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Matthew

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Matthew

Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the book of Matthew

The birth of Jesus Christ and the beginning of his ministry (1:1-4:25)
Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:28)
Jesus illustrates the kingdom of God through acts of healing (8:1-9:34)
Jesus teaches about mission and the kingdom (9:35-10:42)
Jesus teaches about the gospel of the kingdom of God. Opposition to Jesus begins. (11:1-12:50)
Jesus tells parables about the kingdom of God (13:1-52)
Further opposition to Jesus and misunderstanding of the kingdom of God (13:53-17:57)
Jesus teaches about life in the kingdom of God (18:1-35)
Jesus ministers in Judea (19:1-22:46)
Jesus teaches about the final judgment and salvation (23:1-25:46)
The crucifixion of Jesus, his death and resurrection (26:1-28:19)

What is the book of Matthew about?

The Gospel of Matthew is one of four books in the New Testament that describe some of the life of Jesus Christ. The authors of the Gospels wrote about different aspects of who Jesus was and what he did. Matthew showed that Jesus was the Messiah, and God would save Israel through him. Matthew often explained that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. This may indicate that he expected most of his first readers to be Jewish. (See: **Christ, Messiah (p.1400)**)

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "The Gospel of Matthew," or "The Gospel according to Matthew." Or they may choose a title that may be clearer, such as, "The Good News about Jesus that Matthew wrote." (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

Who wrote the book of Matthew?

The book does not give the name of the author. However, since early Christian times, most Christians have thought that the author was the Apostle Matthew.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the "kingdom of heaven?"

Matthew spoke of the "kingdom of heaven" in the same way that other Gospel writers spoke of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of heaven represents God ruling over all people and all creation everywhere. Those whom God accepts into his kingdom will be blessed. They will live with God forever.

What were the teaching methods of Jesus?

The people regarded Jesus as a rabbi. A rabbi is a teacher of God's law. Jesus taught in ways similar those of other religious teachers in Israel. He had students who followed him wherever he went. These students were called

disciples. He often told parables. Parables are stories that teach moral lessons. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/lawofmoses\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/disciple\]\]](#) and **parable (p.1409)**)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What are the Synoptic Gospels?

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels because they have many similar passages. The word “synoptic” means to “see together.”

The texts are considered “parallel” when they are the same or almost the same among two or three gospels. When translating parallel passages, translators should use the same wording and make them as similar as possible.

Why does Jesus refer to himself as the “Son of Man”?

In the gospels, Jesus calls himself the “Son of Man.” It is a reference to Daniel 7:13-14. In that passage there is a person described as a “son of man.” That means the person was someone who looked like a human being. God gave authority to the son of man to rule over the nations forever. All the people will worship him forever.

Jews of Jesus’ time did not use “Son of Man” as a title for anyone. Therefore, Jesus used it for himself to help them understand who he truly was. (See: **Son of Man, son of man (p.1418)**)

Translating the title “Son of Man” can be difficult in many languages. Readers may misunderstand a literal translation. Translators can consider alternatives, such as “The Human One.” It may also be helpful to include a footnote to explain the title.

What are the major issues in the text of the book of Matthew?

The following verses are found in older versions of the Bible but are not included in most modern versions: * “Bless those who curse you; do good to those who hate you” (5:44) * “For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (6:13) * “But this kind of demon does not go out except with prayer and fasting” (17:21) * “For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost” (18:11) * “Many are called, but few are chosen” (20:16) * “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you devour widows’ houses, while you make a show of long prayers. You will therefore receive greater condemnation.” (23:14)

Translators are advised not to include these passages. However, if in the translators’ region, there are older versions of the Bible that include one or more of these passages, the translators may include them. If they are included, they should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that they were probably not original to Matthew’s Gospel. (See: **Textual Variants (p.1381)**)

Matthew 1

Matthew 1 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Indentation

Some translations set a quotation from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULT does this for the quoted material in 1:23.

Genealogy

A genealogy is a list that records a person's ancestors or descendants. Genealogies were important to the Jewish people because family lineage is how they decided how someone functioned in society. For instance, if someone was a descendant of Aaron, they were able to become priests. Similarly, if someone was a descendant of King David, they were able to become a king. This genealogy shows that Jesus was clearly a descendant of King David, and therefore, was able to become king.

Important Figures of Speech in this Chapter

Use of the passive voice

Matthew uses the passive voice very purposefully in this chapter to indicate that Mary did not have a sexual relationship with anyone. She became pregnant with Jesus because the Holy Spirit performed a miracle. Many languages do not have a passive voice, so translators in those languages must find other ways to present the same truths. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 1:1

of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham

Here, **son** means “descendant.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “of Jesus Christ, descendant of King David, who was a descendent of Abraham” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 1:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 1:3

of Perez ... Zerah ... of Hezron ... of Ram

Unless stated otherwise, all of the names in this genealogy are men's names. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

Matthew 1:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 1:5

Rahab, & Ruth

Rahab and **Ruth** are the names of women. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

Matthew 1:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 1:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 1:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 1:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 1:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 1:11

the Babylonian deportation

Here, **Babylonian** refers to the country of Babylonia, not just the city of Babylon. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the deportation to Babylonia” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 1:12

after the Babylonian deportation

Use the same wording you used in [1:11](#) for **Babylonian**. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p. 1134)) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1134))

Matthew 1:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 1:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 1:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 1:16

of Mary, by whom Jesus was born

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “Mary, who gave birth to Jesus” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

of Mary

The word **Mary** is the name of a woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

the one called Christ

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “whom people called Christ” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 1:17

the Babylonian deportation

Use the same wording you used in [1:11](#).

Matthew 1:18

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was thus

This begins a new part of the story in which the author describes the events leading up to the birth of Jesus. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

His mother, Mary, having been engaged to marry Joseph

Mary was given by her parents to Joseph to marry him. This was common in their culture. 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: "Mary, whose parents promised to Joseph that Mary, Jesus' mother, would marry him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

before they came together

This may refer to Mary and Joseph having sexual relations together. If it would be helpful in your language, use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: "before they had united sexually" or "before they joined in physical union" (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

was found having in the womb

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "realized that she was going to have a baby" or "became aware that she was pregnant" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

was found having in the womb

This is an idiom meaning it was discovered that she was pregnant. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: (1) "was found by Joseph that she was pregnant" or (2), more generally "was discovered to be pregnant" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

from the Holy Spirit

The power of the **Holy Spirit** had caused Mary to conceive a baby before she had slept with a man. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "through the Holy Spirit causing her to be pregnant without sleeping with a man" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 1:19

Now Joseph her husband, being righteous, and not wanting to publicly disgrace her, intended to divorce her secretly

Matthew is providing this background information to help readers understand who Joseph was and what his motives were. Use a natural way in your language for introducing background information. Alternate translation: "Joseph her husband, a righteous man who did not want to embarrass her publicly, planned to quietly end their engagement." (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1157)**) (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1157)**)

Matthew 1:20

But he having reflected on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him by way of a dream

The angel appeared to Joseph at the same time that he was considering divorcing Mary. You can make this clear in your translation with an appropriate connecting word or phrase. Alternate translation: “During the time when Joseph was considering divorcing Mary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream” (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.1185)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.1185)**)

son of David

Here, **son** means “descendant.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “descendant of King David” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the one having been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the Holy Spirit caused Mary to become pregnant with this child” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 1:21

for he will save his people from their sins

The phrase **for he will save his people from their sins** is explaining the meaning of the name **Jesus**. In Hebrew, Jesus comes from the word meaning “to save”. Use a natural way in your language for introducing this background information. Alternate translation: “For, just like his name means, he will save his people from their sins” (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1157)**) (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1157)**)

Matthew 1:22

what} was spoken by the Lord through the prophet

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: “what the Lord told the prophet to write long ago” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the prophet

There were many prophets. Matthew was speaking specifically of Isaiah. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “Isaiah the prophet” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

saying

In Paul’s culture, **saying** is a normal way to introduce a quotation from an important text, in this case, the Old Testament book written by Isaiah the prophet. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Paul is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation, ending the previous sentence with a period and beginning a new sentence: “He wrote” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

Matthew 1:23

Immanuel

The word **Immanuel** is a male name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

Behold

The term **Behold** focuses the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. Though it literally means “look” or “see,” in this case seeing means giving notice and attention. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation, followed by a new sentence: “Pay attention to what I am saying to you!” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

which is translated, “God with us

Matthew is providing this background information to help readers understand what the name **Immanuel** means. Use a natural way in your language for introducing background information. Alternate translation, as a new sentence: “This name means, ‘God with us’” (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1157)**) (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1157)**)

Matthew 1:24

did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took her {as} his wife

Connecting Statement:

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “took Mary as his wife, just as the angel of the Lord commanded him to do” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

Matthew 1:25

he did not know her

Matthew uses a polite expression to say that they had not engaged in sexual activity. Alternate translation: “he did not have sexual relations with her” (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

Matthew 2

Matthew 2 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in verses 6 and 18, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special Concepts in this Chapter

“Learned men”

These were men who studied the stars in the sky to try to learn what the gods were communicating to them. If your readers would not be familiar with this, you can state this explicitly. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 2:1

Now, Jesus having been born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, learned men from the east arrived in Jerusalem

The phrase **learned men from the east arrived in Jerusalem** comes after **Jesus had been born in Bethlehem of Judea**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: “Now after Jesus had been born in the city of Bethlehem, which is in Judea, men who studied the stars came to Jerusalem from an eastern country” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

of Herod

There was more than one man named **Herod**. This refers to **Herod** the Great. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

learned men from the east

See the note on these men in the Chapter Introduction. Alternate translation: “men who studied the stars” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 2:2

For we saw his star in the east and came to worship him

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase is the result of the first phrase. Alternate translation: “We have come to worship him, for we saw his star in the sky in the east” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

his star

They were not saying that the baby was the owner of the **star**, but rather that this star was directing them to where the child was. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the star that tells about him” or “the star that is associated with his birth” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

to worship

This could mean: (1) they intended to **worship** the baby as divine. (2) they wanted to honor him as a human king. If your language has a word that includes both meanings, you should consider using it here.

Matthew 2:3

all Jerusalem

Here, **Jerusalem** refers to the people who live in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “all the people in Jerusalem” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

and all Jerusalem with him

Matthew left out some words in this phrase that might be needed in certain languages to make a full sentence. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “and many in Jerusalem were troubled along with him” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

all Jerusalem

Here, **all** means “many.” Matthew is exaggerating to emphasize how many people were worried. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language. Alternate translation: “many of the people in Jerusalem” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

Matthew 2:4

he inquired from them, “Where is the Christ being born

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “he asked them where the Messiah was supposed to have been born” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p. 1195)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

Matthew 2:5

In Bethlehem of Judea

Matthew is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “He is supposed to have been born in Bethlehem, which is in the region of Judea” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

thus it has been written through the prophet

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “this is what the prophet wrote long ago” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

for thus it has been written through the prophet

In Matthew’s culture, **for thus it has been written through the prophet** is a normal way to introduce a quotation from an important text, in this case, the Old Testament book written by Micah the prophet. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Matthew is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “according to Micah the prophet, who wrote” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

Matthew 2:6

And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, for from you will come out a ruling one who will shepherd my people Israel

Micah was speaking to **Bethlehem** as if it were a person. If it would be helpful in your language, consider referring to Bethlehem in the third person. Alternate translation: “Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, is by no means the least among the leaders of Judah, for from this region a ruler will come who will shepherd my people Israel” (See: **Apostrophe (p.1129)**) (See: **Apostrophe (p.1129)**)

are by no means least among the leaders of Judah

If it would be helpful in your language, you can express the meaning of **are by no means the least among the leaders of Judah** positively. Alternate translation: “your town is among the most important towns in Judah” (See: **Litotes (p.1282)**) (See: **Litotes (p.1282)**)

for from you will come out a ruling one

When Matthew says **for from you will come out a ruling one**, he is talking about from the people who live in Bethlehem. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “for from your people a leader will come” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

who will shepherd my people Israel

Micah speaks of this ruler as one **who will shepherd my people Israel**. This means he will lead and care for the people just like a shepherd cares for their animals. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternate translation: “who will lead my people Israel and take care of them” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 2:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 2:8

And having sent them to Bethlehem, he said, “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

Herod first says **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.** and then he **sent them to Bethlehem** but Matthew reversed the order of these phrases. If it would be more natural in your language, you could restore the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: “Herod said to the men who study the stars, ‘After you leave, search carefully for the young child, and after you have found him, report to me so that I also, having come, might worship him.’ Then he sent them to Bethlehem” (See: **Information Structure (p.1261)**) (See: **Information Structure (p.1261)**)

Matthew 2:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 2:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 2:11

having fallen down, they worshiped him

In their culture, **having fallen down, they worshiped him** was something that was done to a king. This shows that they saw Jesus as the true king of the Jews. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “they bowed down and honored the child as they would a king” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

their treasures

Here, **their treasures** refers to the boxes or bags they used to carry their treasures. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “the containers that held their treasures” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

they offered him gifts

In some cultures, gifts are brought when you are meeting someone important to show that you honor them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “they offered him gifts to honor him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 2:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 2:13

until I tell you

If it would be helpful in your language, you can make the full meaning of this statement explicit. Alternate translation: “until I tell you it is safe to come back” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 2:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 2:15

he was there

It is implied that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus remained in Egypt. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "Joseph, Mary, and Jesus were there" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

in order that might be fulfilled {what} was spoken by the Lord through the prophet

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "in order that God might prove true that which he spoke through the prophet Hosea" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

saying

See how you translated **saying** in [1:23](#) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

Matthew 2:16

he had been mocked by the learned men

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the learned men had embarrassed him by tricking him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

having sent forth, he killed all the male children

Herod sent other people to kill the **children**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “he gave orders for his soldiers to kill all the boys” or “he sent soldiers there to kill all the boy babies” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 2:17

it was fulfilled {what} was spoken

See how your translated this in [2:15](#) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 2:18

A voice was heard

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: “People heard a voice” or “People heard a sound” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

weeping and great mourning

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize that the sound of weeping was very strong. If your language does not use repetition to do this, you could use one phrase and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “much weeping” (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**)

Rachel weeping for her children, and not willing to be comforted

Rachel lived many years before this time. This prophecy depicts Rachel, who is represented by her descendants weeping over their children. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “the descendants of Rachel are weeping over their children, and no one can comfort them” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

not willing to be comforted

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “no one could comfort her” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

because they are no more

Here, **they are no more** is a polite way of saying they are dead. If it would be helpful in your language, use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: “because they were dead” or “because the children were gone and would never return” (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

Matthew 2:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 2:20

the ones seeking the life of the child

Here, **seeking the life of the child** is a way of saying they wanted to kill the child. If it would be helpful in your language, use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: “those who were looking for the child in order to kill him” (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

Matthew 2:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 2:22

Archelaus

The word **Archelaus** is the name of Herod's son. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

Matthew 2:23

it might be fulfilled {what} was spoken through the prophets

See how you translated this in [2:15](#) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 3

Matthew 3 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULT does this with the quoted material in verse 3.

Special Concepts in this Chapter

John the Baptist

In this chapter, John the Baptist appears, preaching in the wilderness. He is portrayed by Matthew as resembling the Prophet Elijah in the way that he dresses and by what he eats. We know from other Gospels that John is Jesus' cousin. John the Baptist comes before Jesus to make people ready for his coming.

“Kingdom of heaven”

“The kingdom of Heaven” is synonymous with “kingdom of God” from the other three Gospels. It is a major concept in the Gospel of Matthew and is very rich in meaning. It includes the idea of eternal life in the presence of God, but it also includes the idea of what the earth will be like in the future when God rules everything, and the idea of life on earth right now, when and where God's wishes are carried out fully. The unifying concept behind all of these ideas is that of people becoming the people over whom God rules. Wherever the expression “the kingdom of God” occurs, translation notes will suggest communicating this idea behind the abstract noun “kingdom.” UST models this approach consistently. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

“Bear fruit worthy of repentance”

Fruit is a common metaphor for doing good things that God desires you to do. That idea is similar to what we observe in nature, that if a fruit plant is healthy, it will bear a lot of good fruit, but if a fruit plant is unhealthy, it will bear bad fruit or no fruit.

Important Figures of Speech in this Chapter

Metonymy

Matthew uses metonymy frequently in this chapter to express groups of people or things. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language to express these figures of speech.

Matthew 3:1

Now

This is the beginning of a new part of the story where Matthew tells of the ministry of John the Baptist. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Some time while Jesus was still in Galilee” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

John the Baptist

This introduces **John** as a new character in the story. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. The expression “the Baptist” identifies him as someone who baptized people in water after they were sorry for their sins. Since he is a new participant, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could call him something like “a man named John, who baptized people” (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1272)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1272)**)

Matthew 3:2

the kingdom of the heavens is near

The phrase **the kingdom of the heavens** refers to God ruling as king. Here, **heavens** refers to the place from which God rules. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “our God in heaven will soon show himself to be king” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 3:3

For this is the one spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying

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: "For John was the one about whom Isaiah spoke when he said" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Make ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight

Here there is a direct quotation inside a direct quotation, as Matthew quotes Isaiah who quotes the messenger. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "telling people to make ready the way of the Lord and to make his paths straight" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

A voice of one calling out in the wilderness

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: "The voice of someone is heard crying out in the wilderness, saying:" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

A voice of one calling out

Here, a voice refers to the messenger who uses his voice to cry out. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: "People will hear the messenger's voice as he cries out" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

Make ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight

Make ready the way of the Lord and **make his paths straight** mean almost the same thing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine the two. "Prepare to hear and obey the Lord's message when he comes". (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

Make ready the way of the Lord

Isaiah uses a metaphor here of preparing paths or the way on which someone will travel. If someone prepares a path for another, they make the path walkable. If someone in high authority were coming, they would make sure the roads were clear from any hazards. So this metaphor means that the people should prepare themselves to receive the Lord's message when he comes. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture or use plain speech. Alternate translation: "Prepare to hear and obey the Lord's message when he comes" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 3:4

Now this John had his clothing from the hair of a camel and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey

The word **Now** is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Matthew gives the reader some background information about what John the Baptist ate and what he looked like. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

had his clothing from the hair of a camel

The phrase **had his clothing from the hair of a camel** means that he wore clothes made from camels' hair. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "wore clothing made from the hair of a camel" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

of a camel

If your readers would not know what a **camel** is, you could include a description in a footnote or use a more general term. Alternate translation: "large, humped animal used for riding and carrying burdens in hot, dry areas" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

locusts

If your readers would not know what **locusts** are, you could include a description in a footnote or use a more general term. Alternate translation: "grasshoppers" or "insects" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 3:5

Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the {region} around the Jordan

The words **Jerusalem**, **Judea**, and **the region around the Jordan** are metonyms for the people from those areas. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “people from Jerusalem, Judea, and the region near the Jordan river” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the {region} around

The word **all** is an exaggeration to emphasize that very many people went out. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that depicts many people. Alternate translation: “very many people from Jerusalem, Judea, and the region near the Jordan river” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

Matthew 3:6

being baptized by him

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “receiving baptism by John” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 3:7

Offspring of vipers

Here, **offspring of vipers** means having the characteristic of vipers, which are poisonous snakes. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "You evil poisonous snakes!" or "You are evil like poisonous snakes!" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath

John uses a question to rebuke the Pharisees and Sadducees because they were asking him to baptize them so that God would not punish them, but they did not want to stop sinning. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You cannot flee from God's wrath like this." or "Do not think that you can escape God's wrath just because I baptize you." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

to flee from the coming wrath

The phrase **coming wrath** is being used to refer to God's punishment. Wrath itself cannot come, but God is the one who causes it to happen. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "to flee from God's wrath which he is bringing against you" (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

Matthew 3:8

Therefore, produce fruit worthy of repentance

The phrase **produce fruit** is a metaphor referring to a person's actions. Just as a healthy tree bears good fruit, so should someone who loves God do good. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "So, let your actions show that you have truly repented" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 3:9

We have Abraham {as} father

They would say **We have Abraham {as} father** because they thought being Abraham's descendants would protect them from God's judgment. Alternate translation: "Abraham is our ancestor, so God would not punish us" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

as} father

Here, the word **father** means "ancestor." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternate translation: "Abraham is our ancestor" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones

John uses an exaggeration here to show that God does not need these Pharisees and Sadducees to fulfill his promises which he made to **Abraham**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that portrays this exaggeration. Alternate translation: "God could make children of Abraham even out of these rocks!" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

children for Abraham

Here, the word **children** means "descendants." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternate translation: "descendants for Abraham" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 3:10

But already the ax is set against the root of the trees. So, every tree not producing good fruit is chopped down and thrown into a fire

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "The person who is going to cut down the tree has already placed his ax against the roots. So, he will cut down every tree which does not bear good fruit and throw it into the fire" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

So, every tree not producing good fruit is chopped down and thrown into a fire

The phrase **every tree not producing good fruit is chopped down and is thrown into the fire** is a figurative way of describing punishment. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternate translation: "God will certainly punish every person who does not repent of their sins and do good deeds to show it" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 3:11

I am not worthy to carry away his sandals

Here, **to carry sandals** was a duty of a slave. John is saying implicitly that the one who is coming will be so great that John is not even worthy to be his slave. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: "I am not even worthy to be his slave" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire

John is using literal baptism, which puts a person under water, to speak of spiritual baptism, which cleanses people from their sin. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 3:12

whose winnowing fork {is} in his hand

John is saying that the Messiah will come prepared to judge people right away. You could express this metaphor as a simile in your translation. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here in your translation. Alternate translation: "He will already be prepared to judge people, just like a farmer who is ready to thresh grain" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

whose winnowing fork {is} in his hand

Here, **in his hand** means the person is ready to act. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "Christ is holding a winnowing fork because he is ready" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

winnowing fork

A **winnowing fork** is a tool for tossing wheat into the air to separate the wheat grain from the chaff. The heavier grain falls back down, and the wind blows away the unwanted chaff. This tool is similar to a pitchfork. If you have a similar tool in your culture, you can use the word for it here. Otherwise, you can use a phrase that would express the meaning. Alternate translation: "tool for threshing grain" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

his threshing floor

The **threshing floor** was the place where harvested wheat was processed to separate the valuable grain from the useless husks. To clear off the floor is to finish threshing all the grain. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the name of a place of similar use in your culture, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: "his place where he separated the grain from the chaff" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

gather his wheat into the storehouse. But he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire

John continues to speak, describing how the coming Messiah will judge people. The wheat is the part of the crop that is useful. It represents people who are obedient to God, who will be welcomed into his presence. The chaff is the husk that surrounds the grain. It is not useful for anything, so people burn it up. You could express this metaphor as a simile in your translation. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here, placing a period after "floor" and deleting the word "and.". Alternate translation: "He will welcome those who are obedient to God, just as a farmer stores good grain in his barn. But he will punish those who are disobedient to God, just as a farmer burns up the useless chaff" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 3:13

Then

Connecting Statement:

This introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "Some time later" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

to be baptized by him

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "so John could baptize him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 3:14

I have need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me

John uses a question to show his surprise at Jesus' request. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You are more important than I am. I should not baptize you. You should baptize me" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 3:15

for us

Here, **us** refers to Jesus and John. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.1221)) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.1221))

to fulfill all righteousness

The phrase **to fulfill all righteousness** means to do everything which God requires someone to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "to do everything which God has told us to do" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 3:16

having been baptized

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: “after John baptized Jesus” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the heavens were opened to him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the sky opened up” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the Spirit of God coming down like a dove, resting upon him

The phrase **like a dove** could mean: (1) the Spirit looked like a dove as he descended upon Jesus. Alternate translation: “the Spirit come down from heaven, looking like a dove” (2) the Spirit descend upon Jesus as a dove descends from the sky toward the ground. Alternate translation: “The Spirit of God came down from heaven as a dove comes down” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

Matthew 3:17

a voice from the heavens, saying

Matthew speaks of this voice as if it were a living thing that could come from heaven to earth. The voice is God's voice. Alternate translation: "God spoke from heaven and said" (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

my & Son

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 4

Matthew 4 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in verses 5 and 16, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special Concepts in this Chapter

The Devil

The devil, or Satan, is a fallen angel who attacks God's people and tries to get them to turn against God. The devil hates God and all that God created because he wants to take the place of God and be worshiped as God. **Satan, devil, evil one (p.1414)**

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

Matthew 4:1

Then

This introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “After this,” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Jesus was led up by the Spirit

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the Spirit led Jesus” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

to be tempted by the devil

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “so the devil could tempt Jesus” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 4:2

40 days and 40 nights

This means he fasted continually with no breaks for a period of 40 days. (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**)

40 days and 40 nights

Matthew uses **40 days and 40 nights** to express that Jesus fasted for 40 entire days without stopping. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "for 40 whole days" (See: **Merism (p.1286)**) (See: **Merism (p.1286)**)

Matthew 4:3

If you are the Son of God, speak so that these stones might become loaves

The devil is suggesting that this is a hypothetical condition, and that the stone will only become bread if Jesus speaks to them as the Son of God. The devil is speaking as if it is uncertain who Jesus is in order to challenge him to do this miracle to prove that he really is the Son of God. If this would be unclear in your language, you could clarify. Alternate translation: "Prove that you are the Son of God by commanding these stones to become bread" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**)

the Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 4:4

It is written

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “Moses wrote this in the Scriptures long ago” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

It is written

In Matthew’s culture, **it is written** is a normal way to introduce a quotation from an important text, in this case, an Old Testament book written by Moses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Jesus is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “as it can be read in the Old Testament” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

Man will not live on bread alone

This can either be (1) a command. Alternate translation: “Man shall not live on bread alone” or (2) a general statement: Alternate translation: “Man does not live on bread alone”

Man

This verse is not speaking about a specific person, but about people in general. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: “A person” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

but

What follows the word **but** here is in contrast to what came before it. People should not only live on food, but also must hear what the Lord is teaching them. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “but also” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

every word coming through the mouth of God

The metaphor **coming from the mouth of God** refers to everything which God has spoken. God does not actually have a mouth from which words would come. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: “every word which God has spoken” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 4:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 4:6

the Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

throw yourself down

When Satan tells Jesus to **throw yourself down**, he means that Jesus should throw himself from on top of the temple. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “throw yourself down from on top of the high point of the temple” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

for it is written

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: “for God has written in his word” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

it is written

Satan is quoting from the book of Psalms. See note on [4:4](#) for how you translated this phrase (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

They will lift you up in their hands

This verse is saying that God’s angels would catch Jesus if he were to **throw himself down**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “The angels would catch you if you fell” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 4:7

Again it is written

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Again, I will tell you what Moses wrote in the Scriptures" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

You will not test

Here, **You** refers to people in general, and not to a specific person. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: "No one shall" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

Matthew 4:8

and their glory

Here, **their glory** is referring to the riches that these nations have. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “and the riches which they possess” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 4:9

All these things I will give you

Satan is using a hypothetical statement to tempt Jesus. Make sure to make this hypothetical statement explicit in your language. Alternate translation: "If you bow down and worship me, I will give you all of these things" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**)

if having fallen down

This was a common action to show that a person was worshiping. If there is a gesture with similar meaning in your culture, you could consider using it here in your translation. Alternate translation: "if you show reverence to me" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Matthew 4:10

For it is written

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "For Moses also wrote in the Scriptures" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

You will worship & you will serve

Here, **You** refers to people in general and not to a specific person. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: "Each person shall worship ... each person shall serve" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

Matthew 4:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 4:12

Now

This is the beginning of a new part of the story in which Matthew describes the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. These verses explain how Jesus came to be in Galilee. (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

John had been arrested

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "the king had arrested John" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 4:13

in the territories of Zebulun and Naphtali

The words **Zebulun** and **Naphtali** are the names of the tribes that lived in these territories many years earlier, before foreigners took control of the land of Israel. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)
(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 4:14

what was spoken

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "what God said" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 4:15

The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, & Galilee of the Gentiles

Jesus refers to these places, when he is really referring to the people who live in them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: “You who live in Zebulun and Naphtali” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

the} way of the sea

The phrase **the way of the sea** could also be a title referring to a road which ran along the Sea of Galilee.

Matthew 4:16

the people sitting in darkness

Here, **the people** being referred to are the Jews. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "The Jews, who are sitting in darkness" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the people sitting in darkness have seen a great light, & in the region and shadow of death, & a light

Here, **darkness** and **region and shadow of death** are metaphors for not knowing the truth about God. And **light** is a metaphor for God's true message that saves people from their sin. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: "The people sitting in sin have heard the message that God saves" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

sitting & to the ones sitting

Here, **sitting** is a metaphor for living. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: "who are living ... to those living" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

to the ones sitting in the region and shadow of death, upon them has a light arisen

The latter part of the sentence, **and to those sitting in the region and shadow of death, upon them has a light arisen**, has the same meaning as the first part of the sentence. If it would be helpful in your language, you can combine the two parts of the verse into one. Alternate translation: "Those who are sitting in darkness have seen a great light" (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

Matthew 4:17

the kingdom of the heavens has come near

See how you translated this in [3:2](#) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 4:18

Now

This begins a new story about Jesus' ministry in Galilee. Here he begins to gather men to be his disciples. The story does not say how long after previous events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "Some time later" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

casting a net into the sea

They were **casting a net** in order to catch fish. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "throwing a net into the water to catch fish" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

casting a net

Some cultures use a **net** to catch fish. A net is a mesh or network of cords or ropes which is thrown into the water to trap fish in it. If this would not be understood in your culture, you can use a general phrase. Alternate translation: "fishing in the sea" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

for they were fishermen

Matthew is providing this background information to help readers understand why they were casting fishing nets. Use a natural way in your language for introducing background information. Alternate translation, as a new sentence: "They were doing this because they earned their living by catching fish" (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1157)**) (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1157)**)

Matthew 4:19

Come after me

Come after me is an idiom meaning to follow the speaker and be their student. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "Follow me" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

I will make you fishers of men

I will make you fishers of men means Jesus will cause Simon and Andrew to teach people God's true message so others will also follow Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "I will teach you to gather men to me like you used to gather fish" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 4:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 4:21

he called them

Here, **he called them** is an idiom meaning that he told them to follow him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “he told them to follow him” (See:

Idiom (p.1255)) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 4:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 4:23

preaching the gospel of the kingdom

Here, **kingdom** refers to God's reign as king. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "preaching the good news that God will soon show himself as king" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

every disease and every sickness

The words **disease** and **sickness** are used here to cover every form of illness which someone might have. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "every form of illness" (See: **Merism (p.1286)**) (See: **Merism (p.1286)**)

every disease and every sickness

Here, **every** here is an exaggeration, and it does not mean that he healed every single disease among the people, but rather that he healed many different kinds of diseases. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language. Alternate translation: "many diseases and many sicknesses" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

Matthew 4:24

being possessed by demons

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom demons controlled” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the news of him went out into all Syria

News itself can not **go out**, but rather, people spread the news about what Jesus was doing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “people were spreading the news of what Jesus was doing into all of Syria” (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

they brought to him all the ones & sickness

Here, **all the ones having sickness** is an exaggeration and does not mean that every single person who was sick was brought to him, but rather that many were brought. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language. Alternate translation: “Those who lived there brought many sick people to him” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

the epileptic

This refers to someone who goes unconscious and their body moves uncontrollably. If your readers would not be familiar with this disease, you could use the name of something like this from your language, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “those who sometimes become unconscious and move uncontrollably” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

and the paralytic

A person who is a **paralytic** is someone who is not able to use or control a large portion of their body due to injury or sickness. If your readers would not be familiar with this sickness, you could use the name of something like this in your language, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “someone who is paralyzed” or “someone who is not able to use a large portion of their body” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 4:25

Decapolis

This name means “the Ten Towns.” This is the name of a region to the southeast of the Sea of Galilee. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

Matthew 5

Matthew 5 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Many people call the words in Matthew 5-7 the Sermon on the Mount. This is one long lesson that Jesus taught. Bibles divide this lesson into three chapters, but this can sometimes confuse the reader. If your translation divides the text into sections, be sure that the reader understands that the whole sermon is one large section.

Matthew 5:3-10, known as the Beatitudes or Blessings, has been set apart by being set farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text, with each line beginning with the word “blessed.” This way of placing the words on the page highlights the poetic form of this teaching.

Jesus spoke about many different subjects in this sermon, so you may wish to help the reader by putting an empty line into the text whenever Jesus changed the subject.

Special Concepts in this Chapter

“His disciples”

It is possible to refer to anyone who followed Jesus as a follower or disciple. Jesus selected 12 of his followers to become his closest disciples, “the twelve disciples” or “the Twelve.” They would later become known as the apostles.

Generic Noun Phrases

In this chapter, because Jesus is talking to a very large crowd, he often uses words such as “you”, “those”, “a person”, “someone” or other ways of speaking about people in general. He is not speaking about any particular person. This is a common practice when giving important universal teachers as Jesus is doing here. Express these phrases in a way that is natural in your language for speaking about people in general. (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

The Law

Many times in this chapter, it sounds like Jesus contrasts what the law says with “but I say.” Jesus is not actually contrasting what he says with the law, but is just expanding on the meaning of the law for his listeners, to apply it to their lives. Make sure this is clear to your readers.

