primarily responsible for. Alternate translation: "and who performed music" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

who were over the work of the house of God

Here the list speaks of the temple figuratively as the **house of God** as if it were God's dwelling place. By contrast with the Levites described in 11:16, these Levites were responsible for all the duties that had to be performed inside the temple itself. Alternate translation: "who were responsible for the work that was done inside the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 11:23

For

This word indicates that the information that follows provides further background information about this situation. You could express the same meaning with a word that indicates this in your language. (See: **Background Information (p.493)**) (See: **Background Information (p.493)**)

the commandment of the king was upon them

Here the list speaks figuratively of the commandment as if it rested upon the Levite singers. Alternate translation: "the king had given orders concerning them" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

that support for the ones who sang

The abstract noun **support** refers to an order that the king had given for his own kingdom to pay for the costs of worship in the temple. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the same idea with a verb such as "subsidize." Alternate translation: "to subsidize the expenses of the Levite singers" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

was a daily matter in its day

This is an idiom that means "as each day required." (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 11:24

And Pethahiah, the son of Meshezabel

Pethahiah is the name of a man, and Meshezabel is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

from the sons of Zerah

Sons here figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "one of the descendants of Zerah" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Zerah, the son of Judah

Zerah is the name of a man, and Judah is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

was at the hand of the king

Here, **hand** figuratively means **side** and figuratively describing Zerah as the king's advisor by reference to something associated with that role, the place that he would usually occupy next to the king. Alternate translation: "was an advisor to the king" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

for every matter of the people

People here means the Jewish people. Alternate translation: "for all matters concerning the Jewish people" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 11:25

And for

After describing the various groups that settled in Jerusalem and their leaders, the list said in 11:20 that all the other the Israelites continued to live in the other cities of Judah. In 11:21–24 the list gave additional details about some other things, but it is now returning to speak about those cities and towns outside of Jerusalem. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this with a phrase such as "and as for"

the villages in their fields

This refers to settlements and the adjacent agricultural land. It is as if the villages are **in** the fields because the fields surround the villages. Alternate translation: "the towns where there was farmland" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the villages in their fields

The implication is that these are the places where people lived who did not settle in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the towns outside Jerusalem where there was farmland" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

some from the sons of Judah

Sons here figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "some of the descendants of Judah" or "some of the people of Judah" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

in Kiriath Arba & and in Dibon & and in Jekabzeel

These are the names of three towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**)

in Kiriath Arba and its daughters; and in Dibon and its daughters; and in Jekabzeel and its villages

In this context, referring to the **daughters** of a town is a figurative way of describing the small communities that have grown up around it. (These communities were likely started by people from the town, and they depended on the town the way a child depends on a parent.) Here and in verses 27, 28, 30, and 31, use whatever term would convey this concept most clearly in your language. But be careful to distinguish between this term and the one that is used generally for the places in this part of the list. For example, if you translate "daughters" as "villages," then use a word like "town" for the places named on the list and other places that the list describes with the same word. Alternate translation: "in Kiriath Arba and its villages, in Dibon and its villages, and in Jekabzeel and the surrounding towns." (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 11:26

and in Jeshua; and in Moladah; and in Beth-Palet

These are the names of three towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**)

Nehemiah 11:27

and in Hazar-Shual; and in Beersheba

These are the names of two towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 11:28

and in Ziklag; and Mekonah

These are the names of two towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 11:29

and in En-Rimmon; and in Zorah; and in Jarmuth

These are the names of three towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**)

Nehemiah 11:30

Zanoah, Adullam, and their villages; Lachish and its fields; Azekah and its daughters

These are the names of cities or towns. Alternate translation: "in Zanoah and Adullam and the nearby towns, in Lachish and the surrounding farmland, and in Azekah and its villages" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And they encamped from Beersheba as far as the valley of Hinnom

Encamped is a figurative way of saying that the people of Judah lived throughout this area. They were no longer living in tents, but in permanent houses. Alternate translation: "And so the people of Judah were living throughout the area from Beersheba to the valley of Hinnom" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And they encamped

This phrase indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentences have described. If the people from the tribe of Judah lived in all these towns, then they were spread out over the whole area that the next phrase indicates. Alternate translation: "and so" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

And they encamped

They refers to the people of Judah, looking back to the start of this part of the list in 11:25. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 11:31

and the sons of

This phrase indicates that a different group will now be in focus, the people of the tribe of Benjamin. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this contrast with an expression such as "for their part." (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**)

and the sons of Benjamin

Sons here figuratively means "descendants." Alternate translation: "the people of the tribe of Benjamin" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

from Geba

Here the list is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. The meaning is that the people of the tribe of Benjamin lived in different towns, beginning with Geba and including the rest of the towns that the list names afterwards. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "lived in other towns, including Geba" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

from Geba, at Mikmash, and Aija, and Bethel

These are the names of four towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**)

and Bethel and its daughters

As in 11:25 (and also in verses 27, 28, 30, and 31), **daughters** is a figurative way of speaking of the small communities that grow up around a town. Review the note to 11:25 if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "Bethel and its villages" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 11:32

Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah

These are the names of three towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**)

Nehemiah 11:33

Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim

These are the names of three towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**)

Nehemiah 11:34

Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat

These are the names of three towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**)

Nehemiah 11:35

Lod, and Ono

These are the names of two towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the valley of the craftsmen

Here the list supplies some background information that reminds readers what the town of Ono was known for. It was a center for craftsmen. Alternate translation: "which was a center for craftsmen" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

Nehemiah 11:36

and some from

This phrase indicates that yet another group will now be in focus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this contrast with an expression such as "finally" (since this is also the last group on the list). Alternate translation: "Finally, from" (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**)

and some from the Levites, who were divisions of Judah, in Benjamin

Here the list is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. The meaning seems to be that certain sections of the Levite community that had previously lived in the territory that had belonged to the tribe of Judah went to live in the territory that had belonged to the tribe of Benjamin rather than returning to their former homeland. Alternate translation: "some of the Levites whose families had lived in the territory of Judah now went to live in the territory of Benjamin" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

and some from the Levites, who were divisions of Judah, in Benjamin

The book does not say explicitly why these Levites moved to a different area. However, one reasonable inference in light of the overall themes of the book of Nehemiah is that they did this so that there would be people throughout the entire area where the Israelites were living who could explain the law to them. If that would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "some of the Levites whose families had lived in the territory of Judah now went to live in the territory of Benjamin so that they could teach God's law to the people living there" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 12

Nehemiah 12 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Dedication of the wall

In the ancient Near East, it was common to dedicate an important structure to a god. When it was completed, the wall was dedicated to Yahweh. Long lists of people are present, indicating that "everyone" was present for this and praised Yahweh. (See: **god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry (p.601)**)

Nehemiah 12:1

And these are the priests and the Levites who came up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua

The implication of the list in verses 1–25 of this chapter is that the priests and Levites had dependable records of their ancestry. So when Nehemiah called them back into service for the dedication of the wall and the collection of offerings, as described in the rest of this chapter, he was employing the people with exactly the lineage that the law required. Throughout this book, Nehemiah stresses how he made sure that the people of Judah were not only organized and well-protected, but also obedient to the law. This is one more example of that latter concern. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Here is a record that shows that the priests and Levites had dependable records of their ancestry. It begins with the priests who first returned to Judah with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, their governor, and with Joshua the high priest."

came up

As in 7:6 and 7:61, **went up** means "traveled from Babylon back to Judah," since that involves going from a river valley up into the mountains. Alternate translation: "returned to Judah from Babylon" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel

This was the man who led the first group of Jews who returned to the province of Judah about a hundred years before the time of Nehemiah. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this more explicitly. Alternate translation: "under the leadership of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, their governor" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel

Zerubbabel is the name of a man, and Shealtiel is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and Jeshua

This was the other leader of the first group of Jews who returned to the province of Judah. While Zerubbabel was the governor and civil authority, Joshua was the high priest and religious authority. Alternate translation: "and under the leadership of Joshua the high priest" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra

The list now names the priests who returned to Judah in this first group. Alternate translation: "The priests were:" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra

These are names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:2

Amariah, Malluk, Hattush

These are names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:3

Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth

These are names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:4

Iddo, Ginnethon, Abijah

These are names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:5

Mijamin, Moadiah, Bilgah

These are names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:6

Shemaiah and Joiarib, Jedaiah

These are names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:7

Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah

These are names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

These were the heads of the priests and their brothers in the days of Jeshua

This is a summary statement about the 22 men who have just been named. Alternate translation: "These men were the leaders of the priests in their own divisions while Joshua was the high priest." (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

the heads of the priests and their brothers

Here, **heads** is a figurative way of saying "leaders." Alternate translation: "the leaders of the priests in their own divisions" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the heads of the priests and their brothers

In this context, **and** means "that is," so the full expression means, "the leaders of the priests, that is, the ones who were their 'brothers.'" **Brothers** itself is a figurative way of saying "fellow priests," and in this context specifically means "the priests in their own divisions." (King David had divided the priests into divisions so that they could rotate their responsibilities, and the Israelites reconstituted these divisions after the exile.) It is possible that some of the people in each division were the biological brothers of the leaders named, since the divisions were created based on close kinship ties, but the word "brother" is essentially figurative. Alternate translation: "their fellow priests" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

in the days of Jeshua

The term **days** is used figuratively here to refer a particular period of time. Alternate translation: "in the time of Joshua" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 12:8

And the Levites were

Here the list is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Alternate translation: "And these were the leaders of the Levites who first returned to Judah with Zerubbabel the governor and with Joshua the high priest" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

Jeshua; Binnui; Kadmiel; Sherebiah; Judah; Mattaniah

These are the names of six men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

he and his brothers were over the thanksgiving songs

He refers to Mattaniah. **Brothers** figuratively means "fellow Levite leaders." Alternate translation: "Mattaniah and his fellow Levite leaders were responsible for directing the choir." (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

were over the thanksgiving songs

As in 11:17, here the book is describing the choir figuratively by reference to one kind of thing it was associated with, the songs of thanksgiving that it sang. Alternate translation: "directed the choir" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

were over the thanksgiving songs

Over is a figurative way of saying that Mattaniah and his colleagues were responsible for this group. Alternate translation: "were responsible for directing the choir" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the thanksgiving songs

One responsibility of the Levite choir was to sing prayers of thanksgiving. But it sang many other things as well. Here the list is describing figuratively everything the choir sang by reference to one kind of thing it sang, prayers of thanksgiving. Alternate translation: "the choir" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

Nehemiah 12:9

and Bakbukiah and Unni

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

their brothers

Brothers here figuratively means **their fellow Levite leaders.** (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

were opposite them in the service watches

This phrase could mean one of two things. (1) It could mean that Mattaniah and his associates directed one choir, and Bakbukiah and Unni directed a second choir that stood opposite to this first one and sang responses to what it sang. (2) It could mean that Bakbukiah and Unni took turns with Mattaniah and his associates in assuming the responsibilities of directing a single Levite choir. Alternate translation: "led a second choir that sang responses" or "took turns with them directing the Levite choir" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 12:10

And Jeshua fathered Joiakim; and Joiakim fathered Eliashib; and Eliashib, Joiada

Here the book is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Alternate translation: "Joshua was the father of Joiakim, Joiakim was the father of Eliashib, Eliashib was the father of Joiada" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

And Jeshua fathered Joiakim; and Joiakim fathered Eliashib; and Eliashib, Joiada

Since this list actually continues into the next verse, for clarity you may wish to end this verse with the punctuation that your language uses to indicate that a series is continuing, rather than with the punctuation it uses to show that a sentence is ending.

And Jeshua fathered Joiakim; and Joiakim fathered Eliashib; and Eliashib, Joiada

This is a record of the succession of the Jewish high priests for several generations beginning with Joshua, the high priest who accompanied the first group that returned to Judah from exile. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "When Joshua died, his son Joiakim succeeded him as high priest. When Joiakim died, his son Eliashib succeeded him as high priest. When Eliashib died, his son Joiada succeeded him as high priest" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 12:11

and Joiada fathered Jonathan; and Jonathan fathered Jaddua

Alternate translation, if continuing the sentence from the previous verse: "Joiada was the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan was the father of Jaddua." Alternate translation, if making explicit that this is the succession of high priests: "When Joiada died, his son Jonathan succeeded him as high priest. When Jonathan died, his son Jaddua succeeded him as high priest"

and Joiada & Jonathan; & Jaddua

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:12

And in the days of Joiakim priests were the heads of the fathers

Here the book is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. "Priests were" is an abbreviated way of saying "these are the priests who were." Alternate translation: "These are the priests who were clan leaders while Joiakim was the high priest" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

And in the days of Joiakim

The term **days** is used figuratively here to refer a particular period of time. Alternate translation: "while Joiakim was the high priest" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

the heads of the fathers

This seems to be an abbreviated way of saying "the heads of father's houses." The full expression "house of the father" or "father's house" is used in 7:61. See how you translated it there, and review the note there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "clan leaders" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

the heads of

Head here is a figurative way of saying "leader." Alternate translation: "leaders" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah

In this list the book continues to leave out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Alternate translation: "Meraiah was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Saraiah. Hananiah was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Jeremiah" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

Joiakim & of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah

These are the names of five men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:13

of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan

Alternate translation: "Meshullam was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Ezra. Jehohanan was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Amariah"

of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:14

of Malluk, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph

Alternate translation: "Jonathan was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Malluk. Joseph was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Shebaniah"

of Malluk, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:15

of Harim, Adna; of Meremoth, Helkai

Alternate translation: "Adna was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Harim. Helkai was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Meremoth"

of Harim, Adna; of Meremoth, Helkai

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:16

of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam

Alternate translation: "Zechariah was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Iddo. Meshullam was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Ginnethon"

of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:17

of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai

It appears that the name of the leader of the Miniamin clan has accidentally been lost from the text. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Zichri was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Abijah. Piltai was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Moadiah. It is no longer known who was the leader at this time of the clan whose ancestor was Miniamin"

of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai

These are the names of five men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:18

of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan

Alternate translation: "Shammua was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Bilgah. Jehonathan was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Shemaiah"

of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:19

of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi

Alternate translation: "Mattenai was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Joiarib. Uzzi was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Jedaiah"

of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:20

of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber

Alternate translation: "Kallai was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Sallai. Eber was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Amok"

of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:21

of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethanel

Alternate translation: "Hashabiah was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Hilkiah. Nethanel was the leader of the clan whose ancestor was Jedaiah"

of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethanel

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:22

In the days of Eliashib, the Levites Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, were written as heads of fathers

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. The meaning seems to be, "During the times when Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua served as high priest, the Israelites kept records of which Levites were the clan leaders" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

In the days of Eliashib, & Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua

The term **days** is used figuratively here to refer a particular period of time. Alternate translation: "the times when Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua served as high priest" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Eliashib, & Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

were written as

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "the Israelites kept records" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

heads of fathers

This seems to be an abbreviated way of saying "the heads of father's houses." The full expression "house of the father" or "father's house" is used in 7:61. See how you translated it there, and review the note there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "clan leaders" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

heads of

Head here is a figurative way of saying "leader." Alternate translation: "leaders" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

also the priests, during the reign of Darius the Persian

Here again the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. The meaning seems to be, "The Israelites also made records during the reign of Darius III of which priests were the heads of their clans" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

Darius the Persian

The Persian king named Darius who reigned at the time of Jaddua, the last high priest mentioned in this verse, was Darius III Codomannus. The implication is therefore that the phrase "Darius the Persian" refers to him. (Since he reigned about a hundred years after Nehemiah lived, it is probable that scribes added this information to the book later on to bring it up to date.) If it would be helpful to your readers, you could make this likely identification explicit. Alternate translation: "Darius III" or "Darius Codomannus" or "Darius III Codomannus" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 12:23

The sons of Levi, the heads of fathers, were written

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "Scribes recorded the names of the Levites who were clan leaders" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

The sons of Levi, the heads of fathers, were written

Sons here figuratively means "descendants," so this phrase refers to the descendants of Levi or the Levites. Alternate translation: "the Levites who were clan leaders" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the heads of fathers

This seems to be an abbreviated way of saying "the heads of father's houses." The full expression "house of the father" or "father's house" is used in 7:61. See how you translated it there, and review the note there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "clan leaders" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

the heads of

Head here is a figurative way of saying "leader." Alternate translation: "leaders" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

in the book of the events of days

This is an idiom that describes a regular record of the events. Alternate translation: "in their chronicles" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

even until the days of Johanan

The term **days** is used figuratively here to refer to a particular period of time. Alternate translation: "through the time when Johanan was the high priest" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Johanan

Johanan is the name of a man. The context indicates that he was a Jewish high priest, and so he seems to be the same man who is called "Jonathan" in verse 11. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the same name both here and in verse 11, either "Johanan" or "Jonathan" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the son of Eliashib

Eliashib is the name of a man. Verse 12:10 shows that Johanan/Jonathan was not actually his son, but his grandson. So **son** here figuratively means "descendant." Alternate translation: "the grandson of Eliashib" or "the descendant of Eliashib" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 12:24

And the heads of the Levites were & to praise and give thanks

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. This sentence seems to mean "The Levite leaders who directed the choir that sang songs of praise and thanksgiving were … " You could say something like that as an alternate translation if it would be helpful to your readers. (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

And the heads of the Levites were

Head here is a figurative way of saying "leader." Alternate translation: "the leaders of the Levites" or "the Levite leaders" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Hashabiah, Sherebiah

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and Jeshua, the son of Kadmiel

Jeshua is the name of a man, and Kadmiel is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

with their brothers opposite them, service watch by service watch

As in 12:9, this could mean one of two things. (1) It could mean that Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua directed one choir, and other Levite leaders directed a second choir that stood opposite to this first one and sang responses to what it sang. (2) It could mean that other Levite leaders took turns with these three men in assuming the responsibilities of directing a single Levite choir. Alternate translation: "their fellow Levite leaders directed a second choir that sang responses" or "their fellow Levite leaders took turns with them directing the choir" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

with their brothers

Brothers here figuratively means **their fellow Levite leaders.** (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

to praise and give thanks

Alternate translation: "the choir that sang songs of praise and thanksgiving"

by the commandment of David, the man of God

Here the book offers some background information to remind readers of the character of David, who had been a great founding king of Israel. Alternate translation: "as King David, that godly man, had commanded" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

Nehemiah 12:25

Mattaniah, and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub

These are the names of six men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

were guardians, gatekeepers, a guard at the storehouses of the gates

Since, in context, these men appear to have been Levites, the **gates** described are likely the gates of the temple. It seems that there were rooms above the temple gateways that were used as storehouses or treasuries, and these men were responsible for overseeing and protecting them. Alternate translation: "guarded the store rooms above the gateways to the temple" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 12:26

These were

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. This seems to mean, "These are the names of the men who served in this capacity." You could say something like that if it would be helpful to your readers. (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

in the days of Joiakim

The term **days** is used figuratively here to refer a particular period of time. Alternate translation: "during the time when Joiakim … was the high priest" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Joiakim, the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak

Joiakim is the name of a man, Joshua is the name of his father, and Jozadak is the name of his grandfather. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and in the days of Nehemiah the governor

This would have been one generation later, since 3:1 says that Eliashib was the high priest during the time of Nehemiah, and 12:10 says that Eliashib was the son of Joiakim. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "and also in the next generation, during the time when Nehemiah was the governor" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and in the days of Nehemiah the governor

The term **days** is used figuratively here to refer a particular period of time. Alternate translation: "and also during the time when Nehemiah was the governor" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

and Ezra, the priest, the scribe

Here the book repeats some background information to remind readers who Ezra was. Alternate translation: "and he worked with Ezra, who was a priest and a scribe" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

Nehemiah 12:27

And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem

In this book, Nehemiah tells his personal story from 1:1 through 7:5. In that story, he explains how he was concerned not just to restore the city of Jerusalem physically by rebuilding its wall, but also to restore its population by bringing in people who were genuine Israelites, and to restore worship by making sure that the priests and Levites who were doing assigned tasks had dependable records of their ancestry. He includes the long series of lists from 7:6 through 12:26 to document that these priests, Levites, and Israelites had the lineage that the Law of Moses required. Now Nehemiah resumes his personal story, and he tells what he did next. He organized a worship ceremony to dedicate the city wall. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could put some introductory and transitional sentence here to show how the book is progressing. Alternate translation: "once we had brought many more Israelites to live in Jerusalem, and once we had established the priests and Levites in their tasks, we held a ceremony to dedicate the rebuilt wall of Jerusalem" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem

The abstract noun **dedication** refers to the way the wall would be set apart for a special purpose. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with a verb such as "set apart." Alternate translation: "to set apart the wall of Jerusalem for a special purpose" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem

Dedicating the wall was a symbolic way of dedicating, or rather rededicating, the entire city to the special purpose that God had chosen it for. The rebuilt wall now defined Jerusalem once again as a distinct place, the place from which God had chosen to start making himself famous throughout the world. Alternate translation: "to set apart the wall of Jerusalem for a special purpose, to show that God had set apart the city for a special purpose" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

they sought out the Levites from all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to perform the dedication