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

You singular and you plural

In this chapter, Jesus is talking to a large crowd of his followers. Throughout the chapter, Jesus switches between using you in the singular and you in the plural while he is talking to the same people. When he is using the singular, he is referring to all of the individuals in the crowd, but is still referring to the crowd as a whole. Your language may require you to use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1228)**)

Matthew 5:1

Now

Connecting Statement:

This introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "Some time later" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Matthew 5:2

having opened his mouth

Here, **having opened his mouth** is an idiom meaning to speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "when Jesus began to speak" (See: **Idiom (p. 1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 5:3

Blessed {are}

The phrase **Blessed {are}** indicates that God is giving favor to people and that their situation is positive or good. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "How good it is for" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the poor

Jesus is using the adjective **poor** as a noun in order to indicate a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "people who are poor"(See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

the poor in spirit

Jesus is referring to people in general in this phrase, not of any particular person. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. See the note in the chapter introduction for a longer explanation. Alternate translation: "the people who are poor in spirit" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

the poor in spirit

The phrase **poor in spirit** refers to someone who is in need of God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "those who know they need God" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated **kingdom of the heavens** in [3:2](#) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 5:4

Blessed {are

See the note in the previous verse. (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the ones mourning

See how you translated this type of phrase in the previous verse. (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

they will be comforted

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will comfort them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 5:5

the meek

Jesus is using the adjective **meek** as a noun in order to indicate a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “people who are humble” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 5:6

the ones hungering and thirsting for righteousness

The phrase **hungering and thirsting for righteousness** describes people who strongly desire to do what is right. Hunger and thirst are the strongest desires a person can have. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “those who desire to live right as much as they desire food and drink” (See: **Metaphor (p. 1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

they will be fed

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God will fill them” or “God will satisfy them” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 5:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 5:8

the pure in heart

Here, **pure in heart** is an idiom for a person's good intentions. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "those who have good intentions" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the pure in heart

See the note in [5:3](#). Alternate translation: "people whose intentions please God" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

they will see God

Here, **they will see God** means they will be able to live in God's presence, which a person cannot do unless they are in right relationship with him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "they will live in God's presence" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 5:9

for they will be called sons of God

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “for God will call them his children” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 5:10

the ones persecuted

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “those people whom others treat unfairly” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

theirs is the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated this in [5:3](#) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 5:11

Blessed are you & you & you

The word **you**, here and in the remainder of the chapter unless otherwise noted, is plural. Jesus is talking to the people in the crowd. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

because of me

When Jesus says **because of me**, he means because they are following him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “because you follow me” or “because you believe in me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 5:12

Rejoice and be very glad

Here, **Rejoice** and **be very glad** mean almost the same thing. Jesus said this to be emphatic. If your language does not use repetition to do this, you could use one phrase and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Be exceedingly glad" (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**)

in the heavens

Here, **in the heavens** means with God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "which you will receive when you are with God" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 5:13

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt is made tasteless, with what might it be made salty again

This could mean: (1) just as **salt** makes food taste good, disciples of Jesus influence the people of the world so that they will be good. Alternate translation: "You are like salt for the people of the world" (2) just as **salt** preserves food, disciples of Jesus keep people from becoming totally corrupt. Alternate translation: "As salt is for food, you are for the world" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

But if the salt is made tasteless, with what might it be made salty again

Jesus uses a question to teach the disciples that God does not use people who don't care about what he wants. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "A person who stops following God becomes useless to him" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

except having been thrown out, to be trampled by men

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "except for people to throw it out into the road and walk on it" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

It is good for nothing any longer, except having been thrown out

Jesus is saying that the only use for the salt that lost its taste is to be trampled upon. If it would appear in your language that Jesus was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: "The salt is only useful for being thrown out" (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**)

Matthew 5:14

You are the light of the world

Just like a **light** shines in a dark place, Jesus is saying that, with his message, his disciples will shine in **the world**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “You are like a light for the people of the world to see God” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

A city being set on top of a mountain is not able to be hidden

When it is dark at night, people can see the lights of a city shining from far away, if the view of the city is not blocked by anything, being on top of the hill. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “At night, when the lights are most visible, a city on a hill cannot be hidden” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

A city being set on top of a mountain is not able to be hidden

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “Everyone can see the lights from a city which is set on a hill” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 5:15

Neither do they light a lamp

See the note in the chapter introduction. Alternate translation: “People do not light a lamp” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

but rather

What follows the words **but rather** is in contrast to what came before it. Instead of foolishly putting a lamp in a basket, you should set it on a high place to light up the room. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “but” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

Matthew 5:16

Let your light shine before men

Let your light shine before men means the disciples of Jesus should live in such a way that others can learn about God's truth because of how they live. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "Let your lives be like a light that shines before people" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

your Father in the heavens

God is referred to as our **Father**. He is not our father in that same way as our biological father. That detail is not normally translated, but if your language has a specific word for a man's father, it would be appropriate to use it here. (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**) (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**)

in the heavens

See how you translated **in the heavens** in [5:12](#) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 5:17

the prophets

This refers to what **the prophets** wrote in the Scriptures. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “the writings of the prophets” (See: **Metonymy (p. 1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p. 1302)**)

I came not to destroy but to fulfill

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “I did not come to nullify the law and the prophets, but I came to fulfill them” (See: **Ellipsis (p. 1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p. 1207)**)

but

What follows the word **but** here is in contrast to what came before it. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “but rather” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p. 1162)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p. 1162)**)

Matthew 5:18

until the heaven and the earth passes away, one jot or one tittle will certainly not pass away from the law

The phrase **until the heaven and the earth may pass away, one jot or one tittle may certainly not pass away from the law** exaggerates the fact that no part of God's word will ever pass away. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that shows honor. Alternate translation: "not even the smallest part of God's word will ever pass away" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

one jot or one tittle

The **jot** was the smallest Hebrew letter, and the **tittle** was a small mark that was the difference between two Hebrew letters. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "the smallest written letter or the smallest part of a letter" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 5:19

Therefore, whoever annuls one of the least of these commandments & will be called least in the kingdom of the heavens. But whoever does and teaches {them}, that one will be called great in the kingdom of the heavens

Jesus is using a hypothetical situation to teach the crowd of his disciples the importance of God's law. Alternate translation: "If one were to nullify even the smallest of these commandments ... God would call him the least important in his kingdom. If one were to do and teach the commandments, God would call him great in his kingdom" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**)

Therefore, whoever annuls & But whoever does

See the note in the chapter introduction. Alternate translation: "If anyone therefore breaks ... If anyone does" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

teaches men to do so will be called

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "teaches others to do so, God will call that person" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated this in [3:2](#) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 5:20

that unless your righteousness abounds & you will certainly not enter

If it would be helpful in your language, you can state this double negative in positive form. Alternate translation: “that only if your righteousness abounds ... will you enter” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

unless your righteousness abounds more than that & you will certainly not enter into the kingdom of the heavens

Jesus is using a hypothetical situation to teach the disciples about how holy they need to be to enter into the kingdom of the heavens. Alternate translation: “if your righteousness does not become much greater than that ... you will never become a part of God’s people” (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**)

Matthew 5:21

it was said to the ancient ones

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God spoke to your ancestors long ago, saying" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Whoever kills will be subject to the judgment

Here, **the judgment** implies that a judge will condemn the person to die. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "A judge will condemn anyone who kills another person" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 5:22

with his brother & to his brother

Here, **his brother** refers to a fellow disciple of Jesus, not to a literal brother or a neighbor. If it would be helpful in your language, you can make it explicit. Alternate translation: “with another one believer” (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**) (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**)

Raka

This is an Aramaic word. Matthew spelled it out using Greek letters so his readers would know how it sounded. In your translation you can spell it the way it sounds in your language. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1193)**) (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1193)**)

And whoever says

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “And whoever might say to his brother” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 5:23

at the altar

It is implied that this is God's **altar** at the temple in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "to God at the altar in the temple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 5:24

first be reconciled with your brother

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “first, make peace with that person” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

then

The word **then** indicates that only after the two are reconciled can this person offer something upon the altar. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: “then, once you are brought together again” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

Matthew 5:25

Be in agreement with your accuser quickly while you are with him on the way, lest your accuser might hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of **you** and **your** in this verse are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

with your accuser

An **accuser** is a person who blames someone else for doing something wrong. He may take the wrongdoer to court to accuse him before a judge. If it would be helpful in your language, you can state it explicitly. Alternate translation: "with the one who accuses you of doing wrong" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

might hand you over to the judge

Here, **hand you over** means to give someone into the control of someone else. Alternate translation: "gives control of you to the judge" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

while you are with him on the way

Here, **on the way** is referring to the time when they are walking to the place where the judge is. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "while you are walking with him on the road to the court house" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

lest your accuser might hand you over to the judge

Here, **hand you over** means to bring someone to the judge to have the judge deal with them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "lest your accuser might bring you to the judge and give you to him so that he can judge you" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the judge to the officer

Here, "hand you over" is implied from the previous phrase. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "and the judge might hand you over to the officer" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

to the officer

Here, **the officer** is a person who has authority to carry out the decisions of a judge. Usually this involves bringing people to jail if they have been declared guilty by the judge. Alternate translation: "to one who carries out the judge's orders" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

you will be thrown into prison

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the officer will put you in prison” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 5:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 5:27

that it was said

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “that God said” or “that Moses said” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 5:28

with her in his heart

Here, **heart** Is referring to the inner thoughts and desires of a person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “with her in his thoughts” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 5:29

But if your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw {it} away from you. For it is better for you that one of your members would perish and your whole body would not be thrown into Gehenna

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All instances of **you** and **your** here are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

if your right eye causes you to stumble

Here, **right eye** refers to both eyes. It was common in Jesus' time to think the right eye was more important. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: "if one of your eyes causes you to sin" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

if your right eye causes you to stumble

Here, **to stumble** is a metaphor meaning "to sin." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternate translation: "if you want to sin because of what your eye sees" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

pluck it out

This is an exaggerated command for a person to do whatever he needs to do to stop sinning, even if that means removing an eye. If you mention both eyes in this verse, it will be necessary to say "pluck them out" here. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

and your whole body would not be thrown into Gehenna

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "than for God to throw your whole body into hell" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

one of your members would perish

Here, **one of your members** is referring to an individual part of the body. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternate translation: "one individual part of your body perish" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 5:30

And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw {it} away from you. For it is better for you that one of your members would perish and your whole body would not go into Gehenna

This verse has the same meaning as the previous verse. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the verses into one. Alternate translation: "If a part of your body causes you to sin against God, you should destroy it. For it is better that one part of your body be destroyed than for God to throw your entire body into Gehenna" (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

if your right hand causes you to stumble

Here, the **hand** stands for the actions of the whole person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation "if you do something that causes you to sin" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

cut it off and throw {it} away from you

This is an exaggerated command for a person to do whatever he needs to do to stop sinning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

one of your members would perish

See how you translated this word in the previous verse. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 5:31

it has been said

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God also said" or "Moses also said" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 5:32

everyone divorcing his wife, except for a report of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery

If it would appear in your language that Matthew was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: “a man is only allow to divorce a woman if she has been unfaithful to him with another man. Otherwise, he will cause her to be adulterous” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**)

the one who} has been divorced

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: “her after her husband has divorced her” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 5:33

it was said to the ancient ones

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: “God said to those who lived long ago” or “Moses said to your ancestors long ago” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

but

What follows the word **but** here is in contrast to what came before it. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “but rather,” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

Matthew 5:34

neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God

Here, **heaven** is spoken of as **the throne of God** in a figurative way. Heaven is the place from which God rules. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: “not by heaven, which is his throne” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 5:35

it is a footstool for his feet

Here, **footstool** is used to refer to the earth. If your readers would not know what a footstool is, you can use a general expression. Alternate translation: "it is something on which God can rest his feet" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

for it is a footstool for his feet

God does not need **a footstool for his feet**, for he does not have feet. This language is metaphorical, telling the reader that the earth belongs to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: "no longer belong to Jesus" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 5:36

Neither should you swear by your head, for you are not able to make one hair white or black

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of the words **you** and **your** are singular, but you may have to translate them as plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

Neither should you swear by your head

To **swear by your head** means to swear by your own authority. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: "Neither should you swear by your own authority" or "Neither should you swear by your own knowledge" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 5:37

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 5:38

that it was said

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: “that God said” or “that Moses said” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**)

An eye in exchange for an eye, and a tooth in exchange for a tooth

This passage is speaking of the punishment for injuring someone’s **eye** or **tooth**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly, as modelled in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1134)**)

Matthew 5:39

the evil one

Jesus is using the adjective **evil** as a noun in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "someone who is evil" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 5:40

you & your & your cloak

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of **you** and **your** are singular. In some languages they may need to be plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

tunic, & cloak

The **coat** was worn close to the body, like a heavy shirt or a sweater. The **cloak**, the more valuable of the two, was worn over the **coat** for warmth and also used as a blanket for warmth at night. If your readers would not be familiar with these, you can explicitly state what these things are. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 5:41

whoever

The context implies that he is speaking about a Roman soldier. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “if a soldier of the Roman army” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

for one mile

Here, **one mile** refers to the Roman mile, which was 1,000 paces. This was the distance a Roman soldier could legally force someone to carry something for him. If **mile** is confusing, it can be translated literally. Alternate translation: “1000 paces” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

go with him two

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “go with him two miles” or “go with him 2000 paces” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 5:42

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 5:43

You have heard & your & your

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The **You** is plural in **You have heard**. The verb **Love** and both instances of **your** are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

that it was said

See how you translated this in [5:27](#). (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

your neighbor

Here the word **neighbor** does not refer to a specific neighbor, but to any members of one's community or people group. These are people whom one usually desires to treat kindly or at least believes he ought to treat kindly. Alternate translation: "your countrymen" or "those who belong to your people group" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

Matthew 5:44

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 5:45

you might be sons of your Father

We are not God's physical children but his spiritual children. It is best to translate **sons** with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to human sons or children. (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**) (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**)

of your Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

in the heavens

See how you translated **in the heavens** in [5:12](#) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust

Here, **he makes his sun to rise** and **he sends rain on** are figurative for sending blessings, as sun and rain help crops to grow. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "God gives blessing to both those who are right with him and those who are not right with him" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 5:46

what reward do you have

Jesus uses this question to teach the people that loving those who love them is not something special for which God will reward them. This is because it is easy to love those who love you back. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "you will get no reward." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Do not even the tax collectors do the same thing

Jesus asks this question to show that even people who are considered to be the most evil do this. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Even the tax collectors do the same thing." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 5:47

what do you do more? Do not even the Gentiles do the same thing

Jesus asks these questions to teach his followers that they are no better than the Gentiles if they do not welcome people who are not like them. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “you do not do anything better than those who do not know God. For the Gentiles do this very thing” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 5:48

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 6

Matthew 6 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Matthew 6 continues Jesus' extended teaching known as "The Sermon on the Mount."

You may wish to set apart the prayer in 6:9-11 by placing it farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Jesus spoke about many different subjects in this sermon, so you may wish to help the reader by putting an empty line into the text whenever Jesus changed the subject.

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

You singular and you plural

In this chapter, as in the last chapter, Jesus is talking to a large crowd of his followers. Throughout the chapter, Jesus switches between using you in the singular and you in the plural. In both instances he is talking to the same people. When he is using the singular, he is referring to all of the individuals in the crowd, but is still referring to the crowd as a whole. Your language may require you to use a plural here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1228)**)

Matthew 6:1

not to do your & you do not have & your

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of **you** and **your** are plural in this chapter unless otherwise noted. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

before men to be seen by them

It is implied that those who see this person will honor him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "in front of people to be seen by them so they will give you honor for what you have done" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

before men to be seen by them

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: "in front of people just so that they can see you and honor you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

before men

Although the term **men** is masculine, Jesus is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. See the note in the introduction. Alternate translation: "before people" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

in the heavens

See how you translated this in [5:16](#) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 6:2

do not sound a trumpet before yourself

Here, **do not sound a trumpet** could mean (1) that they should not blow an actual trumpet when they go to give, or (2) **do not sound your trumpet** is figurative for bringing attention to yourself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain way. Alternate translation: “do not bring attention to yourself” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the hypocrites

The word **hypocrites** is not referring to a specific person, but to people who put on a false appearance of righteousness. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: “people who act in a hypocritical way” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

so that they may be glorified by men

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: “in order that people might honor them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

they have their reward in full

Often times, to **have a reward** is a positive thing. Here, Jesus means it in a negative way, saying that their reward is not with God. If it would be helpful in your language, consider expressing the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “their reward is not with God in the heavens” (See: **Irony (p.1275)**) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**)

Matthew 6:3

you, & your & your

All occurrences of **you** and **your** are singular in this verse. You might need to translate these as plural in your language. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1228)**) (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1228)**)

do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing

This phrase is a metaphor for total secrecy. Just as hands usually work together and each can be said to **know** what the other is **doing** at all times, you should not let even those closest to you know when you are giving to the poor. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 6:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 6:5

you pray, & to you

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The first occurrence of **you** is singular and second is plural. In some languages they both may need to be plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

the hypocrites

See the note in [5:2](#) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

so that they may be seen by men

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "so that people will see them and give them honor" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

by men

See the note in the introduction. Alternate translation: "by people" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

Matthew 6:6

enter into your inner chamber

The **inner chamber** was a small, private room where people stored belongings, as well as food for their animals. If it would be helpful in your language, you can state it plainly. Alternate translation: “go into your private storage room” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

to your Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 6:7

the Gentiles

Jesus is speaking of **Gentiles** in general, and not to any specific gentiles. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: "Gentile people" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

they will be heard

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: "their false gods will hear them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 6:8

Therefore, you should not be like them

When Jesus says to **not be like them**, he means in the way they pray. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “Therefore, you should not pray like them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 6:9

let your name be made holy

Here, **your name** refers to God himself. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “make everyone honor you” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Therefore, you must pray like this

Jesus was not saying that this was the only way to pray. He was giving an example of how one should pray. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “Therefore, instead of babbling like the Gentiles, you should pray in a way similar to this” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

in the heavens

See how you translated **who is in the heavens** in [5:16](#) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

let your name be made holy

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: “make people glorify your name” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

let your name be made holy

Here, **your name** refers to God himself. The name of something is very closely associated with the person or being to whom it belongs. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “may people honor you” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 6:10

Let your kingdom come

See how your translated **kingdom** in [3:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

let your will be done as in heaven also on earth

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “May everything on earth happen in accordance with your will, just as everything in heaven does” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 6:11

daily bread

Here, **bread** refers to food in general. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "something he said" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

Matthew 6:12

debts, & our debtors

A **debt** is what one person owes another person. A **debtor** is a person who owes a debt to another person. This is a metaphor for those who have sinned against another person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: "sins ... those who sin against us" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 6:13

do not bring us into temptation

If it would be helpful in your language, you can express **temptation** as a verb. Alternate translation: “do not let anything tempt us” or “do not let anything cause us to desire to sin” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

but deliver us from the evil one

Here, **evil one** could also mean evil. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of evil, you could express the same idea with a verbal form. Alternate translation: “protect us from doing evil things” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Most important manuscripts do not include “For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” See the discussion of textual issues in the chapter introduction to decide whether to include this sentence in your translation. (See: **Textual Variants (p.1381)**) (See: **Textual Variants (p.1381)**)

Matthew 6:14

men

See the note in the introduction. Alternate translation: “people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p. 1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

their trespasses

If your readers would misunderstand the abstract noun **trespasses**, you can express it as a verb. Alternate translation: “when they trespass against you” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 6:15

your trespasses

See how you translated trespasses in the previous verse. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

the men

See the note in the introduction. Alternate translation: “those people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

Matthew 6:16

they disfigure their faces

The hypocrites would not wash **their faces**. They did this purposely to draw attention to themselves so that people would see them and give them honor for fasting. If someone was fasting, it would be obvious from their appearance. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “they make it obvious to others that they are fasting” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

they have their reward in full

See how you translated **they have their reward in full** in [6:2](#) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**)

Matthew 6:17

you, {& your & your

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of **you** and **your** are singular. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1228)**) (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1228)**)

anoint your head and wash your face

Here, to **anoint** the **head** and to **wash** the **face** is to take normal care of one's self. Doing this gives the appearance that you are living life as normal. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "make yourself appear as though you were not fasting" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 6:18

by your Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

seeing in secret

See how you translated this in [6:6](#). Alternate translation: “who sees what you do in private”

Matthew 6:19

moth

A **moth** is a small, flying insect that destroys cloth by eating it. If it would not be known in your language, you can use a general term for moth. Alternate translation: “flying insects that eat your belongings” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

rust

Here, **rust** could also be referring to a bug which eats away at things like food. It is not clear in the original language. If it would be helpful in your language, you can use a general expression. Alternate translation: “bugs which eat away at food” or “things which eat away at your belongings” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

rust

Here, **rust** is a term referring to something that deteriorates metal. If this would not be known in your language, you can use a general expression. Alternate translation: “something which destroys metal” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 6:20

store up for yourselves treasures in heaven

This is a metaphor that means do good things on earth so God will reward you in **heaven**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation “do good things and obey God, so that he will reward you in heaven” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 6:21

For where your treasure is

Here, **treasure** is figurative for the things people value the most in life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: "For with what you value most in life" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

there will your heart be also

Here, **heart** means a person's thoughts and interests. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: "there your desires will also be" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 6:22

your & your

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. Both instances of **your** are all singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1228)**) (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1228)**)

The lamp of the body is the eye

The eye is a lamp in a figurative sense. The eye not a source of light, but a channel for light. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "Your eye lets light into your body" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Therefore, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be illuminated

Jesus is drawing an extended comparison between physical vision and spiritual receptivity. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the comparison. Alternate translation: "When your eye is healthy, it lets light into your whole body. In the same way, if you are willing to obey God, you will understand and live by his message for every part of your life" (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1144)**) (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1144)**)

Matthew 6:23

ἐὰν δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου πονηρὸς ᾖ, ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινὸν ἔσται. εἰ οὖν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ σκότος, ἐστὶν τὸ σκότος πόσον

Jesus continues to draw an extended comparison between physical vision and spiritual receptivity. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the comparison. Alternate translation: "But when your eye is unhealthy, it does not let light into any of your body. In the same way, if you are not willing to obey God, you will not understand and live by his message for any part of your life" (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1144)**) (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1144)**)

Matthew 6:24

No one

Jesus is speaking of people in general, not of one particular person. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: “No person” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

for either he will hate the one and will love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and will despise the other

Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing. They emphasize that a person cannot love and be devoted both to God and money at the same time. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: “for he will obey one of them and disobey the other” (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

You are not able to serve God and wealth

Here, **money** is spoken of as though it were a person who someone could serve. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “You are not able to serve God and completely desire riches” (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

Matthew 6:25

to you, & your & you might eat & you might drink, & your & you might wear

Here the instances of **you** and **your** are all plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

Is not life more than food, and the body, {than} clothing

Jesus uses a question to teach the people about what is important in life. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Life is much more than just food, and the body is much more than just what you wear!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 6:26

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Are} you not more valuable than they

Jesus uses a question to teach the people about the value of human beings compared to animals. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You are much more valuable than the birds of the sky!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 6:27

you

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. Here, **you** is plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

But which of you, being anxious, is able to add one cubit to his lifespan

Here to **add one cubit to his lifespan** is a metaphor for adding time to how long a person will live. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Who among you is able to add to the length of his life by being anxious" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

But which of you, being anxious, is able to add one cubit to his lifespan

Jesus uses this question to emphasize that they cannot lengthen their lives. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "None of you can, just by worrying, add years to your life." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

one cubit

A **cubit** is a measure of a little less than half a meter. (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1141)**) (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1141)**)

Matthew 6:28

why are you anxious about clothing

Jesus uses a question to teach the people why they should not be anxious. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “you should not be worried about what you will wear.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

They do not labor, neither do they spin

Jesus speaks about the lilies as if they were people who were able to **toil** and **spin cloth**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “They do not work and spin cloth like people do” (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

lilies

A lily is a kind of wild flower. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 6:29

not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these

The lilies being **clothed** is a metaphor for the plants having beautiful and colorful flowers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “not even Solomon with all of his riches looked as majestic as a lily of the field” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

clothed himself like one of these

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: “wore clothes that were as beautiful as these lilies” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 6:30

thus clothes the grass of the field

The lilies being clothed is a metaphor for the plants having beautiful and colorful flowers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

grass

If your language has a word that includes **grass** and the word you used for “lilies” in the previous verse, you can use it here.

being thrown into an oven

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “someone throws it into a fire” or “someone burns it” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

will he} not much more

The verb “clothe” is implied from the previous sentence. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

will he} not much more you, ones of little faith

Jesus uses this question to teach the people that God will provide what they need. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “he will certainly clothe you even better, you of little faith.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 6:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 6:32

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 6:33

seek first the kingdom and his righteousness

Here, **kingdom** refers to God's rule as king. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "Most importantly, be one of God's people, and do what he desires of you" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

all these things will be added to you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will provide all these things for you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 6:34

tomorrow will be anxious for itself

Jesus speaks of **tomorrow** as if it were a person who could worry. Jesus means that a person will have enough to worry about when the next day comes. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning in plain language. (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

Matthew 7

Matthew 7 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus spoke about many different subjects in this sermon, so you may wish to help the reader by putting an empty line into the text whenever Jesus changed the subject.

Special Concepts in this Chapter

Matthew 5-7

Many people call the words in Matthew 5-7 the Sermon on the Mount. This is one long lesson that Jesus taught. Bibles divide this lesson into three chapters, but this can sometimes confuse the reader. If your translation divides the text into sections, be sure that the reader understands that the whole sermon is one large section.

“By their fruits you will know them”

Fruit is a common image in the Scriptures. It is used to describe the results of either good or bad actions. In this chapter, good fruit is the result of living as God commands. (See: **fruit, fruitful, unfruitful (p.1404)**)

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

You singular and you plural

In this chapter, as in the past two chapters, Jesus is talking to a large crowd of his followers. Throughout the chapter, Jesus switches between using you in the singular and you in the plural. In both instances he is talking to the same people. When he is using the singular, he is referring to all of the individuals in the crowd, but is still referring to the crowd as a whole. Your language may require you to use a plural here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1228)**)

Matthew 7:1

Do not judge

It is implied here that the word **judge** has a strong negative meaning. Jesus is not saying that judgment is always bad, but that in this case it is negative. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Do not condemn people harshly" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

you will not be judged

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: "God will not condemn you harshly" (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 7:2

with the judgment by which you judge, you will be judged

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: "God will judge you with the judgment with which you judge" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

For with the judgment by which

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **judgment**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "In the manner that you judge" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

you judge, & you measure

Here, Jesus leaves out that **you judge** and **you measure** is being done to other people. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "by which you judge other people ... by which you measure other people" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

and with the measure by which you measure, it will be measured to you

To **measure** someone is to hold them up to a high standard. Here, Jesus is saying that they are holding others up by too high of a standard. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: "and with the standard of behavior that you expect of other people, God will expect of you" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

with the measure by which

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **measure**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "In the manner that you measure other" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

it will be measured to you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will measure you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 7:3

Now why do you look at the speck of wood that {is} in the eye of your brother, but you do not notice the log in your eye

Jesus uses this question to rebuke the people for concerning themselves about other people's sins and ignoring their own. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You look at the speck in your brother's eye, but you do not notice the log that is in your own eye." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

do you look at & your & you do not notice & your eye

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All instances of **you** and **your** are all singular. See the note in the introduction. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1228)**) (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1228)**)

the speck of wood that {is} in the eye of your brother

A **speck of wood** is a tiny piece of wood that might get into someone's eye. This is a metaphor that refers to the less offensive sins of a fellow believer. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "the lesser sin that is in your fellow believer's life" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

of your brother

Here and in the next two verses, **brother** refers to other people who were also followers of Jesus. These people are not their biological siblings. If it would be helpful in your language, you can use plain language. Alternate translation: "your fellow follower of Jesus" (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**) (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**)

the log in your eye

A **log** is a large piece of wood, usually the remnant of the trunk or branch of a tree. Here, **log** is a metaphor that refers to the most offensive sins of a fellow believer. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "the most offensive sin that is in your own life" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

you do not notice the log in your eye

A **log** cannot fit into a person's eye. Jesus is exaggerating to emphasize that a person should pay attention to their own more offensive sins before he deals with another person's less offensive sins. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that shows this exaggeration. Alternate translation: "you do not see your own very offensive sins" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

Matthew 7:4

Or how will you say to your brother, 'Let me take out the speck of wood from your eye,' while behold, the log {is} in your eye

Jesus asks this question to challenge the people to pay attention to their own sins before they pay attention to another person's sins. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You should not say to your brother, 'Let me take out the speck from your eye,' while there is log in your own eye." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 7:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 7:6

You should neither give the holy to the dogs nor should you throw your pearls in front of the pigs

Here, to **give the holy** and to **throw your pearls** means to share about God with people. The message about God is seen as very valuable and holy. Also, **dogs** and **pigs** mean people who would reject this message. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Do not share the holy message about God with people who would hurt you, nor should you try to share the valuable message about God with people who do not care to listen to it” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

pearls

Real **pearls** are beautiful and valuable mineral balls that people use as jewelry. They are formed inside the shell of a small shellfish that lives in the ocean. If your readers would not be familiar with pearls, you could express this idea in a more general way. Alternate translation: “decorations made from valuable materials” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 7:7

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you

Here, **Ask**, **Seek**, and **Knock** all have a similar meaning: praying to God. If saying the same thing three times might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: "Pray to God for what you need, and he will provide it to you" (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

it will be given to you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will give it to you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

knock

To **Knock** on a door is a polite way to request that the person inside the house or room open the door. If knocking on a door is impolite or not done in your culture, use the word that describes how people politely ask people to let you into their house. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Knock on the door" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 7:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 7:9

Or what man is there from among you, of whom his son will ask for bread—he will not give him a stone, will he

Jesus uses a question to teach the people how God gives gifts. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “There is not one person among you of whom his son will ask for bread, and he will give him a stone.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

bread

Here, **bread** refers to food in general. Alternate translation: “some food” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

Matthew 7:10

Or he will also ask for a fish—he will not give him a snake, will he

It is understood that Jesus is still referring to a man and his son. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “Or will a man’s son ask for a fish, and the man will give him a snake” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Or he will also ask for a fish—he will not give him a snake, will he

Jesus asks another question to teach the people about how God gives gifts. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “And there is not one person among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 7:11

how much more will your Father in the heavens give good things to the ones asking him

Jesus uses a question to teach the people about how God gives gifts. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “then your Father in heaven will most certainly give good things to those who ask him.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

in the heavens

See how you translated this in [5:16](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 7:12

for this is the Law and the Prophets

Here, **the Law and the Prophets** refer to what Moses and the prophets wrote. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “for this is what Moses and the prophets wrote in the Scriptures” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

for this is the Law and the Prophets

Here, **for this is the Law and the Prophets** means that the Law and the Prophets teach this same message. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “for the Law and Prophets teach this message” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 7:13

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide {is} the gate and broad {is} the road that is leading to destruction, and there are many entering through it

In this verse, **road** is figurative for the span of a person's life. The word **gate** is figurative for the time when a person dies and enters into eternity. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation, as in the in UST. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

to destruction

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **destruction**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "to God's judgement" or "to God destroying you" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 7:14

to life

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **life**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “to the place where people live forever” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

there are few finding it

Here, to **find it** means to enter into eternal life with God and not be destroyed by him. In the same way that you might find a hidden path, so Jesus is saying that eternal life can be found. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: “there are few whom God brings into eternal life with himself” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 7:15

who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves

Here, a **sheep** means someone who is a part of the people of God. Just as in real life, predators try to attack sheep, so people who try to hurt God's people are called **wolves**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "who come to God's people to harm them, as a wolf comes to harm sheep" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 7:16

By their fruits you will recognize them

Here, **their fruits** is referring to a person's actions before God. Just as a good tree produces good fruit and a bad tree produces bad fruit, so a person who loves God will obey him and a person who does not love God will not obey him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "Just as you know a tree by the fruit that grows on it, you will know false prophets by the fact that they do not speak the words of God" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

They do not gather grapes from a thornbush or figs from thistles, do they

Jesus uses a question to teach the people about false prophets. The people would have known that the answer is no. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "People do not gather grapes from a thornbush or figs from thistles." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 7:17

In the same way, every good tree produces good fruits, but the rotten tree produces bad fruits

Jesus continues to use the metaphor of **fruit** to refer to false prophets who produce evil works. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation "Just as when a good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit, so those who preach God's words do good and speak falsely about God's words do evil" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 7:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 7:19

Every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into a fire

Here, Jesus continues talking about **trees**. He is saying that those who do not preach God's words will be judged by him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation "And just as every bad tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire, so everyone who disobeys God will be judged by him forever" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

is cut down and thrown into a fire

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "people cut down and throw into a fire" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 7:20

by their fruits you will recognize them

See how you translated this in [7:16](#) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 7:21

Lord, Lord

Here, **Lord, Lord** is an exclamation that shows that these people claim that Jesus is their master. This is what a servant would say to their master. Use an exclamation that is natural in your language for communicating this. Alternate translation: "My Lord!" (See: **Exclamations (p.1217)**) (See: **Exclamations (p.1217)**)

of my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

in the heavens

See how you translated **in the heavens** in [5:16](#) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 7:22

in that day

Jesus said **that day** knowing his hearers would understand he was referring to the day of judgment. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “on the day when God will judge all people” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many mighty deeds

The people use a question to emphasize that they did many good things for Jesus. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “we prophesied in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name did many mighty deeds.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

in your name, & in your name & in your name

Here, to do something **in your name** means to do it by his power and authority. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “by your authority ... in your authority ... in your authority” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 7:23

I never knew you

I never knew you means that the person was never one of God's people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "You have never been my follower" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 7:24

will be compared to a wise man who built his house upon the rock

Jesus compares those who obey what he says to a person who builds his **house** on a rock, where nothing can harm it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “will be like a wise man who built his house on a firm foundation” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

will be compared to a wise man

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: “is like a wise man” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

rock

Here, **rock** means the bedrock below the topsoil and clay, not a large stone or boulder above the ground. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “solid ground” or “sturdy ground” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 7:25

it had been founded

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the man had built it” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 7:26

will be compared to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand

Jesus uses a simile to compare those who do not obey his words with **foolish** house-builders who pick a bad place to build a house. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “will be like a fool who built his house in a dangerous place where it could be knocked down” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

will be compared to a foolish man

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: “people will compare him to a foolish man” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 7:27

its destruction was great

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **destruction**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “the waters and the wind destroyed it” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 7:28

General Information:

General Information:

This verse describe how the people in the crowds reacted to Jesus' teaching. This marks the end of the Sermon on the Mount. Use the natural form in your language for expressing the conclusion of a story. (See: **End of Story (p. 1213)**) (See: **End of Story (p.1213)**)

at his teaching

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **teaching**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "by the way that he taught them" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 7:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 8

Matthew 8 General Notes

Figures of Speech

Metonymy

Metonymy is used often in this chapter to refer to people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Rhetorical Questions

Jesus uses rhetorical questions in this chapter to ask his listeners questions that will make them think deeply about what he is saying. Often when rhetorical questions are used, Jesus is being emphatic. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Idiom

Idioms are often used in this chapter. These may not be understood by your audience, as they were sayings that only people in that culture would have understood. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 8:1

Now

This introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Some time later” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Matthew 8:2

behold, a leper, having approached

This introduces the **leper** as a new character in the story. A leper is a person with a serious, contagious skin disease. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. Since he is a new participant, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a common way in your language for introducing a new person to a story. Alternate translation: "There was a man who was a leper. Approaching Jesus, he" (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1272)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1272)**)

if you are willing, you are able to make me clean

The leper is using a hypothetical situation to show that he believes Jesus will heal him. Use the natural form in your language for expressing a hypothetical situation. Alternate translation: "if you would desire to heal me, you are able to do it" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**)

you are able to make me clean

Here, to be **clean** means to be healed from the skin disease, which did not allow them to be in the community with the rest of the people. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "you are able to heal me and allow me to be a part of the community again" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 8:3

his leprosy was cleansed

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: "Jesus cleansed him of his leprosy" (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 8:4

show yourself to the priest

Jewish law required that the person **show** his healed skin **to the priest**, who would then allow him or her to return to the community, to be with other people. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “show the priest that you are healed from the disease, so that you can rejoin your community” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them

The law of **Moses** required that someone healed of leprosy give a thanksgiving offering to the priest. When the priest accepted the gift, people would know that the man had been healed. So that no one else would become infected, lepers were not allowed to come into contact with healthy people. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “offer the gift that Moses commanded in the Law, for a testimony to the priest that you are healed” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

to them

Here, **to them** either refers to (1) the priests, or (2) the community in general. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “to the priests” or “to the community” (See: **Pronouns (p.1335)**) (See: **Pronouns (p.1335)**)

Matthew 8:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 8:6

paralyzed

Someone who is **paralyzed** is someone who is not able to completely use their body. Sometimes they just can't use their legs, but sometimes they can't use anything. If it would be helpful in your language, you can state this explicitly. "not able to use his arms and legs" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 8:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 8:8

under my roof

Here, **under my roof** is figurative for being in a person's house. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: "in my house" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

speak a word

Here, **speak** is a polite way of saying that all Jesus has to do is speak a word, and he will heal the servant. Use a form in your language that communicates this. Alternate translation: "say a word" (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**)

my servant will be healed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "you will make my servant well" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 8:9

I & am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "I am a man who is under the authority of someone else, and I myself authority over a group of soldiers" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

under authority, & under me

To be **under** someone means to be less important and to obey the commands of someone of a higher status. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "who obeys other people's commands ... who obey me" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

and to another one, ' & and to my servant

The centurion is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "and to another I say ... and to my servant, I say" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 8:10

I have found such great faith from no one in Israel

Jesus' hearers would have thought that the Jews in **Israel**, who claim to be children of God, would have greater **faith** than anyone. Jesus is saying that the centurion's faith was greater. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "I have found such faith from no one in Israel, among people who should have more faith" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

in Israel

Here, the name **Israel** is not referring to the country, but to the people who live in Israel. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "among the people of Israel" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 8:11

you

Here, **you** is plural and refers to “those who were following him” in [8:10](#). (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

from east and west

Using the opposites **east** and **west** is a way of saying “everywhere.” Alternate translation: “from many faraway places” (See: **Merism (p.1286)**) (See: **Merism (p.1286)**)

they will recline to eat

Jesus speaks of the joy that people will share in God’s kingdom as if they were all enjoying a feast together. Use a term in your language that refers to a celebratory meal. Alternate translation: “will feast together in the kingdom of God” or “will rejoice together in the kingdom of God” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

in the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated **kingdom of the heavens** in [3:2](#) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 8:12

the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “God will throw out the sons of the kingdom” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

But the sons of the kingdom

The phrase **sons of** is figurative, referring to the Jews of the kingdom of Judea. This is saying that they are of Jewish descent. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “But those who do not believe in me from the Jewish people” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out

In their culture, **the sons of the kingdom** would usually inherit the kingdom and not be thrown out. Jesus is speaking in this way to show how disobedient the Jewish people were being. If it would be helpful in your language, consider expressing the meaning plainly. (See: **Irony (p.1275)**) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**)

into the outer darkness

Here, **outer darkness** is a metonym for the place where God sends those who reject them. This is a place where God punishes people forever. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language, as in the UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

weeping and grinding of the teeth

Here, **grinding of the teeth** is a symbolic act, representing extreme pain and suffering. If there is a gesture with similar meaning in your culture, you could consider using it here in your translation. Alternate translation: “weeping and extreme suffering” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Matthew 8:13

let it be done for you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “so I will do it for you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the servant was healed

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: “Jesus healed the servant” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 8:14

being sick with a fever

A **fever** is a symptom of an illness in which the temperature of the body temporarily increases. This results in the need to lie down in bed and rest as Peter's mother-in-law was doing. If your reader would not be familiar with this, you could use a general expression. Alternate Translation: "being feverish from illness" or "being ill with an elevated temperature" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 8:15

the fever left her

The **fever** is spoken of as if it, like a person, **left**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "Jesus healed her of her fever" (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

Matthew 8:16

many being possessed by demons

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: “many of those who demons have possessed” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

he cast out the spirits with a word

Here, **word** means a command that Jesus gave. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “he commanded the spirits to leave” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 8:17

might be fulfilled that which had been spoken by Isaiah the prophet

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: “Jesus fulfilled the prophecy that the prophet Isaiah spoke” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “and this is what he said” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

He himself took our sicknesses and bore our diseases

Matthew is quoting the prophet Isaiah. **He himself took our weaknesses** and **bore {our} diseases** mean basically the same thing and emphasize that he healed all of **our diseases**. If it would be clearer for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: “He took away our sicknesses” (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

Matthew 8:18

commanded to depart to the other side

Matthew is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "Jesus told his disciples to sail to the other side of the Sea of Galilee" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 8:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 8:20

The foxes have dens, and the birds of the sky, nests, but the Son of Man does not have {a place} where he might lay his head

Jesus answers the scribe with this proverb. The proverb means even wild animals have somewhere to rest. You can translate the proverb itself in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: “Even animals have a place to sleep, but the Son of Man does not have a place to sleep” (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

The foxes have dens, and the birds of the sky, nests

Jesus assumes that his hearers know what **foxes** are and what they use the **holes** for. **Foxes** are animals like wild dogs. They eat nesting birds and other small animals. If foxes are unknown in your area, use a general term for wild dog-like creatures that burrow in the ground. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. It may be helpful to make this a separate sentence. Alternate translation: “Foxes have their holes in the ground to sleep in, and flying birds have their nests to sleep in” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the birds of the sky, nests

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “birds who fly in the sky have nests” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

ὁ & Υἱὸς τοῦ Ἀνθρώπου

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you can express this in the first person. Alternate translation: “I, the Son of Man” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

does not have {a place} where he might lay his head

Here, **lay his head** refers to a place to sleep. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “has no place of his own to sleep” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 8:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 8:22

let the dead bury their own dead

Jesus does not mean literally that **dead** people will bury other dead people. Here, **the dead** is referring to those who are spiritually **dead**, meaning they do not love God, and are not following Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation, as expressed in the UST. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 8:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 8:24

so that the boat was covered by the waves

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “so that the waves were filling the boat” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 8:25

Lord, save us; we are perishing

Here, **we** is referring to both Jesus and the disciples. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**)

Matthew 8:26

Why are you cowardly, you of little faith

Jesus asks this question in order to teach the disciples why they should not be afraid. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "There is nothing for you to be afraid of, you who have little faith!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

you of little faith

Jesus addresses his disciples this way because their anxiety about the storm shows they have little faith in him to control it. See how you translated this in [6:30](#).

Matthew 8:27

What sort of {man} is he, that even the winds and the sea obey him

This question shows that the disciples were surprised. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "This man is unlike any man we have ever seen! Even the wind and the waves obey him!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

even the winds and the sea obey him

Here, **wind** and **waves** are described as if they are able to **obey** Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "he even controls the wind and the waves" (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

Matthew 8:28

the region of the Gadarenes

The **Gadarenes** were named after the town of Gadara. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

two men & being possessed by demons

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: “two men ... whom demons were controlling” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 8:29

What to us and to you, Son of God

The unclean spirit asks this question out of fear. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Leave me alone, Jesus, Son of the Most High God! There is no reason for you to interfere with me." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus, which describes his relationship to God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Have you come here to torment us before the set time

Again, the demons pose a question out of fear. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You have surely come here to punish us before the time when God will judge us!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Have you come here to torment us before the set time

Here, **the set time** is referring to the time when God will judge all of the evil spirits and people. Matthew's readers would have understood this. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Have you come here early, before the time when God is planning to judge us?" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 8:30

Now

Now is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew tells background information about a herd of pigs that had been there before Jesus arrived. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

Matthew 8:31

If you cast us out

It is implied that the demons knew that Jesus was going to **cast** them **out**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Because you are going to cast us out" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

us

Here, **us** is exclusive, referring only to the demons. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**)

Matthew 8:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 8:33

the {things concerning} the ones possessed by demons

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: “what Jesus did to help the men whom demons were controlling” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 8:34

the whole city

The word **city** is a metonym for the people of the city. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “all the people who lived in the city” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

the whole city

The word **whole** is an exaggeration to emphasize how very many people came out to see Jesus. If your readers would misunderstand this, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that shows this. Alternate translation: “many of the people in the city” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

Matthew 9

Matthew 9 General Notes

Structure

Formatting

Special Concepts in this Chapter

Figures of Speech

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

Matthew 9:1

he crossed over

Here, Matthew does not specify that Jesus **crossed over** the Sea of Galilee. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "he crossed over the Sea of Galilee" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 9:2

a paralytic

See how you translated **paralytic** in [4:24](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Your sins are forgiven

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: "I have forgiven your sins" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 9:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 9:4

having seen their thoughts

This phrase implies that Jesus had supernatural knowledge. It indicates that Jesus knew what the scribes were saying even though he did not hear what they said. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “even though no one told Jesus, he knew” or “even though Jesus had not heard them, he was fully aware”(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

For what reason do you think evil in your hearts

Jesus used this question to rebuke the scribes. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “You should not be thinking this evil in your hearts!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

in your hearts

Here, **hearts** refers to their minds or their thoughts. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “in your minds” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 9:5

For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk

Jesus uses this question to make the scribes think about what might prove whether or not he could really forgive **sins**. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "you think that it is certainly easier to say 'your sins are forgiven' than to say 'get up and walk'" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk

The quotes can be translated as indirect quotes. Alternate translation: "you think that it is easier to tell someone that his sins are forgiven than to tell him to get up and walk" or (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

Your sins have been forgiven

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: "I have forgiven your sins" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 9:6

you might know & your & your

Here, the **you** is plural and is addressed to the scribes, but both instances of **your** are singular and addressed to the paralytic. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

the Son of Man

Here Jesus refers to himself as **the Son of Man** in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you can make it first person. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

authority

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **authority**, you could express the same idea in another way, as in the UST. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 9:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 9:8

authority

See how you translated this in [9:6](#) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 9:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 9:10

sinners

Here, **sinners** refers to people who did not obey the law of Moses but committed what others thought were very bad sins. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language.

Alternate translation: "people who committed many sins" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 9:11

Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners

The Pharisees use this question to criticize what Jesus is doing. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Your teacher should not eat with tax collectors and sinners!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 9:12

But he, having heard this

Here, **this** refers to the question the Pharisees asked about Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "When Jesus heard the Pharisees ask this question" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

The ones being healthy do not have need of a physician, but the ones having sickness

Jesus begins his response by quoting or creating a proverb, a short saying about something that is generally true in life. This proverb draws a figurative comparison. Just as sick people need to see a doctor to be healed, so sinners need to see Jesus in order to be forgiven and restored. But since Jesus explains the comparison in the next verse, you do not need to explain it here. Rather, you can translate the proverb itself in a way that will be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: "People who are well do not need to see a doctor, but people who are unwell do" (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

The ones being healthy

Those who **have sickness** are equated with those who are wanting to be saved by Jesus. The **healthy** are equated with those who do not think they need Jesus. Jesus does not actually think those who do not want him are spiritually sound, but rather, that they are needy. He says this because those people think they are healthy in their own eyes and do not need Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, consider expressing the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Those who suppose themselves to be healthy do not need a doctor. It is those who know that they are sick who need a doctor". (See: **Irony (p.1275)**) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**)

the ones having sickness

The phrase "need a physician" is understood from the previous phrase. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "people who are sick need a physician" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 9:13

but sinners

The words **I did not come to call** are understood from the phrase before this. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "but I came to call sinners" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 9:14

Then

The word **Then** indicates that the events the story will now relate came after the event it has just described. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: "After Jesus said this," (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

the disciples of John

Here, **John** is referring to John the Baptizer. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that this is referring to John the Baptizer. Alternate translation: "the disciples of John the Baptizer" (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1272)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1272)**)

Matthew 9:15

The sons of the bridal chamber are not able to mourn while the bridegroom is still with them, are they

Jesus uses a question to answer John's disciples. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "The sons of the bridal chamber are certainly not able to mourn while the bridegroom is still with them." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

The sons of the bridal chamber are not able to mourn while the bridegroom is still with them, are they

Jesus uses this proverb to show that his disciples do not **mourn** because he **is still** there **with them**. In this proverb, Jesus is the **bridegroom**, and his disciples are the **sons of the bridal chamber**. You can translate the proverb itself in a way that it will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. If it would be helpful in your language, you can state it explicitly. Alternate translation: "Just as the sons of the bridal chamber are not able to mourn while the bridegroom is still with them, so my disciples are not able to fast while I am still with them" (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

But days will come when

Here, **the day** is said to be **coming** like a person might come. This is figurative, meaning that the event will happen. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "But it will happen that when" (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

the bridegroom will be taken away from them

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the bridegroom will leave them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 9:16

Now no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for its patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear happens

This verse is a proverb which has a similar meaning to the previous verse. Jesus is talking about how the disciples should not use old ways of worship when he is present with them. Translate the proverb itself in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: "Just as you shouldn't use a new patch on an old piece of cloth, so you should not use old methods of worship like fasting when I am present" (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

Now no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment

When a piece of clothing gets a hole in it, another piece of cloth, a patch, is sewn onto the clothing to cover the hole. If this patch has not yet been washed, it will shrink and tear the piece of clothing, making the hole worse than it was to begin with. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Now, no one sews a new patch of cloth, one that has not yet shrunk from being washed, on an old garment that has shrunk already" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 9:17

οὐδὲ βάλλουσιν οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς παλαιούς; εἰ δὲ μή γε, ῥήγνυνται οἱ ἀσκοί, καὶ ὁ οἶνος ἐκχεῖται καὶ οἱ ἀσκοὶ ἀπόλλυνται. ἀλλὰ βάλλουσιν οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς καινοὺς, καὶ ἀμφότεροι συντηροῦνται

This verse is a proverb with a message similar to that of the previous verse. Jesus is saying that just as someone would not put new wine, which will expand, in an old wine skin, which cannot expand, so the disciples should not fast while Jesus is with them. You can translate the proverb itself in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

Neither

Here, **Neither** is a word which shows that the meaning of this verse is similar to the meaning of the previous verse. Use an word in your language that expresses this. Alternate translation: "Similarly, nor" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1187)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1187)**)

Neither do they put & they put

Jesus is speaking of people in general and not a specific person. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: "People do not pour ... people pour" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are destroyed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "which will spill out all the wine, and the wineskins are ruined" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

But

What follows the word **Instead** here is in contrast to what comes before it, showing what people do and do not do with wine and wineskins. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: "Rather than doing this" (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

both are preserved

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: "this will keep safe both the wineskins and the wine" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 9:18

While} he was saying these things to them

Connecting Statement:

Here, **While he is saying these things to them** marks the introduction of a new event. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “It happened that as Jesus was speaking with the scribes” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

a certain official

This introduces the **official** as a new character in the story. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. Since he is a new participant, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could call him something like “a man who was a ruler in a nearby town” (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1272)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1272)**)

bowed down to him

This is a way someone would show respect to someone in higher authority. If there is a gesture with similar meaning in your culture, you could consider using it here in your translation. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Matthew 9:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 9:20

suffering from a discharge of blood

The woman did not have an open wound. Rather, her monthly flow of blood would not stop. Your language may have a polite way to refer to this condition. (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

touched the edge of his cloak

Matthew does not explain why she **touched the edge of his garment**. Since the expression is explained in the next verse, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1397)**) (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1397)**)

Matthew 9:21

for she was saying in herself, “If only I touch his cloak, I will be saved

This verse tells us why she touched Jesus’ garment. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: “She did this because she was thinking to herself, ‘If I just touch his garments, then he will heal me’” (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

I will be saved

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “he will make me well” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 9:22

Daughter

Jesus was using this term to refer to the woman as a believer. She was not actually his daughter. Make sure this is understood by your readers. Alternate translation: “Beloved woman” (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**) (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**)

your faith has saved you

Here, **faith** is spoken of as having **healed** a person. This is figurative, meaning that because she believed that Jesus was able to heal her, he did heal her. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “because you believed I have healed you, I have healed you” (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

the woman was saved from that hour

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: “Jesus healed the woman at that moment” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 9:23

having seen the flute players and the crowd being disturbed

There were **flute players** at the house because it was customary in that culture to play the flute in a time of mourning. If you think your readers might not understand the significance of these actions, you could explain generally what the people were doing. Or you could describe the actions and say why the people were doing them. Alternate translation: “having seen the flute players and the upset crowd performing their mourning rituals” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Matthew 9:24

the girl has not died, but sleeps

Jesus is using a play on words. It was common in Jesus' day to refer to a dead person as one who **sleeps**. But here the **girl** who **died** will get up, as though she had only been sleeping. If it would be helpful in your language, use a different polite way of referring to death or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: "the girl is only temporarily dead, as if she were sleeping" (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

Matthew 9:25

But when the crowd had been put outside

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “But after Jesus had sent the crowd outside” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

But when the crowd had been put outside

Here, **when** is showing that Jesus did not enter the house until after he made the family leave. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: “After Jesus made the family go out of the house” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

the girl was raised up

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: “Jesus raised the girl from the dead” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 9:26

And this report went out into all that region

It is said that **this report went out** as a person might go out from a place. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "People reported to the whole region what Jesus had done" (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

into all that region

Jesus refers to the **region** to mean the people who live in that region. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: "to many of the people in that region" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

Matthew 9:27

Have mercy on us

Here, **Have mercy** means that they want Jesus to heal them from their blindness. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “Heal us from our blindness” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Son of David

Jesus was not David’s literal **Son**, but his descendant. The title **Son of David** is also an important messianic title. Make sure this is clear to your readers. Alternate translation: “Descendant of King David, the Messiah” (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**) (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**)

Matthew 9:28

Yes, Lord

The two blind men are leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "Yes, Lord, we believe you can heal us" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 9:29

Let it be done to you according to your faith

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: "I will heal you, since you have believed in me" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 9:30

their eyes were opened

Here, **their eyes were opened** is an idiom that means they were able to see. Their eyes were already physically open. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "their sight was restored" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

their eyes were opened

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: "Jesus restored their sight" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

See that you let no one know {about this

Here, **See** is figurative, meaning to be sure to do something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "Be sure no one finds out about this" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 9:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 9:32

a mute, & man

A person who is **mute** is someone who is not able to speak. Use an expression from your language that describes someone who is unable to talk. Alternate translation: "a person who was unable to say anything" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

a mute, demon-possessed man

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: "a man who had a demon that controlled him and made him mute" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 9:33

Such as this has never been seen

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “No one has ever seen anything such as this” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 9:34

By the ruler of the demons

Here, **the ruler of the demons** would have been understood by Jesus' audience as being Satan. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "By Satan, who rules the demons" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 9:35

all the cities

The word **all** is an exaggeration to emphasize how many **cities** Jesus went to. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language. Alternate translation: “many of the cities” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

preaching the gospel of the kingdom

Here the abstract noun **kingdom** refers to God’s rule as king. See how you translated this in [4:23](#). Alternate translation: “preaching the good news that God will make them one of his people” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

every disease and every sickness

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “many different kinds of illnesses” (See: **Hendiadys (p.1236)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.1236)**)

Matthew 9:36

like sheep not having a shepherd

Jesus compares the people to sheep who do not have a shepherd to lead them and take care of them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning in plain language.

Alternate translation: "acting as though they did not have someone to lead them and take care of them" (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

Matthew 9:37

he says

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “he said” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

Indeed, the harvest {is} plentiful, but the laborers {are} few

Jesus uses a proverb to respond to what he is seeing. Jesus means there are a lot of people who are ready to believe God but only a few people to teach them God’s truth. You can translate the proverb itself in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture.(See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

laborers

Here, **laborers** is a word that refers to people who work in a field to bring in the crop. Use a term in your language for this. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 9:38

earnestly ask the Lord of the harvest

Here, **of** means that the harvest belongs to the Lord, and that he has control over it. If this is not clear in your language, you could state this in a clearer way. Alternate translation: "beg the Lord, who is in charge of the harvest" (See: **Possession (p.1330)**) (See: **Possession (p.1330)**)

laborers

See how you translated **laborers** in the previous verse.

Matthew 10

Matthew 10 General Notes

Special Concepts in this Chapter

The sending of the 12 disciples

Many verses in this chapter describe how Jesus sent the 12 disciples out. He sent them to tell his message about the kingdom of heaven. They were to tell his message only in Israel and not to share it with the Gentiles.

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

The 12 disciples

The following are the lists of the 12 disciples:

In Matthew:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

In Mark:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John the son of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

In Luke:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon (who was called the Zealot), Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

Thaddaeus is probably the same person as Jude, the son of James.

“The kingdom of heaven has come near”

No one knows for sure whether the “kingdom of heaven” was present or still coming when John spoke these words. English translations often use the phrase “at hand,” but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phrases “is coming near” and “has come near.”

Matthew 10:1

And

Connecting Statement:

This verse begins the account of Jesus sending his disciples out to share his message with the people in the surrounding towns. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "Some time later," (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

he gave them authority

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **authority**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form. Alternate translation: "he authorized them to have power" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 10:2

Now

Now is used to add needed background information about the 12 apostles. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

first

Here, **first** means first in order, not in rank. If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use a way in your language for marking the first thing in a list. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**)

Matthew 10:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 10:4

Simon the Cananaio

The word **Zealot** refers to members of a group of people who were desiring to see the Jewish people freed from the rule of the Roman Empire. This likely means that **Simon** was a part of this group. If it would be helpful in your language, you can state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Simon, who was a part of the group called the Zealots” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

the {one} having also handed him over

Matthew writes **having even betrayed him** to give some extra information to the readers about what Judas did to Jesus later. Use a natural way in your language for introducing background information. Alternate translation: “the one who led the people to Jesus to arrest and kill him” (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1157)**) (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1157)**)

Matthew 10:5

These 12 Jesus sent out, having instructed them, saying

Although this verse begins by saying that Jesus sent out the Twelve, he gives these instructions before sending them out. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make the order of events clear. Alternate translation: “Before Jesus sent the Twelve out, he instructed them, saying” (See: **Order of Events (p.1311)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.1311)**)

These 12 Jesus sent out

See how you translated this in 10:2

sent out

Jesus **sent** them **out** to teach people his message. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “sent out to teach people his message” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 10:6

But

What follows the word **But** here is in contrast to what came before it. Jesus prefers the disciples to go to the people of Israel instead of to the non-Jewish people. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “But rather,” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

the lost sheep of the house of Israel

This is a metaphor comparing the people of the nation of Israel who are not obeying God to **lost sheep** who have strayed from their shepherd. If your readers would not understand what **sheep** means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “those of the people of Israel who have strayed from God like lost sheep” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

of the house of Israel

The **house of Israel** refers to the people who came from the family line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “of the people of Israel” or “of the descendants of Israel” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 10:7

The kingdom of the heavens has come near

See how you translated this in [3:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 10:8

raise the dead

Here, **raise the dead** is an idiom meaning to bring people who are dead back to life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “cause the dead to live again” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Freely you have received; freely give

Jesus did not state what the disciples had **received** or were to **give**. Some languages may require this information in the sentence. This is referring to the abilities which Jesus gave to the disciples in [4:2](#). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “I have given these abilities to you without cost, so you should use them to help others without cost” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 10:9

Do not acquire gold or silver or copper in your belts

Their **belts** were a long strip of cloth or leather worn around the waist. They were often wide enough that they could be folded and used to carry money. If your readers would not use a belt for this purpose, you can express this with the word for whatever you use to carry money. Alternate translation: “Do not carry money with you” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

gold or silver or copper

gold, silver and **copper** are metals out of which coins were made. This list is a metonym for money. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “valuable metals” or “money” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 10:10

a bag

A **bag** is a flexible container in which a person can carry their belongings. If your language does not have a word for this, you can use something in your culture that you put things in to carry them. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

two tunics

Use the plural of the word you used for **tunic** in [5:40](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

for the laborer {is} worthy of his food

The proverb **for the laborer {is} worthy of his food** is giving the reason why Jesus' disciples should not bring anything with them. Jesus is saying that God will provide each disciple, the **laborer**, with what he needs. You can translate the proverb itself in a way that it will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: "for God will provide the laborer with what he needs to live" (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

Matthew 10:11

and stay there until you go out

In this sentence, **there** means the **worthy** person's house. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "and stay at that person's house until you leave" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 10:12

Now entering into the house, greet it

The word **it** refers to the **house**. Here, **house** represents the people who live in the house. So Matthew is saying to greet the people in the house. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "As you enter the house, greet the people who live in it" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 10:13

indeed the house is worthy, & it is not worthy

Here, **the house** represents those who live in the house. A **worthy** person is a person who is willing to welcome the disciples into their house. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "the people who live in that house receive you well ... the people who live in that house do not receive you well" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 10:14

shake off the dust from your feet

The phrase **shake off the dust from your feet** was an expression of strong rejection in this culture. It showed that someone did not want even the dust of a town to remain on them. If there is a similar expression or gesture in your culture, you could consider using it here in your translation. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Matthew 10:15

for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah

Here, **the land of Sodom and Gomorrah** refers to the people who lived in **Sodom and Gomorrah**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “for the people who lived in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah

Jesus would have expected his hearers to know that Sodom and Gomorrah were cities filled with many wicked people and that God would judge these people harshly. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly, as modelled in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

for that city

Here, **that city** is referring to the city which does not accept Jesus’ disciples. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “for the city that does not receive you and listen to your words” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 10:16

as sheep in the midst of wolves

Sheep are defenseless animals that **wolves** often attack. Jesus is stating that people who are as dangerous as **wolves** may harm the disciples, who are defenseless like **sheep**. Jesus is not using the same sheep metaphor as he used in [10:6](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “as defenseless as sheep among people who are like dangerous wolves” or “to dangerous places where people might attack you” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

become wise as the serpents and harmless as the doves

Jesus is telling the disciples they must be cautious like **serpents** and **harmless** like **doves** around the dangerous the people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “act with wisdom and caution as well as with innocence” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

Matthew 10:17

councils

The **councils** were groups of leaders who helped solve issues among people in their community. They acted like a court. If your readers would not be familiar with this, you could use a term in your language for something like this, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “members of their community who are in authority” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 10:18

you will be brought also

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that “the men” mentioned in the previous verse did it. Alternate translation: “the men will even bring you” or “people will even bring you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

and you will be brought also before governors and kings for my sake

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the first phrase. Alternate translation: “because you are my disciples, they will bring you before rulers and kings” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

Matthew 10:19

But when they hand you over

The pronoun **they** refers to the same people as in 10:17. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “But when people take you to the councils” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

how or what you will speak

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **or**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use **or**. Alternate translation: “what you might say” (See: **Hendiadys (p.1236)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.1236)**)

for what you will say will be given to you in that hour

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: “for God will give to you what you should say in that hour” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

will be given to you

Here, **will be given to you** is figurative for God telling the disciples what to say in this situation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “God will tell you” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

in that hour

Here, **in that hour** means “at that time”. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “when you need it” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 10:20

but

What follows the word **but** here is in contrast to what was before it. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “but rather” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

the Spirit of your Father

Here, **the Spirit of your Father** is referring to the Holy Spirit and not a spirit of an earthly father. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Holy Spirit, who is of your Heavenly Father” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

of your Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

through you

Alternate translation: “through you”

Matthew 10:21

brother will hand over brother to death

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **death**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “aman will have his brother killed” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

a father, his child

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “a father will have his child killed” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

children will rise up

Here, **to rise up against** is an idiom meaning to rebel against an authority. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “children will rebel” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 10:22

you will be hated by all

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: “many people will hate you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

all

Here, **everyone** is figurative for many people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that expresses this. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

because of my name

Here, **name** refers to Jesus himself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “because of me” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

the one having endured

Jesus is speaking of people in general, not of one particular person. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: “if a person remains” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

this one will be saved

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: “God will save him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 10:23

in this city

Here, **this** does not refer to a specific **city**, but cities in general. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: “in a city” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

flee to the next

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “flee to the next city” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

the Son of Man comes

Here, Jesus is referring to himself when he says **Son of Man**. If it would be helpful in your language, you can clarify. Alternate translation: “I, the Son of Man, come” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

the Son of Man

Son of Man is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 10:24

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master

Jesus is using a proverb to teach his disciples a general truth. Jesus is emphasizing that the disciples should not expect people to treat them any better than the people treat Jesus, who is more important than they are. You can translate the proverb itself in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

nor a slave above his master

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “nor is a slave above his master” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 10:25

the slave like his master

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “it is enough for a slave to be like his master” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

If they called the master of the house Beelzebul

Jesus refers to himself as **the master of the house**. This is figurative, meaning that he is the most important person among the group of himself and disciples. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: “If they call me, who is like the master of the house, Beelzebul” or “If they call me, who is more important, Beelzebul” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Beelzebul

The name **Beelzebul** could be translated: (1) as “Beelzebul” or (2) with its original, intended meaning of “Satan”. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1193)**) (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1193)**)

the members of his household

Here, **the members of his household** is referring to Jesus’ disciples. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: “Jesus’ disciples, who are like the members of his house” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 10:26

there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, and hidden, that will not be made known

Here, **there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed** means the same thing as **hidden, that will not be made known**. If it would be helpful in your language, you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: “there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed” (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, and hidden, that will not be made known

Here, Jesus uses a proverb to teach his disciples. Jesus is explaining that all of the evil, which people have done in secret, God will reveal when he judges people. You can translate the proverb itself in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: “everything which is hidden will be revealed” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, and hidden, that will not be made known

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: “God will reveal everything that is concealed and will make known to other people everything which is hidden” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 10:27

What I tell you in the darkness, say in the light, and what you hear in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Jesus is emphasizing that the disciples should tell everyone what he tells the disciples in private. Alternate translation: “Tell everyone in public what I tell you privately” or “What I tell you privately, tell everyone in public” (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

What I tell you in the darkness, say in the light

Here, **darkness** is a metonym for “private,” and **daylight** is a metonym for “public.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “What I tell you privately, say in public” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

what you hear in your ear

Here, **what you hear in {your} ear** is a way of referring to whispering. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “what I whisper to you” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

proclaim upon the housetops

Here, **housetops** refers to any high place where all people can hear a person speaking. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “speak loudly in a public place where many people can hear you” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 10:28

But

Matthew contrasts fear of people with with fear of God by using the phrase **But instead**. People are only able to kill our physical bodies, but God is ** the one being able* *to destroy both our physical bodies and our spiritual souls*. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “But rather” (See: [[rc://ta/man/translate/grammar-connect-logic-contrast]]) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

Gehenna

Jesus uses the name of **Gehenna**, where refuse was thrown and fires burned continually, to mean hell. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: “Hell” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Gehenna

Gehenna is the name for a place, the Valley of Hinnom, just outside of Jerusalem. This was a place where people were constantly burning trash. Jesus draws the imagery of hell from this place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

Matthew 10:29

Are not two sparrows sold for an assarion? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father

Jesus uses this proverb to express that even though sparrows are worth very little money, God still watches over them because he created them. (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

Are not two sparrows sold for an assarion

Jesus uses this question to teach his disciples about how much God cares about them. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Sparrows have so little value that you can buy two of them for only one small coin." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

sparrows

These **sparrows** are very small, seed-eating birds. Alternate translation: "small birds" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

for an assarion

An **assarion** refers to a copper coin worth about one-sixteenth of a day's wage for a laborer. You may translate this as the least valuable coin available in your country. Alternate translation: "very little money" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Are not two sparrows sold for an assarion

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: "Do people not sell two sparrows for an assarion" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "your Father knows when even one sparrow falls to the ground" (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

will fall to the ground

Here, **will fall to the ground** is a polite way of referring to the sparrow dying. If it would be helpful in your language, use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: "will die" (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

apart from your Father

When Jesus says **apart from your Father**, he means apart from the will of your Father. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "apart from the will of your Father" (See: **Explicitly (p.1215)**) (See: **Explicitly (p.1215)**)

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

your Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 10:30

even the hairs of your head are all numbered

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: “God even knows how many hairs are on your head” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 10:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 10:32

my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

before men

Although the term **men** is masculine, Jesus is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: "people" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

in the heavens

See how you translated **in the heavens** in [5:16](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 10:33

before men

See how you translated **before men** in the previous verse. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p. 1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

in the heavens

See how you translated this in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 10:34

upon the earth

Here, **upon the earth** refers to the people who live on **the earth**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “to the people of the earth” or “among people” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

but a sword

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “but I have come to bring a sword” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

a sword

Here the use of the word **sword** means division and fighting. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “division among people” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 10:35

and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “and to set a daughter against her mother, and to set a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 10:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 10:37

is not worthy of me; & is not worthy of me

See how you translated **worthy** in [10:10](#).

Matthew 10:38

does not take up his cross and follow after me

Here, **take up his cross** means to be willing to face persecution because you serve Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “does not suffer because they belong to me” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

is not worthy of me

See how you translated **worthy** in the previous verse.

Matthew 10:39

The one having found his life will lose it, and the one having lost his life for my sake will find it

Jesus uses a proverb to teach his disciples about following him. Since Jesus does not explain its meaning, you can translate the proverb itself in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: “The one who clings to what an earthly life has to offer will lose it, and whoever is willing to give up everything for me will gain eternal life” (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

The one having found & will find

Here, **found** and **find** are figurative for obtaining something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: “The one who retains ... will gain” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

will lose it

Here, Jesus is saying that a person who tries to protect his physical life from people who would punish him for belonging to Jesus will not have eternal life with God. And a person who accepts suffering here on earth because he belongs to Jesus will receive God's reward of eternal life. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 10:40

The one receiving you receives me

Jesus says that people **receive me** when they receive the disciples because Jesus is always with his disciples, and so it is like they receive him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "The one who receives you, my disciples, it will be like he also receives me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the one receiving me receives the one having sent me

Here, **the one receiving me receives the one who sent me** means that for the one who **receives** Jesus, it is the same as **receiving** God the Father, who sent Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: "the one who receives me, he also receives my Father who sent me" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 10:41

The one receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a reward of a prophet, and the one receiving a righteous {man} in the name of a righteous {man} will receive a reward of a righteous {man}

Jesus tells this proverb to show how important it is for people to receive his disciples. You can translate the proverb itself in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: "A person who welcome one of God's prophets, God will reward him in the same way that he rewards the prophets. And a person who welcome someone who obeys God, God will reward him like that person" (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

The one receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a reward of a prophet, and the one receiving a righteous {man} in the name of a righteous {man} will receive a reward of a righteous {man}

This **reward** being referred to is to live with God forever. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "To the one who receives the prophet, God will give him the reward of living with him forever, as he gives to the prophets. And to the one who receives the person who obeys God, God will give to him the reward of living with him forever, which he gives to those who obey him." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 10:42

whoever gives & to drink

Jesus is speaking of people in general, not of one particular person. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: "if a person gives ... to drink" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

to one of these little ones

The phrase **these little ones** refers to Jesus' disciples. If your readers would not understand what **little ones** means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: "one of my disciples, who are like my children," (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

his reward

See the note on **reward** in the previous verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 11

Matthew 11 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULT does this with the quoted material in 11:10.

Some scholars believe that [Matthew 11:20](#) begins a new stage in the ministry of Christ because of Israel's rejection of him.

Special Concepts in this Chapter

Hidden revelation

After [Matthew 11:20](#), Jesus begins to reveal information about himself and about the plans of God the Father, while hiding this information from those who reject him ([Matthew 11:25](#)).

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

“The kingdom of heaven is near”

No one knows for sure whether the “kingdom of heaven” was present or still coming when John spoke these words. English translations often use The phrase **at hand**, but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phrases “is coming near” and “has come near.”

Matthew 11:1

And it happened that

General Information:

And it happened is the beginning of a new part of the story where Matthew tells of how Jesus responded to disciples of John the Baptist. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "Some time later," (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

to teach and to preach

Here, the phrases **to teach** and **to preach** mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize that Jesus was teaching the people there. If your language does not use repetition to do this, you could use one phrase and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "to proclaim many things" (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**)

Matthew 11:2

John, having heard in the prison about

Matthew had not yet told his audience why **John** was **in prison**. Since Matthew explains the story of how John was put in prison in [14:4-5](#), you do not need to explain to your reader here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1397)**) (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1397)**)

Matthew 11:3

the one coming

Here, **the one coming** is referring to the prophet whom God promised to send. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the one whom God promised to send” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

or should we expect another

John's disciples are leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “or should we expect someone else to come after you” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

should we expect another

Here, the word **we** is referring to either (1) John's disciples or (2) the Jewish people in general. It is not including Jesus. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**)

Matthew 11:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 11:5

The blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised, and the poor are being told the gospel

Here, Jesus lists all of the things which he has done to the people during his ministry. Use a form in your language that someone would use to list things that they have done. (See: **Litany (p.1280)**) (See: **Litany (p.1280)**)

The blind & the lame & lepers & the deaf & the dead & the poor

Jesus is using the adjectives **blind**, **lame**, **lepers**, **deaf**, **dead**, and **poor** as nouns in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase, as in the UST. (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

lepers are cleansed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "I am making lepers clean" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the dead are raised

Here, the word **raised** is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "I am causing people to become alive again" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the dead are raised

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Jesus implies that he did it. Alternate translation: "I am raising dead people" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the poor are being told the gospel

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Jesus implies that he did it. Alternate translation: "I am telling the poor good news" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 11:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 11:7

Now {as} these were going on their way

Here, the word **these** refers to John's disciples. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "As John's disciples left" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind

Jesus uses a question to cause the people to think about what kind of person John the Baptist is. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Surely you did not go out to the wilderness to see a reed being shaken by the wind!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

A reed shaken by the wind

Here, the phrase **reed being shaken by the wind** is referring to a person who is easily affected by the people around them as a reed is affected by the wind. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a simile, as in the UST. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "a man who is easily affected by other people" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

A reed shaken by the wind

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "a reed shaking in the wind" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 11:8

But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing

Jesus uses these questions to cause the people to think about what kind of person John the Baptist is. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “Likewise, surely you did not go out to see a man clothed in expensive clothing” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

But what did you go out to see

Here, Jesus leaves out the word “desert” from the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply this word from the context. Alternate translation: “But what did you go out to the desert to see” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 11:9

But why did you go out? To see a prophet

Jesus uses a question to make the people think about what kind of man John the Baptist is. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "But surely you went out to the desert to see a prophet!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

more than a prophet

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "you went out to see someone much more important than a prophet" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 11:10

This is he concerning whom it is written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “This is the one about whom the prophets wrote” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

before your face

Here, the phrase **before your face** is an idiom which means that “the messenger” was sent first, and then the second person came after them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify. Alternate translation: “first” or “before you”. (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

will prepare your way before you

That the messenger will **prepare your way** represents preparing the people for the Lord’s arrival. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this explicitly. Alternate translation: “who will prepare the people for your arrival” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 11:11

among those born of women

The phrase those **born of women** is an idiom that refers to all people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "of all the people who have ever lived," (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

among those born of women

If you would like to retain the idiom but your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "among those whom women have borne" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

among those born of women there has not arisen one greater than John the Baptist

Jesus uses a negative figure of speech to express how great John the Baptist is. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: "among those who have been born to a mother, John the Baptist is the greatest that has arisen" (See: **Litotes (p.1282)**) (See: **Litotes (p.1282)**)

the least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he

See how you translated **kingdom of the heavens** in [3:2](#) Alternate translation: "but those who are the least important among the people whom God rules over are greater than he" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 11:12

But from the days of John the Baptist

The word **days** is an idiom referring to a specific time period. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “from the time of John the Baptist’s preaching” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the kingdom of the heavens suffers violence, and violent men take it by force

This verse is difficult to understand, and many scholars disagree on its meaning. The different options are: (1) that it refers to people attacking God’s kingdom and the people who are his. Alternate translation: “The kingdom of the heavens is attacked violently, and many violent people try to conquer it” or (2) it may be understood instead as referring to God’s kingdom triumphing in the world. Alternate translation: “The kingdom of the heavens triumphs forcefully, and powerful men have control over it”.