All their places means all the other places in the province of Judah besides Jerusalem where the Levites were living. As 11:20 explained, other than the people who agreed to settle in Jerusalem, all of the other Israelites, including the Levites, lived on their family properties in other cities and towns in the province of Judah. Alternate translation: "we brought the Levites back to Jerusalem from all the places where they were living so that they could take part in the dedication ceremony" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

they sought out

They refers to the people who organized the dedication ceremony. Since Nehemiah is resuming his own story here, and since he was one of the organizers, If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this as "we." "We" would not include the addressees, if your language makes that distinction. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

to perform the dedication with rejoicing, and with thanksgivings

Rejoicing and **thanksgivings** mean similar things. Together they describe how the Israelites would celebrate as they dedicated the completed wall. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these words. Alternate translation: "to lead a celebration to dedicate the wall," otherwise "to celebrate the dedication by praising and thanking God" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

and with song, cymbals, lyres, and harps

And with does not mean "in addition to," but "by means of." This next phrase provides further information about how the Levites would conduct the ceremony. Alternate translation: "with songs accompanied by cymbals, harps, and lyres"

cymbals

These are two thin, round metal plates that are hit together to make a loud sound. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

lyres, and harps

These are two different types of stringed instruments. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 12:28

And & gathered themselves

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. This seems to mean "gathered together in Jerusalem for the dedication ceremony." You could say something like that if it would be helpful to your readers. (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

the sons of the ones who sang

As in 3:8 and 3:31, **son of** here is a figurative expression that indicates that a person shares the qualities of something. In this case, the book is describing people who share the quality of being singers. (Verse 12:27 indicates that these were specifically Levites.) Alternate translation: "the Levite singers" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

both from the circle around Jerusalem

This is a figurative way of referring to the towns that the singers had built for themselves all around Jerusalem, as 12:29 describes. These villages seemed to form a circle around the city. Alternate translation: "from the towns they had built around Jerusalem" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and from the villages of the Netophati

The **Netophati** means the people who lived in the town of Netophath, and so their villages would be all the towns in that area where they lived. Alternate translation: "from the towns around Netophath" or "from the towns of the Netophathites" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and from the villages of the Netophati

Netophath was located southeast of Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "from the towns around Netophath, southeast of Jerusalem." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 12:29

and from Beth-Gilgal and from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth

The places listed in this verse are northeast of Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "they also came from three places northeast of Jerusalem, the town of Beth-Gilgal and the rural areas around the towns of Geba and Azmaveth" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and from Beth-Gilgal

This is the name of a town. Alternate translation: "from the town of Beth-Gilgal" (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth

Geba and Azmaveth are the names of towns. Alternate translation: "from the rural areas around the towns of Geba and Azmaveth" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

for the ones who sang had built villages for themselves around Jerusalem

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this sentence at the start of 12:28, since it gives the reason for the results that are described in the rest of 12:28 and 12:29. You could show the connection by using a word like "so" after this phrase. Alternate translation: "The singers were living in towns they had built all around Jerusalem. So … " (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

Nehemiah 12:30

And the priests and the Levites purified themselves. And they purified the people, and the gates, and the wall

This sentence draws a contrast between the joyful celebration that is about to begin in this part of the story and the solemn ceremony that the priests and Levites performed beforehand. You could begin the sentence with a phrase such as "but first" to indicate this contrast. Alternate translation: "But first the priests and Levites performed a ceremony to make themselves clean, and they did the same thing for the people, the gates, and the wall" (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**)

And & purified themselves

Nehemiah expects his readers to know specifically how the priests and Levites did this, but the details are no longer certain. They may have sprinkled themselves, the people, the gates, and the walls with water or with blood, or they may have offered sacrifices. But while the details are uncertain, the purpose of the ceremony is clear. It was to show that the Israelites wanted this place and everyone in it to be acceptable to God. So while it might be best not to suggest how the priests and Levites performed this ceremony, since that is unknown, you could say explicitly what the purpose was if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "And they performed a ceremony to show that they wanted to be clean and acceptable to God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 12:31

And I caused & to go up

In this context, the conjunction **and** indicates that the events the story will now describe came after the event it has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a word such as **then.** (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

And I caused the officials of Judah to go up on top of the wall. And I caused to stand two great thanksgiving groups, and processions

The implication here, which is confirmed in 12:32 and 12:40, is that Nehemiah had these leaders of Judah go up onto the wall so that they could accompany two large groups that would "process" or march around the city on top of the wall while giving thanks to God. They would march in opposite directions and meet up on the far side of the city. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say something like that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

two great thanksgiving groups, and processions

Having two groups walk on top of the wall in opposite directions all around Jerusalem, while sacred musicians played music was a symbolic way of dedicating the rebuilt wall to God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could also say that explicitly. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

to the right hand on top of the wall toward the gate of dung

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. This sentence seems to mean "The first group marched to the right on top of the wall in the direction of the Rubbish Gate." You could say something like that if it would be helpful to your readers. (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

to the right hand

Here, **hand** figuratively means **side.** Alternate translation: "turned to their right and marched" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

to the right hand

Based on the information the book provides, the perspective is of a person facing in towards the city from the top of the wall. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "turned to their right, as they faced the city, and marched" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

toward the gate of dung

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. See how you translated it in 2:13 and 3:13–14. Alternate translation: "the Rubbish Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:32

And after them went Hoshaiah with half of the officials of Judah

Alternate translation: "Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah marched behind this group"

Hoshaiah

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:33

and Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam

Based on what 12:33–36 says about the composition of this group, it appears that Ezra walked in front of it (12:36), Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah walked behind it (12:32), and the group itself was made up of a large number of people from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, along with the other leaders who are named, and priests playing musical instruments. In that case, the word **and** would be indicating this sentence, which continues through to most of verse 12:36, will provide further information about the situation the book has been describing. You could indicate that with a phrase such as "within the group itself were … "

and Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:34

Judah, and Benjamin

One possibility is that these were individual leaders named Judah and Benjamin. However, in the context of the book, this most likely means "people from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin." Their counterparts in the other group would be the other "half of the people" mentioned in 12:38. And since 12:31 says that these were "great" or large processional groups, you could translate this as "large numbers of people from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and Shemaiah, and Jeremiah

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:35

And some from the sons of the priests

Son of here is a figurative expression that indicates that a person shares the qualities of something. In this case, the book is describing people who share the quality of being priests. Alternate translation: "some from among the priests" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Zechariah, the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph

These are the names of seven men. In this context, **son** means literally that the next man named is the father of the man just named. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:36

and his brothers

Here, **brother** is a figurative way of saying "fellow priest," although it is possible that some of the biological brothers of Zechariah were included in this group. Alternate translation: "his fellow priests" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Shemaiah, and Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel and Judah, Hanani

These are the names of eight men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

with the instruments of song of David, the man of God

This likely means the cymbals, harps, and lyres mentioned in 12:27. Those were the instruments that King David had originally instructed the Levite musicians to play. The people honored that religious tradition on this occasion. Alternate translation: "with cymbals, harps, and lyres, the instruments that King David, that godly man, had originally instructed the Levite musicians to play" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

David, the man of God

Here the book offers some background information to remind readers of the character of David, who had been a great founding king of Israel. Alternate translation: "King David, that godly man" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

And Ezra the scribe was before their face

Here, **face** figuratively means the front of a group of people. Alternate translation: "Ezra the scribe walked in front of this group" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

And Ezra the scribe

Here the book repeats some background information to remind readers who Ezra was. Alternate translation: "Ezra, who was a scribe" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

Nehemiah 12:37

And by the gate of the spring and opposite them, they went up on the stairs of the city of David, at the ascent of the wall

The implication, which the original audience of the book would apparently have understood, is that when this first procession reached the place described, rather than continue walking on the wall, which was about to follow a winding course around a hill, they took these stairs straight up the hill, and they rejoined the wall at the place where it went up to the top of the hill. Alternate translation: "When they reached the Fountain Gate, they left the wall and went up the stairs that were in front of them that led to the City of David. They came back onto the wall at the place where it reached the top of the hill they had just climbed" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the gate of the spring

This is the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem. See how you translated it in 2:14 and 3:15. Alternate translation: "the Fountain Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

the city of David

This was one part of Jerusalem. See how you translated it in 3:15. Alternate translation: "the City of David" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

on top of the house of David

This means that as the group walked on the top of the wall once again, at this point they were higher than this palace where David had lived. (In 3:25 this same building is called "the upper house of the king," meaning the royal palace that was located in a more elevated part of the city.) Alternate translation: "They walked along the wall, above the palace where David had lived" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

of the house of David

This building is figuratively called a **house** because David had lived in it. Alternate translation: "the palace where David had lived" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and as far as the gate of water, east

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. This sentence is indicating that once this group reached the Water Gate, it stopped. This left them just to the east of the temple. As 12:39 explains, the other group stopped just to the west of the temple, and the two groups joined together in the temple area. Alternate translation: "until they reached the Water Gate, and there they stopped, on the east side of the temple" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

Nehemiah 12:38

And the & thanksgiving group

The conjunction **And** introduces the description in 12:38 and 12:39 of what the second group was doing while the first group was following the route described in 12:31–37. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word such as "meanwhile" to indicate this. (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**)

And the second thanksgiving group, the one proceeding to the opposite direction

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Alternate translation: "Meanwhile, the second group turned to its left and walked on top of the wall in the opposite direction, with musicians playing songs of thanksgiving as they went." (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

and I after it

I refers to Nehemiah here, as in 12:31. If you think it would be helpful to your readers, you could state his name explicitly. Alternate translation: "I, Nehemiah, walked behind this second group" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

with half of the people on top of the wall

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. This seems to be a reference to the counterparts of the people mentioned in 12:34. Alternate translation: "with the other half of the people from the tribes and Judah and Benjamin who were walking with their leaders on top of the wall to dedicate it to God" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

on top of the tower of ovens

This is the name of one of the towers of the Jerusalem wall. See how you translated it in 3:11. Alternate translation: "They went along the wall above the Tower of the Ovens" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

even as far as the broad wall

This is the name of one of the features of the Jerusalem wall. See how you translated it in 3:8. Alternate translation: "and continued to the Broad Wall" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:39

and on top of the gate of Ephraim, and above the gate of old, and above the gate of fish

These are the names of three of the gates of Jerusalem. See how you translated them in 8:16, 3:6, and 3:3. Alternate translation: "they went over the Ephraim Gate, the Old Gate, and the Fish Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and the tower of Hananel and the tower of the hundred

These are the names of two of the towers on the Jerusalem wall. See how you translated them in 3:1. Alternate translation: "They walked past the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

even as far as the gate of sheep

This is the name of one of the gates of the Jerusalem wall. See how you translated it in 3:1 and 3:32. Alternate translation: "and continued to the Sheep Gate" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and they stood in the gate of the guard

This is apparently the name of one of the gates of the Jerusalem temple. Verse 3:25 describes repairs that were made to the wall near the "court of the guard," which was in the temple precincts, so presumably this was the gate that led into that court. "Stood" means "stood still," that is, "stopped moving." The people were already standing up to walk. Alternate translation: "This second group stopped when it reached the Gate of the Guard" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:40

And the two thanksgiving groups stood at the house of God

The implication is that both groups followed routes that led them around the city from their common starting point to places on either side of the temple. They then joined together for a concluding ceremony in or near the temple. Alternate translation: "both groups that had walked around the city to dedicate the wall came down from it and stood in an open area in front of the temple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And & stood

This word indicates that the event the story will now describe came after the events it has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a word such as "then." (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

also I, and half of the prefects with me

Nehemiah now provides further details for the second group, which he had accompanied, similar to the details he provided for the first group in verses 32–36. Alternate translation: "My group included the other half of the leaders of Judah" (See: **Background Information (p.493)**) (See: **Background Information (p.493)**)

Nehemiah 12:41

Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, Hananiah

These are the names of seven men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 542)**)

Nehemiah 12:42

and Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malkijah, and Elam, and Ezer

These are the names of eight men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And the ones who sang made themselves heard, with Jezrahiah the overseer

Alternate translation: "The singers sang loudly, with Jezrahiah directing their choir"

with Jezrahiah

This is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 12:43

on that day

This is a flexible expression that can mean either **on that same day** or **around that time.** But since this verse continues to describe the celebrations for the dedication of the wall, here it likely means **on that same day.** (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**)

for God had made them glad with great rejoicing

The abstract noun **rejoicing** describes how happy the people were as they held this celebration to dedicate the wall. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with an adjective such as **happy.** Alternate translation: "God had made them all very happy" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

so the rejoicing of Jerusalem was heard from far away

In this case the abstract noun **rejoicing** refers to the loud sound that the singers and the people made as they held the ceremony to dedicate the rebuilt wall. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this abstract noun with a concrete noun such as "sound." Alternate translation: "the sound that the people made as they celebrated in Jerusalem was so loud that even other people who were far away could hear it" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

so the rejoicing of Jerusalem was heard from far away

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "the sound that the people made as they celebrated in Jerusalem was so loud that even other people who were far away could hear it" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

the rejoicing of Jerusalem

Here the story speaks figuratively of Jerusalem as if it were a living thing that could celebrate. Alternate translation: "the sound that the people made as they celebrated in Jerusalem" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

Nehemiah 12:44

on that day

As noted for 12:43, this is a flexible expression that can mean either **on that same day** or **around that time.** So here it could mean either that men were appointed to be in charge of the store rooms on the same day as the dedication celebration, or else at around the same time, perhaps shortly afterwards, once all of the activity of the celebration was over. Alternate translation: "on the same day that they held the ceremony to dedicate the rebuilt wall" or "around this same time" (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**)

And & men were appointed over the chambers for the storehouses

This is referring implicitly to the six Levites whose names are listed in 12:25. The **chambers** are the storerooms above the gateways to the temple. (Review the note to 12:25 if that would be helpful.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "we appointed six Levites to be in charge of the store rooms above the gateways to the temple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And & men were appointed

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. In the context of this episode, saying "we" would indicate Nehemiah and his fellow leaders. ("We" would not include the addressee, if your language makes that distinction.) Alternate translation: "we appointed six Levites" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the cities

In their covenant, these were the things the people promised to provide in order to support the priests and the Levites. (See 10:36–39.) If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "so that they could collect the offerings, firstfruits, and tithes that the Israelites would bring in from the fields around their cities, as they had promised to do in their covenant" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the portions of the law for the priests and for the Levites

The abstract noun **portion** refers to the part of each crop that the law commanded the Israelites to give to the temple to support the priests and Levites. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with a different phrase. Alternate translation: "these were the things that the law commanded the Israelites to give from their harvests to support the priests and Levites" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

For Judah rejoiced over the priests and over the Levites, the ones who were standing

If it would be helpful in your language, you could place this sentence first in the verse since it gives the reason for the results that are described in the rest of the verse. You could also show the connection by using a word like "so" after this phrase. Alternate translation: "The people of Judah were very happy that the priests and the Levites were

once again serving in the roles that the law had assigned to them. So … " (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

rejoiced over the priests and over the Levites

In this context, **over** is a spatial metaphor that figuratively indicates **for** or **because of.** Alternate translation: "were very happy that" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

the ones who were standing

Standing means figuratively that the priests and the Levites were serving in the roles that the law had assigned to them. This meaning can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "serving in the roles that the law had assigned to them" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 12:45

And they kept

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous verse described. Specifically, the temple personnel were able to perform their duties regularly because the people had organized regular support for them. Alternate translation: "and so" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

And they kept the service watch of their God and the service watch of purification

They means the priests and Levites. The abstract noun **service**, in the phrase **service watch of their God**, refers to the duties that God had commanded the priests and Levites to perform in the law. In the phrase "service of purification," this abstract noun refers to one of those duties in particular, the duty of performing a ceremony for themselves and for others that expressed a desire to be ceremonially clean, that is, acceptable to God. The story describes in 12:30 how they performed such a ceremony on this occasion. Alternate translation: "So the priests and Levites were able to perform the duties that God had commanded, including performing ceremonies of purification" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

also the ones who sang and the gatekeepers

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. This phrase seems to means **The singers and the gatekeepers were also able to perform their assigned duties.** You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

according to the commandment of David and Solomon his son

This phrase provides background information that explains that it was King David and King Solomon, his son, who established the duties of the temple singers and gatekeepers. Alternate translation: "as King David and King Solomon, his son, had commanded them to do" (See: **Background Information (p.493)**) (See: **Background Information (p.493)**)

Nehemiah 12:46

For

This word indicates that this sentence will provide further information about the situation that the book is describing here. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a word or expression in your own language that indicates the same thing. (See: **Background Information (p.493)**) (See: **Background Information (p.493)**)

in the days of David and Asaph, from ancient time there was

The expression **from before** is an idiom that means **ever since a long time ago** Alternate translation: "ever since the time of David and Asaph long ago" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

in the days of David and Asaph

The term **days** is used figuratively here to refer a particular period of time. Alternate translation: "in the time of David and Asaph" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

David and Asaph

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and Asaph

The book assumes that the original audience would know that Asaph was the man whom David first appointed to be the director of the Levite singers. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "ever since David first appointed Asaph to lead the singers" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

a head of the ones who sang

Head here is a figurative way of saying **leader.** Alternate translation: "the Levite choir has had an appointed director" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Alternate translation: "and they have sung songs of praise and thanksgiving to God" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

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Nehemiah 12:47

Nehemiah 12:47

And & all

This word indicates that this sentence will provide further information about the situation that the book is describing here. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a word or expression in your own language that indicates the same thing. (See: **Background Information (p.493)**) (See: **Background Information (p.493)**)

in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah

Alternate translation: "just as they had done in the time of Zerubbabel, so now in the time of Nehemiah"

in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah

The term **days** is used figuratively here to refer a particular period of time. Alternate translation: "the time of Zerubbabel … the time of Nehemiah" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

in the days of Zerubbabel

As 12:1 explains, this was the man who led the first group of Jews who returned to the province of Judah, about a hundred years before the time of Nehemiah. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this more explicitly. Alternate translation: "in the time of Zerubbabel, who led the first group back to the province of Judah from exile" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Zerubbabel & Nehemiah

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah, all Israel was giving the portions of the ones who sang

As in 12:44, the abstract noun **portion** refers to the part of each crop that the Israelites contributed to support the temple personnel. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with a different phrase. Alternate translation: "all the Israelites contributed from their harvests to support the singers and the gatekeepers" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

as a daily matter in its day

As in 11:23, this is an idiom that means **as each day required** (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And they were consecrating for the Levites, and the Levites were consecrating for the sons of Aaron

They means the Israelites, as in the previous sentence. **Consecrating** means **setting apart.** This is likely a reference to the tithe or 1/10 of crops that the Israelites promised in their covenant to give to support the Levites, and to the tithe of this tithe that the Levites then contributed to support the priests, as described in 10:37–38. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "The Israelites also gave a tenth of their crops to support the Levites, just as they had promised, and the Levites gave a tenth of this tenth to

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support the priests" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 13

Nehemiah 13 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem

Nehemiah was eager to make sure that the Jews kept their promise to obey the law. When he returned from Persia, he found many things wrong: one of the store rooms in the temple had been converted into a guest room for Tobiah, the Levites had not received their portions for working in the temple, people were working on the Sabbath, and many had married heathen wives. (See: [[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/promise]], [[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/lawofmoses]] and [[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/temple]] and [[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sabbath]])

Nehemiah 13:1

On that day

As noted for 12:43 and 12:44, this is a flexible expression that can mean either "on that same day" or "around that time." Either meaning might fit the context here, so you could choose to say either one in your translation.

it was read in the book of Moses

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "we read from the scroll that contained the Law of Moses" (See: **Active or Passive (p. 484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

in the ears of the people

Here, **ears** stand for hearing. Alternate translation: "out loud so that all the people could hear" (See: **Metonymy (p. 569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

and it was found written in it

Found is an idiom that means "could be found there" or "was there." The expression means that this was something that was in the law. And since Nehemiah and the other leaders were reading this out loud to the people, their purpose was to show them that this was in the law. Alternate translation: "and we showed them that it said" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

and it was found written in it

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "we showed them that it said" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

Ammonite or Moabite

These are the names of the members of two people groups. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

shall enter into the assembly of God

The expression **assembly of God** can refer either to the entire Israelite community, as in 7:66 and 8:17, or to the community gathered for a legal proceeding, as in 5:7 and 5:13, or gathered for a religious ceremony, as in 8:2 and 8:18. The last meaning is probably in view here. This statement likely means that Ammonites and Moabites were not allowed to join the Israelites in their worship of Yahweh in the temple or on public occasions. For example, 9:2 describes how the Israelites did not allow any foreigners to take part in their ceremony of national repentance. (Later in this chapter, in 13:23–27, Nehemiah will describe how he took the further measure of expelling foreigners from the Israelite community itself.) Alternate translation: "could join with the Israelites when they worshiped Yahweh" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

until eternity

This expression means that this was a permanent regulation in the Law of Moses. It was not a regulation that applied just to a specific period and that might change afterwards. Alternate translation: "This was a permanent rule." (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 13:2

For

This word indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the reasons for what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: "they could not come into the assembly because" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

they did not meet the sons of Israel with bread and with water

The assumption is that readers will know what historical incident this statement is referring to. It is a reference to the time when the Israelites were traveling from Egypt to Canaan through the desert. They were basically refugees. It could have been expected, as a basic act of compassion, that the Ammonites and Moabites would help provide for their needs as they passed through their territories but they refused to do this. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "they did not help meet the needs of the Israelites when they were refugees traveling through their territories" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the sons of Israel