Matthew 11:13

all the Prophets and the Law have prophesied until John

Here, **the Prophets and the Law** refer to the things that the prophets and Moses wrote in the Scriptures. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “these are the things that the prophets and Moses have prophesied through the Scriptures until the time of John the Baptist” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 11:14

if you are willing

Here, **you** is plural and refers to the crowd. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

and if you are willing to accept {it}, he is Elijah, the one being about to come

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words in order to make the meaning clearer in your language. Alternate translation: "If you are willing to receive it, then you would understand that he is Elijah, who is about to come" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1210)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 11:15

The one having ears to hear let him hear

The phrase **having ears** here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "Whoever is willing to understand, let him understand and obey" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

The one having ears to hear let him hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. Alternate translation: "If you are willing to listen, listen" or "If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 11:16

Now to what will I compare this generation

Jesus uses a question to introduce a comparison between the people to whom he was speaking and children who are in the marketplace. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "But I will tell you what this generation is like." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

this generation

The phrase **this generation** is likely referring to: (1) the crowd around him. Alternate translation: "you in this crowd" (2) the religious leaders of Israel. Alternate translation: or "the rebellious group of religious leaders" (3) the group of Israelites in general who have rejected Jesus and John. Alternate translation: or "Israel" If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

the marketplace

A **marketplace** is a large, open-air area where people buy and sell items such as food and clothing. Use a term in your language that expresses this meaning. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 11:17

saying, ‘We played a flute for you, and you did not dance. We sang a funeral song, and you did not mourn

Jesus continues the parable from the previous verse, describing the people to whom he referred as “this generation.” They are like a group of children who will not listen to another group of children. The ones who played the flute and mourned are referring to Jesus and John the Baptist. The group who did not dance and did not mourn are Jesus' audience. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly, in a way that is meaningful in your language, or as demonstrated in the UST (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

We played a flute for you

We refers to the children sitting in the marketplace, and **you** is plural and refers to the other group of children. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “We children played a flute for all of you kids” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

We sang a funeral song

The phrase **We mourned** has to do with the mourning ceremonies that the culture performed during that time. If a person died, relatives would hire a group of people to help them mourn. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state this explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 11:18

neither eating nor drinking

This does not mean that John never ate food. It means he fasted often, and when he ate, he did not eat expensive food or drink. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “frequently fasting from food and wine” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

they say, ‘He has a demon

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “they say that he has a demon” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

Matthew 11:19

The Son of Man came

Jesus uses the title **Son of Man** to refer to himself. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could change it to first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

The Son of Man

The phrase **Son of Man** is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

came eating and drinking

The phrase **The Son of Man came eating and drinking** is comparing what Jesus did with what John the Baptist did. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “But the Son of Man came eating and drinking” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

they say, ‘Behold a man, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “they say that he is a man who is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

a glutton & a drunkard

The word **glutton** refers to a person who eats too much food. The word **drunkard** refers to a person who drinks too much wine and gets drunk as a result. Use words in your language that refer to these things. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

But wisdom has been justified by her children

The proverb, **wisdom has been justified by her children**, is figurative. Here, **wisdom** is referring to Jesus and John the Baptist teaching about God’s wisdom, which causes people to be saved. The word **children** is referring to those who are influenced by their ministry. You can translate the proverb itself in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: “But God’s wisdom is proven right by its work in the lives of the people to whom John and I minister” (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

wisdom has been justified by her children

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God proves his wisdom by his children” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 11:20

to rebuke the cities

Here, **the cities** refers to the people who live in the cities. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “to reprimand the people of the cities” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

in which most of his miracles were done

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “in which he did most of his miracles” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 11:21

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida

Jesus is addressing something that he knows cannot hear him, the cities of **Chorazin** and **Bethsaida**, in order to show his listeners in a strong way how he feels. If it would be helpful in your language, consider expressing this feeling by talking about these two cities. Alternate translation: "It will not be good for the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida" (See: **Apostrophe (p.1129)**) (See: **Apostrophe (p.1129)**)

Woe to you, & Woe to you

The phrase **Woe to you** is a common exclamation which brings a charge of judgment against a person or group of people. Use an exclamation that is natural in your language for communicating this. Alternate translation: "Judgment is coming against you" ... "Judgment is coming against you" (See: **Exclamations (p.1217)**) (See: **Exclamations (p.1217)**)

Chorazin! & Bethsaida! & Tyre & Sidon

Here, the words **Chorazin**, **Bethsaida**, and **Tyre and Sidon** refer to the people who live in those cities. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language, as in the UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

if the miracles had happened in Tyre and Sidon which happened in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes

Jesus is using this hypothetical situation to rebuke the people in those cities. Alternate translation: "suppose the miracles had happened in Tyre and Sidon which happened in you. They would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**)

if the miracles had happened in Tyre and Sidon which happened in you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "if I had done the mighty deeds among the people of Tyre and Sidon that I have done among you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

which happened in you

Here the **you** is plural and refers to Chorazin and Bethsaida. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

Matthew 11:22

for Tyre and Sidon

See how you translated **Tyre and Sidon** in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

than for you

The reason why it will be **more tolerable** is because Chorazin and Bethsaida did see Jesus' miracles, and they still did not repent. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "than for you, because you did not repent and believe in me, even though you saw me do miracles" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 11:23

And you, Capernaum, you will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down as far as Hades. For if the miracles that happened in you had happened in Sodom, it would have remained until today

The pronoun **you** is singular and refers to Capernaum throughout this verse and the next. If it is more natural to refer to the people of the city, you could translate with a plural **you**. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

And you, Capernaum, you will not be exalted to heaven, will you

Jesus is addressing something that he knows cannot hear him, the city of Capernaum, in order to show his listeners in a strong way how he feels about it. If it would be helpful in your language, consider expressing this feeling by talking about Capernaum. Alternate translation: "Certainly Capernaum will not be lifted up to heaven, will it" (See: **Apostrophe (p.1129)**) (See: **Apostrophe (p.1129)**)

Capernaum, & in Sodom

Here the words **Capernaum** and **Sodom** are referring to the people who live in those cities. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "people of Capernaum ... among the people of Sodom" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

you will not be exalted to heaven, will you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will not exalt you to heaven, will he?" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

you will not be exalted to heaven, will you

Jesus uses a rhetorical question to rebuke the people of Capernaum for their pride, because they think they deserve to be taken straight to heaven. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "God will certainly not bring you up to heaven like you think he will!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

if the miracles that happened in you had happened in Sodom, it would have remained until today

Jesus is using a hypothetical situation to rebuke the people who live in the city of Capernaum. This could have happened in the past, but it did not happen. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could mark the second event with the word "then." Alternate translation: "suppose I had done all of these powerful deeds in the presence of the people of Sodom. Then they might have turned from their sinful ways and escaped judgment" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**)

if the miracles that happened in you had happened in Sodom

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “if I had done the miracles among the people of Sodom that I have done among you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 11:24

for the land of Sodom

See how you translated **Sodom** in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

than for you

Jesus is saying that it will be **more tolerable** for the people of Sodom because they did not have the chance to see Jesus' miracles, while the people of Capernaum did, and they still did not repent. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 11:25

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Lord of heaven and earth

The phrase **heaven and earth** refers to everything which God has created in the entire universe. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “ruler over the entire universe” (See: **Merism (p.1286)**) (See: **Merism (p.1286)**)

from the wise and intelligent

Jesus is using the adjectives **wise** and **intelligent** as nouns in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “from people who are smart and knowledgeable” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

the wise and intelligent

The words **wise** and **intelligent** mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize how smart these people thought they were. If your language does not use repetition to do this, you could use one phrase and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “the carefully discerning” (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**)

the wise and intelligent

Jesus calls them **wise and intelligent** even though he does not actually believe that they are wise or intelligent. If it would be helpful in your language, consider expressing the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “people who think they are wise and intelligent” (See: **Irony (p.1275)**) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**)

to little children

Here, the phrase **little children** is referring to people who are not wise. Jesus uses the figurative language to emphasize that one does not need to be wise to be one of his followers. If your readers would not understand what **little children** means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: “you who are as wise as little children” or “you who are not very wise” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 11:26

for thus it was well-pleasing before you

The phrase **before you** is an idiom which refers to how someone considers something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "for you considered it good to do this" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 11:27

All things have been handed over to me by my Father

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "My Father has given everything over to me" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

All things

The phrase **All things** could mean: (1) God the Father has revealed to Jesus everything about himself and his kingdom. Alternate translation: "All knowledge of himself" or (2) God has given all authority to Jesus. Alternate translation: "All authority"

my Father

Father is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and to whomever the Son desires to reveal him

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these double negatives as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "Only the Father knows who the Son is, and only the Son and those to whom he reveals the Father know the Father" (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

the Son & the Son

Jesus was referring to himself as the **Son** in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could write it in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

the Son

Son is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 11:28

all the ones laboring and heavy burdened, and I will give you rest

Here, **you** is plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

the ones laboring and heavy burdened

Jesus speaks of people being discouraged in their attempts to obey all the laws as if those laws were **heavy** burdens and the people were **laboring** to carry them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "Come to me, all of you who are feeling burdened by how many laws you are trying to keep" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

and I will give you rest

Here, the word **rest** is figurative for no longer feeling the obligation to keep every law, especially laws that written by the Pharisees. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternative translation: "I will give you relief from feeling the need to be perfect before God" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 11:29

Take my yoke on you

Jesus continues the metaphor of burden that he began in the last verse. Jesus uses the image of a **yoke**, something which is put on large animals to carry or pull heavy burdens, to encourage his listeners to let him carry their burdens with them. If it would be helpful in your language to understand what **yoke** means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "Share your burden with me" (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1144)**) (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1144)**)

I am gentle and humble in heart

Here, **gentle** and **humble in heart** mean basically the same thing. Jesus combines them to emphasize that he is much kinder than the religious leaders who burdened the people with the many laws. Alternate translation: "I am very gentle" (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**)

humble in heart

The phrase **humble in heart** is an idiom meaning that he is a humble person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "humble" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

you will find rest for your souls

Here, **souls** is figurative for the entire person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: "you will be able to rest" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

Matthew 11:30

For my yoke {is} easy and my burden is light

Here, Jesus continues the burden metaphor from the previous verses. You could express this metaphor as a simile if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “When I help you, it will be like I am carrying most of the weight of the yoke and you are only carrying a little bit of the burden” (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1144)**) (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1144)**)

For my yoke {is} easy and my burden is light

Both of these phrases mean the same thing. Jesus is emphasizing that it is easier to obey him than it is to obey the Jewish law. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you could combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: “For what I place on you, you will be able to carry because it is light” (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

Matthew 12

Matthew 12 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 12:18-21, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special Concepts in this Chapter

The Sabbath

This chapter has much to say about how God's people are to honor the Sabbath. Jesus said that the rules that the Pharisees made up did not help people obey the Sabbath the way God wanted them to. (See: **Sabbath (p.1412)**)

“Blasphemy against the Spirit”

No one knows for sure what actions people perform or what words they say when they commit this sin. However, they probably insult the Holy Spirit and his work. Part of the Holy Spirit's work is to make people understand that they are sinners and that they need to have God forgive them. Therefore, anyone who does not try to stop sinning is probably committing blasphemy against the Spirit. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/blasphemy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/holyspirit\]\]](#))

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

Brothers and sisters

Most people call those who have the same parents “brother” and “sister” and think of them as some of the most important people in their lives. Many people also call those with the same grandparents “brother” and “sister.” In this chapter Jesus says that the most important people to him are those who obey his Father in heaven. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/brother\]\]](#))

Matthew 12:1

At that time

This introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Some time later” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

the grainfields

A grainfield is a place where grain is grown and harvested. This grain is usually ground and made into bread. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “a field where grain is grown” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

heads of grain

The **heads** are the topmost part of the grain plant, which is a kind of tall grass. The heads hold the mature grain or seeds of the plant. The disciples were picking the **heads of grain** to eat the kernels, or seeds, in them. If it would be helpful in your language, think of a type of food from which you have to remove a shell or casing. Alternate translation: “picking the tops of grain and eating the seeds.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 12:2

are doing what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath

According to the law of Moses, people are not allowed to work on the Sabbath in order to focus on worshiping God. The Pharisees considered even the small action of plucking and rubbing heads of grain to be work. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "You are harvesting grain, and that is work that the law does not permit you to do on the Sabbath!" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 12:3

Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and the ones with him

This begins a question that continues into the next verse. See the note in the next verse for how to address this rhetorical question. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 12:4

how he went into the house of God and ate the loaves of the Presence, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for the ones with him, except only for the priests

Jesus asks this question to respond to the criticism of the Pharisees. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “how he went into the God’s house and ate the bread of the presence, which they were not allowed to do. Only the priests were allowed to do this” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

the house of God

Jesus is describing the tabernacle as the house of God. He is speaking as if it were the place where God lived, since God’s presence was there. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the tabernacle” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the loaves of the Presence

This refers to the 12 loaves of bread that were placed on a golden table in the tabernacle or temple building as a sacrifice to God during Old Testament times. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the 12 loaves of the bread of the Presence which were in the tabernacle” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

except only for the priests

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “but it was only lawful for the priests to eat that bread” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 12:5

have you not read in the law that on the Sabbaths the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, but are innocent

Jesus uses a question to respond to the criticism of the Pharisees. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “Surely you have read in the law of Moses that on the Sabbaths the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, but are innocent.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

profane the Sabbath

The priests were said to **profane the Sabbath** because they had to fulfill their priestly duties on the Sabbath. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “defile the Sabbath by working at their priestly duties” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 12:6

something greater than the temple

Jesus was referring to himself as the one who is **greater than the temple**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this in the first person. Alternate translation: "I am someone who is more important than the temple" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 12:7

But if you had known what this is, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent

Jesus is using a hypothetical situation to teach the Pharisees about why they were wrong for accusing Jesus' disciples of working on the Sabbath. Alternate translation: "But suppose you had understood what the phrase 'I desire you to have mercy and not to sacrifice' meant. Then you certainly would not have condemned my innocent disciples" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**)

I desire mercy and not sacrifice

In the law of Moses, God did command the Israelites to offer sacrifices. This verse is saying that God would prefer the Israelites to have **mercy** rather than for them to have to offer a **sacrifice** for their sins. Make sure this is clear to your readers. Alternate translation: "I would rather that you would be merciful to others than for you to continually offer sacrifices for your wrongful deeds"

the innocent

Jesus is using the adjective **innocent** as a noun in order to describe his disciples. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "people who are innocent" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 12:8

the Son of Man

Jesus is referring to himself as **the Son of Man**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the first person here to clarify, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

the Son of Man

Son of Man is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 12:9

into their synagogue

The word **their** likely refers to the Pharisees to whom Jesus was just speaking. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “into those Pharisees' synagogue” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

Matthew 12:10

a man having a withered hand

This means that the man's hand was damaged in such a way that he could not stretch it out. It was probably bent almost into a fist, making it look smaller. State this in a way that would be understandable to your readers.

Alternate translation: "his hand was shriveled" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

and they questioned him, & so that they might accuse him

Here, Matthew is giving background information to help to reader understand why the Pharisees **questioned** Jesus. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "and they were questioning him ... to try to find fault in him" (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

Matthew 12:11

What man will there be among you who will have one sheep, and if it might fall into a pit on the Sabbaths, will not grasp hold of it and lift {it} out

Jesus uses a question to respond to the Pharisees. He is challenging them to think about what kind of work they do on the Sabbath. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Every one of you, if you only had one sheep, and it fell into a pit on the Sabbath, would certainly grasp hold of the sheep and lift it out." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 12:12

How much more valuable, then, {is} a man than a sheep

Jesus asks this question to prove the point that the Pharisees would be willing to help a sheep, but not a man, on the Sabbath. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "A man is certainly more valuable than a sheep!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1361)**)

Matthew 12:13

Then he says to the man, “Stretch out your hand

This is an imperative, but this was not a command that the man was capable of obeying. Instead, this was a command that directly caused the man to be healed. Use a form in your language that would be used in this type of situation. Alternate translation: “Stretch out your hand! Be healed!” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**)

it was restored to health

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “Jesus restored his hand to health” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 12:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 12:15

he healed them all

Here, the word **all** is figurative, meaning “very many.” If it would be helpful in your languages, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that shows honor. Alternate translation: “he healed very many people” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

Matthew 12:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 12:17

what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “what God spoke through the prophet Isaiah” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 12:18

my beloved

Connecting Statement:

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **beloved**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “one whom I love” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

in whom my soul was well pleased

Here, **soul** refers to the person as a whole. If your readers would misunderstand this, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: “with whom I am very pleased” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

he will announce justice to the Gentiles

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **justice**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “he will proclaim that God will act justly towards the nations” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 12:19

He will not strive nor cry aloud

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “He will not strive with people, nor will he cry out loud to people” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

in the streets

Here, the phrase **in the streets** is an idiom that means in public. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “in the cities and towns where people are” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 12:20

He will not break a bruised reed; and he will not quench a smoking flax

Both of the phrases **He will not break a bruised reed** and **he will not quench a smoking flax** are metaphors emphasizing that God's servant will be gentle and kind. Both **bruised reed** and **smoking flax** represent weak and hurting people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning in a plainly. Alternate translation: "He will be kind to weak people and he will be gentle to those who are hurting" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

He will not break a bruised reed; and he will not quench a smoking flax

Both of the phrases **He will not break a bruised reed** and **he will not quench a smoking flax** mean the same thing. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you could combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: "He will not destroy something already very weak" (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

he will not quench a smoking flax

Here, **flax** refers to a burning wick or a small flame. If it would be helpful in your language, use a general expression. Alternate translation: "he will not extinguish a small flame" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

until he casts out justice to victory

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the ideas of **justice** or **victory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "until he would cause people to be justified before God and cause them to be victorious over death" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 12:21

in his name

Here, the word **name** refers to God himself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: “in him” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

Matthew 12:22

Then

The word **Then** introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Some time later” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

one being demon-possessed was brought to him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “some people brought to him one who was demon-possessed” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

blind and mute

Jesus is using the adjectives **blind** and **mute** as nouns in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “a person who was blind and mute” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 12:23

the Son of David

Son of David is a an important title for the Messiah, who was supposed to come and rule on David's throne. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state it explicitly. Alternate translation: "the Messiah, the Son of David" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Son

Here, the word **Son** is figurative for a descendant of someone. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "offspring" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 12:24

He does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul

If it would appear in your language that Jesus was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: "He throws out demons only by Beelzebul" (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

Matthew 12:25

But having known their thoughts, he said to them

This phrase implies that Jesus had supernatural knowledge. It indicates that Jesus knew what the scribes were saying even though he did not hear what they said. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Even though no one told Jesus, he knew their thoughts, so he said to them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand

Jesus uses a proverb to respond to the Pharisees saying that he casts out demons by Beelzebul. Translate the proverb itself in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: “If the people of a nation are fighting against each other, they will certainly cause its destruction. Similarly, if people of a city or even a house are fighting against each other, they will not be united together” (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, & every city or house divided against itself will not stand

The phrases **Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate** and **every city or house divided against itself will not stand** mean the same thing. Jesus says the same thing to show that if any group of people fights against each other, it will eventually lose its unity. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you could combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: “Any group of people fighting against each other will eventually fall apart and no longer be united” (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

kingdom & city or house

Here, the words **kingdom** and **city** refer to the people who live in them. The word **house** refers to a family, whose members would all live in the same house. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “people who live in a nation ... people who live in a city or house” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “People living in a country who fight against each other destroy their own country” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 12:26

Satan

The second use of the word **Satan** is figurative, referring to the demons that serve Satan. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “the demons who serve Satan” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

How then will his kingdom stand

Jesus uses this question to show the Pharisees that accusing Jesus of casting out demons by Satan is foolish. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “His kingdom will surely not stand!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 12:27

by whom do your sons cast them out

Jesus uses another question to challenge the Pharisees. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “certainly your sons also cast out demons by the same person as I do” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

your sons

The phrase **your sons** refers to the disciples of the Pharisees. If your readers would not understand what **sons** means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternative translation: “your disciples” or “your followers” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Because of this they will be your judges

The phrase **For this reason they will be your judges** could mean: (1) they will judge the Pharisees' accusations against Jesus to be wrong. Alternate translation: “Because of this your disciples will show that you are wrong” (2) they will stand with God at the end of time to judge the Pharisees. Alternate translation: “Because of this your sons will be your judges”

Matthew 12:28

But if I cast out the demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you

Jesus is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might misunderstand and think that what John is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: “But since I throw out demons by the Spirit of God, the kingdom of God has come upon you” (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.1168)**) (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.1168)**)

then the kingdom of God has come upon you

See how you translated **kingdom** in [3:2](#). Alternate translation: “then God is making you a part of his people over whom he will rule” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 12:29

Or

This parable tells about how Jesus is binding Satan and his evil spirits, and saving the people whom Satan had controlled previously. Make sure it is clear to your readers that this is a story. Alternate translate: "Then Jesus told them a story, saying" (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

how is anyone able to enter into the house of the strong man and steal his possessions if he has not first bound the strong man

Jesus uses a question to teach the Pharisees and the crowd that he is more powerful than Satan. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Certainly, no one can enter into the house of the strong man and steal his belongings without tying up the strong man first" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

anyone

The word **anyone** is a generic noun and is not referring to any specific person. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: "a person" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

how is anyone able to enter into the house of the strong man and steal his possessions

To **enter into the house of the strong man and steal his belongings** is figurative. The **strong man** is referring to Satan. So to enter into his house and steal his belongings means to throw out his demons from people whom they controlled. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternative translation: "Someone cannot take from Satan the demons that belong to him" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

if he has not first bound the strong man

When someone **ties up** the strong man, who is Satan, it means they either defeat him or restrain him, making him no longer able to rule over his demons. If it would be helpful in your language to understand what it means to **bind** in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternative translation: "unless he first restrains him" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 12:30

The one not being with me

The phrase **with me** is an idiom which means to support someone or be on their side. In this instance, the religious leaders were not supporting Jesus' ministry, because they thought he was controlled by Satan. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "The one not supporting my work" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the one not gathering with me scatters

Jesus is using a metaphor that refers to a person either **gathering** the flock of sheep to a shepherd or making them scatter away from the shepherd. Jesus means that a person is either helping to make people become disciples of Jesus or he is making people reject Jesus. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 12:31

every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God will forgive every sin that a person commits” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy of the Spirit will not be forgiven

If it would appear in your language that Jesus was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid confusing your reader. Alternate translation: “God will forgive many sins and blasphemies, but he will not forgive the blasphemy of the Spirit” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**)

the blasphemy of the Spirit will not be forgiven

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “But God will not forgive blasphemy of the Spirit” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

blasphemy & but the blasphemy of the Spirit

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **blasphemy**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “but the blasphemous word one speaks ... when one blasphemes against the Spirit” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 12:32

whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man

Here, the word **word** is refers to what someone says. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "If a person says anything bad about the Son of Man" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

the Son of Man

Here, Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the first person. Alternate translation: "me, the Son of Man"(See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

it will be forgiven him. & it will not be forgiven him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will forgive that person ... God will not forgive that person" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

in this age, nor in the one coming

Here, the phrases **this age** and **the one coming** are idioms referring to the present life and the next life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "in the time in which we now live, nor in eternity" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 12:33

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree rotten and its fruit rotten, for the tree is known by its fruit

The proverb **Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad** is making a figurative comparison. It is comparing the actions of a good person to the good fruit of a healthy tree. It is also comparing the bad works of an evil person to the bad fruit of an unhealthy tree. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: "A person is considered to be a good person if they act in a good way. A person is considered to be a bad person if they act in an evil way. You can judge whether a person is good or bad by how they act" (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

good & rotten

The words **good** and **bad** are figurative for healthy and unhealthy. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language, as in the UST. (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

for the tree is known by its fruit

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "for people know whether a tree is good or bad by looking at its fruit" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 12:34

You offspring of vipers

Here, **You offspring of vipers** is a metaphor which is describing the behavior of the Pharisees. Vipers are poisonous snakes which can harm and kill people. The Pharisees were compared to vipers because their teaching was harming people spiritually. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternative translation: "You who behave like dangerous snakes" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

being evil, how are you able to say good things

Jesus uses a question to rebuke how evilly the Pharisees behave. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "being evil, you are certainly not able to say good things" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks

Here, **mouth** is a synecdoche that represents a person as a whole. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: "A person speaks from all that is in their heart" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks

Here, **heart** is a metonym for the thoughts or intentions a person has. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "what a person says with his mouth reveals what he desires" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 12:35

The good man from his good treasure brings forth good things, and the evil man from his evil treasure brings forth evil things

Jesus uses this proverb to speak about where people's behavior comes from. Jesus speaks of the heart as **treasure**. He is saying that good people say good things out of their good desires. Similarly, evil people do evil things out of their evil desires. Translate this proverb in a way that would be meaningful in your language, or use plain language. Alternate translation: "People who have good desires do things, but people who have evil desires do bad things" (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

Matthew 12:36

men

Jesus is speaking about **men** in general, and not about any specific men. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: “people” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

in the day of judgment

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **judgment**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “in the day when God will judge the people of the world” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 12:37

you will be justified, & you will be condemned

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will justify you ... God will condemn you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 12:38

to see a sign from you

The religious leaders wanted to see a sign in order to prove that God sent Jesus as his messenger. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “to see a sign from you that shows us that you are from God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 12:39

An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, but a sign will not be given to it

Jesus is speaking to the people in the third person though they are right in front of him. If your readers would find it helpful, you could make this second person. Alternate translation: "A wicked and unfaithful generation like you seeks a sign, but a sign will not be given to you" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

An evil and adulterous generation

Here, **adulterous** is a metaphor for people who are not faithful to God in their relationship with him, just as a person is not faithful in their relationship with a spouse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "An evil and unfaithful generation" or "An evil and unloving generation" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

but a sign will not be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet

If it would appear in your language that Jesus was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: "but the only sign that I will give will be the sign of Jonah the prophet" (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**)

a sign will not be given to it

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "I will give them no sign" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 12:40

three days and three nights & three days and three nights

The phrase **three days and three nights** is referring to three entire days. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “three complete days” (See: **Merism (p.1286)**) (See: **Merism (p.1286)**)

For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the big fish, in this manner

Jesus is assuming that his audience is familiar with the story of Jonah, which tells that the prophet Jonah was swallowed by a fish because he disobeyed God. But once he repented, after three days, the fish spit him out. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could reference this story explicitly. Alternate translation: “Think about the story of Jonah the prophet in the Scriptures. He was swallowed by a large fish because he disobeyed God. After he repented three days later, the fish spit him out. Similarly,” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself here in the third person. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

in the heart of the earth

The phrase **the heart of the earth** is referring to being deep in the ground. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “under the ground” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 12:41

The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah {is} here

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “The men of Nineveh repented when Jonah came to them, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here before you. Therefore, the men of Nineveh will stand up at the time of judgment with this generation and condemn it” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

The men of Nineveh

The phrase **men of Nineveh** is referring to both men and women. Alternate translation: “The citizens of Nineveh” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

in the judgment

The phrase **will stand up at the judgment** could mean: (1) that God will resurrect them, as in the UST. (2) that they will stand up with God as fellow judges over Israel. Alternate translation: “they will stand with God at the judgment”

this generation

See how you translated the word **generation** in [12:39](#)

and behold

The word **behold** emphasizes what Jesus says next.

something greater than Jonah {is} here

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “something greater than Jonah is here, and you have not repented” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

something greater than

Jesus is speaking about himself here in the third person. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 12:42

The Queen of the South

This refers to the **Queen** of the country called Sheba. Sheba was a land south of Israel. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

will stand up in the judgment

See the note on this phrase in the previous verse.

in the judgment

See how you translated this phrase in [12:41](#).

this generation

See how you translated **generation** in the previous verse.

she came from the ends of the earth

Here, the phrase **the ends of the earth** is an idiom that means “very far away.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “she came from very far away” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

The Queen of the South will stand up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon {is} here

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “The Queen of Sheba came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, I am much greater than is Solomon. Therefore, she will be raised in the judgment with this generation and will judge it” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

something greater than Solomon {is} here

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “something greater than Solomon is here, and you will not come to hear it” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

something greater than

Jesus is speaking about himself here in the third person. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 12:43

Now

In this verse Jesus begins telling a parable that go through [12:45](#). Jesus is teaching the people the dangers of not allowing the Holy Spirit to live in them, and how this allows demons to control them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “Now I am going to teach you through telling you a story” (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

waterless places

Jesus is describing the desert by reference to the lack of water there. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “desert areas” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 12:44

to my house from which I came out

Here, **my house** is a metaphor for the person in whom the unclean spirit was living and controlling. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to the dwelling place I left” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

it finds {it} being empty, having been swept out and put in order

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the spirit finds that someone emptied it, swept it out and put it in order” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

being empty, having been swept out and put in order

Here, the phrase **empty, having been swept out and put in order** is figurative language referring to a house that has been cleaned and vacated, so no one lives there. Similar to this, the spirit found this person to not have any spirit living in it. Jesus is saying that the person did not have the Holy Spirit living within them, so the demon returned. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternative translation: “empty, cleaned, and organized” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 12:45

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 12:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 12:47

Now someone said to him, “Behold, your mother and your brothers have stood outside, seeking to speak to you

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “Now someone said to him that his mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to him” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

Matthew 12:48

Who is my mother and who are my brothers

Jesus asks this question to teach the crowd about which people are a part of his spiritual family. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "I will tell you who the people are that are my mother and brothers." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 12:49

my mother and my brothers

The phrase **my mother and my brothers** is not here referring to Jesus' actual brothers and mother, but he is referring to his disciples as his brothers and mother. Jesus says this because he considers them a part of his spiritual family. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "these are like a mother and brothers to me" or "these are like family to me" (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**) (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**)

Matthew 12:50

For whoever does the will of my Father in the heavens, he is my brother and sister and mother

The word **For** here tells the reader that Jesus is explaining the previous thing he said. He is explaining that he considers as family those who obey God. Alternate translation: "For I consider the one who obeys my Father in the heavens to be my brother, my sister, or my mother" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1187)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1187)**)

of my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

in the heavens

See how you translated the phrase **in the heavens** in [5:16](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

he is my brother and sister and mother

This is a metaphor meaning that those who obey God belong to Jesus' spiritual family, which is more important than belonging to his physical family. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 13

Matthew 13 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 13:14-15, which are words from the Old Testament.

This chapter begins a new section. It contains some of Jesus' parables about the kingdom of heaven.

Important Figures of Speech in this Chapter

Metonymy

Jesus often says the word **heaven** when he wants his hearers to think of God, who lives in heaven (13:11).

Implicit information

Speakers usually do not say things that they think their hearers already understand. When Matthew wrote that Jesus "sat beside the sea" (Matthew 13:1), he probably expected his hearers to know that Jesus was about to teach the people. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Metaphor

Speakers often use examples of things that we can see or touch to communicate abstract ideas. Jesus spoke of birds eating newly sown seed to describe how Satan keeps people from understanding Jesus' message (13:19).

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

Passive voice

Many sentences in this chapter tell that something happened to a person without indicating who caused the thing to happen. For example, "they were scorched" (13:6). You may have to translate the sentence so that it tells the reader who performed the action. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Parables

The parables are short stories that Jesus told so that people would easily understand the lesson he was trying to teach them. He also told the stories so that those who did not want to believe in him would not understand the truth (13:11-13).

Matthew 13:1

On that day

This introduces a new event that happened at some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Sometime later that same day” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Jesus, having gone out of the house, was sitting beside the sea

Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: “Jesus went out of the house. He was sitting by the sea” (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

Matthew 13:2

large crowds were gathered to him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Large crowds gathered around him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the whole crowd

The word crowd is a singular noun that refers to a group of people. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: "a group of people" or "many people" (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1154)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1154)**)

Matthew 13:3

he spoke many things to them in parables

Jesus begins telling the crowd a parable about what happens when different people hear his teaching. (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

he spoke many things to them in parables, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “he said many things to them in parables, and this is what he said:” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

Matthew 13:4

And as he sowed, some fell beside the road

Many cultures, when they plant seeds, bury them after planting them to protect them from birds and animals that eat seeds. The seeds on the path did not get hidden from the birds, so they ate them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "As he was scattering the seeds, some of them fell onto the path, where they were unprotected from scavengers" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 13:5

others & others & others

In these verses, the word **others** is referring to seeds that fell in different areas as the sower was planting. If it would be helpful in your language, see how it is modeled in the UST. (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 13:6

But {when} the sun had risen

The phrase **the sun had risen** is an idiom which means when the sun got to its highest point in the sky and was hottest. If it would be helpful in your language, you state it explicitly. Alternate translation: “when the hottest time of the day came” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

it was scorched

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the sun scorched the plants” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 13:7

others

See the note on **others** in [13:5](#). (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

the thorns grew up and choked them

The phrase **the thorns grew up and choked them** might be confusing to some readers. What this means is that the weeds grew much faster than did the crops that the sower planted, and so the weeds did not allow the crops to grow. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly with an example from your culture.

Alternate translation: “the thorns grew much faster and overwhelmed the plants” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 13:8

others

See the note in [13:5](#). (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

some 100, and some 60, and some 30

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. The amount of grain each plant produced is being compared to the single seed from which it grew. You could supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation, starting a new sentence: "Some plants bore 100 times as much grain, some produced 60 times as much grain, and some produced 30 times as much grain" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 13:9

The one having ears let him hear

See the note in [11:15](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

The one having ears let him hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. Alternate translation: “If you are willing to listen, listen” or “If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 13:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 13:11

**To you has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens,
but to those it has not been given**

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Jesus implies that “God” did it. Alternate translation: “God has given to you to understand mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but God has not given that understanding to those people” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

but to those it has not been given

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “but to those it has not been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

To you

The word **you** is plural here and refers to the disciples. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

of the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated this in [3:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 13:12

For whoever has, it will be given to him, and he will have an abundance. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him

This proverb draws a figurative comparison: Jesus speaks of understanding as if it were a physical item which could either be given or taken away. He is saying that for whoever is able to understand, God will allow them to understand more. But for whoever does not understand, God will take away even whatever little understanding they have. Alternate translation: "For whoever understands, God will allow that person to understand even more, and it will be plenty. But for whoever does not have understanding, God will take away what understanding they do have" (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

whoever & whoever

The word **whoever** is referring to people in general and not to any specific person. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: "if a person ... if a person" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

it will be given & will be taken away

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Jesus implies that "God" did it. Alternate translation: "God will give ... God will take" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 13:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 13:14

And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, In hearing you will hear, but you will certainly not understand; and seeing, you will see, but you will certainly not perceive

Matthew is quoting Jesus, and Jesus is quoting the prophet Isaiah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: “to them the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled which says that though they hear, they will not understand, and though they see, they will not perceive” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

In hearing you will hear, but you will certainly not understand; and seeing, you will see, but you will certainly not perceive

See how you translated the words **see** and **hear** in the previous verse. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 13:15

the heart of this people & and they might understand with {their} heart

Here, the word **heart** is used to refer to a person's mind or inner desires. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "the minds of these people ... they will understand in their minds" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

turn back

The phrase **they might turn back** is figurative, referring to someone who repents of their sins and asks God for forgiveness. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "they repent" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

I would heal them

The phrase **I will heal them** is figurative, meaning that he will forgive them for the sins that they have confessed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternative translation: "I will forgive their sins" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 13:16

But blessed {are} your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear

Here, **see** and **hear** are referring to the disciples ability to understand what Jesus is saying and doing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: "You are blessed because you understand what you see with your eyes and what you hear with your ears" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

your & your

Both occurrences of **your** are plural and refer to the disciples. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

and your ears, for they hear

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "and blessed are your ears, for they hear" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 13:17

to you & you see, & you hear

All occurrences of **you** are plural and refer to the disciples. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

what you see

The phrase **what you see** is referring to the healings and miracles which Jesus did. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the miracles you have seen me do" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

and did not see

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could give the reason why the prophets and kings **did not see** these things. Alternate translation: "but did not see them because they lived before my time" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

what you hear

The phrase **the things you hear** probably refers to the teachings of Jesus. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "the things that you have heard me teach" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 13:18

You, therefore, listen to the parable of the sower

Jesus is not retelling the parable again, but is now explaining it to the disciples. Make sure this is clear to your audience. See the note in the chapter introduction for more information about this parable. Alternate translation: "Therefore, hear me explain the parable of the one who sowed the seed" (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

Matthew 13:19

Everyone hearing

Jesus is speaking of people in general, and not about any specific person. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: "People hearing" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

the word of the kingdom

The phrase **the word** is referring to the entire message about **the kingdom**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: "the message of the kingdom" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

the word of the kingdom

Here the word **kingdom** is referring to the circumstance where God will rule, and people will gladly submit to his rule over them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "the message about how God will rule over them" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

of the kingdom

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "the kingdom of the heavens" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

the evil one comes and snatches away {what} had been sown in his heart

Jesus is speaking about Satan as if he were like a bird who **snatches away** seeds. God's message is spoken of as if it **had been sown** in a person's **heart**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternative translation: "the evil one comes and takes away their understanding of God's message from their heart" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the evil one

Here, **the evil one** refers to Satan. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Satan, who is the evil one," (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

what} had been sown in his heart

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the seed which God sowed in his heart" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

in his heart

Here, the word **heart** is referring to the mind of the person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “in his mind” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

This is {what} was sown beside the road

Jesus speaks about what happens to these people as if it were what happens when seed is sown on the hard surface alongside the road. The seed is referring to God’s message. The road is referring to the persons **heart**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternative translation: “When this happens, it is like what happened to seed being sown along the path” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

beside the road

See how you translated this in [13:4](#).

Matthew 13:20

the one having been sown

The phrase **the one having been sown** is talking about the seed. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the seed which was sown” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

this is the one hearing the word and immediately receiving it with joy

Jesus is comparing **the one hearing the word and immediately receiving it with joy** with the seed which is sown on rocky ground. In the same way that the seed sown on rocky soil does not have deep roots, so the person who immediately receives the message has not fully believed it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternative translation: “this is like the person who hears the word and quickly receives it with joy” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the word

See how you translated **word** in the previous verse. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

the word

See how you translated **the word** in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

this is the one hearing the word and immediately receiving it with joy

Jesus is speaking about believing as if they were **receiving** God’s message. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternative translation: “this seed is like the person who quickly receives God’s message with joy” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 13:21

but he has no root in himself but is temporary

This expression, **but he has no root in himself, but is temporary**, means that the plant does not have deep enough roots to stay alive. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “but he does not have deep roots to stay alive” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

but is temporary

Here, the second word **but** introduces a contrast. What follows the word **but** is in contrast to what precedes it. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “but rather, is temporary (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

and tribulation or persecution having happened because of the word

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the ideas of **tribulation** and **persecution**, you could express the same ideas with a verbal form. Alternate translation: “for when people afflict and persecute him because of the word” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

the word

See how you translated **word** in the previous verse. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

immediately he is caused to stumble

The expression **to stumble** means that he no longer believes God’s message. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “immediately he stops believing God’s message” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 13:22

the one having been sown

Here, Jesus is talking about the story of seed which was **sown** among the thorns, If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the seed having been sown” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Now the one having been sown among the thorns

See how you translated **thorns** in [13:7](#)

the word, & the word

See how you translated **the word** in the previous verse. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

the worry of this age

The phrase **the worry of this age** is likely referring to caring about what a person will eat or drink. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “fretting about the expense of living” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the deceitfulness of riches

Jesus speaks of **riches** as if it were a living thing that could deceive. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “finding all of their pleasure in wealth” (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

it becomes unfruitful

The person is spoken of as if he were a plant. Being **unfruitful** represents not obeying what God wants them to do. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “he does not do what God wants him to do” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 13:23

the one having been sown on the good soil

Here Jesus is referring to the story of the seed which fell on the **good soil**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the seed having been sown on the good soil” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

who indeed bears fruit and yields

Here the phrase **who indeed produces a crop and yields** means “a person who does many good things that please God”. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “who does many good things that please God, giving fruit” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

yields, some 100, and some 60, and some 30

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “some produce 100 times the grain that was sown, some produce 60 times the grain that was sown, and some produce 30 times the grain that was sown” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

100, & 60, & 30

You can state the numbers as text. Alternate translation: “one hundred times ... sixty ... thirty” (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**)

Matthew 13:24

He set before them another parable, saying

To help the people understand his message, Jesus tells another story. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “Then Jesus told a story to help them understand.” (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

He set before them another parable

Here the term **set before them** means that Jesus told the disciples another parable. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Jesus told them another parable” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

them

It is unknown to whom the pronoun **them** refers. Alternate translation: “the people” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

The kingdom of the heavens is compared to a man having sown good seed in his field

Jesus is explaining about **the kingdom of the heavens** by using the entire story through [13:30](#). See the note in the chapter introduction for more information. (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

The kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated **The kingdom of the heavens** in [3:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

good seed

Here **good seed** is referring to seed that produces the desired crops. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “seed that produces useful crops” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 13:25

darnel

Here, **darnel** is a plant that looks like food, but the grain that it produces is poisonous. Your language and culture may have a term for this that you can use in your translation. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1383)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 13:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 13:27

of the master of the house

The **landowner** is the same person who sowed good seed in his field.

did you not sow good seed in your field

The servants used a question to emphasize their surprise. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "you sowed good seed in your field!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

did you not sow

The landowner probably had his servants plant the seeds. Alternate translation: "did we not sow" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 13:28

But he was saying to them

Alternate translation: "But the landowner said to the servants"

we would gather them

The word **we** refers to the servants.

Matthew 13:29

But he says

Alternate translation: "But the landowner said to his servants"

Matthew 13:30

I will say to the reapers, “First gather the darnel and tie them in bundles to burn them up but gather the wheat into my barn

You can translate this direct quotation as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: “I will tell the reapers to first gather up the darnel and tie them in bundles to burn them, and then gather the wheat into my barn” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

barn

A **barn** is a farm building that can be used for storing grain, housing animals, and sheltering other farm items.

Matthew 13:31

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by beginning to tell a parable about a very small seed that grows into a very big plant. (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

The kingdom of the heavens is like

See how you translated **kingdom of the heavens** in [3:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

a mustard seed

A **mustard seed** is a very small seed that grows into a large plant. If this is unknown in your culture, use a similar type of seed in your language. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 13:32

which is indeed the smallest of all the seeds

The phrase **which is indeed the smallest of all the seeds** shows how small the seed is compared with how big it grows. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "This seed is the smallest of any seed" (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

becomes a tree

Here, the phrase **becomes a tree** is an idiom meaning it grows until it becomes the size of a tree. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "grows to be a tree" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 13:33

The kingdom of the heavens is like yeast

In this passage, Jesus is comparing **the kingdom of the heavens** with **yeast**. Jesus is saying that, just as yeast is mixed into flour and causes it to grow, so the kingdom of the heavens will grow. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly. (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

The kingdom of the heavens is like

See how you translated **The kingdom of the heavens** in 4:2. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

yeast that a woman, having taken, mixed with three seahs of flour until it was all leavened

Bakers use **yeast** to act upon the bread dough, causing it to swell due to a chemical reaction that produces air bubbles. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “yeast, which is used to make bread dough swell” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

three seahs of flour

You can translate this phrase as “a large amount of flour” or use a term that your culture uses for measuring large amounts of flour. (See: **Biblical Volume (p.1151)**) (See: **Biblical Volume (p.1151)**)

Matthew 13:34

All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the crowds, and he was speaking nothing to them without a parable

The phrases **All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the crowds** and **he was speaking nothing to them without a parable** mean the same thing. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you could combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: "Jesus spoke all of these things to the crowds in parables" (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

All these things

The phrase **All these things** is referring to the parables which Jesus just taught. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "All of the things Jesus taught," (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

he was speaking nothing to them without a parable

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "he spoke only with parables" (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

Matthew 13:35

what} had been said through the prophet might be fulfilled

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “what God said through the prophet might be fulfilled” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

through the prophet & saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “through the prophet ... and this is what he said:” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

I will open my mouth in parables

Jesus is using the phrase **I will open my mouth in parables** to mean speaking. Alternate translation: “I will speak in parables” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

what} has been hidden

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “what I have hidden” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

from the foundation of the world

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **foundation**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form. Alternate translation: “since God founded the world” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 13:36

Then

Connecting Statement:

Jesus is using the word translated **Then** to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Matthew 13:37

the Son of Man

Jesus is referring to himself as the **Son of Man**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this in the first person, as modelled by UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 13:38

the sons of the kingdom. & the sons of the evil one

Here, the phrase **sons of the kingdom** is an idiom meaning “people over whom God rules.” The phrase **sons of the evil one** is an idiom meaning “people over whom Satan rules.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “the people over whom God rules ... the people over whom Satan rules” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

of the kingdom

See how you translated **the kingdom** in [3:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 13:39

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 13:40

Therefore, just as the darnel are gathered and burned with fire, thus it will be at the end of the age

Jesus is comparing the parable to what is actually going to happen when God judges the world. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Therefore, similar to how the weeds were gathered up, this is what God is going to do with evil doers when he judges the world" (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

thus it will be at the end of the age

The word **thus** means "like this," and it tells the reader that Jesus is going to explain the meaning of the parable in the following passage. Make sure this is clear to your readers. Alternate translation: "in the end days, it will be like this:" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1187)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1187)**)

Matthew 13:41

The Son of Man will send out his angels

See how you translated **Son of Man** in [13:37](#). (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

from his kingdom

Jesus is using the term **kingdom** here to refer to the whole world. If it would be helpful to your readers, make sure they understand this explicitly. Alternate translation: “from the whole world, which he rules over,” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

all the stumbling blocks

Here, the phrase **stumbling blocks** is speaking about people who cause other people to sin. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “all the one causing others to sin” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 13:42

the furnace of fire

Here, Jesus is referring to hell as a **furnace of fire**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “hell, which is hot like a fiery furnace” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

weeping and grinding of the teeth

Here, **grinding of the teeth** is a symbolic act, representing extreme pain and suffering. If there is a gesture with similar meaning in your culture, you could consider using it here in your translation. Alternate translation: “weeping and extreme suffering” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Matthew 13:43

the righteous

Jesus is using the adjective **righteous** as a noun in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “people who are righteous” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

will shine as the sun

Here, Jesus is describing **the righteous** as if they were shining like **the sun**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning in a non-figurative way, as in the UST. (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

in the kingdom

Jesus is using the term **kingdom** to mean where God dwells and where the righteous will dwell with him. Alternate translation: “when they are dwelling with God” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

of their Father

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1391)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

The one having ears let him hear

See how you translated a similar phrase in [11:15](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 13:44

In 13:44-46, Jesus describes **the kingdom of heaven** by telling two parables about people who sold their possessions to purchase something of great value. (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in a field

Here, Jesus is comparing **the kingdom of the heavens** with when a person finds **treasure**. He is saying that God's kingdom is as valuable to a person as a very expensive treasure which someone might find. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "The kingdom of the heavens is similar to a very valuable item which is found in a field" (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

The kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated **kingdom of the heavens** in [3:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

hidden

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "which someone hid" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

a treasure

A **treasure** is a very valuable and precious thing or collection of things. Your language and culture may have a term for this that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: "a very valuable item" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 13:45

seeking fine pearls

The author is implying here that the man is **seeking fine pearls** because he wants to buy them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “seeking to buy fine pearls” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a man, a merchant, seeking fine pearls

Here, Jesus is comparing **the kingdom of God** with **fine pearls**. He is saying that it is very valuable to a person just like pearls are to a person who buys them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly, as expressed in the UST (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated **the kingdom of the heavens** in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

a man, a merchant

A **merchant** is a trader who often obtains merchandise from distant places and takes it elsewhere to sell it to other people. If your readers would not understand the word **merchant**, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “a person who sells items” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

fine pearls

These pearls are beautiful and valuable mineral balls that people use as jewelry. They are formed inside the shell of a creature that lives at the bottom of the ocean. If your readers would not be familiar with pearls, you could express this idea in a more general way. Alternate translation: “decorations made from valuable materials” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 13:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 13:47

General Information

Jesus describes **the kingdom of heaven** by telling a parable about fishermen who use a large net to catch fish. (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

Jesus explains the meaning of the parable in [13:49](#), so you do not need to explain the meaning here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1397)**) (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1397)**)

the kingdom of the heavens is like a net having been cast into the sea, and having gathered from every kind

Here, Jesus compares **the kingdom of the heavens** with how a **net** catches many different kinds of fish. In this sentence, Jesus is not comparing the kingdom of the heavens with the net itself. He is rather comparing the kingdom of the heavens with what the net is doing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the kingdom of the heavens is comparable to how a net cast into the see gathers every kind of fish in it” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

the kingdom of the heavens is like

See how you translated **the kingdom of the heavens** in [3:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

like a net having been cast into the sea

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “is like a net which fisherman threw into the sea” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 13:48

it was filled

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "fish filled the net" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the good things & the rotten things

Jesus is using the adjectives **good** and **worthless** as a noun here in order to describe a group of as either good for eating or not good for eating. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "good fish ... worthless fish" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 13:49

The angels will go out

Jesus does not say where the angels **go out** from. Jesus and his audience would have known that the angels went out from God's presence. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "The angels will go out from God's presence" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the wicked & the righteous

Jesus is using the adjectives **wicked** and **righteous** as nouns in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "people who are wicked ... people who are righteous" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 13:50

**καὶ βαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός. ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ
βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων**

See how you translated this verse in [13:42](#).

Matthew 13:51

Have you understood all these things?" They say to him, "Yes

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express these as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "Jesus asked them if they had understood all this, and they said that they did understand." (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

Matthew 13:52

having been disciplined for the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated **the kingdom of the heavens** in [3:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

In this parable, he talks about a man who gives people treasures out of his old and new belongings. (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

every scribe & is like a man, the master of the house, who brings forth new and old from his treasure

Here, Jesus is comparing a **scribe** who obeys Jesus with **a man** who gives people new and old things from his treasure. Here, the treasure is referring to both old teachings of the law as well as new teachings which Jesus is bringing. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "every scribe ... is comparable to a person who gives old and new things from their valuable items" or "every scribe ... teaches both new and old teachings, which are like treasures to the people whom they teach" (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

his treasure

See how you translated **treasure** in [13:44](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 13:53

And it happened that when Jesus finished these parables, he departed from there

This verse tells the reader that the story about Jesus telling many parable to others is ending. Use the natural form in your language for expressing the conclusion of a story. (See: **End of Story (p.1213)**) (See: **End of Story (p.1213)**)

Matthew 13:54

And having come to his hometown

Jesus is using the phrase **And having entered into his hometown** to introduce a new event in the story. Use a way in your language that people use to introduce a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

his hometown

Here, **his hometown** refers to the town of Nazareth, where Jesus grew up. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "his hometown, Nazareth" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

From where to this one {is} this wisdom and these miracles

The people asked this question because they did not believe that Jesus had the power to do miracles and heal people. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "How can it be that this man has such great wisdom and does these miracles" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 13:55

Is not this the son of the carpenter? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas

The crowd uses these questions to express their belief that they know who Jesus is and that he is just an ordinary man. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "He is just the son of a carpenter. We know his mother Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

the son of the carpenter

The word **carpenter** here is referring to someone who builds with wood. If your readers would not understand the word **carpenter**, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the son of the man who builds with wood" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

the son of the carpenter

Jesus is using the phrase **the carpenter** to mean Joseph, Jesus' earthly father. Alternate translation: "the son of Joseph, the carpenter" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 13:56

are not all his sisters with us

The crowd uses this question to express their belief that they know who Jesus is and that he is just an ordinary man. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “all his sisters are with us, too.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

From where, therefore, to this one {are} all these things

The crowd uses this question to show their doubt concerning where Jesus got his abilities from. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express it as a statement. Alternate translation: “We do not know where he got these abilities!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

are} all these things

Here, **all these things** refers to Jesus’ wisdom and ability to do miracles mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “are his wisdom and ability to do miracles” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 13:57

they were being caused to stumble on him

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Jesus offended them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

A prophet is not without honor

Jesus uses 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. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: "A prophet is always honored," (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

his hometown

See how you translated **hometown** in [4:2](#).

in his house

Jesus uses the phrase **in his house** to refer to his closest relatives, like his father, mother, or siblings. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "among his closest family members" or "by his father, mother, and siblings" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 13:58

And he did not do many miracles there, because of their unbelief

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “Since they did not believe, Jesus did not do many miracles in that place” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

Matthew 14

Matthew 14 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Verses 1 and 2 continue the account from chapter 13. Verses 3-12 stop the account and speak of things that happened earlier, possibly soon after Satan tempted Jesus (see [4:12](#)). Verse 13 continues the account from verse 2. Be sure to have words in verses 3-12 that tell the reader that Matthew has stopped his account to give new information before he continues. (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

Passive voice

Many sentences in this chapter tell that a person had something happen to him without saying who caused that thing to happen. For example, the writer does not tell who brought John's head to Herodias's daughter ([14:11](#)). You may have to translate the sentence so that it tells the reader who performed the action. (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**)

Matthew 14:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 14:2

And he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead, and because of this the powers work in him

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “And he said to his servants that this is John the Baptist, and that he has been raised from the dead. Because of this, great powers are working in him” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

He has been raised from the dead

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that God did it. Alternate translation: “God raised him from the dead” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

because of this the powers work in him

Jesus speaks of **the miraculous powers** as if they were a living thing. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “this is why God has given him great power to do miracles” (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

Matthew 14:3

For

From here until 14:12, Jesus gives the reader background information explaining why Herod said that John was raised from the dead. He is explaining how John died. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "For John died in this way:" (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

For Herod, having seized John, bound him and put him in prison

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Because of Herodias, Herod's brother's wife, Herod had John arrested, bound, and thrown into prison" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

For Herod, having seized John, bound him and put him in prison

The events described by **arrested**, **bound** and **put in prison** happened in that order. Make sure this is understandable to your audience. Alternate translation: "For Herod first arrested him. Then he bound him and then put him in prison" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

For Herod, having seized John, bound him and put him in prison

Jesus is using the term **Herod** to mean the soldiers who work for him. If it would be helpful to your reader, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Herod sent his soldiers to arrest John, bind him, and put him in prison" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

the wife of & Philip

Philip was the name of a man who was Herod's brother. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

Matthew 14:4

For John was saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “For John was saying that it was not lawful for him to have her” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Matthew 14:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 14:6

in the midst

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express who she was dancing **in the midst** of explicitly. Alternate translation: “in the midst of the guests attending the birthday celebration” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

But the birthday of Herod having come

In some cultures, people celebrate the day that someone was born. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state what it means explicitly. Alternate translation: “And as they were celebrating Herod’s birthday” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 14:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 14:8

Now she, having been urged beforehand by her mother

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Now she, because her mother urged her beforehand" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

a platter

If it would be helpful in your language, you could state what the word **platter** means explicitly. Alternate translation: "a large serving plate" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 14:9

And the king was grieved

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "The king grieved" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

he commanded {it} to be given

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that "the soldiers" did it. Alternate translation: "Herod commanded that the soldiers give to her" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 14:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 14:11

his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl

If your language does not use this passive form, you could state this in active form. Alternate translation: "someone brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

a platter

See how you translated **platter** in verse [14:8](#).

Matthew 14:12

having come, they reported {this} to Jesus

The disciples came to Jesus to tell him what happened to John. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the disciples of John went and told Jesus what had happened to John the Baptist” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 14:13

Now having heard, Jesus withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself

Here, Matthew is providing the reader with background information for what Jesus is about to do. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "After hearing about this, Jesus was going away from there in a boat to an empty place by himself" (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

Jesus

Matthew implies here that the disciples were traveling with Jesus. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus and his disciples" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

on foot

Here, **on foot** is an idiom meaning that they walked. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation, with a preceding comma: "walking" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 14:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 14:15

the hour has already passed by

This phrase means it was late in the day. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "it is already late in the day" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 14:16

You give them

The word **You** is plural, referring to the disciples. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

Matthew 14:17

except five loaves

If it would appear in your language that the disciples are making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: “since we only have five loaves and two fish” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**)

Matthew 14:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 14:19

having looked up to heaven

Here, **looked up to heaven** is symbolic for praying. If there is a gesture with similar meaning in your culture, you could consider using it here in your translation. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

he blessed, and having broken {them

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. You could supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “he blessed them, and having broken the food into pieces” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

and the disciples to the crowds

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “and the disciples gave the loaves to the crowds” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 14:20

and were satisfied

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your languages. Alternative translation: until they felt satisfied" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 14:21

5,000 men

Alternate translation: "five thousand men" (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**)

Matthew 14:22

he compelled the disciples to get into the boat and to go before him to the other side, while he sent the crowds away

Matthew is providing background information for the next story, about Jesus walking on the water. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side while he was sending away the crowds (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)"

Matthew 14:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 14:24

But the boat was already in the middle of the sea being tormented by the waves, for the wind was against {it

Matthew provides more information to help the reader understand the follow verses. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "The boat was already in the middle of the sea and was being tossed around by waves because of a strong opposing wind" (See: **Background Information (p. 1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

Matthew 14:25

Now in the fourth watch of the night

If it would be helpful in your language, you could state what **fourth watch** means explicitly. Alternate translation: "some time just before the sun rose" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 14:26

saying, "& a ghost

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "saying that he is a ghost" (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

Matthew 14:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 14:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 14:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 14:30

seeing the strong wind

Here, **seeing the strong wind** means he observed the turbulent effect the powerful gusts had on the water.
Alternate translation: "when Peter saw that the strong wind was causing large waves"

Matthew 14:31

why did you doubt

Here, **doubt** is referring to Peter not trusting that Jesus could keep him from sinking. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “why did you doubt that I could keep you from sinking” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

why did you doubt

Jesus is not asking for information, but is using the question form here to emphasize the truth of what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “you certainly should not have doubted!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 14:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 14:33

the Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 14:34

And having crossed over

Matthew implies that they **crossed over** the Sea of Galilee. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “After crossing over the Sea of Galilee” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Gennesaret

Gennesaret is a small town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

Matthew 14:35

all

Here, **all** does not mean every single person, but it means many people who were sick. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language to express this. Alternate translation: "many of" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

Matthew 14:36

were healed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that “Jesus” did it. Alternate translation, preceded by a comma: “Jesus healed them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 15

Matthew 15 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 15:8-9, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special Concepts in this Chapter

The “traditions of the elders”

The “traditions of the elders” were oral laws that the Jewish religious leaders developed because they wanted to make sure that everyone obeyed the law of Moses. However, they often worked harder to obey these rules than to obey the law of Moses itself. Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for this, and they became angry as a result. (See: **law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God (p.1406)**)

Jews and Gentiles

The Jews of Jesus’ time thought that only Jews could please God by the way they lived. Jesus healed a Canaanite Gentile woman’s daughter to show his followers that he would accept both Jews and Gentiles as his people.

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

Sheep

The Bible often speaks of people as if they were sheep because sheep require someone to take care of them. This is because they do not see well and they often go to where predatory animals can easily kill and eat them . (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 15:1

Then

Jesus is using the word translated **Then** to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Matthew 15:2

Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders

The Pharisees are using the question form to challenge Jesus about why his disciples are not following the traditions of the elders. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: “Your disciples certainly violate the traditions of the elders!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

the tradition of the elders

Here, **the traditions of the elders** is not referring to the law of Moses, but to man-made laws. Your language and culture may have a term for this that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: “traditional teachings which previous leaders created” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

they do not wash their hands

This washing is not only to clean the hands of filth, but also to rid the body of impurities. It is one which the Pharisees participated in, and often they compelled other people to do so as well. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “they do not follow the ritual of washing their hands of their impurities” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 15:3

Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition

Jesus is using the question form to challenge the Pharisees. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You are violating the commandment of God because of your traditions!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 15:4

Honor your father and your mother,' and 'The one speaking evil of his father or mother, let him end in death

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "For Moses said to honor your father and mother. He also said that the person who speaks evil against his father or mother deserves to die" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Matthew 15:5

is} a gift

It might be necessary in your language to say for whom the gift is intended. This gift is given to God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “is a gift for God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever you might have benefited from me {is} a gift

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “But you say that whoever says to his father or mother ‘Whatever might have been helpful from me is a gift’” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Matthew 15:6

father

Here, the word **father** implies the idea of both the father and the mother. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “father and mother” or “parents” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

you have set aside the word of God

Here, the phrase **the word of God** is referring to God’s commandments in the Old Testament. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “you have voided God’s commandments” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 15:7

Hypocrites

Jesus calls them **hypocrites** in an exclamatory way to emphasize his anger with them. Use an exclamation that is natural in your language for communicating this. Alternate translation: "You are hypocrites!" (See: **Exclamations (p.1217)**) (See: **Exclamations (p.1217)**)

saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation without the preceding comma: "when he said" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

Matthew 15:8

This people honors me with their lips

Isaiah, whom Jesus is quoting, is using the term **lips** to mean the spoken word. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “This people honors me when they speak” or “This people honors me with their words” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

me & me

Here, both uses of the word **me** are referring to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “me, God ... me” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

heart

Jesus is using the term **heart** to mean a person's inner thoughts or desires. Alternate translation: “desire” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

but their heart is far away from me

Here, the phrase **far away from me** is an idiom meaning that they do not love God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “but they do not love me in their hearts” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

but

Here, **but** contrasts what is before it to what comes after it. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

Matthew 15:9

commandments of men

James is using the possessive form to describe these **commandments** as things which are created by people instead of God. If this is not clear in your language, you could use the adjective “man-made” instead of the noun “men.” Alternate translation: “man-made commandments” (See: **Possession (p.1330)**) (See: **Possession (p.1330)**)

Matthew 15:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 15:11

What enters into the mouth does not defile the man, but what comes out from the mouth, this defiles the man

Jesus is using the phrase **enters into the mouth** to mean that which a person eats. He is using the phrase **comes out from the mouth** to mean what a person says. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Nothing that a person eats defiles him, but what a person says, this is what defiles him" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 15:12

the Pharisees, & were caused to stumble

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the Pharisees ... were upset" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 15:13

Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted

Here, Jesus refers to the Pharisees as if they were plants. He also speaks of God as if he is a farmer who **uproots** the plants, judging them. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “The Pharisees are like plants that my Heavenly Father will pull up because he did not plant them” or “The Pharisees will be judged severely by my Heavenly Father because they do not obey him” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

my heavenly Father

The phrase **my heavenly Father** is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1391)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

will be uprooted

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “he will uproot” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 15:14

them

The word **them** refers to the Pharisees. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Pharisees” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

They are blind guides But if a blind one guides a blind one, both will fall into a pit

Jesus speaks of the Pharisees as if they were blind people trying to **guide** other **blind** people. Jesus means that the Pharisees do not understand how to help people obey God, because they themselves do not know how to obey God. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “They are like sightless guides. But if the sightless guide leads the sightless person along, both will fall into a hole” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 15:15

to us

By **us**, Peter means himself and the other disciples but not Jesus, so use the exclusive form of that word in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1219)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

Matthew 15:16

Are you also still without understanding

Jesus is using the question form to challenge the disciples. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "After all I have said and done, I am amazed that you still do not understand" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 15:17

Do you not yet understand that everything that enters into the mouth passes into the stomach and is passed out into the latrine

Jesus is using the question form to challenge his disciples. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You ought to understand that everything that goes into a persons mouth passes into the stomach and is passed out into the toilet" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

the latrine

Here, **latrine** is a word which means the place where people bury bodily waste. Your language and culture may have a term for this that you can use in your translation. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 15:18

the things coming out from the mouth

Jesus is using the phrase **proceeding out of the mouth** to mean speaking. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the things which a person speaks” (See: **Metonymy (p. 1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

the heart

Jesus is using the term **heart** to mean a persons inner desires or thoughts. If it would it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this in a plain way. Alternate translation: “a persons inner thoughts” (See: **Metonymy (p. 1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 15:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 15:20

man, & man

Although the term **man** is masculine, Jesus is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If you retain the metaphor in your translation, you could say “people” to indicate this. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

Matthew 15:21

Here, Matthew is introducing a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Jesus withdrew

It is implied that the disciples went with Jesus. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “Jesus and his disciples withdrew” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 15:22

behold, a Canaanite woman, having come out from those regions

Matthew is using the phrase **behold, a Canaanite woman, having come out** to introduce the **Canaanite woman** as a new participant in the story. If your language has its own way of introducing new participants, you could use it here in your translation. Alternate translation: “behold, there was a woman from the people called the Canaanites who was coming from their region” (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1272)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1272)**)

Son of David

Jesus was not David’s literal **Son**, but his descendant. The title **Son of David** is also an important messianic title. Make sure this is clear to your readers. Alternate translation: “Descendant of King David, Messiah” (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**) (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**)

My daughter is severely demon-possessed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that “a demon” did it. Alternate translation: “A demon is controlling my daughter” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 15:23

did not answer her a word

Matthew is using the phrase **he did not answer her a word** to mean that he did not respond at all to her cries for help. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "he kept silent" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 15:24

I was not sent

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that “God” did it.

Alternate translation: “God did not send me” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

I was not sent, except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel

If it would in appear your language that Jesus was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: “I was sent only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**)

to the lost sheep of the house of Israel

Here, Jesus is referring to the people of **Israel** who have gone astray as **lost sheep**. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to the people of Israel who have wandered like lost sheep” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 15:25

bowed down to him

Here, **bowed down to him** was a sign of honor which was often shown in their culture. If it would be helpful to your readers, use a similar action from your culture. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Matthew 15:26

It is not good to take the bread of the children and to throw {it} to the little dogs

This proverb draws a figurative comparison: The people of Israel are like the children of a house because they are the offspring of the parents. But non-Israelite people are like dogs because they are not the offspring. You can translate the proverb itself in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: "It is not good to share the message intended for the people of Israel with those from other places" or "It is not good to give something to a person for whom it was not intended" (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

the bread

Jesus is using **bread** to represent food. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the nourishment" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

Matthew 15:27**also the little dogs eat from the crumbs falling from the table of their masters**

The woman responds by using the same imagery as Jesus used in the metaphor he just spoke. She means non-Jews should be able to have a small amount of the good things Jews are wasting. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the little dogs

See how you translated **little dogs** in the previous verse.

Matthew 15:28

let it be done

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that Jesus did it.

Alternate translation: "I will do this" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

her daughter was healed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Jesus healed her daughter" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

from that hour

Here, **from that hour** is an idiom that means "at that moment". If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "at that moment" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 15:29

Matthew is using this verse to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Matthew 15:30

the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute

Jesus is using the adjectives **the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute** as nouns in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase, as demonstrated in the UST. (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

they laid them at his feet

Here, the phrase **they laid them at his feet** is an idiom meaning “they laid them in front of him”. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “they laid them in front of Jesus” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

them

Here, the word **them** is referring to the many sick people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the sick people” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

Matthew 15:31

the mute & the crippled & the lame & the blind

See the note in the previous verse for how to translate these adjectives. (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 15:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 15:33

From where {would be} to us in a desolate place so many loaves so as to satisfy so large a crowd

The disciples are using the question form to challenge Jesus. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "There is certainly no place in the wilderness where we can get enough food to feed this large crowd!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**). (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 15:34

Seven

The disciples are leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation, with following comma deleted: "We have seven loaves" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 15:35

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 15:36

and the disciples to the crowds

Matthew is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “and the disciples were giving them to the crowd” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 15:37

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 15:38

4,000 men

Alternate translation: "four thousand men" (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**)

Matthew 15:39

of Magadan

This region is sometimes called "Magdala." (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

Matthew 16

Matthew 16 General Notes

Special Concepts in this Chapter

Yeast

Jesus spoke of the way people thought about God as if it were bread, and he spoke of what people taught about God as if it were the yeast that makes bread dough become larger and the baked bread taste good. He did not want his followers to listen to what the Pharisees and Sadducees taught. This was because if they did listen, they would not understand who God is and how he wants his people to live. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Important Figures of Speech in this Chapter

Metaphor

Jesus told his people to obey his commands. He did this by telling them to “follow” him. It is as if he were walking on a path and they were walking after him. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

Background information

Matthew continues his account from chapter 15 in verses 1-20. The account stops in verse 21 so that Matthew can tell the reader that Jesus told his disciples again and again that people would kill him after he arrived in Jerusalem. Then the account continues in verses 22-27 with what happened the first time Jesus told the disciples that he would die.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Jesus uses a paradox when he says, “Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” ([Matthew 16:25](#)).

Matthew 16:1

testing {him

Here, **testing** is used in a negative sense. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “challenging him” or “wanting to trap him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 16:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 16:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 16:4

An evil and adulterous generation

See how you translated this in [12:39](#). (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

An evil and adulterous generation

Here, **adulterous** is a metaphor for people who are not faithful to God. See how you translated this in [12:39](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

σημεῖον οὐ δοθήσεται αὐτῇ

If your language does not use this passive form, you could state this in active form. Alternate translation: “I will not give it a sign” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

except the sign of Jonah

See how you translated this in [12:39](#). Alternate translation: “except the same sign God gave to Jonah the prophet”

Matthew 16:5

And

Jesus is using the word translated **And** to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Now” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

the other side

Matthew is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “the opposite shore” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 16:6

the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

Here, **yeast** is a metaphor that refers to evil ideas and wrong teaching. Translate it as **yeast** here and do not explain its meaning in your translation. This meaning will be made clear in [16:12](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 16:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 16:8

You of little faith

See how you translated this in [6:30](#).

You of little faith, why are you reasoning among yourselves that you do not have loaves

Jesus is using the question form to challenge his disciples. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am disappointed that you think it was because you forgot to bring bread that I talked about the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 16:9

Do you not yet perceive nor remember the five loaves of the 5,000, and how many baskets you received

Jesus uses a question to rebuke his disciples. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you remember the five loaves of the 5,000, and how many baskets you gathered up!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

of the 5,000

Alternate translation: "of the five thousand" (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**)

Matthew 16:10

Nor the seven loaves of the 4,000, and how many baskets you received

Jesus uses a question to rebuke his disciples. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express it as a statement. Alternate translation: “Surely you also remember the seven loaves of the 4,000, and how many baskets you took up!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

of the 4,000

Alternate translation: “of the four thousand” (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**)

Matthew 16:11

How do you not perceive that I did not speak to you about loaves

Jesus uses this question to rebuke the disciples. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express it as a statement. Alternate translation: “You should have known that I was not speaking about bread.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

Here, **yeast** represents evil ideas and wrong teaching. Translate as “yeast” here and do not explain the meaning in your translation. In the next verse, Jesus will tell the disciples the meaning. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 16:12

they understood

The pronoun **they** refers to the disciples. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the disciples realized” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1339)**)

Matthew 16:13

Now

Jesus is using the word translated **Now** to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If this would not be natural in your language, you could use the first person form, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 16:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 16:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 16:16

the Son of the living God

Son is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

of the living God

Here, Peter uses the phrase **living God** to speaking about God as being alive. This is to contrast God, the only true God, with the other gods, who are not real. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “of the only true God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 16:17

Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in the heavens

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in the heavens, you are blessed" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

Simon Bar Jonah

The word **Bar** is an Aramaic word which means son. You will need to decide if you will also borrow this word into your language or if you will translate the meaning. Either approach has broad support. If you borrow the word, you could spell it the way it sounds in your language and then put the translation in a footnote. Alternative translation: "Simon, the son of Jonah" (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1191)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in the heavens

Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: "but rather" (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

flesh and blood did not reveal this

Jesus is using **flesh and blood** to represent a person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "a person" or "people" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

did not reveal this

The pronoun **this** refers to Peter's pronouncement in the previous verse about Jesus being "the Christ, the Son of the living God." It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: "did not reveal to you that I am the Christ, the Son of the living God" or "did not give you the knowledge to say this" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

but my Father in the heavens

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: "but my Father in the heavens revealed it to you" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

my Father

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 16:18

that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church

Here, Jesus uses the imagery of **Peter** as a **rock**. The name **Peter** means **rock**. It might be helpful to state this explicitly in your language to make this imagery and wordplay clear to your readers. See how this is demonstrated in the UST. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

upon this rock I will build my church

Here, **build my church** is a metaphor for uniting the people who believe in Jesus into a community. The phrase **this rock** could represent: (1) Peter himself. Alternate translation: “upon this rock, which is you” or (2) the truth that Peter had just said in [16:16](#). Alternate translation: “upon what you have said, which is like a foundation of rock” If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the gates of Hades will not prevail against it

Jesus is using the term **Hades** to mean death. He is using the term **gate** to mean the power which death has over people. Once a gate is shut, people can no longer leave. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the imprisoning power of death will not overpower it” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 16:19

I will give to you

Here, **you** is singular and refers to Peter. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and

Here Jesus is using the term **keys** to refer to someone having authority in God's kingdom. There is some debate about how much authority Peter is given here. (1) Some interpret the second half of the verse as describing the authority that Peter is given. Alternate translation: "the keys of the kingdom, so that" (2) Some say that Peter is given authority to decide who can and can not live with God forever. Alternate translation: "authority to decide who can come to live with me forever, and" If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the keys

Here, **keys** are things used to unlock a door or gate so that people can enter or exit a place. And **keys** can also be used to make it so that a door cannot be opened, and people cannot go through it. Your language and culture may have a term for this that you can use in your translation. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

of the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated **the kingdom of the heavens** in [3:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

whatever you bind on the earth will have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth will have been loosed in the heavens

Here, **bound** is a metaphor meaning to forbid something, and **loosed** is a metaphor meaning to allow something. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "whatever you forbid to happen on the earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you allow on the earth will be allowed in the heavens" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

in the heavens, & in the heavens

Jesus is using the phrase **in the heavens** to mean by God himself. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "by God who is in the heavens ... by God who is in the heavens" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 16:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 16:21

to go to Jerusalem and to suffer much from the elders and chief priests and scribes and to be killed and to be raised on the third day

Here, everything that Jesus says will happen to him: that he is **to go to Jerusalem, to suffer much from the elders and chief priests and scribes, to be killed, to be raised on the third day**, will happen as he said. Make sure this is clear in your language. Alternate translation: “to go to Jerusalem. Then, to suffer much from the elders and the chief priests and the scribes. Then to be killed, and afterwards, to be raised on the third day” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

to be raised

Here, **to be raised** is an idiom that means that God made Jesus alive again after he died. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to be brought back to life” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

to be raised on the third day

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that “God” did it. Alternate translation: “God will raise me on the third day” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

on the third day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “on day three” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**)

Matthew 16:22

Merciful to you

Merciful to you is an idiom that means “May God be merciful to you.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly.