Sons here figuratively means "descendants." The descendants of Israel were the Israelites. Alternate translation: "the Israelites" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

they did & meet & with bread and with water

Bread stands for food, and water stands for drink, and together both terms probably represent assistance in general. Alternate translation: "provide food and drink" or "provide the help they needed" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

And he hired Balaam against them to curse them, but our God overturned the curse to a blessing

The assumption once again is that readers will know what historical incident this is referring to. This is a reference to the way the king of Moab hired a prophet named Balaam to curse the Israelites, but instead God made Balaam speak words of blessing about them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "The Moabites also hired a prophet named Balaam to curse the Israelites, but God made him speak words of blessing instead" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Balaam

This is a man's name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 13:3

And it happened

This phrase indicates that the events the story will now describe came after the things it has just described. You can use an expression in your own language that will indicate this clearly. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

as soon as they heard the law

As in 9:29, **hear** in this context is an idiom that means not just to hear something audibly, but to understand a command and recognize the need to obey it. Alternate translation: "when they realized that this was what the law commanded" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

that, & they separated all the mixed company from Israel

Mixed company is an expression that describes people who were not Israelites. It indicates that if they were present, then the group would be mixed, part Israelite and part non-Israelite. Alternate translation: "They no longer allowed foreigners to worship with the Israelites" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 13:4

Now, before the face of this

This phrase indicates that the events the story will now relate came before the events it has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a phrase such as "but before all this happened." (See: **Background Information (p.493)**) (See: **Background Information (p.493)**)

Now, before the face of this

In this book, the expression **face** often refers figuratively to the front of a person, place, or object. Here the expression has the further figurative significance of "in front of" or "before" a certain time. Alternate translation: "before this time" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Eliashib

This is a man's name. See how you translated it in 3:1. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Eliashib the priest

Here the book repeats some background information to remind readers who Eliashib was. As we learn in 3:1, 3:20, and 12:10, he was actually the Jewish high priest during the time of Nehemiah. Alternate translation: "the high priest" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

Eliashib the priest, & was being put

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in active form. Alternate translation: "they appointed Eliashib the priest" or "the leaders appointed Eliashib the priest" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

was being put in the chamber of the house of our God

This is most likely a figurative way of saying that as high priest, Eliashib had responsibility for and control over all the rooms in the temple. Alternate translation: "since he had control over" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

nearly-related to Tobiah

Since Tobiah was an Ammonite, Eliashib could not have been his close blood relative. So this expression must refer to a connection by marriage. We learn in 6:18 that both Tobiah and his son had married Jewish women, and one or both of these women may have been relatives of Eliashib. Alternate translation: "who was related to Tobiah by marriage"

in the chamber of the house of our God

Here one **chamber** or room is used figuratively to mean "every chamber" or room in the temple. Alternate translation: "every room in the temple" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

the house of our God

As often in this book, Nehemiah speaks figuratively of the temple here as the **house of God**, as if it were God's dwelling place. Alternate translation: "the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 13:5

And he made

In this context, the conjunction **and** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the reason for what the previous sentence described, or what made it possible. Alternate translation: "and so" unless you used the word "since" to introduce the last phrase in 13:4, in which case the connection would already be clear and you would not need to use any connecting phrase here. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

for him

Verse 13:7 indicates that **him** refers to Tobiah. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly here. Alternate translation: "he allowed Tobiah to move into a large room in the temple"

and there previously they were putting offerings

They means the Israelites, and **offerings**, if it is a general term (see next note), means the contributions that they gave to support the priests and Levites, as described in 12:44. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "This was the room that the Israelites had previously been using to store the offerings they brought to the temple to support the priests and Levites" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

offerings

The word **offerings** could be referring generally to all of the contributions that the Israelites brought, which would then be listed in the rest of this verse, or it could be the first specific item on the list, the daily grain offering, as described in 10:33. Alternate translation: "the offerings they brought" or "the daily grain offering"

the frankincense

This term refers to a mixture of fragrant spices that was burned to produce smoke that had a pleasant smell. The law specified a special blend of spices that it said could only be used in the temple by the priests. Alternate translation: "the sacred incense" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

and the vessels

As in 10:39, here Nehemiah uses one type of equipment that the storerooms would hold, **vessels** or "jars" or "containers," to refer figuratively to all the different types of equipment that the priests and Levites would have used in the temple. Alternate translation: "the temple equipment" (See **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p. 593)**)

and the tithes of the grain, the wine, and the oil

This means the portion, one tenth, of their crops and produce that the Israelites had promised to contribute to support the temple personnel, as described in 10:37–38. Alternate translation: "the tenth of their crops and produce"

and the tithes of

A **tithe** means a tenth (1/10) or one part out of ten equal parts. (See **Fractions (p.537)**) (See: **Fractions (p.537)**)

the commandment for the Levites, and the ones who sang, and the gatekeepers

Here Nehemiah leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. This phrase means "which the law had commanded them to contribute to support the Levites, the singers, and the temple gatekeepers." You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

and the offerings of the priests

This likely refers to the tithe, or one tenth of what they received, that the Levites, in turn contributed to the priests, as described in 10:38. Alternate translation: "and the contributions to support the priests" or "the tithe of the tithe that the Levites gave to support the priests"

Nehemiah 13:6

And during all this

This expression indicates that the sentence it introduces describes something that was happening at the same time as the events the book has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase such as "while all of this was happening" to indicate this. (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**)

For

This word indicates that the clause it introduces explains the reason for what the previous clause described. That is, Nehemiah is about to give the reason why he was not in Jerusalem while Eliashib was allowing Tobiah to move into the temple. Alternate translation: "because" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

I had gone to the king in year 32 of Artaxerxes, the king of Babylon

Here Nehemiah is providing background information to explain why he was not in Jerusalem. As he indicates in 5:14, he was governor of Judah for twelve years, from the twentieth to the thirty-second year of the reign of King Artaxerxes. As this verse indicates, he then returned to the royal court. Alternate translation: "I had returned to serve King Artaxerxes in his court in the thirty-second year of his reign" (See: **Background Information (p.493)**) (See: **Background Information (p.493)**)

in year 32 of Artaxerxes

This expression refers to the number of years that Artaxerxes had been reigning as king. Alternate translation: "in year 32 of the reign of Artaxerxes as king" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.576)**)

the king of Babylon

Artaxerxes was the king of the Persian Empire, but since the Persians had conquered the Babylonians, he also had the right to use the title "king of Babylon." The fact that Nehemiah describes him by this title may actually indicate that the royal court was located in the city of Babylon at this time and that he returned to that city to resume his duties in the court. Alternate translation: "the king of Persia, whose court was then in Babylon" (See: **Background Information (p.493)**) (See: **Background Information (p.493)**)

And at an end of days

The term **days** is used figuratively here to refer a particular period of time. Alternate translation: "after some time" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

I requested leave from the king

The implication, as shown explicitly in the next verse, is that Nehemiah requested time off from his responsibilities in the court so that he could travel back to Judah and see how the people there were doing, and that the king gave him permission to do this. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I asked the king if I could take some time off and travel back to Judah to help the people there, and he gave me permission to do that" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 13:7

And I came to Jerusalem

In this context, the conjunction **And** at the beginning of this phrase indicates that this event took place after the event the story has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a phrase such as "and so." (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

And I understood

In this context, the conjunction **And** at the beginning of this phrase indicates that this event took place after the event in the previous sentence. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a phrase such as "when I got there, I discovered" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

And I understood about the evil

In this context, this phrase means "came to understand the evil" or "discovered the evil" or "realized the evil." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use any of those phrases or a similar one as an alternate translation. (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

about the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah by making for him a chamber in the courts of the house of God

While in the book of Nehemiah the word **evil** often means things like "sad" or "harmful," in this context, the word does describe something that is morally bad and destructive. Eliashib had not done this wrong thing to Tobiah, but on his behalf. Alternate translation: "about the wrong thing that Eliashib had done by allowing Tobiah to move into a storeroom within the temple courts"

the house of God

Nehemiah speaks figuratively of the temple as the **house of God** as if it were God's dwelling place. Alternate translation: "the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

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Nehemiah 13:8

And it was extremely evil to me

This expression describes Nehemiah's perspective on the action. It does not mean that Eliashib did a wrong thing to Nehemiah directly. Alternate translation: "I recognized how very wrong this was" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

and I cast out all the things of the house of Tobiah from the storeroom to the outside

Here, the term **house** figuratively represents all the possessions of Tobiah. It does not mean a literal house that Tobiah owned, because the context shows that he was staying in a room within the temple. Rather, **house** is a metaphor for "property," that is, the things a person owns and would keep in a house. Alternate translation: "I threw everything that Tobiah was keeping in that storeroom right out of the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 13:9

And I spoke

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that this event took place after the event the story has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a word such as "then." (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

And I spoke, and they purified the chambers

The implication is that Nehemiah spoke to the priests since they would have been the ones to conduct a ceremony like the one the story describes in 12:30 to show that the people wanted the rooms in the temple to be ceremonially clean in the hopes that they would once more be acceptable to God. Alternate translation: "I told the priests to conduct a ceremony to purify the rooms in the temple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the vessels of the house of God, with the offering and the incense

See how you translated these expressions in 13:5. Alternate translation: "the equipment for the temple, the offerings that the people brought, and the sacred incense"

the house of God

Nehemiah speaks figuratively of the temple as the **house of God** as if it were God's dwelling place. Alternate translation: "the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 13:10

And I knew

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that this event took place after the event the story has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a word such as **then.** As with "understood" in 13:7, **knew** here means **came to know** or **discovered** or **realized.** Alternate translation: "Then I discovered that" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

the portions of the Levites had not been given

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "no one had been giving the Levites the support that the law commanded the Israelites to provide for them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

the portions of the Levites had not been given

The implication is that no one was giving the Levites their support because there was no longer any place to store the grain, oil, and other supplies in the temple, from where they could be distributed to them. This was because Tobiah had taken over the large storeroom. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "no one had been giving the Levites the support that the law commanded the Israelites to provide for them because there was no place to store the contributions now that Tobiah had taken over the storeroom" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

the portions of the Levites

As in 12:44 and 12:47, the abstract noun **portion** refers to the part of each crop that the law commanded the Israelites to give towards the work of the temple to support the Levites. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with a different phrase. Alternate translation: "the support that the law commanded the Israelites to provide for the Levites" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

and & had fled, a man to his field

The implication is that the Levites had had to return to farming their own land because they no longer received from the people the support they needed to be able to serve in the temple. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "all of the Levites had left the temple and returned to farming their own land because they had all stopped receiving the support that enabled them to serve in the temple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and & had fled

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: "as a result" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

a man to his field

In this context, **a man** means **each one of them** or **every one of them** Alternate translation: "all of the Levites had returned to farming their own land" or "each of the Levites had returned to farming his own land" (See: **Idiom (p. 550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

the Levites and the ones who sang, who did the work

Here the book repeats some background information to remind readers who the Levites and the singers were. Alternate translation: "the Levites and the singers, who were responsible for the worship in the temple" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

who did the work

The work is an abbreviated way of saying "the work of the house of our God" as in 10:33 or "the work of the house of God" as in 11:12, that is, the work of the temple, meaning specifically everything required to maintain the worship there. Alternate translation: "who were responsible for the worship in the temple" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

Nehemiah 13:11

And I contended

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that this event took place after the event the story has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a phrase such as "and after that" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

And I contended with the prefects

As in 5:7, **contended** is a technical term that describes a public accusation that requires the defendants to answer for themselves in the presence of their fellow citizens. Alternate translation: "Then I called the city officials to account publicly for what they had allowed" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

the prefects

See how you translated this term in 2:16. Alternate translation: "the city officials"

and I said

The implication in context is that what Nehemiah said was an accusation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that indicates this. Alternate translation: "I demanded to know" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Why is the house of God forsaken

Nehemiah uses the question form to challenge or even ridicule the officials who have failed in the basic responsibility of making sure that worship continues in the temple. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "Because of you, the temple has been abandoned" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

And I gathered them and caused them to stand at their stations

Here, **them** refers not to the city officials but to the Levites and singers who had gone back to their farms. Alternate translation: "I brought the Levites and the singers back to the temple and I had them start doing their work again"

And I gathered them

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that this event took place after the event the story has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a word such as "then" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

Nehemiah 13:12

And all

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that this event took place after the event the story has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a word such as "then" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

And all Judah

All is a figurative exaggeration that means that people from throughout the province of Judah did this generally. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah" (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.546)**)

And all Judah

Here Nehemiah refers to all of the Israelites living in the province of Judah figuratively as if they were a single person, Judah, the ancestor of the tribe by that name that lived in the territory that was now this province. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

to the treasuries

This means the storerooms in the temple. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 13:13

And I appointed treasurers

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that this event took place after the event the story has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a word such as "then." (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

And I appointed treasurers over the treasuries

Treasurers means officials who would be responsible for the storerooms in the temple. Alternate translation: "I appointed these men to be responsible for the temple storerooms" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and Pedaiah from the Levites

Shelmiah, Zadok, and Pedaiah are the names of men. As in 8:1, where the word refers to Ezra, **scribe** means a teacher who has carefully studied the Law of Moses. **From the Levites** means that Pedaiah was one of the Levites. Alternate translation: "Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and Pedaiah the Levite" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and at their hand was

At their hand is a figurative way of saying **assisting them** Alternate translation: "I appointed to be their assistant" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Hanan, the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah

Hanan is the name of a man, Zaccur is the name of his father, and Mattaniah is the name of his grandfather. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

For

In this context, the conjunction **For** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the reason for what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: "I appointed them because" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

they were considered faithful

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "Everyone recognized that they were honest men" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

and it was for them to apportion to their brothers

In this context, **brother** seems to be a figurative way of saying **fellow priests and Levites,** although it is possible that some of the biological brothers of the men listed were included in this group. **Apportion** means **give the portions,** meaning the support as described in 13:10. Alternate translation: "their responsibility was to make sure that their fellow priests and Levites received the support that the law commanded the Israelites to provide" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

Nehemiah 13:14

Remember me, my God, concerning this

In this context, **remember** means to think about someone and consider what action you can take on their behalf. Nehemiah is not suggesting that God has forgotten about him. Alternate translation: "please bless me, my God, for doing this" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Remember me, my God, concerning this

As in 4:4, here Nehemiah stops addressing the audience of his story and speaks directly to God. You could indicate this by putting this verse in quotation marks. Review the note at 4:4 about asides like this if that would be helpful. (See: **Aside (p.487)**) (See: **Aside (p.487)**)

and do not wipe out

Nehemiah speaks of his good deeds as if they were something written that could be erased. Alternate translation: "do not overlook" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

my faithful kindness

The abstract noun **faithful kindness** here is the same as the term "covenant faithfulness" that Nehemiah applies to God in 1:5, 9:17, 9:32, and 13:22. It refers to a person consistently and dependably fulfilling the obligations they have accepted. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with a phrase that would bring out this meaning. Alternate translation: "the way that I have consistently provided for" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

for the house of my God

Nehemiah speaks figuratively of the temple as the **house of God** as if it were God's dwelling place. Alternate translation: "your temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and for its service watches

As in 12:9 and 12:24, the phrase **service watch** refers to the Levite singers. It means either an individual choir or a time on duty for the singers. Alternate translation: "and for the Levite singers"

Nehemiah 13:15

In those days

This phrase indicates that this event took place at the same time as the event the story has just related. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a phrase such as "around that same time."

I saw in Judah ones treading winepresses

Alternate translation: "I saw that some of the people of Judah were treading winepresses"

ones treading winepresses

The word **winepresses** figuratively represents the grapes that were in the winepresses. The people were treading on the grapes to press the juice out of them so that they could make wine. Alternate translation: "treading on grapes in winepresses" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

on the sabbath

The implication is that the people of Judah should not have been doing such work on the Sabbath because God had commanded them to set apart that day, the seventh day of the week, as a special day for rest and worship. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "on the Sabbath, when they should not have been doing any work" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

on the sabbath

This is the name of a religious observance. It occurs repeatedly in this part of the story, through 13:22. It will be helpful to your readers if you translate it consistently. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

and ones bringing in grain-heaps, and ones loading onto donkeys, yes, even wine, grapes, and figs, and all kinds of loads, and ones bringing to Jerusalem on the day of the sabbath

These **ones** are not three different groups, but various people of Judah who were collectively doing all these things. The implication is that they were bringing these goods to Jerusalem to sell them even on the Sabbath. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. "Others had loaded their wares, such as sheaves of grain, wine, grapes, figs, and other goods, onto donkeys, and they were bringing these goods into Jerusalem to sell on the Sabbath day" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

And I protested on the day of their selling provisions

The word **day** could be intended literally here and it could mean that Nehemiah protested that the Sabbath itself was not a day for selling goods since that was work. Another possibility is that the word **day** does not refer to a specific day, but rather to a more general time when Nehemiah said this. Alternate translation: "I protested that they should not be doing the work of selling on the Sabbath" or "at the time when they were selling these provisions, I protested against that" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 13:16

And the Tyrians who dwelt in it

Tyrians were people from the city of Tyre. **It** here refers to the city of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Also, some people from the city of Tyre who were living in Jerusalem"

And the Tyrians

Tyrians were people who came from the city of Tyre. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

to the sons of Judah

Son of is a figurative expression that indicates that a person shares the qualities of something. In this case, Nehemiah is describing people who share the quality of being residents of the province of Judah. (In context, this does not seem to be limited to actual descendants of Judah, that is, Israelites from that tribe, since the Tyrians seem to have been eager to sell to anyone living in the area.) Alternate translation: "the people of Judah" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

even in Jerusalem

The implication is that Jerusalem was the last place where anyone should have broken the Sabbath by doing work and engaging in commerce because it was the place from which God had chosen to start making himself famous throughout the world and the city where God had chosen to put his temple. (The concept is the same here as in 11:1 and 11:18, where Nehemiah calls Jerusalem "the holy city.") If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "even in Jerusalem, the special city that God chose" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 13:17

And I contended

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains something that happened as a result of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: "So" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

And I contended with the nobles of Judah

As in 5:7 and 13:11, **contended** is a technical term that describes a public accusation that requires the defendants to answer for themselves in the presence of their fellow citizens. Alternate translation: "Then I called the leading citizens of Judah to account publicly for what they had allowed" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

the nobles of Judah

See how you translated this term in 2:16. Alternate translation: "the leading citizens of Judah"

And I said to them

The implication in context is that what Nehemiah said was an accusation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that indicates this. Alternate translation: "I demanded to know" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

What is this evil thing that you are doing, and profaning the day of the sabbath

Nehemiah is using the question form for emphasis in order to scold the leaders of Judah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate what he says as an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You are doing an evil thing by treating the Sabbath day like any other day" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

and profaning the day of the sabbath

To **profane** something means to treat something that should be holy, set apart for a special purpose, as if it were something ordinary or common, just like anything else. Alternate translation: "treating the Sabbath day like any other day" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 13:18

Did not your fathers do thus, and our God brought all this evil on us and on this city

Nehemiah once again uses a question form for emphasis as he continues to scold the leaders of Judah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate what he says as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You know that your ancestors did the same thing, and that is why our God brought all this trouble on us and on this city" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

your fathers

Fathers here figuratively means "ancestors." Alternate translation: "your ancestors" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and our God brought all this evil on us and on this city

As Nehemiah speaks to the leading citizens, he assumes that they will know that he is referring to the way God allowed the Babylonians to conquer Jerusalem, destroy much of the city including the temple, break down the city wall, and take most of the people into exile. As he reports this conversation in the book, he assumes that its audience will know this as well. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "our God allowed the Babylonians to take our people into exile and destroy this city" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

all this evil

Evil here does not refer to something morally wrong, but to trouble or harm. Alternate translation: "all this trouble" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And you

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates a contrast between how the leading citizens should be acting and how they actually are acting. You could make this contrast explicit by using an expression such as, "You should know better" (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**)

And you are increasing wrath upon Israel

Nehemiah assumes that the leading citizens will know that he is speaking of God's wrath, that is, God's anger at the people's sin, and the punishment that God may use to penalize and correct the people for what they are doing. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "you are making God even more angry with the people of Israel, and God may punish us even more" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Israel

Here Nehemiah refers to all of the Israelites figuratively as if they were a single person, their ancestor, Israel. Alternate translation: "the Israelites" or "the people of Israel" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

by profaning the sabbath

As in 13:17, to **profane** something means to treat something that should be considered holy, that is, set apart for a special purpose, as if it were ordinary or common. Alternate translation: "by treating the Sabbath day like any other day" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.595)**)

Nehemiah 13:19

And it happened & when the gates of Jerusalem grew dark before the face of the sabbath

Nehemiah uses this phrase to introduce the next event in his story. You do not need to represent it in your translation unless your language has a similar expression that it characteristically uses. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.553)**)

when the gates of Jerusalem grew dark before the face of the sabbath

Nehemiah speaks of the gates as if they were changing in hue, but this is a figurative way of saying that the sun was setting and evening was beginning. Alternate translation: "when evening came" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

before the face of the sabbath

As in 13:4, the expression **face**, which often refers figuratively to the front of something, has the further figurative significance of "in front of" or "before" a certain time. Alternate translation: "as the Sabbath was beginning" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

that, & I spoke, and the doors were shut

Here the conjunction **and** indicates that the action described in the second phrase was the result of the action described in the first phrase. Alternate translation: "I gave orders for the doors to be closed and barred" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

and I said that they should not open them until after the sabbath

They likely refers to the gatekeepers. Alternate translation: "I ordered the gatekeepers not to open them again until after the Sabbath"