Alternate translation: “May God be merciful to you” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 16:23

Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me

Here, Jesus calls Peter **Satan**. This is because Peter is behaving as Satan behaved by trying to get Jesus not to obey God. He also calls him a **stumbling block**, which is a rock which someone might trip over. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "You are acting like Satan! Get out of my sight! You are like a stumbling block to me, trying to get me to disobey God" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 16:24

If anyone wants

The word **anyone** represents people in general, not one particular person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more natural expression. Alternate translation: "If a person wants" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p. 1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

to come after me

Here, **to come after me** is an idiom that means to be Jesus' disciple. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to be my disciple" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

take up his cross

The **cross** here represents suffering and death. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "be willing to suffer and die for my sake" (See: **Metonymy (p. 1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 16:25

For whoever wants

By using the word **whoever**, Jesus is speaking of people in general, not of one particular person. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: "For any person who desires" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

will lose it

Here, **lose** it is a polite way to say that God will judge the person who tries to save their own soul. If it would be helpful in your language, use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: "will forfeit his life" (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

will find it

Here, **find it** means to obtain life with God forever. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "will live with God forever" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 16:26

For what will a man benefit if he gains the whole world but forfeits his life

Jesus is using the question form to challenge his disciples. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Even if a person gains the whole world, it will not profit him if he forfeits his soul" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

a man

Jesus is using the phrase a man here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: "a person" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

if he gains the whole world

The phrase the whole world is an exaggeration meaning that the person might gain great riches and fame. Alternate translation: "if he gains everything he desires" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

Or what will a man give in exchange for his life

Jesus asks this question to emphasize the value of the soul of each person. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "There is nothing a person can give in exchange for his life" or "No one can give anything in exchange for his life" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 16:27

the Son of Man is about & his & he will repay

Here Jesus refers to himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of man, am about ... my ... I will repay" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

of his Father

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1391)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 16:28

to you

Here, **you** is plural and refers to the disciples. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

will certainly not taste death

The phrase **taste death** is an idiom which means to experience death. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning using plain language. Alternate translation: “will certainly not die” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

who will certainly not taste death

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of death, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun death by using the verb form. Alternate translation: “who may certainly not die” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom

Jesus is using the term **coming in his kingdom** to mean when Jesus will come to rule over his people forever. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “until they see the Son of Man coming to rule over his people” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

the Son of Man

See how you translated **the Son of Man** in the previous verse. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 17

Matthew 17 General Notes

Special Concepts in this Chapter

Elijah

The Old Testament prophet Malachi lived many years before Jesus was born. Malachi had said that before the Messiah came a prophet named Elijah would return. Jesus explained that Malachi had been talking about John the Baptist. Jesus said this because John the Baptist had done what Malachi had said that Elijah would do. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/prophet\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/christ\]\]](#))

“transfigured”

Scripture often speaks of God’s glory as a great, brilliant light. When people see this light, they are afraid. Matthew says in this chapter that Jesus’ body shone with this glorious light so that his followers could see that Jesus truly was God’s Son. At the same time, God told them that Jesus was his Son. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/glory\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/fear\]\]](#))

Matthew 17:1

And after six days

The phrase translated **And six days later** indicates that this event happened after the previous event that the story described. Alternate translation: “And six days after these things happen” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

Matthew 17:2

he was transfigured

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God changed how he looked" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

before them

Here, **before them** is an idiom that means in front of them. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "in front of them" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

his face shone as the sun, and his garments became white as the light

The phrases **his face shone like the sun** and **his garments became brilliant as the light** are similes describing Jesus' appearance when it changed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "his face shone very brightly, and his garments were very bright" (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

Matthew 17:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 17:4

Lord, it is good for us to be here

By **us** Peter means himself and the other two disciples but not Jesus, so use the exclusive form of that word in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**)

tents

Here, **shelters** are temporary places where people live. These are not full houses. Your language and culture may have a term for this that you can use in your translation. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 17:5

overshadowed them

Here, **overshadowed** could mean: (1) that the light from the cloud made them invisible to people not on the mountain. Alternate translation: “blocked people’s view of them” (2) the cloud descended so that they themselves were inside the cloud. Alternate translation: “enveloped them”

a voice from the cloud

Matthew is using the term **voice** to mean sounds from God himself. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “God spoke from the cloud” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 17:6

And having heard, the disciples

Alternate translation: "And when the disciples heard God speak, they"

fell on their face

Here, **fell on their face** is an idiom that means that the three disciples fell down with their faces to the ground. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "fell down with their faces to the ground" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 17:7

having touched them, said, “Get up and do not be afraid

It may be more natural in your language to have an indirect quotation here. Alternate translation: “having touched them, he told them to get up and to not be afraid” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

Matthew 17:8

they saw no one except only Jesus himself

If it would in appear your language that Matthew was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: “they only saw Jesus” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**)

Matthew 17:9

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If this would not be natural in your language, you could use the first person form. Alternative translation: "I, the Son of Man" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 17:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 17:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 17:12

they did & them

The pronouns **they** and **them** refer to the religious leaders. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers.

Alternate translation: “the religious leaders did ... the religious leaders” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

the Son of Man

See how you translated **Son of Man** in [17:9](#). (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 17:13

Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them about John the Baptist

Matthew provides this background information to show how the disciples reacted to what Jesus has just said. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p. 1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

Matthew 17:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 17:15

have mercy on my son

See how you translated **have mercy** in [15:22](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)
(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

he is epileptic

Here, **epileptic** is a condition where someone's body moves without their ability to control it. Your language and culture may have a term for this which you can use in your translation. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 17:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 17:17

unbelieving

Jesus is using the adjective **unbelieving** as a noun to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “unbelieving people” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

until when will I be with you? Until when will I bear with you

Jesus is using the question form to challenge his disciples. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate these questions as statements or exclamations, as in the UST. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 17:18

the boy was healed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that “Jesus” did it. Alternate translation: “Jesus caused the boy to be healed” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

from that hour

Here, **from that hour** is an idiom that means the boy was healed instantly. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “instantly” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 17:19

we

By **we**, the speaker means himself and the rest of the disciples but not Jesus, so use the exclusive form of that word in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**)

it

The pronoun **it** refers to the demon which Jesus cast out of the boy. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: "the demon" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

Matthew 17:20

if you had faith like a mustard seed

Here, Jesus is comparing the size of a **mustard seed** with the amount of **faith** necessary to move a mountain. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning in a non-figurative way. Alternate translation: “if you have even very small faith, like a small seed” or “if you have even a very small amount of faith” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

nothing will be impossible for you

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative pronoun **nothing** and the negative word **impossible**. Alternate translation: “everything will be possible for you” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

Matthew 17:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 17:22

Now

Connecting Statement:

Jesus is using the word translated **Now** to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

The Son of Man is about

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If this would not be natural in your language, you could use the first person form. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, am about" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

The Son of Man is about to be handed over

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Someone is about to hand the Son of Man over" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

The Son of Man is about to be handed over into the hands of men

The word **hands** here is a metonym expressing possession and control. People will hand Jesus over into other people's possession so that those men will have control over him. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "The Son of Man is about to be handed over into the control of men" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 17:23

him, & he will be raised up

Jesus is continuing to speak about himself in the third person. If this would not be natural in your language, you could use the first person form. Alternate translation: “me ... I will be raised up” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

on the third day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “three days afterwards” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**)

he will be raised up

Here, **he will be raised up** is an idiom that means God will bring Jesus back from being dead. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have that meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “he will be brought back from the dead” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

he will be raised up

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that “God” did it. Alternate translation: “God will raise him up” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 17:24

Now

Connecting Statement:

Jesus is using the word translated **Now** to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

the two-drachma tax

Here, **the two-drachma tax** is a tax that people paid to help support the temple in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the two-drachma tax in order to support the temple” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the two-drachma tax

A **drachma** was a coin equivalent to one day’s wage. You could try to express this amount in terms of current monetary values, but that might cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate, since those values can change over time. So instead, you might state something more general or give the equivalent in wages. Alternate translation: “two days’ wages” (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**)

Matthew 17:25

From their sons

Jesus is using the term **sons** to mean citizens who live within a king's kingdom. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "From their citizens" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 17:26

the sons

See how you translated **sons** in the previous verse. (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**) (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**)

Matthew 17:27

throw in a fishhook

Fishermen tied **a fishhook**, a sharp curved object used to catch fish, to the end of a fishing line. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that in a way that people catch fish in your culture. Alternate translation: “go fishing” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

a shekel

A **shekel** was a silver coin equivalent to four days’ wages. You could try to express this amount in terms of current monetary values, but that might cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate, since those values can change over time. So instead, you might state something more general or give the equivalent in wages. Alternate translation: “a coin worth four days’ wages” (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**)

on behalf of me and you

Here, **you** is singular and refers to Peter. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

Matthew 18

Matthew 18 General Notes

Special Concepts in this Chapter

What should Jesus' followers do when other followers sin against them?

Jesus taught that his followers must treat each other well and not be angry with each other. They should forgive anyone who is sorry for his sin, even if he has committed the same sin before. If he is not sorry for his sin, Jesus' followers should speak with him alone or in a small group. If he is still not sorry after that, then Jesus' followers can treat him as though he had been judged to be guilty. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/repent\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#))

Matthew 18:1

At that hour

Here, **At that hour** is an idiom that means immediately. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Right then" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

in the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated **the kingdom of the heavens** in [3:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 18:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 18:3

unless you turn and become like little children, you will certainly not enter

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative. Alternate translation: “if you turn and become like children, you will certainly enter” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

unless you turn and become like little children, you will certainly not enter into the kingdom of the heavens

Jesus is suggesting that this is a hypothetical condition, that the disciples will only enter the kingdom of God if they become like children. Alternate translation: “suppose that you do not turn and become like little children. Then you will never enter the kingdom of the heavens” (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**)

become like little children

Here, Jesus is comparing the disciples with children. He is saying that unless they become like the child who does not care about being the greatest but obeys Jesus, they will not enter the kingdom of the heavens. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “unless you become humble” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated **the kingdom of the heavens** in [3:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 18:4

Therefore, whoever will humble himself like this little child

Connecting Statement:

Here, Jesus continues to compare the disciples with a **little child**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "So, he who becomes humble in the same way as this little child is humble" (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

whoever

The word **whoever** represents people in general, not one particular person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more natural expression. Alternate translation: "if a person" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

in the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated **the kingdom of the heavens** in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 18:5

whoever

The word **whoever** represents people in general, not one particular person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more natural expression. Alternate translation: “any person who” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

receives a little child like this

Here, the phrase **little child** is referring to the people who act like a little child, and not to an actual child. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “receives one of those acting like a little child” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

in my name

Jesus is using the phrase **in my name** to mean “because he is my disciple.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “because he is my disciple” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 18:6

that a millstone of a donkey would have been hung around his neck and he would have been sunk into the depth of the sea

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “that a person might put a millstone around his neck and he might sink into the depths of the sea” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

But whoever causes one of these little ones & to stumble

The word **stumble** usually refers to someone tripping over an object. Here, **stumble** is used to refer to someone who sins. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “But whoever causes one of these little ones ... to stop believing in me” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

a millstone

A **millstone** is a large, heavy, circular stone used for grinding wheat grain into flour. Your language and culture may have a term for this that you could use in your translation. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 18:7

to the world

Jesus is using the term **world** to mean the people who live in the world. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to the people” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

the stumbling blocks! & the stumbling blocks & to the man through whom the stumbling block comes

A **stumbling block** is something that causes people to trip and fall. Here, it is referring to people who cause others to sin. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “people who cause others to sin ... people who cause others to sin ... to the person who causes other people to sin” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 18:8

Now if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw {it} away from you

Jesus says **Now if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw {it} away from you** here to emphasize the importance of trying to get rid of sin. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis in your language. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

causes you to stumble

Here, **stumble** means to sin. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “causes you to sin” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

your & you & you. & for you

All occurrences of **your** and **you** are singular. Jesus is speaking individually to all people in general. It may be more natural for your language to translate with a plural “you.” (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

into life

Here, Jesus says **life** to refer to eternal life with God in heaven. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “eternal life with God in heaven” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

than, having two hands or two feet, to be thrown into the eternal fire

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that “God” did it. Alternate translation: “than to have both hands and feet when God throws you into the eternal fire” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 18:9

And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw {it} away from you

Jesus says **And if your eye causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw {it} away from you** here to emphasize the importance of trying to get rid of sin. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis in your language. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

if your eye causes you to stumble

Jesus speaks of an **eye** as if it were able to cause a person **to stumble**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “if your eye lets you see things that cause you to stumble” (See: **Personification (p.1322)**) (See: **Personification (p.1322)**)

causes you to stumble

See how you translated **stumble** in the previous verse. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

your & you & you. & for you

All occurrences of **your** and **you** are singular although Jesus is speaking to all people in general. It may be more natural for your language to translate with a plural “you.” (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

into life

See how you translated **life** in the previous verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

than, having two eyes, to be thrown into the Gehenna of fire

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that “God” did it. Alternate translation: “than to have both eyes when God throws you into the eternal fire” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 18:10

See that

See is an idiom that here means “be sure that.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Be sure that” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

one of these little ones

See how you translated **little ones** in [18:6](#).

you would not despise

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative. Alternate translation: “you would treat well” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father in the heavens

Jewish teachers taught that only the most important **angels** could be in God’s presence. Jesus means that the most important angels speak to God about these little ones. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

always look on the face of my Father

Here, **always look on the face of my Father** is an idiom that means that they are in his presence continually. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “are continually in the presence of my Father” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

of my Father

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 18:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 18:12

What do you think

Jesus is using the question form to get the people's attention. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "Think about what I am about to say." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

a certain man

The phrase **a certain man** represents people in general, not one particular person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more natural expression. Alternate translation: "a person" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

having left the 99 on the mountains and having gone, does he not seek the one having gone astray

Jesus is using the question form to challenge his disciples. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "he would certainly leave the 99 on the hillside and seek the one wandering" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 18:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 18:14

In the same way, it is not the will before your Father in the heavens that one of these little ones would perish

Here, Jesus is comparing the story of the wander sheep and the rejoicing shepherd with what God thinks when one of his people is wandering from him and is brought back. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “In the same way that the shepherd brings back the wandering sheep, so your Father who is in the heavens does not want any of those who are like little children to wander from him and perish eternally” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

your

Here, **your** is plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

Father

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

in the heavens

See how you translated **in the heavens** in [5:16](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 18:15

your brother

Here the term **brother** specifically means fellow believers that are like brothers in a family. If your language uses a different term that is specific in this way, translators should use it. (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**) (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**)

But if your brother sins against you go, reprove him between you and him alone

Jesus uses this expression to introduce an imaginary situation to help explain what to do if a fellow believer sins against you. Use a natural method in your language for introducing an imaginary situation. Alternate translation: "But suppose a fellow believer sins against you. Then you should go to reprove him privately" (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1250)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1250)**)

If he listens to you, you have gained your brother

Jesus uses this expression to introduce an imaginary situation to help explain the importance of reconciling fellow believers. Use a natural method in your language for introducing an imaginary situation. Alternate translation: "Suppose he listens to you. Then you have gained your brother" (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1250)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1250)**)

Matthew 18:16

so that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be verified

Here, **mouth** and **word** both refer to what a person says. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

But if he does not listen, take with you yet one or two {others

Jesus uses this expression to introduce an imaginary situation to help explain what to do if someone who sins against you does not listen to you when you tell them that they sinned against you. Use a natural method in your language for introducing an imaginary situation. Alternate translation: "Suppose they do not listen. Then you should bring one or two other people with you" (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1250)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1250)**)

so that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be verified

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "so that two or three witnesses may verify that what you say about your brother is true" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

take with you yet one or two {others}, so that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be verified

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the first phrase. Alternate translation: "In order that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every accusation might stand, bring one or two people with you" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

Matthew 18:17

But if he refuses to listen to them, speak to the church. But & he also refuses to listen to the church, let him be to you even as the Gentile and the tax collector

Translate the hypothetical phrases **if he refuses to listen to them, speak to the church** and **if he also refuses to listen to the church, let him be to you even as the Gentile and the tax collector** the way that you translated the similar phrase in the previous verse. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1250)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1250)**)

let him be to you even as the Gentile and the tax collector

Here, Jesus is comparing the person who does not listen with a Gentile and a tax collector. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state what this means explicitly. Alternate translation: “treat them as you would treat a Gentile or a tax collector who is not a fellow believer” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

Matthew 18:18

whatever you bind on the earth will be bound in heaven; and whatever you release on the earth will be released in heaven

See how you translated the words **bind** and **release** in [16:19](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 18:19

if two of you

Here, Jesus implies that he means not only **two**, but two or more people. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “if two or more of you” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

it will be done for them by my Father

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “my Father will do it for them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

my Father

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

in the heavens

See how you translated **in the heavens** in [5:16](#) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 18:20

in my name

Jesus is using the phrase **in my name** to mean himself. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “because of me” or “because they belong to me” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 18:21

how often will my brother sin against me and I will forgive him

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the first phrase describes the reason for the second phrase. Alternate translation: “how often will I forgive my brother because he sinned against me” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

my brother

Here the term **brother** specifically means another disciple of Jesus. If your language uses a different term that is specific in this way, translators should use it. (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**) (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**)

Matthew 18:22

77 times

This could mean: (1) 70 times 7. (2) 77 times. Jesus is using this number to mean a number so high that one cannot count. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a very large number used for exaggeration in your language, or you can state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “more times than you can count” (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**) (See: **Numbers (p.1308)**)

Matthew 18:23

the kingdom of the heavens is compared to

The phrase **the kingdom of the heavens may be compared to** introduces a parable. See how you translated a similar parable introduction in [13:24](#). (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

to take up a word together with his slaves

Here, to **settle accounts** means to look at how much each of **his slaves** owes him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “to figure out how much his debtors owed him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 18:24

one debtor of 10,000 talents was brought to him

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “someone brought him a large debtor who owed 10,000 talents to him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

of 10,000 talents

A **talent** was worth about a days wage, so **10,000 talents** would have been an extremely large amount of money. Jesus used this large amount on purpose to show that it was an unpayable amount of debt. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “who owed an unpayable amount of money” (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**)

Matthew 18:25

the master commanded him to be sold, together with his wife and children and everything, as much as he had, and repayment to be made

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language, as demonstrated in the UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**)

Matthew 18:26

So, having fallen down, the slave was bowing down before

In their culture, **bowing down** was a sign of honoring someone of more importance than you. If there is a gesture with similar meaning in your culture, you could consider using it here in your translation. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

have patience

This is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as “please” to make this clear. Alternate translation: “please be patient” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**)

Matthew 18:27

forgave him the debt

Here, **forgave him his debt** is an idiom that means the slave no longer had to pay the debt that he owed the king. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "made it so that the slave did not have to pay his debt" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 18:28

100 denarii

You could try to express this amount in terms of current monetary values, but that might cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate, since those values can change over time. So instead you might state something more general or give the equivalent in wages. Alternate translation: “100 days' wages” (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**)

Matthew 18:29

having fallen down

See how you translated this in [18:26](#). (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Have patience

See how you translated **Have patience** in [18:26](#). (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**)

Matthew 18:30

he threw him into prison

Here, **he threw him into prison** is an idiom that means that he put him in prison. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “he put him in prison” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 18:31

his fellow slaves

Alternate translation: "the other slaves"

they explained to their master

Alternate translation: "they told the king"

Matthew 18:32

Then, having summoned him, his master

Alternate translation: "Then the king called the first slave and"

Matthew 18:33

Was it not necessary for you also to have had mercy on your fellow slave, just as I also had mercy on you

The king uses a question to scold the first slave. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should have had mercy on your fellow slave, just as I also had mercy on you!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 18:34

handed him over

Most likely the king himself did not take the first slave to the torturers. Alternate translation: “ordered his slaves to give the wicked slave over” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

to the torturers

Alternate translation: “to those who would torture him”

that is owed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could state this in active form. Alternate translation: “that the wicked slave owed the king” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 18:35

my heavenly Father

Father is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

to you, & each of you & your

All occurrences of **you** and **your** are plural. Jesus is speaking to his disciples, but this parable teaches a general truth that applies to all believers. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

out of your hearts

Here, **heart** is a metonym for a person's inner being. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

out of your hearts

The phrase **from your heart** is an idiom that means “sincerely.” Alternate translation: “sincerely” or “completely” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 19

Matthew 19 General Notes

Special Concepts in this Chapter

Divorce

Jesus taught about divorce because the Pharisees wanted people to think Jesus' teachings about divorce were wrong ([19:3-12](#)). Jesus talked about what God had first said about marriage when he created it.

Important Figures of Speech in this Chapter

Metonymy

Jesus often says the word "heaven" when he wants his hearers to think of God, who lives in heaven ([1:12](#)).

Matthew 19:1

General Information:

General Information:

Matthew uses this verse to introduce a new event in the story. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

when Jesus had finished these words

The phrase translated **when Jesus had finished these words** at the beginning of this phrase indicates that this event happened after the previous event that the story described. Alternate translation: “after Jesus said all of these things” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

had finished these words

Here, **these words** refers to what Jesus taught starting in [18:1](#). Alternate translation: “had finished teaching these things” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 19:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 19:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 19:4

**Have you not read that the one having made {them} from the beginning
'made them male and female**

Jesus is using the question form to challenge the Pharisees. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You have certainly read that the one having made them from the beginning made them male and female" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 19:5

and said

Here, Jesus quotes a quotation from [Genesis 2:23](#). Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “and Moses wrote what he said, saying” (See: [Quotations and Quote Margins \(p.1346\)](#))

and said, ‘Because of this, a man will leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will be one flesh

This verse is the second part of the rhetorical question that Jesus began in the previous verse. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. (See: [Rhetorical Question \(p.1361\)](#)) (See: [Rhetorical Question \(p.1361\)](#))

and said, ‘Because of this, a man will leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will be one flesh

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “and said that on account of this, a man will leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will be one flesh” (See: [Quotes within Quotes \(p.1354\)](#)) (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations \(p.1195\)](#))

will be joined to his wife

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “will come together with his wife” (See: [Active or Passive \(p.1126\)](#)) (See: [Active or Passive \(p.1126\)](#))

will be joined to his wife

Here, **he will be joined to his wife** is an idiom that could mean (1) a sexual union. Alternate translation: “he will have sexual union with his wife” (2) he will be associated closely with his wife. Alternate translation: “he will live with his wife” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. (See: [Idiom \(p.1255\)](#)) (See: [Idiom \(p.1255\)](#))

the two will be one flesh

Here, two people, a man and woman, are spoken of as if they can become one person. They do not actually become one person, but are so close to each other that it is as if they are one person. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the two will become like one flesh” (See: [Metaphor \(p.1294\)](#)) (See: [Metaphor \(p.1294\)](#))

flesh

Jesus is using the term **flesh** to mean body. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “body” (See: [Metonymy \(p.1302\)](#)) (See: [Metonymy \(p.1302\)](#))

Matthew 19:6

So then, they are no longer two, but one flesh

See how you translated the similar phrase in the previous verse. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

flesh

See how you translated **flesh** in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

man

Although the term **man** is masculine, Jesus is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If you retain the metaphor in your translation, you could say “a person” to indicate this. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

Matthew 19:7

Why then did Moses command {us} to give a certificate of divorce

Moses did not tell the people to divorce their wives, but he gave the men a way to do it if they insisted. This might be confusing to your readers, as it might sound like Moses is telling the people to divorce their wives. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “Why did Moses permit us to give a certificate of divorce” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

a certificate of divorce

A **certificate of divorce** is a document that legally ends a marriage. Your language and culture may have a term for this that you can use in your translation. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 19:8

Because of your hardness of heart, Moses allowed you to divorce your wives

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “Moses permitted you to send away your wives because of your hardness of heart” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

Because of your hardness of heart

The phrase **hardness of heart** is a metaphor that means stubbornness. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Because you are so stubborn” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

from the beginning

Jesus is using the phrase **from the beginning** to mean when God created man and woman. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “when God created man and woman,” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 19:9

whoever

The word **whoever** represents people in general, not one particular person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more natural expression. Alternate translation: “a person who” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and the one having married one that has been divorced commits adultery

If it would appear your language that Jesus was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: “only if someone divorces his wife because she was sexually immoral does he not commit adultery when he marries another woman” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**)

marries another

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “marries another woman” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

and the one having married one that has been divorced commits adultery

Many early texts do not include these words. (See: **Textual Variants (p.1381)**) (See: **Textual Variants (p.1381)**)

Matthew 19:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 19:11

to whom it has been given

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that "God" did it.

Alternate translation: "the ones to whom God has given it" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 19:12

there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “there are eunuchs whom men made eunuchs” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs

This could mean: (1) Jesus is referring to men who have **made themselves eunuchs** by removing their sexual organs, as represented in the UST. (2) Jesus is referring to men who choose to remain unmarried and sexually pure. Alternate translation: “eunuchs who remain unmarried” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

because of the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated **kingdom of the heavens** in [3:2](#). Alternate translation: “in order to serve God, who rules as king from heaven” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 19:13

Then

Connecting Statement:

Matthew is using the word translated **Then** to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

little children were brought to him

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "some people brought little children to him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 19:14

do not forbid

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate the double negative **do not forbid**. Alternate translation: “allow them” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

Permit the little children, and do not forbid them to come to me

The phrases **Permit the little children** and **do not forbid** mean the same thing. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you could combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: “You should allow the little children to come to me” (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

for of the ones such as these is the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated **the kingdom of the heavens** in [19:12](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 19:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 19:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 19:17

Why do you ask me about {what is} good

Jesus is using the question form to challenge the young man. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You should not ask me about what is good!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

One is good

When Jesus says **One is good**, he is referring to God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "God alone is good" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

to enter into life

Here, **to enter into life** is an idiom that means to gain eternal life. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to gain eternal life" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 19:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 19:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 19:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 19:21

to the poor

Jesus is using the adjective **poor** as a noun to mean poor people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "to people who are poor" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

you will have treasure in the heavens

The phrase **treasure in the heavens** is a metaphor that refers to the reward of living with God forever. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

follow me

Jesus is using the term **follow me** to mean "be one of my disciples." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "be one of my disciples" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 19:22

the young man, & the word, went away being grieved, for he was having many possessions

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “the young man ... had many possessions, so he went away being grieved” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 19:23

a rich {person}

Jesus is using the adjective **rich** as a noun to mean rich people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “those who are rich” (See:

Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

will enter difficultly into the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated **the kingdom of the heavens** in [19:12](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 19:24

it is easier for a camel to pass through an eye of a needle than for a rich {person} to enter into the kingdom of God

Jesus says **it is easier for a camel to pass through an eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God** here as a generalization for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: "it would be easier for a large object to pass through a very small hole than for a rich person to enter into the kingdom of God" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

an eye of a needle

Here, **eye of a needle** is referring to the small hole in a needle used for sewing fabric. Your language and culture may have a term for this which you could use in your translation. Or, you can use a general statement. Alternate translation: "a tiny hole" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 19:25

Who then is able to be saved

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that "God" did it.

Alternate translation: "Who then will God save" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 19:26

But

Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “But on the other hand,” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

men

Although the term **men** is masculine, Jesus is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If you retain the metaphor in your translation, you could say “people” to indicate this. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

Matthew 19:27

we left everything

Peter is using the adjective **everything** as a noun to mean all of their possessions. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "everything which belongs to us" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 19:28

in the renewal

Jesus is using the phrase **in the renewal** to mean the time when God will recreate the world without any sin in it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “in the time when God recreates the world with no sin in it,” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

when the Son of Man sits on his throne of glory

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If this would not be natural in your language, you could use the first person form as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

sits on his throne of glory

Jesus is using the term **throne** to mean when he is going to rule as king. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “rules over the world as king” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

also will sit upon 12 thrones

See how you translated “throne” in the previous note. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

the 12 tribes of Israel

Jesus is using the term **tribes** to mean the people who belong to those tribes. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the people who belong to each of the 12 tribes of Israel” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 19:29

for the sake of my name

Jesus is using the term **name** to mean his entire person. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “for my sake” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

will inherit eternal life

Here, to **inherit eternal life** is an idiom that means that God will allow them to live forever with him. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “God will allow them to live forever with him” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 19:30

first & last, & last, first

Jesus is using the terms **first** and **last** to mean people's importance in the world. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

But many first will be last, and last, first

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: "But many whom the world considers most important will be last, and many whom the world considers least important will be first" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 20

Matthew 20 General Notes

Special Concepts in this Chapter

The parable of the landowner and his vineyard

Jesus tells this parable ([20:1-16](#)) to teach his disciples that what God says is right is different from what people say is right.

Matthew 20:1

For the kingdom of the heavens is like

This is the beginning of a parable. See how you translated a similar introduction to a parable in [13:24](#). (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

Matthew 20:2

a denarius for the day

A **denarius** was a coin equal to a day's wage for a laborer. You could try to express this amount in terms of current monetary values, but that might cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate, since those values can change over time. So instead you might state something more general or give the equivalent in wages. Alternate translation: "a day's wage" (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**)

Matthew 20:3

about the third hour

Here, **the third hour** is about 9 o'clock in the morning. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “about 9 o'clock in the morning” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the third hour

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “at hour three” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**)

the marketplace

A **marketplace** is an outdoor area where people buy and sell food and other goods. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the place where people go to buy food” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 20:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 20:5

So they went out

The pronoun **they** refers to the people standing in the marketplace. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: "The people who were standing in the marketplace went to the vineyard" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

about the sixth and ninth hour

The **sixth** hour is around noon. The **ninth** hour is around three in the afternoon. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "about noon and three in the afternoon" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 20:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 20:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 20:8

to his manager

Here, **manager** is referring to a worker who told the other workers what to do. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “his manager, who was in charge of the workers” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

having begun from the last to the first

Here, **last** and **first** are referring to the **workers**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “having begun from the workers who came last and then paying the workers who came first” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 20:9

a denarius

See how you translated **denarius** in [20:2](#). (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**)

Matthew 20:10

a denarius

See how you translated **denarius** in the previous verse. (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**)

Matthew 20:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 20:12

the ones having borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat

Here, **the ones having borne the burden** is an idiom that means those who did the most work. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the ones having done the most work for the day in the intense heat” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 20:13

Did you not agree with me for a denarius

The landowner is using the question form to challenge the workers who are grumbling against him. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You certainly agreed with me for a denarius!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 20:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 20:15

Or is it not lawful for me to do what I desire with {what is} mine

The landowner is using the question form to challenge the workers. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "It is surely lawful for me to do what I desire with my money!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Or is your eye evil because I am good

The landowner is using the question form to challenge the workers. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "Your eye is certainly evil because I am good!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 20:16

In the same way, the last will be first, and the first last

See how you translated a similar verse in [19:30](#).

In the same way, the last will be first

Here the parable has ended and Jesus is speaking. Alternate translation: “Then Jesus said, ‘In the same way, the last will be first’”

Matthew 20:17

going up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem is on top of a hill, so people had to travel **up** to get there. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “going up the hill to Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 20:18

we are going up

Jesus is using the pronoun **we** to refer to himself and the disciples, so use the inclusive form of that word if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**)

the Son of Man will be handed over

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "someone will hand the Son of Man over" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the Son of Man & him

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If this would not be natural in your language, you could use the first person form. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man ... me" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

to death

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **death**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form. Alternate translation: "to die" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 20:19

him & to crucify him. & he will be raised up

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If this would not be natural in your language, you could use the first person form. Alternate translation: “me ... to crucify me ... I will be raised up” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

to whip

Here, to **flog** is to whip someone as a form of torture. Your language and culture may have a term for this which you could use in your translation. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

on the third day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “three days later” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**)

he will be raised up

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that “God” did it. Alternate translation: “God will raise him up” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 20:20

Then

The word translated **Then** at the beginning of this phrase indicates that this event happened after the previous event that the story described. Alternate translation: “After this” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

Matthew 20:21

Say

This is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as “please” to make this clear. Alternate translation: “Please tell me” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**)

one at your right hand and one at your left hand

Jesus is using the phrases **at your right hand** and **at your left hand** to mean places of power. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “holding in places of power” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

in your kingdom

Jesus is using the term **kingdom** to mean when Jesus rules as king. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “when you rule as a king over the world” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 20:22

You do not know

You is plural and refers to the mother and the sons. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

Are you able

Here, **you** is plural, but Jesus is only talking to the two sons. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

to drink the cup that I am about to drink

Here, **to drink the cup that I am about to drink** is an idiom that means to suffer as Jesus will suffer. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to suffer in the way that I am about to suffer” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

They say

The pronoun **They** refers to the son of Zebedee. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “The sons of Zebedee say” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

We are able

By **We**, the sons of Zebedee mean themselves, but not their mother, so use the exclusive form of that word in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1221)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1221)**)

Matthew 20:23

My cup you will drink

Here, **My cup you will drink** is an idiom that means they will suffer in the same way that Jesus will suffer. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “You will suffer just as I will suffer” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

right hand & my left hand

See how you translated this in [20:21](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

but

Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “but rather” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

for whom it has been prepared by my Father

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that “God” did it. Alternate translation: “to the ones that God, my Father, prepared” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

my Father

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 20:24

were very angry with the two brothers

The other ten disciples were angry at the two disciples because they also wanted to be most powerful when Jesus ruled as king. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “were very angry with the two because they likewise wanted to be the most important people when Jesus would rule as king” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 20:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 20:26

Instead

Jesus is comparing what the rulers of the world do with what the disciples should do. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “Rather” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p. 1162)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

Matthew 20:27

to be first

Jesus is using the adjective **first** as a noun to mean people who think they are most important. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “to be most important” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

will be your slave

Jesus is using the term **servant** to mean a person who takes the humblest position among the Christian community. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “will serve all of you” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 20:28

the Son of Man & his life

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If this would not be natural in your language, you could use the first person form. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man ... my life" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1225)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

did not come to be served

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "did not come for people to serve him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1123)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

but to serve

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: "but he came to serve" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1210)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

but

Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: "but rather" (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1160)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1162)**)

and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many

Jesus' **life** being a **ransom** is a metaphor for his being punished in order to set people free from themselves taking the punishment for their own sins. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to give his life as a substitute to set many free" (See: **Metaphor (p.1288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

and to give his life

Here, **to give his life** is an idiom that means to die. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "and to die" (See: **Idiom (p.1253)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 20:29

as} they were going out

The pronoun **they** refers to Jesus and his disciples. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “as Jesus and his disciples were proceeding” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1337)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

Matthew 20:30

Son of David

The blind men are using the term **Son** to mean Descendent. This is a title for the Messiah. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Descendent of King David” (See: **Metonymy (p.1300)**) (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**)

Matthew 20:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 20:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 20:33

Lord, that our eyes might be opened

Here, the word **opened** means made able to see. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Lord, that we might see with our eyes" (See: **Metaphor (p.1288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

that our eyes might be opened

The blind men are leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from the previous verse if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: "we desire that our eyes might be opened" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1210)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 20:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 21

Matthew 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 21:5,16 and 42, which is quoted from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The donkey and the colt

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an animal. In this way he was like a king who came into a city after he had won an important battle. Also, the kings of Israel in the Old Testament rode on a donkeys. Other kings rode on horses. So Jesus was showing that he was the king of Israel and that he was not like other kings.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about this event. Matthew and Mark wrote that the disciples brought Jesus a donkey. John wrote that Jesus found a donkey. Luke wrote that they brought him a colt. Only Matthew wrote that there was both a donkey and a colt. No one knows for sure whether Jesus rode the donkey or the colt. It is best to translate each of these accounts as it appears in the ULT without trying to make them all say exactly the same thing. (See: [Matthew 21:1-7](#) and [Mark 11:1-7](#) and [Luke 19:29-36](#) and [John 12:14-15](#))

Hosanna

This is what the people shouted to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem. This word meant “Save us,” but people used it to praise God.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“The kingdom of God will be taken away from you”

No one knows for sure what this phrase means. No one knows if Jesus meant that God would someday give the kingdom back or not.

Matthew 21:1

when

Matthew is using the word translated **when** to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1263)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Bethphage

Bethphage is the name of a village that was near Jerusalem. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

the Mount of Olives

The **Mount of Olives** is the name of a mountain near the city of Jerusalem. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

Matthew 21:2

a donkey tied up

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “a donkey that a person has tied up” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1123)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**)

tied up

The donkey was **tied up** to a wooden post in the ground. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “tied up to a post” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1134)**)

a colt

Here, **a colt** is a young donkey. Your language and culture may have a term for this that you can use in your translation. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1383)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1386)**)

Matthew 21:3

And if anyone says anything to you, you will say, 'The Lord has need of them

Jesus is describing a hypothetical situation in order to tell his disciples what they should do if it takes place.

Alternate translation: "Now suppose someone says something to you. Then you should say, 'The Lord has need of them'" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1173)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**)

you will say, 'The Lord has need of them

If your language would not use a second direct quotation inside a first direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "you should say that the Lord has need of them" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1351)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

The Lord

The disciples are to refer to Jesus by a respectful title. Use a form for addressing someone respectfully in your language. Alternate translation: "the Lord Jesus" (See: **Politeness (p.1324)**) (See: **Politeness (p.1324)**)

Matthew 21:4

so that {what} was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled

See how you translated a similar phrase in [4:14](#). (See: **Active or Passive (p.1123)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

through the prophet

Here, the **prophet** whom Matthew is speaking about is Zechariah. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “through the prophet Zechariah” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “and this is what he said:” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1344)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

Matthew 21:5

the daughter of Zion

The prophet is using the phrase **daughter of Zion** to mean the people who live in the city of Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the people who live in the city of Jerusalem” (See: **Metaphor (p.1288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

a colt

See how you translated **colt** in 21:2. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

on a colt, a son of a beast of burden

Here, the **colt** and the **foal of a beast of burden** are referring to the same animal. The second phrase is describing more about the **colt**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “on a colt, which is a foal of a beast of burden” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

a son of a beast of burden

Here, a **foal** is the offspring of donkey. A **beast of burden** is an animal that pulls heavy objects and works. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the offspring of a large working animal” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1383)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 21:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 21:7

cloaks

See how you translated "cloak" in [9:20](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1383)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 21:8

crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and were spreading {them} on the road

The crowd did these things, which are usually done for a king, to show honor to Jesus. If there is a gesture with similar meaning in your culture, you could consider using it here in your translation. (See: **Symbolic Action (p. 1370)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Matthew 21:9

Hosanna & Hosanna

Hosanna is a word borrowed from Hebrew. You will need to decide if you will also borrow this word into your language or if you will translate the meaning. Either approach has broad support. If you borrow the word, you can spell it the way it sounds in your language and then put the translation in a footnote. Alternative translation: "Praise ... Praise" (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1191)**) (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1193)**)

to the Son of David

See how you translated **Son of David** in [20:30](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

in the name of the Lord

The people are using the term **in the name of the Lord** to mean one who comes representing God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "representing God" (See: **Metonymy (p.1300)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Hosanna in the highest

The people are using the phrase **in the highest places** to refer to God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Hosanna to God" (See: **Metonymy (p.1300)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 21:10

the whole city was shaken, saying

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “this stirred the whole city, and its people said” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the whole city was shaken

Matthew is using the term **city** to mean the people who live in that city. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the people who lived in the city were stirred” (See: **Metonymy (p.1300)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 21:11

Nazareth of Galilee

Here, the possessive form tells the reader that **Nazareth** is a town in the region of **Galilee**. Alternate translation: "Nazareth, which is in Galilee" (See: **Possession (p.1327)**) (See: **Possession (p.1330)**)

Matthew 21:12

Jesus entered into the temple

Jesus did not enter the actual **temple**. He entered the courtyard around the temple. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus entered the courtyard around the temple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the ones selling and buying

Merchants were **selling** animals and other items so that travelers could buy them and offer the proper sacrifices at the temple. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "the one buying and selling things for temple sacrifices" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 21:13

It has been written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that "God" did it. Alternate translation: "God said in the Scriptures" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1123)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

It has been written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a 'den of robbers'

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: "It has been written that God's temple would be called a place of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

My house will be called

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "People will call my house" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

My house

God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, refers to his temple as his house because his presence is there. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "My temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

a house of prayer

God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, refers to a place where people would pray as **a house of prayer**. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "a place where people can pray to me" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

a 'den of robbers'

God, speaking through the prophet Jeremiah, refers to a place where thieves would gather to hide and plot their crimes as if it were a wild animal's den or lair. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "a place where thieves gather" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 21:14

the blind and the lame

Matthew is using the adjectives **blind** and **lame** as nouns to mean certain kinds of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate these words with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: “people who were blind and people who were lame” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

the lame

See how you translated **lame** in [11:5](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1383)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 21:15

the marvelous things

This phrase refers implicitly to Jesus healing the blind and lame people in [21:14](#). Alternate translation: “the miracles” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Hosanna

See how you translated **Hosanna*** in [21:9](#). (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1191)**) (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1193)**)

to the Son of David

Jesus was not David’s literal son, so this may be translated as “descendant of king David.” However, “Son of David” is also a title for the Messiah, and the children were probably calling Jesus by this title. See how you translated this in [21:9](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

became very angry

It is implied that they were **very angry** because they did not believe Jesus was the Christ and they did not want other people praising him. Alternate translation: “they became very angry because people were praising him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 21:16

Do you hear what these are saying

The chief priests and scribes ask this question to rebuke Jesus because they are angry with him. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not allow them to say these things about you!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Yes! Have you never read, From the mouths of little children and nursing infants you have prepared praise

Jesus asks this question to remind the chief priests and scribes of what they had studied in the scriptures. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "I hear them, but you should remember what you read in the Scriptures, 'From the mouths of little children and nursing infants you have prepared praise.'" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

From the mouths of little children and nursing infants you have prepared praise

From the mouths refers to speaking. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "You caused little children and nursing infants to speak in praise of God" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Have you never read, From the mouths of little children and nursing infants you have prepared praise

If your language would not use a second direct quotation inside a first direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Have you not read that God said that from the mouths of infants and young children he would prepare praise" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1351)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Matthew 21:17

Bethany

The word **Bethany** is the name of a village near Jerusalem. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

Matthew 21:18

Now

Matthew is using the word translated **Now** to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1263)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Matthew 21:19

he went

In a context such as this, your language might say “came” instead of **went**. Alternate translation: “he came” (See: **Go and Come (p.1232)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1234)**)

found nothing on it except leaves only

If it would in appear your language that Matthew was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: “found only leaves on it” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1164)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**)

Matthew 21:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 21:21

if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do {what was} of the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and be thrown into the sea,' it will happen

Jesus uses this expression to introduce an imaginary situation to help explain what they could do if they had faith in God. Use a natural method in your language for introducing an imaginary situation. Alternate translation: "suppose you have faith and do not doubt. Then you will not only do what I did to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and be thrown into the sea,' it will happen" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**)

if you have faith and do not doubt

Jesus expresses the same idea both positively and negatively to emphasize that this faith must be genuine. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: "if you truly believe" (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**)

do not doubt

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative word **doubt**. Alternate translation: "believe" (See: **Double Negatives (p.1197)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

you will not only do {what was} of the fig tree

The phrase **what was of the fig tree** is referring to what Jesus did to the fig tree. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "you will not only be able to do what I did to the fig tree" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

also if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and be thrown into the sea,' it will happen

If your language would not use a second direct quotation inside a first direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "you will even be able to tell this mountain to be taken up and be thrown into the sea, and it will happen" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1351)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Be taken up and be thrown into the sea

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Get up and throw yourself into the sea" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1123)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 21:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 21:23

when} he had come into the temple

Matthew is using **temple** to represent the temple courtyard. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “when he had come into the courtyard of the temple” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1377)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

when} he had come into the temple

Your language may say “gone” rather than **come** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: “when he had gone into the temple” (See: **Go and Come (p.1232)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1234)**)

By what authority do you do these things, and who gave you this authority

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **authority**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form. Alternate translation: “who authorized you to do these things, and who authorized you in this way” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1119)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

do you do these things

Here, **these things** refers to Jesus teaching in the temple. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “teach these things” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 21:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 21:25

From heaven

In order to honor the commandment not to misuse God's name, Jewish people often avoided saying the word "God" and used the word **heaven** to represent God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "from God" (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

from men

Here, Jesus is using the term **men** in a generic sense that includes all people. If you retain the metaphor in your translation, you could say "people" to indicate this. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1393)**) Alternate translation: "people" or "humans" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'For what {reason} then did you not believe him

If your language would not use a second direct quotation inside a first direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "If we say that we believe John received his authority from heaven, then Jesus will ask us why we did not believe John." (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'For what {reason} then did you not believe him

The Jewish leaders are describing a hypothetical situation. Use the natural form in your language for expressing a hypothetical situation. Alternate translation: "Suppose we say, 'From heaven.' Then he will ask, 'Then why did you not believe him'" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**)

For what {reason} then did you not believe him

Jesus is using the question form to challenge the religious leaders. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You should have believed John the Baptist" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 21:26

But if we say, 'From men

If your language would not use a second direct quotation inside a first direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "But if we say that we believe John received his authority from men" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1351)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the crowd, for they all regard John as a prophet

The religious leaders uses this expression to introduce an imaginary situation to help explain what would happen if they said that John's authority was from man.. Use a natural method in your language for introducing an imaginary situation. Alternate translation: "Suppose we say 'from men'. Then we fear the crowd, because they all regard John as a prophet" (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1247)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1250)**)

for they all regard John as a prophet

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Because they all regard John as a prophet, we fear the crowd" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1177)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

all

The chief priests and elders say **all** here as a generalization for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: "generally" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

Matthew 21:27

by what authority I do these things

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **authority**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “who authorized me to do these things” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 21:28

But what do you think

To the religious leaders, Jesus tells a story. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly.

Alternate translation: "But what do you think about this story I am about to tell you?" (See: **Parables (p.1315)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

But what do you think

Jesus is using the question form to challenge the religious leaders. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You should consider what I am about to say!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1357)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

having approached

Your language may say "come" rather than gone in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: "having come to" (See: **Go and Come (p.1232)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1234)**)

Matthew 21:29

having changed his mind

This refers to the son reconsidering his thoughts and deciding to act differently from how he had said he would act. Alternate translation: “having reconsidered” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

but afterward

The word translated **afterward** at the beginning of this phrase indicates that this event happened after the previous event that the story described. Alternate translation: “But later, after this,” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1181)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

Matthew 21:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 21:31

the tax collectors and the prostitutes enter into the kingdom of God before you

Jesus is using the phrase **the kingdom of God** to mean God ruling over people as a king. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly as demonstrated in the UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.1300)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 21:32

John came to you

Here, **you** is plural and refers to all the people of Israel, not just the religious leaders. Alternate translation: “John came to all of you people of Israel” (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

in the way of righteousness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **righteousness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “teaching you what is right” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

you did not believe him

Here, **you** is plural and refers to the religious leaders, so use the plural form in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

Matthew 21:33

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement: To rebuke the religious leaders and illustrate their unbelief, Jesus tells a parable about rebellious servants. (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

a master of a house

Alternate translation: "a person who owned a piece of property"

a hedge

Alternate translation: "a wall" or "a fence made of bushes"

dug a winepress in it

Alternate translation: "dug a hole in the vineyard in which to press the grapes"

rented it out to farmers

This was an arrangement known as sharecropping. The owner still owned the vineyard, but he allowed the **vine growers** to take care of it. When the grapes became ripe, they were to give some of them to the owner and keep the rest. Be sure that this is clear in your translation if your readers would not be familiar with this kind of arrangement. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

ἐξέβαλον ἔξω τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος

Jesus likely does not mean that the farmers literally **threw** the son out of the vineyard. It is unlikely that they actually picked him up and heaved him through the air. Alternate translation: "they seized him and forced him out of the vineyard" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 21:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 21:35

his servants

The pronoun **his** refers to the landowner. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the landowner’s servants” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

Matthew 21:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 21:37

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 21:38

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 21:39

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 21:40

Therefore

The word **Therefore** indicates that what follows is the result of what has happened in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “As a result” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

Matthew 21:41

They say to him

Matthew does not make specify who answered Jesus, but it seems implicitly from the context that it was the chief priests and elders. Alternate translation: "The chief priests and elders replied to Jesus" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 21:42

A stone that the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner. This came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes

Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that God will honor the one whom the religious leaders reject.

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement: Here Jesus begins to explain the parable of the rebellious servants.

Jesus says to them

It is unclear to whom Jesus asks the following question. If you need to make **them** explicit, use the same audience as you did in 21:41. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Did you never read in the Scriptures, A stone that the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner. This came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes

Jesus uses a question to make his audience think deeply about what this scripture means. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "Think about what you have read in the Scriptures, 'A stone that the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner. This was from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes.'" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

A stone that the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner

Jesus is quoting from the Psalms. This is a metaphor that means the religious leaders, like builders, will reject Jesus, but God will make him the most important in his kingdom, like the cornerstone in a building. Since this is a quotation from Scripture, we recommend that you translate the words directly rather than providing a non-figurative explanation of them, even if your language does not customarily use such figures of speech. If you want to explain the meaning of the metaphor, we recommend that you do that in a footnote rather than in the Bible text. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

has become the head of the corner

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "is now the cornerstone" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

This came about from the Lord

Alternate translation: "The Lord has caused this great change"

it is marvelous in our eyes

Here, **in our eyes** refers to seeing. Alternate translation: "it is wonderful to see" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 21:43

I say to you

This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next. Alternate translation: "I can assure you" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

to you

Here, **you** is plural, so use the plural form in your translation if your language marks that distinction. Jesus was speaking to the religious leaders who had rejected him. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a nation

Here, **kingdom of God** refers to God's rule as king. If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God will reject you and he will be king over people from other nations" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a nation

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God will take his kingdom away from you and will give it to a nation" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

producing its fruits

Here, **fruits** is a metaphor for "results" or "outcomes." Alternate translation: "that produces good results" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 21:44

the one having fallen on this stone will be broken to pieces

Here, **this stone** is the same stone as in [21:42](#). This is a metaphor that means the Christ will destroy anyone who rebels against him. Since Jesus is referring here to his earlier quotation from Scripture, we recommend that you translate the words directly rather than providing a non-figurative explanation of them, even if your language does not customarily use such figures of speech. If you want to explain the meaning of the imagery, we recommend that you do that in a footnote rather than in the Bible text. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the one having fallen on this stone will be broken to pieces

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the stone will break into pieces anyone who falls on it” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 21:45

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement: The religious leaders react to the parable that Jesus told.

his parables

The pronoun **his** refers to Jesus. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “these parables that Jesus told” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

Matthew 21:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 22

Matthew 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in verse 44, which is quoted from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Wedding Feast

In the parable of the wedding feast ([Matthew 22:1-14](#)), Jesus taught that when God offers to save a person, that person needs to accept the offer. Jesus spoke of life with God as a feast that a king prepared for his son who had just gotten married. In addition, Jesus emphasized that not everyone whom God invites will properly prepare himself to come to the feast. God will throw such people out from the feast.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Implicit information

Speakers usually do not say things that they think their hearers already understand. When the king in the parable says, "My oxen and fattened calves have been killed" ([Matthew 22:4](#)), he assumes that the hearers will understand that those who had killed the animals had also cooked them.

Paradox

A paradox is a statement that describes two things that seemingly cannot both be true at the same time. To the Jews, ancestors were greater than their descendants. But in one psalm David calls one of his descendants "Lord." Jesus tells the Jewish leaders that this is a paradox, asking, "If David then calls the Christ 'Lord,' how is he David's son?" ([22:45](#)).

Matthew 22:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 22:2

The kingdom of the heavens is compared to

See how you translated **The kingdom of the heavens is like** in [13:24](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1300)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 22:3

the ones having been invited

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that the “king” did it. Alternate translation: “the ones whom the king invited” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1123)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**)

Matthew 22:4

servants, saying, 'Say to the ones having been invited

See how you translated **the ones who have been invited** in the previous verse. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

servants, saying, 'Say to the ones having been invited

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "servants, commanding them to tell the ones who had been invited" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1351)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

I have prepared my dinner

The king did not kill **prepare** the **dinner** himself. The implication is that his **servants** did that. Alternate translation: "my servants have prepared my dinner" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**)

My bulls and fattened calves have been killed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that "my servants" did it. Alternate translation: "My servants have killed my oxen and fattened calves" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1123)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

My bulls and fattened calves have been killed

Here, **have been killed** means that they have been both slaughtered and prepared to eat. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "My oxen and fattened calves have been prepared to eat" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 22:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 22:6

mistreated and killed {them

This does not mean that the **others** both **mistreated** and **killed** the same servants. Rather, some of them mistreated some of the servants, while others killed other servants. You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “mistreated some of the servants and killed others” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 22:7

the king became angry

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “this provoked the king” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

he destroyed those murderers

The king did not kill **those murderers** himself. The implication is that **his soldiers** did it. Alternate translation: “his soldiers killed those murderers” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 22:8

the ones having been invited

See how you translated **the ones who had been invited** in [22:4](#). (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 22:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 22:10

both evil and good

Jesus is using the adjectives **evil** and **good** as nouns to mean certain kinds of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate these words with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: “both evil people and good people” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

all whom they found, both evil and good

Jesus says the words **evil** and **good** to show that they invited everyone who was there. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “all of the people whom they found there” (See: **Merism (p.1284)**) (See: **Merism (p.1286)**)

the wedding was filled {with those} reclining to eat

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “those reclining to eat filled the wedding hall” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1123)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the wedding

A **wedding hall** was a large room where weddings were performed. Your language and culture may have a term for this that you can use in your translation. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1383)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 22:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 22:12

how did you come in here, not having wedding clothes

The king uses a question to scold the guest. If it would be helpful to your readers, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: “you are not wearing proper clothes for a wedding. You should not be here.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 22:13

Then

The word translated **Then** at the beginning of this phrase indicates that this event happened after the previous event that the story described. Alternate translation: “After this,” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1181)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

Having bound his feet and hands

When the king commands his servants to bind this man **foot and hand**, this does not mean that he wants them to tie the man’s feet to his hands. Rather, this is an idiom that means to bind his hands together and his feet together. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “After you bind his hands together and his feet together” (See: **Idiom (p.1253)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the outer darkness

See how you translated this in 8:12. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

weeping and grinding of the teeth

See how you translated this in 8:12. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Matthew 22:14

For many are called, but few chosen

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Matthew implies that God did it.

Alternate translation: "For God invites many people to be with him forever, but he only chooses a few" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1123)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

For

If the connection between this statement and the previous one is not clear, you may want to use a connecting word to show how this statement relates to what came before it. Use a natural form in your language for connecting this statement to the previous one. Alternate translation: "So in the same way as this" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1187)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1187)**)

Matthew 22:15

Then

The word translated **Then** at the beginning of this phrase indicates that this event happened after the previous event that the story described. Alternate translation: "After this," (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1181)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

how they might entrap him in word

Matthew is speaking as if the Pharisees literally wanted to catch Jesus in a trap or **entrap** him. He means that they wanted to get Jesus to say or do something that would allow them to accuse him of doing wrong. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "how they might cause him to say something that would allow them to accuse him of doing wrong" (See: **Metaphor (p.1288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

in word

Matthew is using the term **word** to mean something that Jesus might say by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "by something he said" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 22:16

their disciples with the Herodians

The **disciples** of the Pharisees supported paying taxes only to Jewish authorities. The **Herodians** supported paying taxes to the Roman government. It is implied that the Pharisees believed that no matter what Jesus said, he would offend one of these groups. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “their disciples, who paid taxes only to the temple, along with the Herodians, who paid taxes to the Roman government” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Herodians

Herodians is the name of a group of people who supported the ruler Herod Antipas. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly, as modeled by the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Teacher

The Pharisees and Herodians are addressing to Jesus by a respectful title. Your language and culture may have a comparable title that you can use in your translation, here and in verse 24. (See: **Politeness (p.1324)**) (See: **Politeness (p.1324)**)

in truth

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **truth**, you could express the same idea with an adjective such as “truthfully.” Alternate translation: “truthfully” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1119)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

οὐ & βλέπεις εἰς πρόσωπον ἀνθρώπων

Here, **you do not look at the face of men** is an idiom that means that before you speak, you do not consider what others might think about what you say. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you do not worry what others will think of what you have to say” (See: **Idiom (p.1253)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 22:17

to Caesar

The religious leaders are using the term **Caesar** to mean the roman government. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to the Roman government” (See: **Metonymy (p.1300)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 22:18

Why are you testing me, hypocrites

Jesus is using the question form to challenge the religious leaders. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You certainly should not test me, you hypocrites!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1357)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 22:19

a denarius

The **denarius** was a Roman coin worth one day's wages. You could try to express this amount in terms of current monetary values, but that might cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate, since those values can change over time. So instead you might state something more general or give the equivalent in wages. Alternate translation: "a coin worth one day's wages" (See: **Biblical Money (p.1147)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**)

Matthew 22:20

to them

The pronoun **them** refers to the Herodians and the disciples of the Pharisees. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “to the Herodians and the disciples of the Pharisees” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1337)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

Matthew 22:21

and the things of God to God

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “and give to God the things of God” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 22:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 22:23

On that day

The phrase translated **On that day** at the beginning of this phrase indicates that this event happened later that same day, after the previous event that the story described. Alternate translation: "Later that same day" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1181)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

Matthew 22:24

Teacher, Moses said, 'If someone dies

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

his brother will marry his wife and will raise up

Moses is using a future statement to give a command. Alternate translation: "his brother must marry his wife and must raise up" (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1368)**) (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1368)**)

seed

The term **seed** means "offspring." It is a word picture. Just as plants produce seeds that grow into many more plants, so people can have many offspring. If it would help your readers to understand what seed means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternate translation: "offspring" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 22:25

the first

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use a cardinal number here. Alternate translation: “brother number one” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**)

the first

Jesus is using the adjective **first** as a noun in order to indicate a particular person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could specify the person. Alternate translation: “the first brother” or “the oldest brother” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1250)**)

Matthew 22:26

the second & the third, & the seven

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “the next oldest ... the next oldest ... the youngest” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**)

the second & the third, & the seven

The Sadducees are using the adjectives **second**, **third** and **seventh** as a noun in order to indicate a particular person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could specify the person. Alternate translation: “the second brother ... the third brother ... the seventh brother” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 22:27

last of all

The Sadducees are using the adjective **all** as a noun in order to indicate a particular group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could specify the people. Alternate translation: “all these people we have told you about” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 22:28

in the resurrection

The Sadducees did not actually believe that there would be a resurrection. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this explicitly. Alternate translation: “in the supposed resurrection” or “when people supposedly rise from the dead” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

of the seven

The Sadducees are using the adjective **seven** as a noun to mean the seven brothers. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “the seven brothers” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1304)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 22:29

You are being led astray

Jesus is speaking as if the Sadducees have literally been **led astray** or conducted down the wrong path. He means that they have been deceived. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "You have been deceived" (See: **Metaphor (p.1288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

You are being led astray

Jesus is saying that they have been **led stray** specifically about the resurrection. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "You have been led astray not to believe in the resurrection of the dead" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

You are being led astray

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Someone has led you astray" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the power of God

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **power**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form. Alternate translation: "what God is able to do" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1119)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 22:30

in the resurrection

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **resurrection**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “when dead people rise back to life” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

they neither marry & they are

Both uses of the pronoun **they** refer to men and women in general. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify this in your translation. Alternate translation: “men and women neither marry ... men and women are” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

nor are given in marriage

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “nor do people give their children in marriage” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 22:31

But concerning the resurrection of the dead

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **resurrection**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "But concerning what happens when people who have died become alive again" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

of the dead

Jesus is using the adjective **dead** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "people who have died" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

have you not read {what} was spoken to you by God, saying

This is the first part of a rhetorical question that continues into the next verse. Jesus scolds the Sadducees by asking a question. He is not looking for an answer. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "I know you have read what was spoken to you by God. You know that he said" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

what} was spoken to you by God

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "what God spoke to you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 22:32

I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation, with no comma at the end of verse 31: “that he was the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1351)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

of the dead, & of the living

Jesus is using the adjective **dead** and the participle **living** as nouns to mean certain kinds of people. Your language may use adjectives and participles in the same way. If not, you can translate these words with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: “of dead people ... of living people” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

He is not a God of the dead, but of the living

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “he is not the God of the dead, but he is the God of the living” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1210)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 22:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 22:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 22:35

And one of them, a lawyer, questioned {him}, testing him

Matthew is using this verse to introduce **a lawyer** as a new participant in the story. If your language has its own way of introducing new participants, you can use it here in your translation. Alternate translation: "Now one of the Sadducees was a lawyer. He asked Jesus a question in order to test him" (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1269)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1272)**)

Matthew 22:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 22:37

with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole mind

The phrases **with all your heart**, **with all your soul** and **with all your mind** mean similar things. Moses, whom Jesus is quoting, may have been using the three phrases together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “completely” or “with your whole being” (See: **Doublet (p.1203)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**)

with your whole heart, and with your whole soul

Here, **heart** and **soul** are metonyms for a person’s inner being. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “with all your desires, and with all your feelings” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 22:38

the great and first commandment

The terms **greatest** and **first** mean similar things. Jesus may be using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “very greatest” (See: **Doublet (p.1203)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**)

Matthew 22:39

a second

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “a second commandment” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1210)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 22:40

the whole Law and the Prophets

Jesus is two of the main parts of the Scriptures, the **Law** and the **Prophets** to mean all of the Scriptures. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “all of the Scriptures” (See: **Merism (p.1284)**) (See: **Merism (p.1286)**)

On these two commandments are hung the whole Law and the Prophets

Here, Jesus is speaking of the Law and the Prophets as if they were something that a person would **hang** on the **two commandments** that he previously mentioned. This means that the Law and the Prophets are summarized by these two laws. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the whole Law and the Prophets are summarized by these two laws” (See: **Metaphor (p.1288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 22:41

Now

Matthew is using the word translated **Now** to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1263)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

συνηγμένων

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “having gathered together” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **[[σ Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 22:42

son

Jesus is not asking whose literal son the **Christ** is. Jesus is using the term **son** to mean “descendant.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “descendant” (See: **Metaphor (p. 1288)**) (See: **Metaphor (p. 1294)**)

David's

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “He is a son of David” (See: **Ellipsis (p. 1210)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p. 1207)**)

Matthew 22:43

How then does David in the Spirit call him 'Lord

Jesus begins to ask a question to make the religious leaders think deeply about the Psalm he is about to quote. The question continues into the next verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "Tell me, then, why David in the Spirit calls him Lord, saying" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

David in the Spirit

Here, **in the Spirit** is an idiom that means that David was prompted by the Holy Spirit to write the quote in the next verse. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "David, prompted by the Spirit," (See: **Idiom (p.1253)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: "when he said this:" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1344)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

Matthew 22:44

to my Lord

Here, **Lord** refers to the Messiah. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “my Lord, the Messiah” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

my right hand

David is using the adjective **right** as a noun to mean a particular place. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “my right side” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/ figs-nominaladj]])

Sit at my right hand

To sit at the **right** side of God is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: “Sit in the place of honor beside me” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

until I put your enemies under your feet

Here, to **put** the Messiah’s **enemies under** his **feet** means to make his enemies subordinate to him. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “until I might make your enemies subordinate to you” (See: **Idiom (p.1253)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 22:45

If David therefore calls him 'Lord,' how is he his son

Jesus is using the question form to challenge the religious leaders. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "David would not call him 'Lord' if he were only his son!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1357)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 22:46

no one was able to answer him a word

Matthew is using the term **word** to mean something that one of Jesus' listeners might have said by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "no one was able to say anything to him in response" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 23

Matthew 23 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Hypocrites

Jesus calls the Pharisees “hypocrites” many times in verses 13–29. He carefully explains why he calls them that. The Pharisees made rules that no one could actually obey, and then they persuaded the ordinary people that they were guilty because they could not obey those rules. Also, the Pharisees obeyed their own rules instead of obeying God’s original commands in the law of Moses.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Name-calling

In most cultures, it is wrong to insult people. The Pharisees took many of the words in this chapter as insults. Jesus called them “hypocrites,” “blind guides,” “fools,” and “serpents.” But Jesus used these words not as insults but as warnings that God would surely punish the Pharisees because they were doing wrong.

Paradox

A paradox is a statement that describes two things that seemingly cannot both be true at the same time. Jesus uses a paradox when he says, “He who is greatest among you will be your servant” ([23:11-12](#)).

Matthew 23:1

Then

The word translated **Then** at the beginning of this phrase indicates that this event happened after the previous event that the story described. Alternate translation: "After this," (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

Matthew 23:2

sat in the seat of Moses

Jesus is using the phrase **seat of Moses** to mean having the authority that Moses had. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “have the authority that Moses had” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 23:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 23:4

And they tie up loads, heavy and difficult to carry, and they put {them} on the shoulders of men, but they themselves are not willing with their finger to move them

Jesus is speaking as if the Pharisees were literally putting **loads, heavy and difficult to carry** on people's **shoulders**. He means that they are making people try to obey many difficult laws. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could express the meaning as a comparison. Alternate translation: "They make you obey many difficult laws as if they were binding up heavy loads and putting them on your shoulders. But they do not obey the same laws, and so it is as if they are not helping to carry those loads" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 23:5

to be seen by men

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “in order for men to see them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

by men

Although the term **men** is masculine, Jesus is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: “by people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

phylacteries

The term **phylacteries** describes small leather boxes containing papers with scriptures written on them. If it would be helpful, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “devotional boxes containing scriptures” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

their tassels

Here, **tassels** refers to decorative fringes that Jewish men would attach to the hems of their robes to show that they were devoted to God. Your language and culture may have a term for this igdm that you can use in your translation. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 23:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 23:7

to be called 'Rabbi' by men

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "to have men call them 'Rabbi'" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

by men

See how you translated **men** in [23:5](#). (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

Matthew 23:8

But you should not be called

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "But you should not have people call you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

But you should not be called 'Rabbi,' for one is your teacher, and you are all brothers

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Since your teacher is one, and since you are all brothers, you should not be called 'Rabbi'" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

one is your teacher

Jesus is using the adjective **one** as a noun to mean one person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "one person is your teacher" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

you are & brothers

Here, Jesus says **brothers** to be mean fellow believers. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "you are all fellow believers" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 23:9

you should not call {anyone} on the earth your father, for one is your heavenly Father

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “Since you have one heavenly father, you should not call any of you on the earth ‘father’” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

you should not call {anyone} on the earth & father, & your

Jesus says **you should not call any of you on the earth ‘father’** here as a generalization for emphasis. He is not saying that you cannot call your biological father ‘father’, but he is saying that you cannot use father as a title to honor someone. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: “you should not call someone ‘father’ as a title to honor him” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.1243)**)

your & one is & heavenly Father

See how you translated **one** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “one person is your heavenly Father” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

heavenly Father

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 23:10

And you should not be called 'teacher,' for your teacher is one, the Christ

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "since your teacher is one, the Christ, you should not be called 'teacher'" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

And you should not be called

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "you should not have people call you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

your teacher is one, the Christ

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If this would not be natural in your language, you could use the first person form. Alternate translation: "I, the Messiah, am your only teacher" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 23:11

the greatest

Jesus is using the adjective **greatest** as a noun to mean the greatest person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “the greatest person” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

among you

Here, **you** is plural and refers to Jesus’ followers, so use the plural form of “you” if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.1227)**)

Matthew 23:12

will be humbled

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who will do the action, Jesus implies that God will do it.

Alternate translation: "God will humble him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

will be exalted

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who will do the action, Jesus implies that God will do it.

Alternate translation: "God will exalt him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 23:13

For you shut the kingdom of the heavens in front of men. For you do not enter in, nor do you permit the ones entering to enter

Jesus speaks of the **kingdom of the heavens** as if it were a house, the door into which the Pharisees have shut from the outside so that neither they nor anyone else can enter the house. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "For you have made it so that men cannot live with God forever in the kingdom of the heavens. For neither you will live there, nor will you let anyone else live there" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of the heavens in front of men

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Since you have shut the kingdom of the heavens before men, woe to you, scribes and Pharisees!" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

For you shut the kingdom of the heavens in front of men

The words **kingdom of the heavens** refers to God's rule as king from heaven. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "For you have not allowed people to become people over whom God rules" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

men

Although the term **men** is masculine, Jesus is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: "people" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

Matthew 23:14

Some ancient manuscripts include the first part of verse 14. Other ancient manuscripts add that sentence after verse 12. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.1381)**) (See: **Textual Variants (p.1381)**)

Matthew 23:15

the sea and the dry land

Jesus is describing the earth by naming its two main components. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the entire earth” (See: **Merism (p.1286)**) (See: **Merism (p.1286)**)

to make one proselyte

Here, **to make one a proselyte** means to convince a non-Jewish person to begin practicing the Jewish religion. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “to convince a non-Jewish person to practice the Jewish religion” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

a son of Gehenna

The expression **son of** figuratively describes a person who shares the qualities of something. Here, **a son of Gehenna** means a person who is evil and whom God will judge in hell. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “an evil person whom God will judge” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

of Gehenna

See how you translated **Gehenna** in [5:30](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 23:16

blind guides

See how you translated **blind guides** in 15:14. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Whoever swears by the temple

When a person **swears by** something, he is calling it to be a witness to the oath that he is making. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Whoever calls the temple to be a witness to his oath" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

it is nothing

Here, **it is nothing** means that he is not bound to keep his oath. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "he is not bound to the oath" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 23:17

Foolish and blind

Jesus is using the adjectives **foolish** and **blind** as nouns to mean certain kinds of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate these words with equivalent phrases, here and in verse 19. Alternate translation: "You foolish and blind people" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

blind

Jesus is speaking of the scribes and Pharisees as if they were literally **blind**. He means that they are not able to recognize something in the moral realm that should be obvious. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "morally obtuse" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

For which is greater, the gold or the temple having sanctified the gold

Jesus is using the question form to challenge the religious leaders. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "Certainly the gold is not greater than the temple that sanctifies the gold!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 23:18

it is nothing

See how you translated **it is nothing** in [23:16](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)
(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the gift

Here, **gift** is referring to an offering that is sacrificed to God on the altar. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the sacrifice” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 23:19

For which {is} greater, the gift or the altar sanctifying the gift

Jesus is using the question form to challenge the religious leaders. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "For the gift is certainly not greater than the altar sanctifying the gift!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

blind

See how you translated **blind** in [23:17](#). Alternate translation: "morally obtuse" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the gift & the gift

See how you translated **the gift** in the previous verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 23:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 23:21

the one inhabiting it

Here, **the one inhabiting it** is referring to God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “God, who is inhabiting it” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 23:22

the one sitting on it

As in the previous verse, this refers to God the Father. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 23:23

Woe to you, & hypocrites

See how you translated this in [11:21](#). Alternate translation: “How terrible it will be for you” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the mint and the dill and the cumin

These are various leaves and seeds people used to make food taste good. If your readers would not be familiar with them, in your translation you could use the name of comparable seasonings in your culture, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “herbs and spices” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

the weightier {things}

Jesus is using the adjective **weightier** as a noun to mean certain aspects of the law. ULT adds the word **matters** to show that. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “the weightier commandments” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

the weightier {things}

Jesus is speaking as if the more important commandments in the law were literally **weightier** or heavier than the others. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the more important commandments” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

these and those

By **these**, Jesus means the commandments he has just mentioned, and by **those**, he means the ones he mentioned earlier. Your language may have its own way of indicating this distinction. Alternate translation: “the latter ... and the former” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

and those not to neglect

If your readers would misunderstand the double-negative **not ... neglect**, you can state this in positive form. Alternate translation: “while also obeying the less important laws” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

Matthew 23:24

Blind guides

See how you translated **You blind guides** in [15:14](#). (See: [Metaphor \(p.1294\)](#)) (See: [Metaphor \(p.1294\)](#))

the ones straining out the gnat but swallowing the camel

Jesus is speaking as if the scribes and Pharisees were literally **straining out** a tiny **gnat** if they found one in a drink but **swallowing** a large **camel** whole. He means that they are being careful to follow the less important laws but ignoring the more important laws. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you are carefully following the less important laws but ignoring the more important laws” (See: [Metaphor \(p.1294\)](#)) (See: [Metaphor \(p.1294\)](#))

gnat

A **gnat** is a tiny flying insect. If your readers would not be familiar with what a gnat is, in your translation you could use the name of a comparable insect in your area, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “a tiny insect” (See: [Translate Unknowns \(p.1386\)](#)) (See: [Translate Unknowns \(p.1386\)](#))

the camel

A **camel** is a large mammal that people in this culture would ride and use to carry loads. If your readers would not be familiar with what a camel is, in your translation you could use the name of a comparable beast of burden in your area, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “a large beast of burden” (See: [Translate Unknowns \(p.1386\)](#)) (See: [Hyperbole \(p.1243\)](#))

Matthew 23:25

For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and lack of self-control

Here, cleaning **the outside of the cup and of the plate** represents the Pharisees acting in such a way that people will consider them holy. When Jesus says **inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence**, he is referring the inward desires of the Pharisees. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly.