And I caused some from my young men to stand at the gates

As in 4:16 and many other places in the book, "young men" refers to the servants who worked for Nehemiah. While they probably were young adult males, the expression is specifically envisioning their role and status. Alternate translation: "I had some of my servants stand at the gates" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

a load could not enter on the day of the sabbath

Here Nehemiah speaks figuratively of a load of goods as if it were a living thing that could go through the gates and into Jerusalem on its own. Alternate translation: "so that no one would bring in a load on the Sabbath day" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

a load could not enter on the day of the sabbath

The ultimate purpose was to keep merchants from offering goods for sale on the Sabbath and to keep the people from buying them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "so that

on the Sabbath day no one would bring a load of goods into the city for sale" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 13:20

the ones who traded and the ones who sold all kinds of goods to sell

These two phrases mean similar things. You do not need to repeat both of them in your translation if that might be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: "merchants who had goods for sale," or "some traders and some merchants" (See: **Doublet (p.523)**) (See: **Doublet (p.523)**)

And & lodged outside of Jerusalem

Lodged means "spent the night." The implication is that they wanted to start selling their goods first thing the next morning. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "spent the night outside Jerusalem so they could start selling their goods first thing the next morning" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

a time or two

Alternate translation: "once or twice"

Nehemiah 13:21

And I testified against them

As in 9:26, this phrase means, "I warned them that what they were doing was wrong." (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

And I testified

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that this event took place at the same time as the event the story has just related. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a phrase such as "each time they did this" (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.511)**)

Why are you lodging in front of the wall

As in 13:17, Nehemiah is using a question form for emphasis as he scolds these merchants. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate what he says as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "I do not allow you to spend the night just outside the city wall" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

Why are you lodging in front of the wall

The implication, as in 13:20, is that the traders want to begin selling first thing the next morning. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I do not allow you to spend the night just outside the city wall so you could start selling your goods as soon as the Sabbath day begins"

If you repeat

This is an idiom that means "if you do this again." (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

I will stretch out a hand on you

This is an idiom that means "I will use force against you." Alternate translation: "I will forcibly drive you away from the city" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

I will stretch out a hand

Here, **hand** figuratively represents power and action. Alternate translation: "forcibly drive away" (See: **Metaphor (p. 563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

From that time, they did not come on the sabbath

The expression in the first phrase indicates that the event it introduces took place after the event the story has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a phrase such as "after that." Alternate translation: "After that, the merchants no longer came to the city on the Sabbath" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**)

Nehemiah 13:22

And I said to the Levites that they should purify themselves

As in 12:30 and 13:9, **purify** means to perform a ceremony to make a person or a place ceremonially clean, to express the hope that it will be acceptable to God and useful for his purposes. Alternate translation: "I told the Levites to hold a ceremony to make themselves clean and acceptable to God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and come keep the gates to consecrate the day of the sabbath

As in 3:1 and 12:47, **consecrate** means to set something apart for a special purpose. Nehemiah was telling the Levites that they should guard the gates in order to prevent people from bringing goods for sale into the city on the Sabbath day. That way, they would ensure that the Sabbath continued to be a day that was set apart for the special purpose of rest and worship, and it would not be treated like an ordinary day. Alternate translation: "and I told them that they should then guard the gates of the city so that no one would bring in goods to sell on the Sabbath as if it were an ordinary day" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Remember me concerning this also, my God

In this context, **remember** means to think about someone and consider what action you can take on their behalf. Nehemiah is not suggesting that God has forgotten about him. Alternate translation: "Please bless me, O God, for doing this as well" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Remember me concerning this also, my God

As in 4:4, Nehemiah stops addressing the audience of his story and speaks directly to God. You could indicate this by putting this verse in quotation marks. Review the note at 4:4 about asides like this if that would be helpful. (See: **Aside (p.487)**) (See: **Aside (p.487)**)

and have pity on me according to the greatness of your covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun **greatness** expresses the vast extent to which God possesses the quality of **covenant faithfulness**. As in 1:5, God having this quality means that he is inwardly disposed to keep all of his promises, and so he always does that faithfully. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this abstract noun with an adjective such as "great." Alternate translation: "and have mercy on me, because your faithfulness to those who belong to you is so great" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.482)**)

Nehemiah 13:23

In those days

This phrase indicates that this event took place at the same time as the event the story has just related. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship in this case by using a phrase such as "around that same time"

In those days

The term **days** is used figuratively here to refer a particular period of time. Alternate translation: "around that same time" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

who had given a dwelling to

This is an expression that refers figuratively to marriage. Alternate translation: "who had married" (See: **Idiom (p. 550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Ashdodite, Ammonite, and Moabite

These are the names of three people groups. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Nehemiah 13:24

And their sons

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that this sentence will provide further information about the situation the book is describing here. You could use a phrase such as **and as for** to show that this is further background information. (See: **Background Information (p.493)**) (See: **Background Information (p.493)**)

And their sons, half were speaking Ashdodite, and none of them were knowing to speak Hebrew

This could mean one of two things. It seems most likely that the expression means that: (1) these children spoke a mixed language, using Ashdodite expressions half the time and Hebrew expressions the other half of the time, so that none of them knew how to speak Hebrew fluently. The expression could also mean that (2) half of the children who were born to Hebrew fathers and foreign mothers spoke a foreign language. However, if half spoke Ashdodite, and none spoke Hebrew, this leaves open the question of what language the other half of the children spoke. Alternate translation: (1) "their children spoke a mixed dialect, using Philistine expressions half the time, so that none of them could speak Hebrew fluently" or (2) "half of their children spoke the language of the Philistines, and none of their children knew how to speak Hebrew"

half

Half means one part out of two equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.537)**) (See: **Fractions (p.537)**)

and none of them were knowing to speak Hebrew, but according to the tongue of people group by people group

Here Nehemiah leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. This sentence seems to mean "none of them could speak Hebrew fluently, but instead they mixed it with the language of whatever people group their mothers belonged to." You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

but according to the tongue of

Here, **tongue** figuratively means the language spoken by a person or a group of people. Alternate translation: "language" (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.569)**)

people group by people group

This is an idiom that means "of each people group" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 13:25

And I contended with them

As in 5:7, 13:11, and 13:17, **contended** is a technical term that describes a public accusation that requires the defendants to answer for themselves in the presence of their fellow citizens. Alternate translation: "then I called these men to account publicly for what they had done" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

and cursed them

As in 10:29, **curse** means to express the wish that God would punish someone. Alternate translation: "I said I wished that God would punish them"

and struck some of their men, and pulled out their hair

By performing these actions, Nehemiah demonstrated to these men symbolically how serious a wrong they had committed. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I struck some of them and pulled out their hair to show how wrong they were to have married foreign women" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.591)**)

And I caused them to swear an oath by God: "If you give your daughters to their sons, or if you lift from their daughters for your sons, or for yourselves

Here Nehemiah is reporting the words of the oath in the second person, because this is his account of how he spoke to the men who had married foreign women. When these men said the actual oath, they would have used the first person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the first person in your translation as well. Alternate translation: "I made them take this oath: 'If we allow our daughters to marry their sons, or if we or our sons marry their daughters, may God punish us severely'" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.532)**)

And I caused them to swear an oath by God: "If you give your daughters to their sons, or if you lift from their daughters for your sons, or for yourselves

Nehemiah has the men take an oath using a common Hebrew formula that leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Whenever a person takes an oath using this formula, the implication is, "May God punish me severly if I do this thing." Alternate translation: "If we allow our daughters to marry their sons, or if we or our sons marry their daughters, may God punish us severely!" (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.525)**)

you give your daughters to their sons

This is an idiom that means **allow your daughters to marry their sons** or **give your daughters in marriage to their sons** (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

you lift from their daughters

This is an idiom that means "if you take any of their daughters as wives" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 13:26

Did not Solomon, the king of Israel, sin concerning these things

Here Nehemiah supports his argument by appealing to facts that he assumes these men will know. Alternate translation: "you know that Solomon king of Israel sinned because he married foreign women" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Did not Solomon, the king of Israel, sin concerning these things

Nehemiah is using a question form for emphasis as he scolds these men. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate what he says as a statement. Alternate translation: "you know that Solomon king of Israel sinned because he married foreign women" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

Yet among & nations

In this context, the conjunction **Yet** introduces a contrast between what Solomon would have been expected to do and what he actually did. You could begin the sentence with a phrase like "even though" to indicate this contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.501)**)

Yet among many nations there was no king like him

The expression **many nations** in this phrase indicates, "You could look among as many nations as you wanted, but you would still find no king like him." In other words, "There was no other king like him anywhere in the world." If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that as an alternate translation. (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

and he was beloved by his God

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "God loved him very much" (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.484)**)

and God gave him as king over all Israel

This is an idiom that means, "God made him king over all of Israel" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

The foreign women caused even him to sin

The implication is that these were foreign women whom Solomon married. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "The foreign women he married caused even him to sin" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 13:27

Should we then listen to you, to do all this great evil, to act unfaithfully toward our God and give a dwelling to foreign women

Nehemiah uses a question form for emphasis once again as he continues to scold these men. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate what he says as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: "We will not accept your excuses and allow you to keep doing this thing that is so wrong" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 584)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.584)**)

Should we then listen to you

As in 9:16 and 9:29, **listen** in this context is an idiom that means not just to hear a statement about a course of action, but to agree to follow it. If your language has a word for "listen" that also means "agree," you could use it here. Alternate translation: "we will not heed your words" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

all this great evil

Here, the word **all** does not indicate the entirety of something. Instead, it expresses emphasis. Alternate translation: "this thing that is so wrong" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

to act unfaithfully toward our God and give a dwelling to foreign women

Here acting unfaithfully means violating the Law of Moses. Nehemiah assumes that these men will know that the law forbade the Israelites to marry outside their people group. (In fact, it does so using language very much like the oath that Nehemiah made these men swear. For example, "Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons," Deuteronomy 7:3.) If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "By marrying foreign women, you are breaking the law that God gave us" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

and give a dwelling to

As in 13:23, this is an expression that refers figuratively to marriage. Alternate translation: "marrying" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 13:28

And one from the sons of

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that this sentence will provide background information that is necessary for understanding the next event the book will describe. You could express the same meaning with a word that indicates this in your language. (See: **Background Information (p.493)**) (See: **Background Information (p.493)**)

And one from the sons of

This means **one of the sons of.** (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Joiada, the son of Eliashib

Joiada is the name of a man, and Eliashib is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

Eliashib the high priest

Here Nehemiah repeats some background information to remind readers who Eliashib was. Alternate translation: "Eliashib, who was the high priest" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.517)**)

was son-in-law

Alternate translation: "had married the daughter of"

to Sanballat the Horonite

Sanballat is the name of a man, and Horonite is the name of his people group. See how you translated these words in 2:10. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.542)**)

And I caused him to flee

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: "as a result" or "because he had done this" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.506)**)

And I caused him to flee from beside me

Him means this son of Joiada. Nehemiah means not just that he made this man leave his personal presence, but that he forced him to at least leave Jerusalem, and perhaps to stay out of the entire province of Judah. Nehemiah is using the space around himself figuratively to represent all Jerusalem and Judah. Alternate translation: "I forced him to leave Jerusalem" or "I forced him to leave the province of Judah" (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.593)**)

And I caused him to flee from beside me

The implication is that this son of Joiada was serving as a priest himself (as his lineage entitled him to do), and so he was a high-profile case of flaunting the command in the law against marrying foreign women. Nehemiah needed to make an example of him. A further consideration may have been that Sanballat was an enemy to Nehemiah and the Jews, and this man was one of the people who was sending letters to Sanballat with information about Nehemiah, as 6:17 indicates. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express one of these possibilites explicitly. Alternate translation: "I forced him to leave Jerusalem because as a priest, he was setting a bad public example by being married to a foreign woman" or "I forced him to leave Jerusalem because he was helping our enemy Sanballat" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 13:29

Remember them, my God, on account of the defiling of the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites

As in 13:22, Nehemiah stops addressing the audience of his story and speaks directly to God. You could indicate this by putting this verse in quotation marks. Review the note at 4:4 about asides like this if that would be helpful. (See: **Aside (p.487)**) (See: **Aside (p.487)**)

Remember them

Them likely means this son of Joiada, who had married a foreign woman, and Joiada himself, who had arranged with Sanballat for his son to marry Sanballat's daughter. As often in this book, **remember** means to think about someone and consider what action you should take in their regard. Nehemiah is not suggesting that God has forgotten about Joiada and his son. Alternate translation: "treat Joiada and his son the way they deserve for what they have done" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

on account of the defiling of the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites

Nehemiah speaks here of Joiada and his son causing the priesthood to be dishonored and breaking the covenant as if these actions had made the priesthood and God's covenant with the Israelites ceremonially unclean. Alternate translation: "they have dishonored the priesthood and broken the covenant you made with the priests and Levites" (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites

This means the covenant that established the descendants of Aaron as priests and the Levites as their helpers, in other words, the covenant that God made with Israel through Moses. Alternate translation: "the covenant you made with the Israelites" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.489)**)

Nehemiah 13:30

And I purified them

In this context, the conjunction **And** indicates that this event it introduces took place after the event the story has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a word such as **then** (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.509)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p. 509)**)

And I purified them from everything foreign

Them means the priests and Levites whom Nehemiah has just mentioned. He probably says **purified** in a figurative sense. He did not hold a ceremony of purification, since the priests and Levites themselves would have done that. Rather, he means that he made sure that none of the other priests or Levites were married to foreign women, and that in this way he ensured that the priesthood was no longer figuratively unclean, as described in 13:29. Alternate translation: "I made sure that none of the priests or Levites were married to foreign women." (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.563)**)

And I caused the service watches to stand: for the priests and for the Levites

Generally in this book, the phrase **service watch** refers to the Levite singers. It means either an individual choir or a time on duty for the singers. But since Nehemiah also speaks of the priests here, in this context the phrase seems to mean more generally the time on duty for both the priests and the Levites. Alternate translation: "I made sure that the priests and Levites all came on duty in the temple when they were supposed to"

And I caused & to stand

Nehemiah is speaking of these temple arrangements figuratively, as in 5:13, as if they were a living thing that could stand, that is, stay in place or be established rather than go away. Alternate translation: "I made sure that" (See: **Personification (p.582)**) (See: **Personification (p.582)**)

a man in his work

In this context, **a man** means **each one of them** Alternate translation: "and that each one fulfilled his assigned responsibilities" (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

Nehemiah 13:31

and for the offering of pieces of wood at the appointed times; and for the firstfruits

This verse continues the sentence that begins in the previous verse, so here Nehemiah is describing two further things that he **caused to stand** or made sure happened. He is referring to the promises that the people made in their covenant to bring these contributions to the temple to support the priests and Levites. See how you translated these terms in 10:34 and 10:35. Alternate translation: "I also made sure that the people brought their offerings of wood and of the first crops that grow in their fields at the times when they had promised to bring them"

Remember me, my God, for good

As in 4:4, here Nehemiah stops addressing the readers of his story and speaks directly to God. You could indicate this by putting this verse in quotation marks. Review the note at 4:4 about asides like this if that would be helpful. (See: **Aside (p.487)**) (See: **Aside (p.487)**)

Remember me, my God, for good

To remember someone **for good** is an idiom that means to reward someone with good things for the good that they have done. (See: **Idiom (p.550)**) (See: **Idiom (p.550)**)

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Version 78

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: Nehemiah 1:2; Nehemiah 1:3; Nehemiah 1:7; Nehemiah 2:17; Nehemiah 2:20; Nehemiah 3:5; Nehemiah 4:4; Nehemiah 4:8; Nehemiah 5:1; Nehemiah 5:5; Nehemiah 5:6; Nehemiah 5:9; Nehemiah 5:18; Nehemiah 7:6; Nehemiah 8:8; Nehemiah 8:10; Nehemiah 8:12; Nehemiah 8:17; Nehemiah 9:5; Nehemiah 9:9; Nehemiah 9:17; Nehemiah 9:28; Nehemiah 9:32; Nehemiah 9:35; Nehemiah 9:36; Nehemiah 9:37; Nehemiah 10:32; Nehemiah 10:34; Nehemiah 10:37; Nehemiah 11:6; Nehemiah 11:14; Nehemiah 11:20; Nehemiah 11:23; Nehemiah 12:27; Nehemiah 12:43; Nehemiah 12:44; Nehemiah 12:45; Nehemiah 12:47; Nehemiah 13:10; Nehemiah 13:14; Nehemiah 13:22

Active or Passive

Some languages use both active and passive sentences. In active sentences, the subject does the action. In passive sentences, the subject is the one that receives the action. Here are some examples with their subjects bolded:

> • Active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
> • Passive: **The house** was built in 2010.

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)

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: Nehemiah 1:3; Nehemiah 2:3; Nehemiah 2:7; Nehemiah 2:13; Nehemiah 2:17; Nehemiah 4:2; Nehemiah 4:6; Nehemiah 4:7; Nehemiah 4:15; Nehemiah 5:8; Nehemiah 5:16; Nehemiah 5:18; Nehemiah 6:1; Nehemiah 6:6; Nehemiah 6:7; Nehemiah 6:8; Nehemiah 6:9; Nehemiah 6:10; Nehemiah 6:15; Nehemiah 6:16; Nehemiah 7:1; Nehemiah 7:3; Nehemiah 7:4; Nehemiah 7:5; Nehemiah 8:10; Nehemiah 8:11; Nehemiah 8:12; Nehemiah 8:13; Nehemiah 8:15; Nehemiah 9:1; Nehemiah 9:25; Nehemiah 10:29; Nehemiah 10:34; Nehemiah 10:36; Nehemiah 12:22; Nehemiah 12:23; Nehemiah 12:43; Nehemiah 12:44; Nehemiah 13:1; Nehemiah 13:4; Nehemiah 13:10; Nehemiah 13:13; Nehemiah 13:26

Aside

Description

An aside is a figure of speech in which someone who is speaking to a person or group pauses to speak confidentially to himself or someone else about those to whom he had been speaking. The speaker does this to indicate in a strong way his thoughts or feelings about that person or group.

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use asides, and readers could be confused by them. They may wonder why the speaker suddenly starts talking to himself or someone else about the people he is speaking with.

Examples From the Bible

> All the men of your covenant are sending you away as far as the border. The men of your peace are deceiving you and are prevailing against you. They of your bread will set a trap under you. **There is no understanding in him.** (Obadiah 1:7 ULT)

In the first three lines, Yahweh is telling the people of Edom what will happen to them because they did not help the people of Judah. In the fourth line, Yahweh says something about Edom to himself.

> And I purified them from everything foreign. And I caused the service watches to stand: for the priests and for the Levites, a man in his work; and for the offering of pieces of wood at the appointed times; and for the firstfruits. **Remember me, my God, for good.** (Nehemiah 13:30-31 ULT)

Nehemiah is speaking to the readers of his account and describing some of the many things he did to restore true worship in Judah after the people returned from exile. But he suddenly turns aside and addresses God, asking God to bless him for what he, Nehemiah, has done for those people.

Translation Strategies

(1) If an aside would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. But if this way of speaking would be confusing, let the speaker continue speaking to the people who are listening to him, but make clear that he is now expressing his thoughts and feelings about them.
(2) If a person speaks a prayer to God as an aside, you can put the prayer in quotation marks to indicate that.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1)

> All the men of your covenant are sending you away as far as the border. The men of your peace are deceiving you and are prevailing against you. They of your bread will set a trap under you. **There is no understanding in him.** (Obadiah 1:7 ULT)

All the men of your covenant are sending you away as far as the border. The men of your peace are deceiving you and are prevailing against you. They of your bread will set a trap under you. **You do not understand any of this.**

(2)

> And I purified them from everything foreign. And I caused the service watches to stand: for the priests and for the Levites, a man in his work; 31 and for the offering of pieces of wood at the appointed times; and for the firstfruits. **Remember me, my God, for good.** (Nehemiah 13:30-31 ULT)

And I cleansed them from everything foreign, and I made assignments for the priests and for the Levites, a man to his own work. And the wood offering at the stated time, and the firstfruits. **"Remember me, my God, for good."**

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 4:4; Nehemiah 5:19; Nehemiah 6:9; Nehemiah 9:5; Nehemiah 13:14; Nehemiah 13:22; Nehemiah 13:29; Nehemiah 13:31

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)*

Nehemiah 8:10; Nehemiah 8:12; Nehemiah 8:13; Nehemiah 8:14; Nehemiah 8:16; Nehemiah 8:17; Nehemiah 8:18; Nehemiah 9:1; Nehemiah 9:2; Nehemiah 9:4; Nehemiah 9:6; Nehemiah 9:7; Nehemiah 9:9; Nehemiah 9:10; Nehemiah 9:11; Nehemiah 9:12; Nehemiah 9:14; Nehemiah 9:15; Nehemiah 9:17; Nehemiah 9:18; Nehemiah 9:21; Nehemiah 9:23; Nehemiah 9:24; Nehemiah 9:32; Nehemiah 9:35; Nehemiah 9:37; Nehemiah 9:38; Nehemiah 10:1; Nehemiah 10:9; Nehemiah 10:28; Nehemiah 10:30; Nehemiah 10:31; Nehemiah 10:36; Nehemiah 10:38; Nehemiah 11:4; Nehemiah 11:5; Nehemiah 11:7; Nehemiah 11:10; Nehemiah 11:12; Nehemiah 11:13; Nehemiah 11:14; Nehemiah 11:15; Nehemiah 11:17; Nehemiah 11:19; Nehemiah 11:24; Nehemiah 11:25; Nehemiah 11:30; Nehemiah 11:36; Nehemiah 12:1; Nehemiah 12:9; Nehemiah 12:10; Nehemiah 12:22; Nehemiah 12:24; Nehemiah 12:26; Nehemiah 12:27; Nehemiah 12:28; Nehemiah 12:29; Nehemiah 12:30; Nehemiah 12:31; Nehemiah 12:34; Nehemiah 12:36; Nehemiah 12:37; Nehemiah 12:38; Nehemiah 12:40; Nehemiah 12:44; Nehemiah 12:46; Nehemiah 12:47; Nehemiah 13:2; Nehemiah 13:5; Nehemiah 13:6; Nehemiah 13:9; Nehemiah 13:10; Nehemiah 13:11; Nehemiah 13:15; Nehemiah 13:16; Nehemiah 13:17; Nehemiah 13:18; Nehemiah 13:19; Nehemiah 13:20; Nehemiah 13:22; Nehemiah 13:26; Nehemiah 13:27; Nehemiah 13:28; Nehemiah 13:29

Background Information

Description

When people tell a story, they normally tell the events in the order that they happened. This sequence of events makes up the storyline. The storyline is full of action verbs that move the story along in time. But sometimes a writer may take a break from the storyline and give some information to help his listeners understand the story better. This type of information is called background information. The background information might be about things that happened before the events he has already told about, or it might explain something in the story, or it might be about something that would happen much later in the story.

> This page answers the question: *What is background information, and how can I show that some information is background information?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Order of Events* *(UTA PDF)*
> *Writing Styles* *(UTA PDF)*

Example — The bolded phrases in the story below are all background information.

Peter and John went on a hunting trip because **their village was going to have a feast the next day**. **Peter was the best hunter in the village. He once killed three wild pigs in one day!** They walked for hours through low bushes until they heard a wild pig. The pig ran, but they managed to shoot the pig and kill it. Then they tied up its legs with some rope **they had brought with them** and carried it home on a pole. When they brought it to the village, Peter's cousin saw the pig and realized that it was his own pig. Peter had mistakenly killed his cousin's pig.

Background information often tells about something that had happened earlier or something that would happen much later. Examples of these are: "their village was going to have a feast the next day," "He once killed three wild pigs in one day," and "that they had brought with them."

Often background information uses "be" verbs like "was" and "were," rather than action verbs. Examples of these are "their village was going to have a feast the next day," and "Peter **was** the best hunter in the village."

Background information can also be marked with words that tell the reader that this information is not part of the event line of the story. In this story, some of these words are "because," "once," and "had."

A writer may use background information:

- to help their listeners be interested in the story
- to help their listeners understand something in the story
- to help the listeners understand why something is important in the story
- to tell the setting of a story

> ◦ Setting includes:
> ◦ where the story takes place
> ◦ when the story takes place
> ◦ who is present when the story begins
> ◦ what is happening when the story begins

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of marking background information and storyline information.
- You (the translator) need to know the order of the events in the Bible, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.
- You will need to translate the story in a way that marks the background information in a way that your own readers will understand the order of events, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.

Examples From the Bible

> Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.
> Abram **was 86 years old** when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:15-16 ULT)

The first sentence tells about two events. Hagar gave birth and Abraham named his son. The second sentence is background information about how old Abram was when those things happened.

> And Jesus himself **was beginning about 30 years old**. He **was the son** (as it was assumed) of
> Joseph, of Heli, (Luke 3:23 ULT)

The verses before this tell about when Jesus was baptized. This sentence introduces background information about Jesus' age and ancestors. The story resumes in chapter 4 where it tells about Jesus going to the wilderness.

> Then **it happened on a Sabbath** that he **was going through the grain fields**, and his
> disciples **were picking and eating the heads of grain**, **rubbing them in their hands**. But
> some of the Pharisees said ... (Luke 6:1-2a ULT)

These verses give the setting of the story. The events took place in a grain field on the Sabbath day. Jesus, his disciples, and some Pharisees were there, and Jesus' disciples were picking heads of grain and eating them. The main action in the story starts with the phrase, "But some of the Pharisees said ...."

Translation Strategies

To keep translations clear and natural you will need to study how people tell stories in your language. Observe how your language marks background information. You may need to write down some stories in order to study this. Observe what kinds of verbs your language uses for background information and what kinds of words or other markers signal that something is background information. Do these same things when you translate, so that your translation is clear and natural and people can understand it easily.

(1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information.
(2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first. (This is not always possible when the background information is very long.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information. The examples below explain how this was done in the ULT English translations.

> **And** Jesus himself **was** beginning about 30 years old. He **was** the son (as it was assumed) of
> Joseph, of Heli. (Luke 3:23 ULT)

As here, English sometimes uses the word "and" to show that there is some kind of change in the story. The verb "was" shows that it is background information.

> Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But
> Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother,
> and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He
> locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The bolded phrase happened before John rebuked Herod. In English, the helping verb "had" in "had done" shows that Herod did those things before John rebuked him.

(2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first.

> Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. **Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram**. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

> > "**When Abram was 86 years old**, Hagar gave birth to his son, and Abram named his son Ishmael."

> Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The translation below reorders John's rebuke and Herod's actions.

> > "Now Herod the tetrarch married his brother's wife, Herodias, and **he did many other evil things**, so John rebuked him. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison."

Next we recommend you learn about:

Connecting Words and Phrases *(UTA PDF)*
Introduction of a New Event *(UTA PDF)*

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 1:11; Nehemiah 11:4; Nehemiah 11:11; Nehemiah 11:23; Nehemiah 12:40; Nehemiah 12:45; Nehemiah 12:46; Nehemiah 12:47; Nehemiah 13:4; Nehemiah 13:6; Nehemiah 13:24; Nehemiah 13:28

Biblical Distance

Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal]]
Fractions (UTA PDF)

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man's hand.
- The **span** or handspan was the width of a man's hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man's forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **"long" cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as "furlong," which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

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

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

Translation Principles

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

Translation Strategies

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

Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The footnotes would look like:

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

The footnotes would look like:

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

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 3:13

Biblical Money

Description

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals, such

as silver and gold, and would pay a certain weight of that metal in order to buy things. Later, people started to make coins that each contained a standard amount of a certain metal. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

Unit in OT	Metal	Weight
daric	gold coin	8.4 grams
shekel	various metals	11 grams
talent	various metals	33 kilograms

Unit in NT	Metal	Day's Wage
denarius/denarii	silver coin	1 day
drachma	silver coin	1 day
mite	copper coin	1/64 day
shekel	silver coin	4 days
talent	silver	6,000 days

Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see Biblical Weight. The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament.

(1) Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)
(2) Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
(4) Use the biblical term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.
(5) Use the biblical term and explain it in a footnote.

Translation Strategies Applied

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

> The one owed 500 denarii, and the other, 50. (Luke 7:41b ULT)

Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)

> > "The one owed **500 denali**, and the other, **50**."

Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.

> > "The one owed **500 silver coins**, and the other, **50**."

(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.

> > "The one owed **500 days' wages**, and the other, **50**."

(4) Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

> > "The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2"

The footnotes would look like:

> > [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

> > "The one owed **500 denarii**,1 and the other, **50**." (Luke 7:41 ULT)
>
> > [1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

> "

Next we recommend you learn about:

Copy or Borrow Words (UTA PDF)
Translate Unknowns (UTA PDF)

Referenced in: Nehemiah 5:15; Nehemiah 7:70; Nehemiah 7:71; Nehemiah 7:72; Nehemiah 10:32

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: Nehemiah 3:5; Nehemiah 6:1; Nehemiah 6:8; Nehemiah 9:28; Nehemiah 11:3; Nehemiah 11:31; Nehemiah 11:36; Nehemiah 12:30; Nehemiah 13:18; Nehemiah 13:26

Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Logical Relationships

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

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: Nehemiah 6:13

Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

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.

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 2:8; Nehemiah 2:12; Nehemiah 2:15; Nehemiah 5:5; Nehemiah 5:12; Nehemiah 5:15; Nehemiah 5:18; Nehemiah 6:7; Nehemiah 6:13; Nehemiah 6:16; Nehemiah 6:18; Nehemiah 7:5; Nehemiah 8:5; Nehemiah 8:9; Nehemiah 8:10; Nehemiah 8:11; Nehemiah 8:12; Nehemiah 8:13; Nehemiah 9:10; Nehemiah 9:12; Nehemiah 9:15; Nehemiah 9:19; Nehemiah 9:20; Nehemiah 9:21; Nehemiah 9:28; Nehemiah 9:30; Nehemiah 9:31; Nehemiah 9:32; Nehemiah 9:33; Nehemiah 9:38; Nehemiah 10:8; Nehemiah 10:31; Nehemiah 11:30; Nehemiah

Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

Time Relationships

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

Sequential Clause

Description

A sequential clause is a time relation that connects two events in which one happens and then the other happens.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate sequences of events in different ways; some use ordering, some use connecting words, some even use relative tense (Relative tense is a tense that refers to a time in relation to a reference point in the context.) Connecting words that may indicate sequence are words such as "then," "later," "after," "afterward," "before," "first," and "when." Translators need to be certain that they communicate the order of the events in a way that is natural in their language. This may require ordering clauses differently than in the original languages.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> **When** Joseph came to his brothers, they kidnapped him and sold him to some slave traders. (OBS Story 8 Frame 2)

First Joseph came to his brothers, and then they kidnapped and sold him. We know this because of the connecting word "**when**." The translator needs to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

> It was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but **after** I ate it, my stomach became bitter. (Revelation 10:10b ULT)

The event of the first clause occurs first, and the event of the last clause occurs later. We know this because of the connecting word "**after**." The translator needs to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

> For **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate (Isaiah 7:16 ULT)

The event of the first clause occurs after the event of the second clause. First the land they dread will be desolate, and then the child will know to refuse evil and choose good. We know this because of the connecting word "**before**." However, stating the clauses in this order may communicate the wrong order of events in your language. The translator may have to change the order so that the clauses come in the order that they happen. Or it may be possible to keep the order of the original language text and mark the ordering of sequence so that it is clear to the readers. You (the translator) need to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

> Then Mary arose in those days **and** quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah, **and** she entered into the house of Zechariah **and** greeted Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-40 ULT)

Here the general connector "**and**" connects four events. These are sequential events—each happens after the one before it. We know this because that is the only way that these events would happen. So in English, the general connector "and" is enough to make the sequence clear for events such as these. You will need to decide if this also communicates this sequence clearly and correctly in your language.

Translation Strategies

If the sequence of events is clear in your language, then translate the sequence as it is.

(1) If the connecting word is not clear, use a connecting word that communicates the sequence more clearly.
(2) If the clauses are in an order that makes the sequence unclear, put the clauses in an order that is more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the connecting word is not clear, use a connecting word that communicates the sequence more clearly.

> Then Mary arose in those days **and** quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah, **and** she entered into the house of Zechariah **and** greeted Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-40 ULT)
>
> > Then Mary arose in those days. **Then** she quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah. **Then** she entered into the house of Zechariah, **and then** she greeted Elizabeth.

> For **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate (Isaiah 7:16 ULT)
>
> > For the time will come when the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, **but even before that time**, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate.

(2) If the clauses are in an order that makes the sequence unclear, put the clauses in an order that is more clear.

> For the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good.

For more about sequences of events, see Sequence of Events.

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 7:73; Nehemiah 12:27; Nehemiah 12:31; Nehemiah 12:40; Nehemiah 13:3; Nehemiah 13:7; Nehemiah 13:9; Nehemiah 13:10; Nehemiah 13:11; Nehemiah 13:12; Nehemiah 13:13; Nehemiah 13:21; Nehemiah 13:30

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: Nehemiah 4:23; Nehemiah 5:1; Nehemiah 6:10; Nehemiah 6:17; Nehemiah 9:4; Nehemiah 12:38; Nehemiah 12:43; Nehemiah 12:44; Nehemiah 13:6; Nehemiah 13:21

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:

> This page answers the question: *How do connecting words work to join parts of the text in different ways?*

- 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:

Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

Description

In some languages, phrases that modify a noun can be used with the noun for two different purposes. They can either (1) distinguish the noun from other similar items, or (2) they can give more information about the noun. That information could be new to the reader, or a reminder about something the reader might already know. Other languages use modifying phrases with a noun only for distinguishing the noun from other similar things. When people who speak these languages hear a modifying phrase along with a noun, they assume that its function is to distinguish one item from another similar item.

> This page answers the question: *When a phrase is used with a noun, what is the difference between phrases that distinguish the noun from others and phrases that simply inform or remind?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)*
> *Sentence Structure (UTA PDF)*

When the phrase that modifies a noun is a relative clause (a phrase that starts with a word such as "who" or"which"), some languages use a comma to mark the difference between (1) making a distinction between similar items and (2) giving more information about an item. Without the comma, the sentence below communicates that the added phrase is making a distinction:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister who was very thankful**.
  - If her sister was usually thankful, the phrase "who was thankful" could distinguish this sister of Mary's from another sister who was not usually thankful.

With the comma, the phrase is giving more information:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister, who was very thankful**.
  - This same phrase can be used to give us more information about Mary's sister. It tells us about how Mary's sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish one sister from another sister.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Many source languages of the Bible use phrases that modify a noun both for distinguishing the noun from another similar item and also for giving more information about the noun. You (the translator) must be careful to understand which meaning the author intended in each case.
- Some languages use phrases that modify a noun only for distinguishing the noun from another similar item. When translating a phrase that is used for giving more information, translators who speak these languages will need to separate the phrase from the noun. Otherwise, people who read it or hear it will think that the phrase is meant to distinguish the noun from other similar items.

Examples From the Bible

Examples of words and phrases that are used to distinguish one item from other possible items:

(These usually do not cause any problem in translation.)

> The curtain is to separate **the holy place** from **the most holy place**. (Exodus 26:33b ULT)

The words "holy" and "most holy" distinguish two different places from each other and from any other place.

> A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to **the woman who bore him**. (Proverbs 17:25 ULT)

The phrase "who bore him" distinguishes which woman the son is bitterness to. He is not bitterness to all women, but to his mother.

Examples of words and phrases that are used to give added information or a reminder about an item:

(These are a translation issue for languages that do not use these.)

> ... for **your righteous judgments** are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

The word "righteous" simply reminds us that God's judgments are righteous. It does not distinguish his righteous judgments from his unrighteous judgments, because all of his judgments are righteous.

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

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

> How can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase "who is 90 years old" is a reminder of Sarah's age. It tells why Abraham was asking the question. He did not expect that a woman who was that old could bear a child. He was not distinguishing one woman named Sarah from another woman named Sarah who was a different age.

> I will wipe away mankind **whom I have created** from the surface of the earth. (Genesis 6:7 ULT)

The phrase "whom I have created" is a reminder of the relationship between God and mankind. It is the reason God had the right to wipe away mankind. There is not another mankind that God did not create.

> I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

By saying "worthless idols," David was commenting about all idols and giving his reason for hating those who serve them. He was not distinguishing worthless idols from valuable idols.

Translation Strategies

If readers would understand the purpose of a phrase with a noun, then consider keeping the phrase and the noun together. For languages that use words or phrases with a noun only to distinguish one item from another, here are some strategies for translating phrases that are used to inform or remind.

(1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose. (2) Use one of your language's ways for expressing that this is just added information. It may be by adding a small word, or by changing the way the voice sounds. Sometimes changes in the voice can be shown with punctuation marks, such as parentheses or commas.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.

> I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)
>
> > **Because idols are worthless**, I hate those who serve them.

> ... for your **righteous** judgments are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

> ... for your judgments are good **because they are righteous**.

Can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

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

(2) Use one of your language's ways for expressing that this is just added information.

You are my Son, **whom I love**. I am pleased with you. (Luke 3:22 ULT)

> You are my Son. **I love you** and I am pleased with you.
>
> **Receiving my love**, you are my Son. I am pleased with you.

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

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

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 8:9; Nehemiah 8:13; Nehemiah 10:38; Nehemiah 11:1; Nehemiah 11:18; Nehemiah 11:22; Nehemiah 11:35; Nehemiah 12:7; Nehemiah 12:24; Nehemiah 12:26; Nehemiah 12:36; Nehemiah 13:4; Nehemiah 13:10; Nehemiah 13:28

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** παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου (Matthew 5:18)
> …iota one or one serif **not not** may pass away from the law

>> …**not even** one iota or one serif may pass away from the law
>> or:
>> …**certainly no** iota or serif may pass away from the law

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

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 2:2

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: Nehemiah 1:3; Nehemiah 1:5; Nehemiah 1:7; Nehemiah 1:10; Nehemiah 2:10; Nehemiah 2:20; Nehemiah 4:14; Nehemiah 4:17; Nehemiah 4:19; Nehemiah 5:1; Nehemiah 5:2; Nehemiah 5:6; Nehemiah 5:8; Nehemiah 5:9; Nehemiah 5:13; Nehemiah 5:15; Nehemiah 7:4; Nehemiah 7:6; Nehemiah 7:61; Nehemiah 8:8; Nehemiah 8:9; Nehemiah 8:10; Nehemiah 8:12; Nehemiah 9:5; Nehemiah 9:10; Nehemiah 9:13; Nehemiah 9:14; Nehemiah 9:17; Nehemiah 9:22; Nehemiah 9:24; Nehemiah 9:26; Nehemiah 9:28; Nehemiah 9:31; Nehemiah 9:32; Nehemiah 9:34; Nehemiah 9:35; Nehemiah 9:36; Nehemiah 10:29; Nehemiah 10:36; Nehemiah 12:27; Nehemiah 13:20

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: Nehemiah 3:1; Nehemiah 3:4; Nehemiah 3:5; Nehemiah 3:18; Nehemiah 3:25; Nehemiah 3:26; Nehemiah 4:23; Nehemiah 5:18; Nehemiah 7:70; Nehemiah 7:71; Nehemiah 8:13; Nehemiah 8:16; Nehemiah 10:31; Nehemiah 10:34; Nehemiah 10:37; Nehemiah 10:39; Nehemiah 11:1; Nehemiah 11:7; Nehemiah 11:8; Nehemiah 11:12; Nehemiah 11:13; Nehemiah 11:19; Nehemiah 11:31; Nehemiah 11:36; Nehemiah 12:8; Nehemiah 12:10; Nehemiah 12:12; Nehemiah 12:22; Nehemiah 12:23; Nehemiah 12:24; Nehemiah 12:26; Nehemiah 12:28; Nehemiah 12:31; Nehemiah 12:37; Nehemiah 12:38; Nehemiah 12:45; Nehemiah 12:46; Nehemiah 13:5; Nehemiah 13:10; Nehemiah 13:24; Nehemiah 13:25

Exclamations

Description

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

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

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"

Referenced in:

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

> 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)*

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.

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.

we/us (inclusive)

we/us (exclusive)

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: Nehemiah 10:30

First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as "I" and the person he is speaking to as "you." Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than "I" or "you."

> This page answers the question: *What are first, second, and third person, and how do I translate when a third person form does not refer to the third person?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (UTA PDF)*
>
> *Pronouns (UTA PDF)*

Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns "I" and "we." (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun "you." (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns "he," "she," "it," and "they." (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like "the man" or "the woman" are also third person.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses the third person to refer to himself or to the people he is speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant "I" or "you."

Examples From the Bible

Sometimes people used the third person instead of "I" or "me" to refer to themselves.

> But David said to Saul, "**Your servant** used to keep **his** father's sheep." (1 Samuel 17:34 ULT)

David referred to himself in the third person as "your servant" and used "his." He was calling himself Saul's servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

> Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, "… Do you have an arm like **God's**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?" (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words "God's" and "his." He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful.

Sometimes people use the third person instead of "you" or "your" to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

> Abraham answered and said, "Look, I have undertaken to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!" (Genesis 18:27 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as "My Lord" rather than as "you." He did this to show his humility before God.

> So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

After saying "each of you," Jesus used the third person "his" instead of "your."

Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean "I" or "you" would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

(1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun "I" or "you."
(2) Simply use the first person ("I") or second person ("you") instead of the third person.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun "I" or "you."

> But David said to Saul, "**Your servant** used to keep **his** father's sheep." (1 Samuel 17:34)
>
> > But David said to Saul, "**I, your servant**, used to keep **my** father's sheep."

(2) Simply use the first person ("I") or second person ("you") instead of the third person.

> Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, "... Do you have an arm like **God's**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?" (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)
>
> > Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, "... Do you have an arm like **mine**? Can you thunder with a voice like **mine**?"

> So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)
>
> > So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **your** brother from your heart.

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Forms of You (UTA PDF)*

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 1:5; Nehemiah 1:6; Nehemiah 1:9; Nehemiah 1:10; Nehemiah 1:11; Nehemiah 2:3; Nehemiah 2:5; Nehemiah 2:7; Nehemiah 2:8; Nehemiah 12:27; Nehemiah 13:25

Forms of You

Singular, Dual, and Plural

Some languages have more than one word for "you" based on how many people the word "you" refers to. The **singular** form refers to one person, and the **plural** form refers to more than one person. Some languages also have a **dual** form which refers to two people, and some languages have other forms that refer to three or four people.

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

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses a singular form of "you" even though he is speaking to a crowd. 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: Nehemiah 1:5; Nehemiah 1:8; Nehemiah 1:9; Nehemiah 2:17

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.

<div style="border:1px solid">

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)

</div>

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: Nehemiah 1:8

Fractions

Description

A fraction is a number that represents part of a whole. When an item is divided into several equal parts, a fraction refers to one or more of those parts.

For the drink offering, you must offer **a third** of a hin of wine. (Numbers 15:7a ULT)

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

A hin is a container of a set size which is used for measuring wine and other liquids. The people were to think about dividing a hin container into three equal parts, filling up only one of those parts and offering that amount.

> ... **a third** of the ships were destroyed. (Revelation 8:9b ULT)

There were many ships. If all those ships were divided into three equal groups of ships, one group of ships was destroyed.

Most fractions in English simply have the letters "th" added to the end of the number, such as fourth, sixth, ninth, tenth.

Number of parts the whole is divided into	Fraction
four	fourth
ten	tenth
one hundred	one hundredth
one thousand	one thousandth

Some fractions in English do not follow that pattern.

Number of parts the whole is divided into	Fraction
two	half
three	third
five	fifth

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use fractions. They may simply talk about parts or groups, but they do not use fractions to tell how big a part is or how many parts are included in a group.

Examples From the Bible

> Now to the **half-tribe** of Manasseh, Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the other **half**, Joshua gave a possession among their brothers across the Jordan on the west. (Joshua 22:7 ULT)

The tribe of Manasseh divided into two groups. The phrase "the half-tribe of Manasseh" refers one of those groups. The phrase "the other half" refers to the other group.

> So the four angels who had been prepared for that hour, that day, that month, and that year, were released so that they would kill **a third** of mankind. (Revelation 9:15 ULT)

If all the people in the world were to be divided into three equal groups, then the number of people in one group would be killed.

> You must also prepare **a fourth** of a hin of wine as the drink offering. (Numbers 15:5 ULT)

They were to imagine dividing a hin of wine into four equal parts and prepare the amount equal to one of them.

Translation Strategies

If a fraction in your language would give the right meaning, consider using it. If not, you could consider these strategies.

(1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.
(2) For measurements such as for weight and length, use a unit that your people might know or the unit in the UST.
(3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

Examples of These Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.

> **A third** of the ocean became red like blood (Revelation 8:8 ULT)
>
> > It was like they **divided** the ocean **into three parts**, and **one part** of the ocean became blood.
>
> Then you must offer with the bull a grain offering of **three-tenths** of an ephah of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9 ULT)
>
> > ... then you must **divide** an ephah of fine flour **into ten parts** and **divide** a hin of oil **into two parts**. Then mix **three of those parts** of the flour with **one of the parts** of oil. Then you must offer that grain offering along with the bull.

(2) For measurements, use the measurements that are given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

> ... **two-thirds of a shekel** ... (1 Samuel 13:21b ULT)
>
> ... **eight grams** of silver ... (1 Samuel 13:21b UST)
>
> ... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)
>
> > ... **six and one-half liters** of finely ground flour mixed with **two liters** of olive oil. (Numbers 15:9b UST)

(3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

> ... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)
>
> > **six quarts** of fine flour mixed with **two quarts** of oil.

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 3:9; Nehemiah 4:6; Nehemiah 4:16; Nehemiah 4:21; Nehemiah 5:11; Nehemiah 10:32; Nehemiah 10:37; Nehemiah 10:38; Nehemiah 13:5; Nehemiah 13:24

Hebrew Months

Description

The Hebrew calendar used in the Bible has twelve months. Unlike
the western calendar, its first month begins in the spring of the northern hemisphere. Sometimes a month is called by its name (Aviv, Ziv, Sivan), and sometimes it is called by its order in the Hebrew calendar year (first month, second month, third month).

> This page answers the question: *What are the Hebrew months?*

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may be surprised to read of months that they have never heard of, and they may wonder how those months correspond to the months that they use.
- Readers may not realize that phrases such as "the first month" or "the second month" refer to the first or second month of the Hebrew calendar, not some other calendar.
- Readers may not know when the first month of the Hebrew calendar begins.
- The Bible may tell about something happening in a certain month, but readers will not be able to fully understand what is said about it if they do not know what season of the year that was.

List of Hebrew Months

This is a list of the Hebrew months with information about them that may be helpful in the translation.

Aviv — (This month was called **Nisan** after the Babylonian exile.) This is the first month of the Hebrew calendar. It marks when God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. It is at the beginning of the spring season when the late rains come and people begin to harvest their crops. It is during the last part of March and the first part of April on western calendars. The Passover celebration started on Aviv 10; the Festival of Unleavened Bread was right after that, and the Festival of Harvest was a few weeks after that.

Ziv — This is the second month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the harvest season. It is during the last part of April and the first part of May on Western calendars.

Sivan — This is the third month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the harvest season and the beginning of the dry season. It is during the last part of May and the first part of June on Western calendars. The Feast of Weeks is celebrated on Sivan 6.

Tammuz — This is the fourth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of June and the first part of July on Western calendars.

Ab — This is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of July and the first part of August on Western calendars.

Elul — This is the sixth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the dry season and the beginning of the rainy season. It is during the last part of August and the first part of September on Western calendars.

Ethanim — This is the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the early rain season which would soften the land for sowing. It is during the last part of September and the first part of October on Western calendars. The Feast of Ingathering and the Day of Atonement are celebrated in this month.

Bul — This is the eighth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the rainy season when people plough their fields and sow seed. It is during the last part of October and the first part of November on Western calendars.

Kislev — This is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. This is at the end of the sowing season and the beginning of the cold season. It is during the last part of November and the first part of December on Western calendars.

Tebeth — This is the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the cold season when there may be rain and snow. It is during the last part of December and the first part of January on Western calendars.

Shebat — This is the eleventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is the coldest month of the year, and it has heavy rainfall. It is during the last part of January and the first part of February on Western calendars.

Adar — This is the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the cold season. It is during the last part of February and the first part of March on western calendars. The feast called Purim is celebrated in Adar.

Examples From the Bible

> Today you are going out, in **the month of Aviv**. (Exodus 13:4 ULT)

> You must eat unleavened bread from evening of the fourteenth day **in the first month of the year**, until evening of the twenty-first day of the month. (Exodus 12:18 ULT)

Translation Strategies

You may need to make some information about the months explicit. (See Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information.)

(1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.
(2) Use the names for months that people know.
(3) State clearly what season the month occurred in.
(4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the Hebrew name of the month. (If possible, use a footnote to show the Hebrew month and day.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The examples below use these two verses.

> At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of Aviv**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt. (Exodus 23:15b ULT)

> It will always be a statute for you that in **the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month,** you must humble yourselves and do no work. (Leviticus 16:29a ULT)

(1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.

> > At that time, you will appear before me in **the first month of the year**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.

(2) Use the months that people know.

> > At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of March**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.
> >
> > It will always be a statute for you that **on the day I choose in late September** you must humble yourselves and do no work.

(3) State clearly what season the month occurs in.

> > It will always be a statute for you that **in the autumn, on the tenth day of the seventh month,** you must humble yourselves and do no work.

(4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the month.

> It will always be a statute for you that in **the day I choose in early autumn**[1] you must humble yourselves and do no work.

The footnote would look like:

> [1] The Hebrew says, "the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month."

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Ordinal Numbers (UTA PDF)*

Referenced in: Nehemiah 1:1; Nehemiah 2:1; Nehemiah 6:15; Nehemiah 8:2; Nehemiah 9:1

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

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 Nehemiah; Nehemiah 1:1; Nehemiah 1:2; Nehemiah 1:5; Nehemiah 1:11; Nehemiah 2:7; Nehemiah 2:8; Nehemiah 2:9; Nehemiah 2:10; Nehemiah 2:13; Nehemiah 2:14; Nehemiah 2:15; Nehemiah 2:19; Nehemiah 3:1; Nehemiah 3:2; Nehemiah 3:3; Nehemiah 3:4; Nehemiah 3:5; Nehemiah 3:6; Nehemiah 3:7; Nehemiah 3:8; Nehemiah 3:9; Nehemiah 3:10; Nehemiah 3:11; Nehemiah 3:12; Nehemiah 3:13; Nehemiah 3:14; Nehemiah 3:15; Nehemiah 3:16; Nehemiah 3:17; Nehemiah 3:18; Nehemiah 3:19; Nehemiah 3:20; Nehemiah 3:21; Nehemiah 3:23; Nehemiah 3:24; Nehemiah 3:25; Nehemiah 3:26; Nehemiah 3:27; Nehemiah 3:28; Nehemiah 3:29; Nehemiah 3:30; Nehemiah 3:31; Nehemiah 3:32; Nehemiah 4:1; Nehemiah 4:3; Nehemiah 4:7; Nehemiah 6:1; Nehemiah 6:2; Nehemiah 6:6; Nehemiah 6:10; Nehemiah 6:14; Nehemiah 6:17; Nehemiah 6:18; Nehemiah 7:2; Nehemiah 7:7; Nehemiah 7:8; Nehemiah 7:9; Nehemiah 7:10; Nehemiah 7:11; Nehemiah 7:12; Nehemiah 7:13; Nehemiah 7:14; Nehemiah 7:15; Nehemiah 7:16; Nehemiah 7:17; Nehemiah 7:18; Nehemiah 7:19; Nehemiah 7:20; Nehemiah 7:21; Nehemiah 7:22; Nehemiah 7:23; Nehemiah 7:24; Nehemiah 7:25; Nehemiah 7:26; Nehemiah 7:27; Nehemiah 7:28; Nehemiah 7:29; Nehemiah 7:30; Nehemiah 7:31; Nehemiah 7:32; Nehemiah 7:33; Nehemiah 7:34; Nehemiah 7:35; Nehemiah 7:36; Nehemiah 7:37; Nehemiah 7:38; Nehemiah 7:39; Nehemiah 7:40; Nehemiah 7:41; Nehemiah 7:42; Nehemiah 7:43; Nehemiah 7:44; Nehemiah 7:45; Nehemiah 7:46; Nehemiah 7:57; Nehemiah 7:61; Nehemiah 7:62; Nehemiah 7:63; Nehemiah 8:1; Nehemiah 8:3; Nehemiah 8:4; Nehemiah 8:7; Nehemiah 8:16; Nehemiah 8:17; Nehemiah 9:4; Nehemiah 9:5; Nehemiah 9:7; Nehemiah 9:8; Nehemiah 9:9; Nehemiah 9:13; Nehemiah 9:14; Nehemiah 9:22; Nehemiah 10:1; Nehemiah 10:2; Nehemiah 10:3; Nehemiah 10:4; Nehemiah 10:5; Nehemiah 10:6; Nehemiah 10:7; Nehemiah 10:8; Nehemiah 10:9; Nehemiah 10:10; Nehemiah 10:11; Nehemiah 10:12; Nehemiah 10:13; Nehemiah 10:14; Nehemiah 10:15; Nehemiah 10:16; Nehemiah 10:17; Nehemiah 10:18; Nehemiah 10:19; Nehemiah 10:20; Nehemiah 10:21; Nehemiah 10:22; Nehemiah 10:23; Nehemiah 10:24; Nehemiah 10:25; Nehemiah 10:26; Nehemiah 10:27; Nehemiah 11:4; Nehemiah 11:5; Nehemiah 11:7; Nehemiah 11:8; Nehemiah 11:9; Nehemiah 11:10; Nehemiah 11:11; Nehemiah 11:12; Nehemiah 11:13; Nehemiah 11:14; Nehemiah 11:15; Nehemiah 11:16; Nehemiah 11:17; Nehemiah 11:19; Nehemiah 11:21; Nehemiah 11:22; Nehemiah 11:24; Nehemiah 11:25; Nehemiah 11:26; Nehemiah 11:27; Nehemiah 11:28; Nehemiah 11:29; Nehemiah 11:30; Nehemiah 11:31; Nehemiah 11:32; Nehemiah 11:33; Nehemiah 11:34; Nehemiah 11:35; Nehemiah 12:1; Nehemiah 12:2; Nehemiah 12:3; Nehemiah 12:4; Nehemiah 12:5; Nehemiah 12:6; Nehemiah 12:7; Nehemiah 12:8; Nehemiah 12:9; Nehemiah 12:11; Nehemiah 12:12; Nehemiah 12:13; Nehemiah 12:14; Nehemiah 12:15; Nehemiah 12:16; Nehemiah 12:17; Nehemiah 12:18; Nehemiah 12:19; Nehemiah 12:20; Nehemiah 12:21; Nehemiah 12:22; Nehemiah 12:23; Nehemiah 12:24; Nehemiah 12:25; Nehemiah 12:26; Nehemiah 12:28; Nehemiah 12:29; Nehemiah 12:31; Nehemiah 12:32; Nehemiah 12:33; Nehemiah 12:34; Nehemiah 12:35; Nehemiah 12:36; Nehemiah 12:37; Nehemiah 12:38; Nehemiah 12:39; Nehemiah 12:41; Nehemiah 12:42; Nehemiah 12:46; Nehemiah 12:47; Nehemiah 13:1; Nehemiah 13:2; Nehemiah 13:4; Nehemiah 13:13; Nehemiah 13:15; Nehemiah 13:16; Nehemiah 13:23; Nehemiah 13:28

Hyperbole

Description

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

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

It rains here every night.

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

Hyperbole

In hyperbole, a figure of speech that uses exaggeration, a speaker deliberately describes something with an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it. He expects people to understand that he is exaggerating.

> They will not leave **stone upon stone in you.** (Luke 19:44b ULT)

This is an exaggeration. It means that the enemies will completely destroy Jerusalem.

> Moses was educated in **all the wisdom of the Egyptians.** (Acts 7:22a ULT)

This hyperbole means that he had learned everything an Egyptian education could offer.

Generalization

This is a statement that is true most of the time or in most situations that it could apply to.

> The one who ignores instruction **will have poverty and shame,** but **honor will come** to him who learns from correction. (Proverbs 13:18)

These generalizations tell about what normally happens to people who ignore instruction and what normally happens to people who learn from correction. There may be some exceptions to these statements, but they are generally true.

> And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as **the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.** (Matthew 6:7)

This generalization tells about what Gentiles were known for doing. Many Gentiles did this. It does not matter if a few did not. The point was that the hearers should not join in this well-known practice.

Even though a hyperbole or a generalization may have a strong-sounding word like "all," "always," "none," or "never," it does not necessarily mean **exactly** "all," "always," "none," or "never." It simply means "most," "most of the time," "hardly any," or "rarely."

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.
If readers realize that a statement is not literally true, they need to be able to understand whether it is a hyperbole, a generalization, or a lie. (Though the Bible is completely true, it tells about people who did not always tell the truth.)

Examples From the Bible

Examples of Hyperbole

> If your hand causes you to stumble, **cut it off**. It is better for you to enter into life maimed … (Mark 9:43a ULT)

When Jesus said to cut off your hand, he meant that we should **do whatever extreme things** we need to do in order not to sin. He used this hyperbole to show how extremely important it is to try to stop sinning.

> The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel with 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The bolded phrase is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that the Philistine army was overwhelming in number. It means that there were **many, many** soldiers in the Philistine army.

> But as his anointing teaches you **everything** and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27b ULT)

This is a hyperbole. It expresses the assurance that God's Spirit teaches us about **all things that we need to know**. God's Spirit does not teach us about everything that it is possible to know.

> When they found him, they also said to him, "**Everyone** is looking for you." (Mark 1:37 ULT)

The disciples probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for Jesus, but that **many people** were looking for him, or that all of Jesus' closest friends there were looking for him. This is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that they and many others were worried about him.

Examples of Generalization

> Can **any good thing** come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46b ULT)

This rhetorical question is meant to express the generalization that there is nothing good in Nazareth. The people there had a reputation for being uneducated and not strictly religious. Of course, there were exceptions.

> One of them, of their own prophets, has said, "**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies**." (Titus 1:12 ULT)

This is a generalization that means that Cretans had a reputation to be like this because, in general, this is how Cretans behaved. It is possible that there were exceptions.

> **A lazy hand causes a person to be poor, but the hand of the diligent person gains riches.** (Proverbs 10:4 ULT)

This is generally true, and it reflects the experience of most people. It is possible that there are exceptions in some circumstances.

Caution

- Do not assume that something is an exaggeration just because it seems to be impossible. God does miraculous things.

> They saw Jesus **walking on the sea** and coming near the boat. (John 6:19b ULT)

This is not hyperbole. Jesus really walked on the water. It is a literal statement.

- Do not assume that the word "all" is always a generalization that means "most."

> Yahweh is righteous in **all** his ways and gracious in **all** he does. (Psalms 145:17 ULT)

Yahweh is always righteous. This is a completely true statement.

Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole or generalization would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here are other options.

(1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
(2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like "in general" or "in most cases."
(3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like "many" or "almost" to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.
(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like "all," "always," "none," or "never," consider deleting that word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.

> The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)
>
> > The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and **a great number of troops**.

(2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like "in general" or "in most cases."

> **The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame.** (Proverbs 13:18a ULT)
>
> > **In general,** the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame

> When you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the **Gentiles do,** for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. (Matthew 6:7 ULT)
>
> > And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles **generally** do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

(3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like "many" or "almost" to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.

> The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)
>
> > **Almost all** the country of Judea and **almost all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. or:

> > **Many** of the country of Judea and **many** of the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like "all," "always," "none," or "never," consider deleting that word.

> The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

> > The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 1:9; Nehemiah 2:3; Nehemiah 2:12; Nehemiah 4:3; Nehemiah 4:12; Nehemiah 4:17; Nehemiah 8:1; Nehemiah 8:9; Nehemiah 8:11; Nehemiah 9:23; Nehemiah 13:12

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: Nehemiah 1:4; Nehemiah 1:6; Nehemiah 1:8; Nehemiah 1:11; Nehemiah 2:1; Nehemiah 2:2; Nehemiah 2:3; Nehemiah 2:5; Nehemiah 2:6; Nehemiah 2:10; Nehemiah 2:18; Nehemiah 2:20; Nehemiah 3:1; Nehemiah 3:2; Nehemiah 3:28; Nehemiah 4:2; Nehemiah 4:4; Nehemiah 4:12; Nehemiah 4:14; Nehemiah 4:15; Nehemiah 4:16; Nehemiah 4:18; Nehemiah 4:19; Nehemiah 4:22; Nehemiah 4:23; Nehemiah 5:5; Nehemiah 5:7; Nehemiah 5:9; Nehemiah 5:11; Nehemiah 5:13; Nehemiah 5:14; Nehemiah 5:18; Nehemiah 5:19; Nehemiah 6:2; Nehemiah 6:14; Nehemiah 6:17; Nehemiah 6:18; Nehemiah 6:19; Nehemiah 7:2; Nehemiah 7:3; Nehemiah 7:4; Nehemiah 7:6; Nehemiah 7:61; Nehemiah 8:1; Nehemiah 8:2; Nehemiah 8:6; Nehemiah 8:14; Nehemiah 8:16; Nehemiah 8:17; Nehemiah 8:18; Nehemiah 9:4; Nehemiah 9:5; Nehemiah 9:6; Nehemiah 9:8; Nehemiah 9:9; Nehemiah 9:13; Nehemiah 9:16; Nehemiah 9:29; Nehemiah 9:30; Nehemiah 9:34; Nehemiah 9:36; Nehemiah 9:38; Nehemiah 10:28; Nehemiah 10:29; Nehemiah 10:32; Nehemiah 10:34; Nehemiah 10:35; Nehemiah 11:2; Nehemiah 11:3; Nehemiah 11:20; Nehemiah 11:23; Nehemiah 12:1; Nehemiah 12:7; Nehemiah 12:12; Nehemiah 12:22; Nehemiah 12:23; Nehemiah 12:26; Nehemiah 12:31; Nehemiah 12:46; Nehemiah 12:47; Nehemiah 13:1; Nehemiah 13:3; Nehemiah 13:4; Nehemiah 13:6; Nehemiah 13:7; Nehemiah 13:8; Nehemiah 13:10; Nehemiah 13:11;

Nehemiah 13:14; Nehemiah 13:15; Nehemiah 13:17; Nehemiah 13:18; Nehemiah 13:19; Nehemiah 13:21; Nehemiah 13:22; Nehemiah 13:23; Nehemiah 13:24; Nehemiah 13:25; Nehemiah 13:26; Nehemiah 13:27; Nehemiah 13:28; Nehemiah 13:29; Nehemiah 13:30; Nehemiah 13:31

Introduction of a New Event

Description

When people tell a story, they tell about an event or a series of events. Often they put certain information at the beginning of the story, such as who the story is about, when it happened, and where it happened. This information that the writer gives before the events of the story begin is called the setting of the story. Some new events in a story also have a setting because they might involve new people, new times, and new places. In some languages, people also tell if they saw the event or heard about it from someone else.

This page answers the question: *How do we introduce a new event in a story?*

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

Writing Styles *(UTA PDF)*
Order of Events *(UTA PDF)*

When your people tell about events, what information do they give at the beginning? Is there a certain order that they put it in? In your translation, you will need to follow the way your language introduces new information at the beginning of a story or a new event rather than the way the source language did that. In this way your translation will sound natural and communicate clearly in your language.

Examples From the Bible

> **In the days of Herod**, king of Judea, **there was a certain priest named Zechariah**, from the division of Abijah. And **his wife was** from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. (Luke 1:5 ULT)

The verses above introduce a story about Zechariah. The first bolded phrase tells when it happened, and the next two bolded phrases introduce the main people. The next two verses go on to explain that Zechariah and Elizabeth were old and did not have any children. All of this is the setting. Then the phrase "And it happened that" in Luke 1:8 helps to introduce the first event in this story:

> **And it happened that** in his performing as priest before God, in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, he came up by lot to enter into the temple of the Lord to burn incense. (Luke 1:8-9 ULT)

> **The birth of Jesus Christ happened in the following way.** His mother, Mary, was engaged to marry Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18 ULT)

The bolded sentence above makes it explicit that a story about Jesus is being introduced. The story will tell about how the birth of Jesus happened.

> **Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king**, behold, learned men from the east arrived in Jerusalem. (Matthew 2:1 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that the events concerning the learned men happened **after** Jesus was born.

> **Now in those days** John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea. (Matthew 3:1-22 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that John the Baptist came preaching around the time of the previous events. It is probably very general and refers to when Jesus lived in Nazareth.

> **Then** Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to John, to be baptized by him. (Matthew 3:13 ULT)

The word "then" shows that Jesus came to the Jordan River some time after the events in the previous verses.

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

The author first introduced the new person and then told about what he did and when he did it. In some languages, it might be more natural to tell about the time first.

> 6 Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. 7 Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)

Verse 6 is a statement of the events that happen in the rest of chapter 7. Chapter 6 already told about how God told Noah that there would be a flood, and how Noah prepared for it. Chapter 7 verse 6 introduces the part of the story that tells about Noah and his family and the animals going into the ship, the rain starting, and the rain flooding the earth. Some languages might need to make it clear that this verse simply introduces the event, or move this verse after verse 7. Verse 6 is not one of the events of the story. The people went into the ship before the flood came.

Translation Strategies

If the information given at the beginning of a new event is clear and natural to your readers, consider translating it as it is in the ULT or UST. If not, consider one of these strategies:

(1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.
(2) If readers would expect certain information but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase to fill in that information, such as: "another time" or "someone."
(3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language's way of showing that it is a summary.
(4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, indicate that the event would actually happen later in the story.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.

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

> > There was a **man whose name was Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**. One night he came to Jesus.

> > One night **a man named Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**, came to Jesus.

> As he passed by, **he saw Levi the son of Alpheus, sitting** at the tax collector's tent, and he said to him … (Mark 2:14a ULT)

> > As he passed by, **Levi the son of Alpheus was sitting** at the tax collector's tent. Jesus saw him and and said to him …

> > As he passed by, **there was a man sitting** at the tax collector's tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him …

> > As he passed by, **there was a tax collector** sitting at the tax collector's tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him …

(2) If readers would expect certain information, but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase such as "another time," or "someone."

> Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT) — If people expect to be told something about when the new event happened, the phrase "after that" can help them see that it happened after the events already mentioned.
>
> > **After that**, when Noah was 600 years old, the flood came upon the earth.

> **Again he began** to teach beside the sea. (Mark 4:1a ULT) — In chapter 3 Jesus was teaching at someone's house. Readers may need to be told that this new event happened at another time, or that Jesus actually went to the sea.
>
> > **Another time** Jesus began to teach people again beside the sea.
> >
> > Jesus went to the sea and **began to teach people again** there.

(3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language's way of showing that it is a summary.

> Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT)
>
> > **Now this is what happened when** Noah was 600 years old and the flood came upon the earth.
> >
> > **This part tells about what happened when** the flood came upon the earth. It happened when Noah was 600 years old.

(4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, show that the event will actually happen later in the story.

> Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)
>
> > **Now this is what happened when** Noah was 600 years old. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because **God had said that the waters of the flood would come**.

"

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Background Information* *(UTA PDF)*
> *Introduction of New and Old Participants* *(UTA PDF)*

Referenced in: Nehemiah 1:1; Nehemiah 1:4; Nehemiah 2:1; Nehemiah 4:1; Nehemiah 4:7; Nehemiah 4:15; Nehemiah 6:1; Nehemiah 6:16; Nehemiah 7:1; Nehemiah 13:19

Introduction of New and Old Participants

Description

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

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

<div style="border">
This page answers the question: *Why cannot the readers of my translation understand who the author was writing about?*

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

Parts of Speech *(UTA PDF)*
Writing Styles *(UTA PDF)*
</div>

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

New Participants

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

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

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

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

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

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

Old Participants

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Pronouns — When to Use Them* *(UTA PDF)*

Referenced in: Nehemiah 8:1; Nehemiah 8:9

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: Nehemiah 9:20; Nehemiah 10:39

Merism

Definition

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it. By referring to the extreme parts, the speaker intends to include also everything in between those parts.

> "I am **the alpha and the omega**," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8 ULT)

> I am **the alpha and the omega**, **the first and the last**, **the beginning and the end**. (Revelation 22:13, ULT)

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:

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: Nehemiah 1:6; Nehemiah 1:8; Nehemiah 1:9; Nehemiah 1:10; Nehemiah 1:11; Nehemiah 2:1; Nehemiah 2:3; Nehemiah 2:8; Nehemiah 2:12; Nehemiah 2:18; Nehemiah 2:20; Nehemiah 3:1; Nehemiah 3:8; Nehemiah 3:18; Nehemiah 3:20; Nehemiah 3:31; Nehemiah 4:1; Nehemiah 4:2; Nehemiah 4:5; Nehemiah 4:6; Nehemiah 4:7; Nehemiah 4:9; Nehemiah 4:11; Nehemiah 4:14; Nehemiah 4:16; Nehemiah 4:21; Nehemiah 5:1; Nehemiah 5:5; Nehemiah 5:6; Nehemiah 5:7; Nehemiah 5:8; Nehemiah 5:10; Nehemiah 5:14; Nehemiah 5:15; Nehemiah 5:16; Nehemiah 5:18; Nehemiah 6:8; Nehemiah 6:9; Nehemiah 6:10; Nehemiah 6:16; Nehemiah 6:19; Nehemiah 7:5; Nehemiah 7:8; Nehemiah 7:9; Nehemiah 7:10; Nehemiah 7:11; Nehemiah 7:12; Nehemiah 7:13; Nehemiah 7:14; Nehemiah 7:15; Nehemiah 7:16; Nehemiah 7:17; Nehemiah 7:18; Nehemiah 7:19; Nehemiah 7:20; Nehemiah 7:21; Nehemiah 7:22; Nehemiah 7:23; Nehemiah 7:24; Nehemiah 7:25; Nehemiah 7:39; Nehemiah 7:40; Nehemiah 7:41; Nehemiah 7:42; Nehemiah 7:43; Nehemiah 7:44; Nehemiah 7:45; Nehemiah 7:46; Nehemiah 7:47; Nehemiah 7:48; Nehemiah 7:49; Nehemiah 7:50; Nehemiah 7:51; Nehemiah 7:52; Nehemiah 7:53; Nehemiah 7:54; Nehemiah 7:55; Nehemiah 7:56; Nehemiah 7:57; Nehemiah 7:58; Nehemiah 7:59; Nehemiah 7:61; Nehemiah 7:62; Nehemiah 7:63; Nehemiah 7:65; Nehemiah 7:70; Nehemiah 7:71; Nehemiah 8:10; Nehemiah 8:13; Nehemiah 8:14; Nehemiah 8:16; Nehemiah 8:17; Nehemiah 9:1; Nehemiah 9:2; Nehemiah 9:5; Nehemiah 9:6; Nehemiah 9:8; Nehemiah 9:9; Nehemiah 9:11; Nehemiah 9:14; Nehemiah 9:16; Nehemiah 9:17; Nehemiah 9:22; Nehemiah 9:23; Nehemiah 9:24; Nehemiah 9:25; Nehemiah 9:26; Nehemiah 9:27; Nehemiah 9:28; Nehemiah 9:29; Nehemiah 9:30; Nehemiah 9:32; Nehemiah 9:34; Nehemiah 9:35; Nehemiah 9:36; Nehemiah 10:9; Nehemiah 10:10; Nehemiah 10:14; Nehemiah 10:28; Nehemiah 10:29; Nehemiah 10:32; Nehemiah 10:33; Nehemiah 10:34; Nehemiah 10:35; Nehemiah 10:36; Nehemiah 10:37; Nehemiah 10:38; Nehemiah 10:39; Nehemiah 11:3; Nehemiah 11:4; Nehemiah 11:5; Nehemiah 11:6; Nehemiah 11:7; Nehemiah 11:8; Nehemiah 11:11; Nehemiah 11:12; Nehemiah 11:13; Nehemiah 11:14; Nehemiah 11:16; Nehemiah 11:17; Nehemiah 11:19; Nehemiah 11:21; Nehemiah 11:22; Nehemiah 11:24; Nehemiah 11:25; Nehemiah 11:30; Nehemiah 11:31; Nehemiah 12:7; Nehemiah 12:8; Nehemiah 12:9; Nehemiah 12:12; Nehemiah 12:22; Nehemiah 12:23; Nehemiah 12:24; Nehemiah 12:28; Nehemiah 12:35; Nehemiah 12:36; Nehemiah 12:37; Nehemiah 12:44; Nehemiah 12:46; Nehemiah 13:2; Nehemiah 13:4; Nehemiah 13:7; Nehemiah 13:8; Nehemiah 13:9; Nehemiah 13:13; Nehemiah 13:14; Nehemiah 13:16; Nehemiah 13:18; Nehemiah 13:19; Nehemiah 13:21; Nehemiah 13:29; Nehemiah 13:30

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.

> ... 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: Nehemiah 1:1; Nehemiah 1:3; Nehemiah 1:4; Nehemiah 1:6; Nehemiah 1:9; Nehemiah 1:11; Nehemiah 2:3; Nehemiah 2:8; Nehemiah 2:13; Nehemiah 3:5; Nehemiah 3:25; Nehemiah 4:8; Nehemiah 4:10; Nehemiah 4:15; Nehemiah 4:23; Nehemiah 5:4; Nehemiah 5:10; Nehemiah 5:11; Nehemiah 5:13; Nehemiah 5:17; Nehemiah 6:13; Nehemiah 7:3; Nehemiah 7:6; Nehemiah 7:39; Nehemiah 8:1; Nehemiah 8:2; Nehemiah 8:3; Nehemiah 8:4; Nehemiah 8:10; Nehemiah 9:5; Nehemiah 9:10; Nehemiah 9:11; Nehemiah 9:24; Nehemiah 9:25; Nehemiah 9:29; Nehemiah 9:30; Nehemiah 9:32; Nehemiah 9:35; Nehemiah 10:29; Nehemiah 10:31; Nehemiah 10:33; Nehemiah 10:35; Nehemiah 10:37; Nehemiah 11:9; Nehemiah 11:17; Nehemiah 11:20; Nehemiah 11:24; Nehemiah 12:8; Nehemiah 12:36; Nehemiah 13:1; Nehemiah 13:2; Nehemiah 13:15; Nehemiah 13:24

Numbers

Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words ("five") or as numerals ("5"). Some numbers are very large, such as "two hundred" (200), "twenty-two thousand" (22,000), or "one hundred million" (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

> Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

> That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word "about" shows that it is not an exact number.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

Examples From the Bible

> When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

> Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands.** (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

Translation Strategies

(1) Write numbers using numerals.
(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.
(4) Combine words for large numbers.
(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

> Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

(1) Write numbers using numerals.

> > I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

> > I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

> > I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

> > I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

> I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents)**, **ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord® Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord® Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

> When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years.

> He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

"

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Ordinal Numbers* *(UTA PDF)*
> *Fractions* *(UTA PDF)*

Referenced in: Nehemiah 5:14; Nehemiah 5:15; Nehemiah 6:15; Nehemiah 11:6; Nehemiah 11:8; Nehemiah 11:12; Nehemiah 11:13; Nehemiah 11:14; Nehemiah 11:18; Nehemiah 11:19

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: Nehemiah 2:9; Nehemiah 5:7; Nehemiah 5:8; Nehemiah 8:6

Ordinal Numbers

Description

Ordinal numbers are used in the Bible mainly to tell the position of something in a list.

> And God has indeed appointed some in the church, **first** apostles, **second** prophets, **third** teachers, then miracles. (1 Corinthians 12:28a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are ordinal numbers and how can I translate them?*

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

Numbers (UTA PDF)

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

Ordinal Numbers in English

Most ordinal numbers in English simply have "-th" added to the end.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
4	four	fourth
10	ten	tenth
100	one hundred	one hundredth
1,000	one thousand	one thousandth

Some ordinal numbers in English do not follow that pattern.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
1	one	first
2	two	second
3	three	third
5	five	fifth
12	twelve	twelfth

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have special numbers for showing the order of items in a list. There are different ways to deal with this.

Examples From the Bible

> The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim … the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

The people cast lots and one went to each of these people in the order given.

> You must place in it four rows of precious stones. The **first** row must have a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet. The **second** row must have an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. The **third** row

> must have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. The **fourth** row must have a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They must be mounted in gold settings. (Exodus 28:17-20 ULT)

This describes four rows of stones. The first row is probably the top row, and the fourth row is probably the bottom row.

Translation Strategies

If your language has ordinal numbers and using them would give the right meaning, consider using them. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

(1) Use "one" with the first item and "another" or "the next" with the rest.
(2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell the total number of items, and use "one" with the first item and "another" or "the next" with the rest.

> The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim … the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

>> There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **another** to Jedaiah, **another** to Harim … **another** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

>> There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **the next** to Jedaiah, **the next** to Harim … **the next** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

> A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **the first** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the second** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the third** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. **The fourth** river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10-14 ULT)

>> A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **one** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the next** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the next** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. The **last** river is the Euphrates.

(2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

> The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim … the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

>> They cast **24** lots. The lots went to Jerhoiarib, Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim … Delaiah, and Maaziah.

"

Next we recommend you learn about:

Fractions (UTA PDF)

Referenced in: Nehemiah 2:1; Nehemiah 3:11; Nehemiah 3:19; Nehemiah 3:20; Nehemiah 3:21; Nehemiah 3:24; Nehemiah 3:27; Nehemiah 3:30; Nehemiah 5:14; Nehemiah 6:5; Nehemiah 6:15; Nehemiah 7:73; Nehemiah 8:13; Nehemiah 8:14; Nehemiah 8:18; Nehemiah 9:1; Nehemiah 10:31; Nehemiah 11:17; Nehemiah 13:6

Parallelism

Description

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

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "doublet" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and raises it above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

> Your word is a lamp to my feet
> and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULT)

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

> You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
> you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

> Yahweh sees everything a person does
> and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

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: Nehemiah 1:2; Nehemiah 1:3; Nehemiah 1:5; Nehemiah 1:6; Nehemiah 1:7; Nehemiah 1:9; Nehemiah 1:10; Nehemiah 1:11; Nehemiah 2:6; Nehemiah 2:19; Nehemiah 2:20; Nehemiah 4:1; Nehemiah 4:5; Nehemiah 4:11; Nehemiah 5:8; Nehemiah 5:13; Nehemiah 6:10; Nehemiah 6:16; Nehemiah 7:61; Nehemiah 8:15; Nehemiah 8:17; Nehemiah 9:16; Nehemiah 9:22; Nehemiah 9:24; Nehemiah 9:31; Nehemiah 9:32; Nehemiah 9:34; Nehemiah 9:37; Nehemiah 10:30

Personification

Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

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

Such as wisdom:

> Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

> Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

> You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples From the Bible

> You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

> Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.

> **Sin crouches** at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — God speaks of sin as if it were a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.
>
> > **Sin** is at your door, **waiting to attack you.**

(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.

> Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — This can be translated with the word "as."
>
> > Sin is crouching at the door, **just as a wild animal does as it waits to attack a person.**.

(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

> Even the **winds and the sea obey him**. (Matthew 8:27b ULT) — The men speak of the "wind and the sea" as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus, just as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.
>
> > He even **controls the winds and the sea**.

NOTE: We have broadened our definition of "personification" to include "zoomorphism" (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and "anthropomorphism" (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics) because the translation strategies for them are the same.

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

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 1:9; Nehemiah 2:2; Nehemiah 4:2; Nehemiah 4:7; Nehemiah 5:7; Nehemiah 5:13; Nehemiah 6:17; Nehemiah 7:6; Nehemiah 7:34; Nehemiah 7:35; Nehemiah 7:36; Nehemiah 7:37; Nehemiah 7:38; Nehemiah 9:8; Nehemiah 9:32; Nehemiah 9:33; Nehemiah 10:32; Nehemiah 11:3; Nehemiah 11:23; Nehemiah 12:43; Nehemiah 13:12; Nehemiah 13:18; Nehemiah 13:19; Nehemiah 13:30

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.

> But you, why do you judge your brother? And you also, why do you despise your brother? (Romans 14:10 ULT)

Paul used these rhetorical questions **to rebuke** the Romans for doing what they should not do.

> 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 express surprise or other emotion? 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!

But you, **why do you judge your brother**? And you also, **why do you despise your brother**? (Romans 14:10 ULT)

> > Do you think it is good to judge your brother? Do you think it is good to despise your brother?

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 2:3; Nehemiah 2:19; Nehemiah 4 General Notes; Nehemiah 4:2; Nehemiah 5:9; Nehemiah 6:3; Nehemiah 6:11; Nehemiah 13:11; Nehemiah 13:17; Nehemiah 13:18; Nehemiah 13:21; Nehemiah 13:26; Nehemiah 13:27

Simile

Description

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. The simile focuses on a particular trait the two items have in common, and it includes the words "like," "as," or "than."

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

> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were troubled and discouraged, **like sheep not having a shepherd**. (Matthew 9:36)

Jesus compared the crowds of people to sheep without a shepherd. Sheep grow frightened when they do not have a good shepherd to lead them in safe places. The crowds were like that because they did not have good religious leaders.

> See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, so be as wise **as the serpents** and harmless **as the doves**. (Matthew 10:16 ULT)

Jesus compared his disciples to sheep and their enemies to wolves. Wolves attack sheep; Jesus' enemies would attack his disciples.

> For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

God's word is compared to a two-edged sword. A two-edged sword is a weapon that can easily cut through a person's flesh. God's word is very effective in showing what is in a person's heart and thoughts.

Purposes of Simile

- A simile can teach about something that is unknown by showing how it is similar to something that is known.
- A simile can emphasize a particular trait, sometimes in a way that gets people's attention.
- Similes help form a picture in the mind or help the reader experience what he is reading about more fully.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not know how the two items are similar.
- People may not be familiar with both of the items being compared.

Examples From the Bible

> Suffer hardship with me, **as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3 ULT)

In this simile, Paul compares suffering with what soldiers endure, and he encourages Timothy to follow their example.

> Just as the lightning flashing from a place under the sky shines to another place under the sky, so will the Son of Man be. (Luke 17:24b ULT)

This verse does not tell how the Son of Man will be like the lightning. But in context we can understand from the verses before it that just as lighting flashes suddenly and everyone can see it, the Son of Man will come suddenly and everyone will be able to see him. No one will have to be told about it.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the correct meaning of a simile, consider using it. If they would not, here are some strategies you can use:

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience. (2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote. (3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.

> See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves.** (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — This compares the danger that Jesus' disciples would be in with the danger that sheep are in when they are surrounded by wolves.
>
> > See, I send **you out among wicked people** and you will be in danger from them **as sheep are in danger when they are among wolves**.
>
> For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)
>
> > For the word of God is living and active and **more powerful than a very sharp two-edged sword**.

(2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.

> See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — If people do not know what sheep and wolves are, or that wolves kill and eat sheep, you could use some other animal that kills another.
>
> > See, I send you out **as chickens in the midst of wild dogs**.
>
> How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)
>
> > How often I wanted to gather your children together, **as a mother closely watches over her infants**, but you refused!
>
> If you have faith **as a grain of mustard** … (Matthew 17:20)
>
> > If you have faith even as small **as a tiny seed**,

(3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

> See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT)
>
> > See, I send you out among **people who will want to harm you**.
>
> How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

> > How often I wanted to **protect you**, but you refused!

"

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Next we recommend you learn about:

Metaphor *(UTA PDF)*

Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns *(UTA PDF)*

</div>

Referenced in: Nehemiah 9:11; Nehemiah 9:23

Symbolic Action

Description

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their heads up and down to mean "yes" or turn their heads from side to side to mean "no." Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures. In the Bible, sometimes people perform symbolic actions and sometimes they only refer to the symbolic action.

> This page answers the question: *What is a symbolic action and how do I translate it?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Translate Unknowns* *(UTA PDF)*

Examples of symbolic actions

- In some cultures people shake hands when they meet to show that they are willing to be friendly.
- In some cultures people bow when they meet to show respect to each other.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

An action may have a meaning in one culture and a different meaning or no meaning at all in another culture. For example, in some cultures raising the eyebrows means "I am surprised" or "What did you say?" In other cultures it means "yes."

In the Bible, people did things that had certain meanings in their culture. When we read the Bible, we might not understand what someone meant if we interpret the action based on what it means in our own culture today.

You (the translator) need to understand what people in the Bible meant when they used symbolic actions. If an action does not mean the same thing in your own culture, then you need to figure out how to translate what the action meant.

Examples From the Bible

> And behold, a man came whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And **falling at the feet of Jesus**, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: He did this to show great respect to Jesus.

> Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: When people wanted someone to welcome them into their home, they stood at the door and knocked on it.

Translation Strategies

If people would correctly understand what a symbolic action meant to the people in the Bible, consider using it. If not, here are some strategies for translating it.

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.
(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.
(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning. Do this only in poetry, parables, and sermons. Do not do this when there actually was a person who did a specific action.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)
>
> > Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet in order to show that he greatly respected him.
>
> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and knock on it, asking you to let me in.

(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)
>
> > Jairus showed Jesus great respect.
>
> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and ask you to let me in.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT) — Since Jairus actually did this, you should not substitute an action from your own culture.
>
> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT) — Jesus was not standing at a real door. Rather he was speaking about wanting to have a relationship with people. So in cultures where it is polite to clear one's throat when wanting to be let into a house, you could use that.
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and clear my throat.

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 1:4; Nehemiah 3:1; Nehemiah 5:13; Nehemiah 6:10; Nehemiah 8:5; Nehemiah 8:6; Nehemiah 9:1; Nehemiah 9:3; Nehemiah 9:5; Nehemiah 9:15; Nehemiah 12:27; Nehemiah 12:31; Nehemiah 13:25

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: Nehemiah 2:2; Nehemiah 2:3; Nehemiah 2:5; Nehemiah 2:6; Nehemiah 2:13; Nehemiah 2:15; Nehemiah 2:16; Nehemiah 3:28; Nehemiah 3:32; Nehemiah 4:2; Nehemiah 4:12; Nehemiah 4:13; Nehemiah 4:14; Nehemiah 4:16; Nehemiah 4:19; Nehemiah 4:21; Nehemiah 5:2; Nehemiah 5:14; Nehemiah 5:15; Nehemiah 5:16; Nehemiah 5:17; Nehemiah 6:1; Nehemiah 6:3; Nehemiah 6:16; Nehemiah 7:1; Nehemiah 8:3; Nehemiah 8:5; Nehemiah 8:6; Nehemiah 8:15; Nehemiah 9:1; Nehemiah 9:15; Nehemiah 9:36; Nehemiah 10:39; Nehemiah 11:1; Nehemiah 11:17; Nehemiah 13:4; Nehemiah 13:5; Nehemiah 13:28

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: Nehemiah 1:1; Nehemiah 2:15; Nehemiah 3:1; Nehemiah 3:5; Nehemiah 3:7; Nehemiah 3:8; Nehemiah 3:26; Nehemiah 4:13; Nehemiah 4:16; Nehemiah 4:20; Nehemiah 4:23; Nehemiah 5:3; Nehemiah 5:4; Nehemiah 5:7; Nehemiah 5:17; Nehemiah 5:18; Nehemiah 7:1; Nehemiah 7:5; Nehemiah 7:44; Nehemiah 7:46; Nehemiah 7:57; Nehemiah 7:65; Nehemiah 7:67; Nehemiah 7:70; Nehemiah 7:73; Nehemiah 8:1; Nehemiah 8:3; Nehemiah 8:8; Nehemiah 8:9; Nehemiah 8:14; Nehemiah 9:3; Nehemiah 9:4; Nehemiah 9:6; Nehemiah 9:11; Nehemiah 9:15; Nehemiah 9:18; Nehemiah 9:20; Nehemiah 9:25; Nehemiah 9:26; Nehemiah 9:27; Nehemiah 10:1; Nehemiah 10:28; Nehemiah 10:33; Nehemiah 10:34; Nehemiah 10:37; Nehemiah 10:38; Nehemiah 11:1; Nehemiah 11:3; Nehemiah 11:9; Nehemiah 11:19; Nehemiah 11:21; Nehemiah 12:25; Nehemiah 12:27; Nehemiah 13:5; Nehemiah 13:12; Nehemiah 13:13; Nehemiah 13:17; Nehemiah 13:18

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 78

god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry

Definition:

A false god is something that people worship instead of the one true God. The term "goddess" refers specifically to a female false god.

- These false gods or goddesses do not exist. Yahweh is the only God.
- People sometimes make objects into idols to worship as symbols of their false gods.
- In the Bible, God's people frequently turned away from obeying him in order to worship false gods.
- Demons often deceive people into believing that the false gods and idols they worship have power.
- Baal, Dagon, and Molech were three of the many false gods that were worshiped by people in Bible times.
- Asherah and Artemis (Diana) were two of the goddesses that ancient peoples worshiped.

An idol is an object that people make so they can worship it. Something is described as "idolatrous" if it involves giving honor to something other than the one true God.

- People make idols to represent the false gods that they worship.
- These false gods do not exist; there is no God besides Yahweh.
- Sometimes demons work through an idol to make it seem like it has power, even though it does not.
- Idols are often made of valuable materials like gold, silver, bronze, or expensive wood.
- An "idolatrous kingdom" means a "kingdom of people who worship idols" or a "kingdom of people who worship earthly things."
- The term "idolatrous figure" is another word for a "carved image" or an "idol."

Translation Suggestions:

- There may already be a word for "god" or "false god" in the language or in a nearby language.
- The term "idol" could be used to refer to false gods.
- In English, a lower case "g" is used to refer to false gods, and upper case "G" is used to refer to the one true God. Other languages also do that.
- Another option would be to use a completely different word to refer to the false gods.
- Some languages may add a word to specify whether the false god is described as male or female.

(See also: God, Asherah, Baal, Molech, demon, image, kingdom, worship)

Bible References:

- Genesis 35:2
- Exodus 32:1
- Psalms 31:6
- Psalms 81:8-10
- Isaiah 44:20
- Acts 7:41
- Acts 7:43
- Acts 15:20
- Acts 19:27
- Romans 2:22
- Galatians 4:8-9
- Galatians 5:19-21
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **10:2** Through these plagues, God showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's **gods**.
- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, "I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other **gods**."
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false **gods** and did many evil things.
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite **gods** instead of Yahweh, the true God.
- **18:13** But most of Judah's kings were evil, corrupt, and they worshiped idols. Some of the kings even sacrificed their children to false **gods**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H0367, H0410, H0426, H0430, H0457, H1322, H1544, H1892, H2553, H3649, H4656, H4906, H5236, H5566, H6089, H6090, H6091, H6456, H6459, H6673, H6736, H6754, H7723, H8163, H8251, H8267, H8441, H8655, G14930, G14940, G14950, G14960, G14970, G22990, G27120

"

Referenced in: Introduction to Nehemiah; Nehemiah 12 General Notes

Israel, Israelites

Facts:

The term "Israel" is the name that God gave to Jacob. Often it refers to the nation that is descended from him.

- The name Israel probably means "He struggles with God."
- The descendants of Jacob became known as the "sons of Israel" or the "people of Israel" or the "nation of Israel" or the "Israelites."
- God formed his covenant with the people of Israel. They were his chosen people.
- The nation of Israel consisted of twelve tribes.
- Soon after King Solomon died, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the southern kingdom, called "Judah," and the northern kingdom, called "Israel."
- Often the term "Israel" can be translated as "the people of Israel" or "the nation of Israel," depending on the context.

(See also: Jacob, kingdom of Israel, Judah, nation, twelve tribes of Israel)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 10:1
- 1 Kings 8:2
- Acts 2:36
- Acts 7:24
- Acts 13:23
- John 1:49-51
- Luke 24:21
- Mark 12:29
- Matthew 2:6
- Matthew 27:9
- Philippians 3:4-5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:15** The descendants of the twelve sons became the twelve tribes of **Israel**.
- **9:3** The Egyptians forced the **Israelites** to build many buildings and even whole cities.
- **9:5** A certain **Israelite** woman gave birth to a baby boy.
- **10:1** They said, "This is what the God of **Israel** says, 'Let my people go!'"
- **14:12** But despite all this, the people of __Israel __ complained and grumbled against God and against Moses.
- **15:9** God fought for **Israel** that day. He caused the Amorites to be confused and he sent large hailstones that killed many of the Amorites.
- **15:12** After this battle, God gave each tribe of **Israel __ its own section of the Promised Land. Then God gave __Israel** peace along all its borders.
- **16:16** So God punished __Israel __ again for worshiping idols.
- **43:6** "Men of **Israel**, Jesus was a man who did many mighty signs and wonders by the power of God, as you have seen and already know."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3478, H3479, H3481, H3482, G09350, G24740, G24750

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Referenced in: Introduction to Nehemiah

law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God

Definition:

Most simply, the term "law" refers to a rule or instruction that should be followed. In the Bible, the term "law" is often used generally to refer to anything and everything God wants his people to obey and do. The specific term "law of Moses" refers to the commandments and instructions that God gave Moses for the Israelites to obey.

- Depending on the context, the "law" can refer to:
    - the Ten Commandments that God wrote on stone tablets for the Israelites
    - all the laws given to Moses
    - the first five books of the Old Testament
    - the entire Old Testament (also referred to as "scriptures" in the New Testament).
    - all of God's instructions and will
- The phrase "the Law and the Prophets" is used in the New Testament to refer to the Hebrew scriptures (or "Old Testament")

Translation Suggestions:

- These terms could be translated using the plural, "laws," since they refer to many instructions.
- The term "law of Moses" could be translated as "the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites."
- Depending on the context, "the law of Moses" could also be translated as "the law that God told to Moses" or "God's laws that Moses wrote down" or "the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites."
- Ways to translate "the law" or "law of God" or "God's laws" could include "laws from God" or "God's commands" or "laws that God gave" or "everything that God commands" or "all of God's instructions."
- The phrase "law of Yahweh" could also be translated as "Yahweh's laws" or "laws that Yahweh said to obey" or "laws from Yahweh" or "things Yahweh commanded."

(See also: instruct, Moses, Ten Commandments, lawful, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Acts 15:6
- Daniel 9:13
- Exodus 28:42-43
- Ezra 7:25-26
- Galatians 2:15
- Luke 24:44
- Matthew 5:18
- Nehemiah 10:29
- Romans 3:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:7** God also gave many other **laws** and rules to follow. If the people obeyed these **laws**, God promised that he would bless and protect them. If they disobeyed them, God would punish them.
- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed **God's law** could bring an animal to the altar in front of the Tent of Meeting as a sacrifice to God.
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the covenant that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai. The people promised to remain faithful to God and follow **his laws**.
- **16:1** After Joshua died, the Israelites disobeyed God and did not drive out the rest of the Canaanites or obey **God's laws**.

- **21:5** In the New Covenant, God would write **his law** on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would forgive their sins.
- **27:1** Jesus answered, "What is written in **God's law**?"
- **28:1** Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me 'good?' There is only one who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have eternal life, obey **God's laws**."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H1881, H1882, H2706, H2710, H3068, H4687, H4872, H4941, H8451, G23160, G35510, G35650

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Referenced in: Nehemiah 9 General Notes

people of God

Definition:

The concept of the "people of God" in the Bible refers to people with whom God has established a covenant relationship.

- In the Old Testament, the phrase "people of God" refers to the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel was chosen by God and set apart from the other nations of the world in order to serve and obey him.
- In the New Testament, the phrase "people of God" refers to the "Church," meaning everyone who believes in Jesus. This includes both Jews and Gentiles. In the New Testament, sometimes this group of people is called the "sons of God" or "children of God."
- When God uses the phrase "my people," he is referring to people who have a covenant relationship with him. God's people are chosen by him, and he wants them to live in a way that is pleasing to him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "people of God" could be translated as "God's people" or "the people who worship God" or "people who serve God" or "people who belong to God."
- When God says "my people" other ways to translate it could include "the people I have chosen" or "the people who worship me" or "the people who belong to me."
- Similarly, "your people" could be translated as "the people who belong to you" or "the people you chose to belong to you."
- Also "his people" could be translated as "the people who belong to him" or "the people God chose to belong to himself."

(See also: Israel, people group)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:2
- Acts 7:34
- Acts 7:51-53
- Acts 10:36-38
- Daniel 9:24-25
- Isaiah 2:5-6
- Jeremiah 6:20-22
- Joel 3:16-17
- Micah 6:3-5
- Revelation 13:7-8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H5971, G23160, G29920

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Referenced in: Nehemiah 2 General Notes

Promised Land

Facts:

The term "Promised Land" only occurs in the Bible stories, not the Bible text. It is an alternate way of referring to the land of Canaan which God had promised to give to Abraham and his descendants.

- When Abram was living in the city of Ur, God commanded him to go live in the land of Canaan. He and his descendants, the Israelites, lived there for many years.
- When a severe famine caused there to be no food in Canaan, the Israelites moved to Egypt.
- Four hundred years later, God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and brought them back to Canaan again, the land God had promised to give them.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "Promised Land" can be translated as the "land that God said he would give to Abraham" or "land that God promised to Abraham" or "land God promised to his people" or "land of Canaan."
- In the Bible text, this term occurs as some form of "the land God promised."

(See also: Canaan, promise)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 8:1-2
- Ezekiel 7:26-27

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:1** They (Israelites) were no longer slaves, and they were going to the **Promised Land**!
- **14:1** After God had told the Israelites the laws he wanted them to obey as part of his covenant with them, God began leading them from Mount Sinai toward the **Promised Land**, which was also called Canaan.
- **14:2** God had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that he would give the **Promised Land** to their descendants, but now there were many people groups living there.
- **14:14** Then God led the people to the edge of the **Promised Land** again.
- **15:2** The Israelites had to cross the Jordan River to enter into the **Promised Land**.
- **15:12** After this battle, God gave each tribe of Israel its own section of the **Promised Land**.
- **20:9** This period of time when God's people were forced to leave the **Promised Land** is called the Exile.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0776, H3068, H3423, H5159, H5414, H7650

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Referenced in: Introduction to Nehemiah

repent, repentance

Definition:

The terms "repent" and "repentance" refer to turning away from sin and turning back to God.

- To "repent" literally means to "change one's mind."
- In the Bible, "repent" usually means to turn away from a sinful, human way of thinking and acting, and to turn to God's way of thinking and acting.
- When people truly repent of their sins, God forgives them and helps them start obeying him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "repent" can be translated with a word or phrase that means "turn back (to God)" or "turn away from sin and toward God" or "turn toward God, away from sin."
- Often the term "repentance" can be translated using the verb "repent." For example, "God has given repentance to Israel" could be translated as "God has enabled Israel to repent."
- Other ways to translate "repentance" could include "turning away from sin" or "turning to God and away from sin."

(See also: forgive, sin, turn)

Bible References:

- Acts 3:19-20
- Luke 3:3
- Luke 3:8
- Luke 5:32
- Luke 24:47
- Mark 1:14-15
- Matthew 3:3
- Matthew 3:11
- Matthew 4:17
- Romans 2:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **16:2** After many years of disobeying God and being oppressed by their enemies, the Israelites **repented** and asked God to rescue them.
- **17:13** David **repented** of his sin and God forgave him.
- **19:18** They (prophets) warned people that God would destroy them if they did not **repent**.
- **24:2** Many people came out to the wilderness to listen to John. He preached to them, saying, "**Repent**, for the kingdom of God is near!"
- **42:8** "It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to **receive** forgiveness for their sins."
- **44:5** "So now, **repent** and turn to God so that your sins will be washed away."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5150, H5162, H5164, G02780, G33380, G33400, G33410

"

Referenced in: Nehemiah 1 General Notes; Nehemiah 9 General Notes

sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

The term "sin" refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God's will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people don't know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God's will are called "sinful."
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a "sinful nature," a nature that that controls them and causes them to sin.
- A "sinner" is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word "sinners" was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who didn't keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term "sinner" was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "sin" could be translated with a word or phrase that means "disobedience to God" or "going against God's will" or "evil behavior and thoughts" or "wrongdoing."
- To "sin" could also be translated as to "disobey God" or to "do wrong."
- Depending on the context "sinful" could be translated as "full of wrongdoing" or "wicked" or "immoral" or "evil" or "rebelling against God."
- Depending on the context the term "sinner" could be translated with a word or phrase that means "person who sins" or "person who does wrong things" or "person who disobeys God" or "person who disobeys the law."
- The term "sinners" could be translated by a word or phrase that means "very sinful people" or "people considered to be very sinful" or "immoral people."
- Ways to translate "tax collectors and sinners" could include "people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people" or "very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors."
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people don't see or know about.
- The term "sin" should be general, and different from the terms for "wickedness" and "evil."

(See also: disobey, evil, flesh, tax collector)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3
- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31

• Romans 6:23
• Romans 8:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, "I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children."
- **13:12** God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- **20:1** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- **21:13** The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no **sin**. He would die to receive the punishment for other people's **sin**.
- **35:1** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinners** who had gathered to hear him.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**."
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**."
- **48:8** We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- **49:17** Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

Word Data:

• Strong's: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

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Referenced in: Nehemiah 9 General Notes

temple, house, house of God

Facts:

The temple was a building surrounded by walled courtyards where the Israelites came to pray and to offer sacrifices to God. It was located on Mount Moriah in the city of Jerusalem.

- Often the term "temple" referred to the whole temple complex, including the courtyards that surrounded the main building. Sometimes it referred only to the building.
- The temple building had two rooms, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.
- God referred to the temple as his dwelling place.
- King Solomon built the Temple during his reign. It was supposed to be the permanent place of worship in Jerusalem.
- In the New Testament, the term "temple of the Holy Spirit" is used to refer to believers in Jesus as a group, because the Holy Spirit lives in them.

Translation Suggestions:

- Usually when the text says that people were "in the temple," it is referring to the courtyards outside the building. This could be translated as "in the temple courtyards" or "in the temple complex."
- Where it refers specifically to the building itself, some translations translate "temple" as "temple building," to make it the reference clear.
- Ways to translate "temple" could include, "God's holy house" or "sacred worship place."
- Often in the Bible, the temple is referred to as "the house of Yahweh" or "the house of God."

(See also: sacrifice, Solomon, Babylon, Holy Spirit, tabernacle, courtyard, Zion, house)

Bible References:

- Acts 3:2
- Acts 3:8
- Ezekiel 45:18-20
- Luke 19:46
- Nehemiah 10:28
- Psalm 79:1-3

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:6** David wanted to build a **temple** where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him sacrifices.
- **18:2** In Jerusalem, Solomon built the **Temple** for which his father David had planned and gathered materials. Instead of at the Tent of Meeting, people now worshiped God and offered sacrifices to him at the **Temple**. God came and was present in the **Temple**, and he lived there with his people.
- **20:7** They (Babylonians) captured the city of Jerusalem, destroyed the **Temple**, and took away all the treasures.
- **20:13** When the people arrived in Jerusalem, they rebuilt the **Temple** and the wall around the city of the city and the **Temple**.
- **25:4** Then Satan took Jesus to the highest point on the **Temple** and said, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'God will command his angels to carry you so your foot does not hit a stone.'"
- **40:7** When he died, there was an earthquake and the large curtain that separated the people from the presence of God in the **Temple** was torn in two, from the top to the bottom.

Word Data:

  • Strong's: H1004, H1964, H1965, G14930, G24110, G34850

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Referenced in: Nehemiah 10 General Notes

trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness

Definition:

To "trust" something or someone is to believe that the thing or person is true or dependable. That belief is also called "trust." A "trustworthy" person is one you can trust to do and say what is right and true, and therefore one who has the quality of "trustworthiness."

- Trust is closely related to faith. If we trust someone, we have faith in that person to do what they promised to do.
- Having trust in someone also means depending on that person.
- To "trust in" Jesus means to believe that he is God, to believe that he died on the cross to pay for our sins, and to rely on him to save us.
- A "trustworthy saying" refers to something that is said that can be counted on to be true.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate "trust" could include "believe" or "have faith" or "have confidence" or "depend on."
- The phrase "put your trust in" is very similar in meaning to "trust in."
- The term "trustworthy" could be translated as "dependable" or "reliable" or "can always be trusted."

(See also: believe, confidence, faith, faithful, true)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:22-24
- 1 Timothy 4:9
- Hosea 10:12-13
- Isaiah 31:1-2
- Nehemiah 13:13
- Psalm 31:5
- Titus 3:8

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they **trusted** in God and believed that Moses was a prophet of God.
- **14:15** Joshua was a good leader because he **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **17:2** David was a humble and righteous man who **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **34:6** Then Jesus told a story about people who **trusted** in their own good deeds and despised other people.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0539, H0982, H1556, H2620, H2622, H3176, H4009, H4268, H7365, G16790, G38720, G39820, G40060, G41000, G42760

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Referenced in: Nehemiah 4 General Notes

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