Alternate translation: "You try to make yourselves appear righteous by doing good deeds, but in your inner being, you are greedy and self-indulgent" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 23:26

Blind Pharisee

Jesus is not referring to a specific **Pharisee**. He is referring to every Pharisee who acts in the way he has described. Express this in the way that would be most natural in your language. Alternate translation: "You blind Pharisees" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Blind

See how you translated **blind** in [23:17](#). Alternate translation: "morally obtuse" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Clean first the inside of the cup and of the plate, so that the outside of them might become clean also

See how you translated **inside of the cup and of the plate** and **outside** in in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "First make sure your inward being is righteous, and then you will genuinely appear righteous on the outside" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 23:27

you are like whitewashed tombs, & uncleanness

Here, Jesus is comparing the **scribes and Pharisees** with **whitewashed tombs**. Jesus states the plain meaning in the next verse, so you do not need to do that here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1397)**) (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1397)**)

whitewashed tombs

The Jews would paint **tombs** white so that they would appear beautiful to people who passed by them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “tombs that someone has painted white” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 23:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 23:29

of the righteous

Jesus is using the adjective **righteous** as a noun to mean people who are righteous. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "of righteous people" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 23:30

And you say, 'If we were in the days of our fathers, we would not have been sharers with them in the blood of the prophets

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "You also say that if you had been in the days of your fathers, you would not have been partners with them in the blood of the prophets" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

of our fathers

Jesus is using the term **fathers** to mean "ancestors." If your readers would misunderstand this, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "our ancestors" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the blood

Jesus is using the word **blood** to mean "death" by association. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the death" (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy\]\]](#)) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 23:31

you are sons of the ones having killed

Jesus may be using the term **sons** to mean descendants. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you are the descendants of the ones having killed” or see next note for another possibility. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

you are sons of the ones having killed

Jesus may also be using the expression **sons of** to describe people who share the qualities of something. He would be saying that the scribes and Pharisees share the quality of resistance to God that led their ancestors to kill the prophets. If your readers would misunderstand this, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you are resistant to God just like your ancestors, who killed” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 23:32

And you, fill up the measure of your fathers

Jesus is speaking as if he wants the scribes and Pharisees literally to **fill up a measure** of a certain amount. This represents them completing the wicked behavior that their ancestors began when they killed the prophets. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Now you finish the sins your ancestors began when they killed the prophets" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

And you, fill up the measure of your fathers

The implication is that the scribes and Pharisees would **fill up the measure** of their **fathers** by killing the greatest prophet of all, the Messiah. You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "Now, by killing the Messiah, finish the sins your ancestors began when they killed the prophets" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

you, fill up the measure of your fathers

Even though Jesus is using an imperative form, he does not actually want the Pharisees to **fill up the measure** of their **fathers** by killing him, the Messiah. If they did that, they would not be obeying a command from him. Instead, Jesus is using a figure of speech in which he says the opposite of what he means. He does that in order to warn the scribes and Pharisees about where their attitude and behavior will lead if they do not change those things. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "You should be very concerned, because if you do not stop resisting God, you will finish the sins of your ancestors by killing the Messiah" (See: **Irony (p.1275)**) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**)

Matthew 23:33

Serpents, offspring of vipers

The terms **serpents** and **vipers** mean similar things. Both are names of poisonous snakes. Jesus is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single expression. Alternate translation: “poisonous snakes” (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**)

Serpents, offspring of vipers

Jesus is speaking of the scribes and Pharisees as if they were literally **serpents** and **offspring of vipers**. He means that they are evil. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “You evil people” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

offspring of vipers

The expression **offspring of** figuratively describes a person who shares the qualities of something. In this case, **vipers** represent evil or harmful people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom from your language or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you who are harmful like vipers” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

how might you escape from the judgment of Gehenna

Jesus is using the question form to challenge the religious leaders. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: “You will certainly not escape from the judgment of Gehenna” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

of Gehenna

See how you translated **Gehenna** in 5:30. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 23:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 23:35

might come upon you

Jesus is speaking as if the **blood** of **righteous** people would literally **come upon** the scribes and Pharisees. He means that God would consider them guilty of shedding this blood. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “God might consider you guilty for shedding” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the righteous blood being shed on the earth, & the blood & the blood

Jesus is using the word **blood** to mean murder by association. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the guilt for all of the murders of righteous people on the earth ... the murder ... the murder” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

the righteous blood

Jesus is speaking by association as if the **blood** of righteous people were **righteous** itself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the blood of righteous people” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος Ἀβελ τοῦ δικαίου, ἕως τοῦ αἵματος Ζαχαρίου, ὃν ἐφονεύσατε μετὰ τοῦ ναοῦ καὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου

Abel was the first righteous victim of murder and **Zechariah**, who was murdered by Jews in the temple, was the last righteous person whose murder was recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures in the order in which the Jews of this time likely read them. Jesus is using these first and last men to represent all the righteous people who have been murdered. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “all throughout human history” (See: **Merism (p.1286)**) (See: **Merism (p.1286)**)

whom you killed

By using the term **you**, Jesus is speaking as if the scribes and Pharisees he is addressing had killed **Zechariah**, but he means by association that their ancestors killed him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “whom your ancestors killed” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 23:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 23:37

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one killing

Jesus is using the term **Jerusalem** to mean the people who live in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “People of Jerusalem, the ones killing” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Jerusalem, Jerusalem

Jesus is figuratively addressing something that he knows cannot hear him, the city of Jerusalem, in order to show his listeners in a strong way how he feels about it. If it would be more natural in your language, you could show in your translation that Jesus is talking about Jerusalem rather than to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “I am very upset with the city of Jerusalem” (See: **Apostrophe (p.1129)**) (See: **Apostrophe (p.1129)**)

the ones having been sent to her

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Jesus implies that God did it. Alternate translation: “the ones whom God sent to you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

your children

Jesus is speaking as if Jerusalem had **children**. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “those who live in you” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings

The point of this comparison is that Jesus wishes he could comfort and protect the people of Jerusalem, just as a **hen** does that for her **chicks**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings to comfort and protect them” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

a hen

A **hen** is a female chicken. You could translate this with the name of a bird familiar in your culture that protects her chicks under her wing. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 23:38

your house is left to you desolate

Jesus is using the past tense in order to refer to something that will happen in the future. He is doing this to show that the event will certainly happen. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the future tense.

Alternate translation: "your house will be left to you desolate" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

your house

Jesus is speaking of the city of Jerusalem as if it were a **house** in which its people lived. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "your city" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 23:39

Blessed is the one coming in the name of the Lord

See how you translated **in the name of** in [21:9](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 24

Matthew 24 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Jesus begins to prophesy about the future from that time until he returns as king of everything. (See: **prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess (p.1410)**)

Special concepts in this chapter

“The end of the age”

In this chapter, Jesus gives an answer to his disciples when they ask how they will know when he will come again. (See: **Symbolic Prophecy (p.1374)**)

The example of Noah

In the time of Noah, God sent a great flood to punish people for their sins. He warned them many times about this coming flood, but it actually began suddenly. In this chapter, Jesus draws a comparison between that flood and the last days. (See: **sin, sinful, sinner, sinning (p.1416)**)

Important translation issues in this chapter

“Let”

The ULT uses this word to begin several commands of Jesus, such as “let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (24:16), “let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house” (24:17), and “let him who is in the field not return to take his cloak” (24:18). There are many different ways to form a command. Translators may select the most natural ways in their own languages.

“The one”

Several times in this chapter, Jesus speaks of “the one” who does a certain thing. (Matthew himself uses that phrase in verse 15.) This phrase does not refer to a specific person. It refers to anyone who performs the action that it names. Express this in the way that would be most natural in your language. For example, in verse 13, Jesus says that “the one having endured to the end, he will be saved.” You might say that “whoever endures to the end will be saved.” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

Matthew 24:1

from the temple

Here, **temple** is referring to the courtyard around the temple. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that in your translation. Alternate translation: “from the courtyard of the temple” (See: **Metonymy** (p. 1302)) (See: **Metonymy** (p.1302))

Matthew 24:2

Do you not see all these things

Jesus is using the question form to challenge his disciples. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "Certainly you see all of these things!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

a stone upon a stone will certainly not be left here, which will not be torn down

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this with an active form, and you could state who will do the action. Alternate translation: "Your enemies will not leave one stone upon another here, but will tear them down" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 24:3

of your coming and of the end of the age

Here, **your coming** refers to when Jesus will come in power, establishing God's reign on earth and bringing this **age** to an end. Alternate translation: "that you are about to come and reign in power and that the world is about to end" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

as} he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him

Here, the pronouns **he** and **him** refer to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: "as Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached Jesus" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the disciples approached him by themselves, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what {is} the sign of your coming and of the end of the age

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "the disciples came to him by themselves asked Jesus to tell them when these things would be and what would be the sign of his coming and the end of the age" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Matthew 24:4

Be careful that no one leads you astray

See how you translated the similar expression in [22:29](#). Alternate translation: “Be careful that no one deceives you” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Be careful that no one leads you astray & For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “Since many will come in my name saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will lead many astray, you ought to be careful not to be led astray” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

Matthew 24:5

For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "For many will come in my name saying that they are the Christ, and they will lead many people astray" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

in my name

Here, Jesus uses the word **name** to mean identity. The people he is talking about will likely not say that their name is Jesus, they will claim to be the Messiah. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "claiming to be me" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

they will lead & astray

See how you translated the similar expression in the previous verse. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 24:6

you are going to hear of wars and rumors of wars

This probably means implicitly that the disciples will hear about wars that are definitely happening and about wars that may be happening (**reports of wars**). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly in your translation. Alternate translation: “you are going to hear about wars that are definitely happening and about wars that may be happening” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

See that you are not troubled

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “Do not let these things trouble you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the end

Here, the end implicitly means “the end of the world.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly, as the UST models. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 24:7

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Jesus is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these two phrases into one phrase. Alternate translation: "Different groups of people will attack each other" (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom

Here, **nation** and **kingdom** represent the people who live within them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the people of one nation will rise up against the people of another nation, and the people of one kingdom against the people of another kingdom" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom

The word **kingdom** represents kingdoms in general, not one particular kingdom. The word **nation** represents nations in general, not one particular nation. Alternate translation: "some nations will attack other nations, and some kingdoms will attack other kingdoms" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

will rise against

The phrase **rise against** is an idiom that means to attack. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "will attack" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

kingdom against kingdom

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: "kingdom will rise up against kingdom" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 24:8

But all these things

Here, **all these things** refers to the things that Jesus has said will happen. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “These things that I have just described” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

are} the beginning of birth pains

Jesus uses the image of **birth pains** to indicate that in the same way that the pain of childbirth is eventually replaced by joy when the child is born, so the suffering that is experienced by true believers will eventually be replaced by joy when Christ returns. Because childbirth occurs in all cultures, you may wish to retain this metaphor in your translation. You could express it as a simile if your language would not say directly that **these things** are **birth pangs**. Alternate translation: “These events will be like the first pains a woman suffers when she is about to give birth to a child” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 24:9

you will be hated by all the nations

See how you translated **nations** in [24:7](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

you will be hated by all the nations

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "People from every nation will hate you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

because of my name

See how you translated **my name** in [24:5](#) Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because you believe in me" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 24:10

many will be caused to stumble

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “these hardships will cause many people to stumble” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

many will be caused to stumble

Here, **to stumble** means to stop believing in God. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “many people will stop believing in God” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 24:11

will be raised up

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “will rise up” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

will be raised up

Here, **will be raised up** is an idiom that means “will come.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “will come” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

and will lead many astray

See how you translated **lead ... astray** in [24:4](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 24:12

lawlessness will be increased

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "lawlessness will increase" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

lawlessness will be increased

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **lawlessness**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form. Alternate translation: "people will commit more lawless deeds" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

the love of many will grow cold

Jesus is speaking as if the **love of many** would literally **grow cold**. This could mean: (1) Alternate translation: "many people will no longer love other people" (2) Alternate translation: "many people will no longer love God" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 24:13

But the one having endured to the end, this one will be saved

See how you translated **But the one having endured to the end, he will be saved** in [10:22](#). (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

But the one having endured to the end

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, the phrase **the one** does not refer to a specific person. It refers to anyone who performs the action described. Here and in the other instances of the phrase in this chapter, express this in the way that would be most natural in your language. Alternate translation: “whoever endures to the end” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

Matthew 24:14

this gospel of the kingdom will be preached

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Jesus implies that his disciples will do it. Alternate translation: “my disciples will preach this gospel of the kingdom” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

this gospel of the kingdom

Here, **kingdom** refers to God's rule as king. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **kingdom**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “the message about how God rules as a king over his people” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

to & the nations

See how you translated **nations** in [24:7](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 24:15

having been spoken of by Daniel the prophet

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “about which Daniel the prophet spoke” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the abomination of desolation

The phrase **the abomination of desolation** is found in [Daniel 9:27](#), Daniel 11:31, and [Daniel 12:11](#). Jesus’ audience would have been familiar with those passages, which prophesy about **the abomination** defiling the temple. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the shameful thing that defiles the temple” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

let the one reading understand

The phrase **Let the one reading understand** is not Jesus speaking. Matthew added this to get his readers to pay attention to this warning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show that this is not part of Jesus’ direct speech by not enclosing it within quotation marks or in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1348)**) (See: **Quote Markings (p.1348)**)

Matthew 24:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 24:17

let the one on the housetop not go down to take anything from his house

Where Jesus lived, the tops of houses were flat. People would eat and do other activities on top of their houses. Jesus assumes that his hearers know this and that they know that the roofs were accessed by an exterior staircase at the back of the house, distant from the entry at the front. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the person who is on top of his roof should escape immediately by the back stairway and not enter his house to get anything” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 24:18

and let the one in the field not turn back to take his cloak

People in Jesus' time often walked from their towns to the field that they worked in during the day. Jesus is saying that when they see the abomination of desolation, they should not return to their town to get their cloak, but should flee from the field that they are working in. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "let the one working the field not return to his town to get his cloak before fleeing" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

cloak

See how you translated **cloak** in [5:40](#). See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)** (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 24:19

to the ones having in the womb

The phrase **having in the womb** is an idiom that refers to women who are expecting babies. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “to women who are pregnant” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

to the ones nursing

This does not mean babies who are nursing but women who are nursing babies (providing their milk for them). If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this explicitly. Alternate translation: “mothers who are nursing their babies” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

in those days

Jesus is using the term **days** to refer to a specific time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “at that time” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 24:20

your flight might not happen

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **flight**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form. Alternate translation: “you would not have to flee” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

in winter

In the location to which Jesus is referring, **winter** is the time of year when it is cold and travel is difficult. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a term for a season in which it would be difficult to travel or you could translate winter with a general expression. Alternate translation: “in the rainy season” or “in the cold season” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 24:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 24:22

if those days had not been shortened, no flesh would be saved. & those days will be shortened

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who will do the action, Jesus implies that God will do it. Alternate translation: "If God had not shortened those days, then he would have saved no flesh ... he will shorten those days" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

if those days had not been shortened, no flesh would be saved

Jesus is using the past tense in order to refer to something that will happen in the future. He is doing this to show that the event will certainly happen. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the future tense. Alternate translation: "if God were not going to shorten those days, no flesh would be saved" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

if those days had not been shortened

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the word **shortened**. Alternate translation: "if those days had continued" or "if God had allowed those days to continue" (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

flesh

See how you translated **flesh** in [16:17](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

Matthew 24:23

if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here {is} the Christ!' or, 'Here!' you should not believe {it}

Jesus uses this expression to introduce an imaginary situation to help explain what his disciples should do if someone claims that they have found the Messiah. Use a natural method in your language for introducing an imaginary situation. Alternate translation: "Suppose someone says to you, 'Behold, here {is} the Christ!' or, 'Here!' Then you should not believe it" (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1250)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1250)**)

Matthew 24:24

will be raised up

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: “will arise” or “will become powerful” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

great signs and wonders

The terms **signs** and **wonders** mean similar things. Jesus may be using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “great miracles” (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**)

to lead astray

See how you translated **lead astray** in [24:5](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the elect

See how you translated the phrase **the elect** in [24:22](#). (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 24:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 24:26

if they say to you, 'Behold, he is in the wilderness,' you should not go out

You can state this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "if someone tells you that the Christ is in the wilderness, do not go out there" (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

Behold, in the inner chambers

You can state this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Or, if someone tells you that the Christ is in the inner rooms" (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

Matthew 24:27

thus will be the coming of the Son of Man

The point of this comparison is that just as lightning flashes across the whole sky and so is obvious to see, so the Son of Man will be obvious to see when he returns. He will not be out “in the wilderness” or “in the inner rooms,” as Jesus says in verse 25 that some will claim. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “so the coming of the Son of Man will be obvious to see” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

thus will be the coming of the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: “in the same way I, the Son of Man, will come” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 24:28

Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will be gathered

This is probably a proverb that the people of Jesus' time understood. This could mean: (1) Alternate translation: "When the Son of Man comes, everyone will see him and know that he has come" (2) Alternate translation: "Wherever spiritually dead people are, false prophets will be there to tell them lies" (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.1342)**)

the vultures will be gathered

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the vultures will gather" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the vultures

The word **vultures** describes large birds that eat the bodies of dead or dying animals. If your readers would not be familiar with what a vulture is, in your translation you could use the name of a comparable scavenger bird in your area, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: "the scavenger birds" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 24:29

the tribulation of those days

Jesus is using the term **days** to refer to a specific time. If your readers would misunderstand this, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “that time of tribulation” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the sun will be darkened

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God will make the sun dark” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the powers of the heavens will be shaken

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “God will shake the powers of the heavens” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 24:30

the sign of the Son of Man will appear

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: "the sign of me, the Son of Man, will appear" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 24:31

he will send his angels with a great trumpet

Your language may need to say who will make this **sound of a trumpet**. That could be the Son of Man himself or an angel. Alternate translation: “the Son of Man will sound a trumpet and send his angels” or “God will have an angel blow a trumpet, and he will send his angels”

he will send his angels & his

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: “I will send my angels ... my” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

from the four winds, from the ends of the heavens to the ends of them

These two phrases mean the same thing. Jesus is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express, which is how far the angels will go to gather the elect. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: “from all over the world” (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

from the four winds

This expression means “from every direction from which the wind blows,” envisioning the four primary directions of north, south, east, and west. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this in plain language. Alternate translation: “from every part of the world” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 24:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 24:33

it is near

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: "I am near" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

at the doors

Jesus is speaking of himself as if he were a king or important official getting close to the gates of a walled city. He means that he would be just about to return to earth. Alternate translation: "about to return to earth" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 24:34

this generation will certainly not pass away

Here, **pass away** is a polite way of saying “die.” Alternate translation: “this generation will not all die” (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

this generation

This could refer implicitly to: (1) the people alive when Jesus was speaking. (2) all the people who will be alive when these things happen that Jesus has just described. Try to translate so that both interpretations are possible. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

will certainly not pass away

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative verb **pass away**. Alternate translation: “will certainly remain alive” (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

until all these things happen

Alternate translation: “until God causes all these things to happen”

Matthew 24:35

The heaven and the earth will pass away

Jesus is using the two main components of creation, **heaven** and **earth**, to mean all of creation. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in plain language. Alternate translation: "All of creation" (See: **Merism (p.1286)**) (See: **Merism (p.1286)**)

my words

Jesus is using the term **words** to mean the things he has said by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the things I have said" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 24:36

that day and hour

The terms **day** and **hour** mean similar things. Jesus may be using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “that specific time” (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**)

that day and hour

By **that day and hour**, Jesus means implicitly the time when he will return. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “that day and hour when I will return” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Doublet (p.1205)**)

no one knows, neither the angels of the heavens, nor the Son,except the Father only

If it would appear your language that Jesus was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: “only the Father knows, not the angels in heaven, nor the Son” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1166)**)

of the heavens

Here, **the heavens** refers implicitly to the place where God lives. It does not refer to the sky. Be sure that this is clear in your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the Son,& the Father

Son and **Father** are important titles that describes the relationship between Jesus and God. Be sure to retain these titles in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

the Son

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: “I, the Son” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 24:37

the days of Noah

Jesus is using the term **days** to refer to a specific time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the time of Noah was” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

of the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: “of me, the Son of Man” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 24:38

they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage

Jesus describes several regular activities to refer to regular activities in general. Alternate translation: “they were going about their normal lives” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

in the days before the flood & until that day Noah entered into the ark

See how you translated **days** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “in the time before the flood ... until the time when Noah entered the ark” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the ark

The term **ark** refers to the structure that Noah built on God’s instructions to save himself and his family from the flood. If your readers would not recognize this specific term, you could use a more general one. Alternate translation: “the ship he built” or “the barge he built” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 24:39

and they did not know

Here, **they did not know** means that they did not know what was about to happen to them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “and they did not realize what was about to happen to them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

took {them} all away

Jesus is referring to death in a polite way by using the phrase **took them all away**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a polite way of referring to this in your language, or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: “killed them all” (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

thus also will be the coming of the Son of Man

Here, Jesus is comparing the flood of Noah, which came unexpectedly, with his own coming, which will be similarly unexpected. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “in the same way, the coming of the Son of Man will be unexpected” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

Matthew 24:40

two will be in the field

It is implied that these **two** are working **in the field**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “two men will be working in the field” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

one is taken, and one is left

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who will do the action, Jesus implies that God will do it. Alternate translation: “God will take one, and he will leave the other” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 24:41

one is taken, and one is left

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who will do the action, Jesus implies that God will do it.

Alternate translation: "God will take one, and he will leave the other" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 24:42

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 24:43

But know this

To help his disciples understand his message, Jesus tells a story. He explains its meaning in the next verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Let me tell you a story to help you understand this:” (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

in which watch

Here, **watch of night** is an idiom that means a certain time during the night, referring to how some would take turns keeping “watch” for a certain length of time to protect others who were asleep. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “at what time during the night” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

would not have allowed his house to be broken into

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who would do the action, Jesus implies that the thief would do it. Alternate translation: “would not have allowed the thief to break into his house” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 24:44

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: “I, the Son of Man, (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

For this reason you also be ready

Here, Jesus is explaining the meaning of his parable. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “In the same way that the owner of the house prepares in case a thief comes, so you should also be ready” (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

in that hour

Jesus is using the term **hour** to refer to a specific time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “at a time” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 24:45

Who then is the faithful and wise slave whom the master has appointed over his household to give them their food in time

Jesus is using the question form to challenge his disciples and to make them think. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "Certainly a faithful servant is the one whom his master appoints over his house in order to give them food at the proper time!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

whom the master has appointed over his household

In this phrase, it is assumed that the **the master** leaves the house over which he appoints his servant. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "whom his master, when he leaves, `appoints over his household" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

to give them their food

The connecting word **to** introduces a goal or purpose relationship. The purpose for which **his master has appointed** him is **to give them their food**. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that this is the purpose. Alternate translation: "for the purpose of giving them their food" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1170)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1170)**)

Matthew 24:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 24:47

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 24:48

says in his heart

See how you translated **in his heart** in [5:28](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

My master delays

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “But if that evil slave says in his heart that his master is delaying” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Matthew 24:49

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 24:50

on a day that he does not expect and at an hour that he does not know

The phrases **on a day that he does not expect** and **at an hour that he does not know** mean the same thing. Jesus is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. It may be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if the meaning might be unclear, you could connect the phrases with a word other than **and** in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: “on a day that he does not expect, yes, at an hour that he does not know” (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

on a day that he does not expect and at an hour that he does not know

Jesus is using the terms **day** and **hour** to refer to a specific time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. If you do that, you may wish to combine the phrases. Alternate translation: “at a time that he does not expect, yes, at an time that he does not know” or “at a time that he is not expecting at all” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 24:51

he will cut him in two

Here, **cut him in pieces** is an idiom that means to punish someone severely. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, use an idiom from your language that does have this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "he will punish him severely" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

there will be weeping and grinding of the teeth

See how you translated this in [8:12](#). (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Matthew 25

Matthew 25 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the teaching of the previous chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

The parable of the ten virgins

Jesus told the parable of the ten virgins in [25:1–13](#) to tell his followers to be ready for him to return. His hearers could understand the parable because they knew Jewish wedding customs. When the Jews arranged marriages, they would plan for the wedding to take place weeks or months later. At the appointed time, the bridegroom would go to his bride's house and she would be waiting for him there. The wedding ceremony would take place, and then the man and his bride would travel to his home, where there would be a feast. In this parable, the bridegroom represents Jesus, the five foolish virgins represent false believers in Jesus who do not prepare for Jesus' return, and the five wise virgins represent true Christians who are ready for Jesus to come back at the end of the world. (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

The parable of the talents

Jesus told the parable of the talents in [25:14–30](#) to teach that true Christians use the blessings that God gives them in order to live fruitful lives that glorify him. Jesus' hearers could understand the parable because they knew about investing money and the relationship between masters and slaves. In this parable, the master represents Jesus, the "talents" (a form of money) represent blessings from God, the two good slaves represent true Christians who faithfully use the blessings that God gives them, and the wicked slave represents false believers in Jesus.

A talent was a unit of weight that, when used for precious metals, was also a unit of money. One talent weighed nearly 30 kilograms or over 60 pounds. One silver talent was the equivalent of over 16 years' wages for a laborer. You could try to express this amount in terms of current monetary values, but that might cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate, since those values can change over time. So instead you might state something more general or give the equivalent in wages. See the suggestions at each occurrence of the word "talent" in this chapter. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-parables\]\]](#) and [rc://ta/man/translate/translate-bmoney](#))]

Matthew 25:1

Then

Here, **Then** refers to the time in the future when Jesus will return to the world. He called this time “the coming of the Son of Man” in [24:37](#) and the “day your Lord is coming” in [24:42](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “At the time I return to the world” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the kingdom of the heavens will be compared to ten virgins

In [25:1–13](#), Jesus is explaining about **the kingdom of the heavens** by telling a brief story that provides an illustration. See the discussion of this parable in the General Notes for this chapter. (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

the kingdom of the heavens

See how you translated this phrase in [3:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

lamps

The **lamps** in this story are small containers that produce light by burning oil that is absorbed by a wick. Someone had to trim the wick and supply enough oil to keep the wick burning in order for the lamp to continue producing light. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “lamps that burn oil to produce light” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

went out to a meeting of the bridegroom

Here, **meeting of the bridegroom** refers to the Jewish wedding practice of the bride and bridesmaids waiting for the bridegroom to come and get his bride and take her to the wedding feast. The fact that they took **lamps** also implies that they **went out** during the night. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “went out during the night to wait for the bridegroom to come and take his bride to the wedding feast” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 25:2

five of them

Here, **them** refers to the “virgins” mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “five of the virgins” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

five wise

Jesus is leaving out a word that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply this word from the previous clause. Alternate translation: “five were wise” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 25:3

oil with them

Jesus' hearers would have understood that the **oil** was used to keep the **lamps** lit. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "oil with themselves to keep their lamps lit" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 25:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 25:5

they all became sleepy

Here, **they** refers to the ten virgins mentioned in [25:1](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “all ten virgins became sleepy” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

they all became sleepy and were sleeping

The word **and** indicates that the event in the previous phrase happened before the event in the next phrase. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: “they all became sleepy and then began to sleep” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

Matthew 25:6

there was a cry

Alternate translation: "someone cried"

Behold

The person speaking uses the term **Behold** here to get the ten virgins to focus their attention on what he is about to say. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Listen" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Go out to the meeting

If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "someone cried that they should pay attention, the bridegroom was coming, and they should go out to the meeting" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Matthew 25:7

got up

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “awoke” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

put their lamps in order

The oil **lamps** people used at that time produced light from a burning wick. That wick had to be **trimmed** in order for it to keep burning properly. If this would be unfamiliar to your readers, you could use a general expression for preparing a lamp. Alternate translation: “adjusted their lamps so they would burn brightly” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 25:8

said to the wise, 'Give us from your oil, because our lamps are going out

If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "said to the wise ones that they should give them from their oil, because their lamps were going out" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

our lamps are going out

Here, **going out** refers to the **lamps** running out of oil so that the fire in them would stop burning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the fire in our lamps is about to burn out" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 25:9

saying, ‘There will certainly not ever be enough for us and for you. Go instead to the ones selling and buy for yourselves

If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “said that there would certainly not be enough for themselves and the foolish ones, so the foolish ones should go instead to the ones selling and buy for themselves” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

There will certainly not ever be enough for us and for you. Go instead to the ones selling and buy for yourselves

It is implied that **the wise ones** are referring to oil. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “There will certainly not be enough oil for us and you. Go instead to the ones selling oil and buy some oil for yourselves” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

There will certainly not ever be enough for us and for you

By answering in this way, **the wise ones** imply that they will not give any oil to the foolish virgins. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “We will not give you any oil! There will certainly not be enough oil for us and you.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

certainly not

The phrase **certainly not** translates two negative words in Greek. The wise virgins use them together to emphasize that they do not have enough oil to share with the foolish virgins. If your language can use two negatives together for emphasis without them cancelling each other to create a positive meaning, it would be appropriate to use that construction here. (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

for us

Here, **us** refers to the wise virgins, so **us** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1221)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1221)**)

Matthew 25:10

they

Here, **they** refers to the five foolish virgins. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the five foolish virgins” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

to buy

Jesus is leaving out a word that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply the missing word from the context. Alternate translation: “to buy more oil” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

the prepared

Here, **the prepared ones** refers to the five wise virgins who had enough oil for their lamps. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the wise virgins who had prepared” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the door was shut

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the servants shut the door” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 25:11

come

To call attention to a development in the story, Jesus uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you could use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “came” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

saying, ‘Lord, lord, open for us

If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “saying that the master should open for them” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

open for us

Here, **open** is an imperative, but since the **virgins** cannot command the **master** to do this, you could translate this phrase as polite request. Alternate translation: “please open for us” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**)

open for us

Here **the other virgins** are implying that they want the door opened for them so they can enter the wedding feast. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “open the door for us so we can come inside” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 25:12

said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you

If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "said that he said to them truly that he did not know them" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

I do not know you

By answering in this way, the bridegroom implies that he will not open the door for the foolish virgins. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I will not open the door for you because I do not know you" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 25:13

Therefore

Therefore here indicates that what follows is the reason why Jesus told the parable in 25:1-12. Use the most natural way in your language to state a reason. Alternate translation: “Since something like this could happen to you” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

be alert

Here Jesus implies that believers must **stay alert** for his return to the world. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “stay alert for my return” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

you do not know the day nor the hour

Here, **the day** and **the hour** refer to the time when Jesus will return to the world. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “you know neither the day nor the hour when I will return” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

you do not know the day nor the hour

Here, **day** and **hour** refer to an exact point in time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you do not know the exact time” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 25:14

For

For here indicates that the parable Jesus tells in [25:14–30](#) teaches another reason why believers must “stay alert,” as stated in the previous verse. Use the most natural way in your language to indicate a reason. Alternate translation: “Stay alert because” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

it is} as if

Here, **it** refers to “the kingdom of the heavens,” as mentioned in [25:1](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the kingdom of the heavens is like” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

a man, going abroad

Jesus tells a story to help his listeners understand why they should properly use the blessings that God gives them in order to be ready for him to return to the world. If it would help your readers, you could say that explicitly. See the discussion of this in the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: “a story in which a man goes to another country” (See: **Parables (p.1317)**) (See: **Parables (p.1317)**)

his possessions

Alternate translation: “his property” or “his wealth”

Matthew 25:15

five talents

See the discussion of the talent as a unit of money in the General Notes to this chapter to decide how to represent these numbers of **talents** in your translation. Alternate translation: “an amount equal to 80 years’ wages ... an amount equal to 32 years’ wages ... an amount equal to 16 years’ wages” (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.1149)**)

and to one, two, and to one, one—to each

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous clause. It may be helpful to break the sentence here. Alternate translation: “and to one slave he gave two talents, and to one slave he gave one talent. He gave to each” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

to each according to his own ability

Here, **his** refers to each slave. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “to each of them according to each one’s own ability” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 25:16

the five talents & another five talents

See how you translated **talents** in the previous verse to decide how to translate it here and in the rest of the parable. Alternate translation: “the amount equal to 80 years’ wages ... an equal amount” (See: **Biblical Money** (p. 1149)) (See: **Biblical Money** (p.1149))

Matthew 25:17

the one with the two also gained another two

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “the one slave with the two talents also gained another two talents” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 25:18

the one having received the one

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “the one slave having received the one talent” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 25:19

Now after a long time

Now here introduces a new event that happened **a long time** after the events the story has just related. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "A long time later" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

comes and takes up & together

To call attention to a development in the story, Jesus uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: "came and settled" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

takes up a word together

Alternate translation: "called them to give an account of how they had used his money"

Matthew 25:20

saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; behold, I gained another five talents

If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "said that the master had handed over to him five talents, but behold, he had gained five talents" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p. 1354)**)

Matthew 25:21

said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things. I will appoint you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master

If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "said to him that he had done well and was a good and faithful slave. The master also said that he had been faithful over a few things, so he would appoint him over many things. The master told him to enter into the joy of his master" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Well done

Your culture might have an expression that someone in authority would use to show that he approves of what someone working under his authority has done. Alternate translation: "You have done well" or "You have done right"

Enter into

Here, **Enter into** represents experiencing something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Experience" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the joy of your master

Here the **master** is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: "my joy" or "the joy of me, your master" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

Matthew 25:22

εἶπεν, Κύριε, δύο τάλαντά μοι παρέδωκας. ἴδε, ἄλλα δύο τάλαντα ἐκέρδησα

If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “said to his master that he had handed over to him two talents, but behold, he had gained two talents” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Matthew 25:23

His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things. I will appoint you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master

The contents of this verse are identical to [25:21](#). Translate both verses identically.

Matthew 25:24

said, 'Master, I knew you, that you are a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter

If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "said to his master that he knew that his master was a strict man, reaping where he did not sow, and gathering where he did not scatter" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter

Jesus' audience would have known that the master was referring to **reaping** and **gathering** crops and sowing and scattering seed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "reaping crops where you did not sow seed, and gathering crops where you did not scatter seed" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter

These two clauses mean the same thing. The slave says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to emphasize how **strict** he thinks the master is. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: "surely harvesting crops that you did not plant" (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter

In these two clauses, the slave is speaking of the master as if he were a farmer who harvests a crop that someone else had planted. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: "benefitting from the labor of other people" or "like a farmer who reaps crops where he did not sow seed and gathers crops where he did not scatter seed" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 25:25

καὶ φοβηθεὶς ἀπελθὼν, ἔκρυψα τὸ τάλαντόν σου ἐν τῇ γῇ. Ἴδε, ἔχεις τὸ σόν

This verse continues a direct quotation within a direct quotation that began in the previous verse. If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “He also told his master that, having become afraid, he went away and hid the master’s talent in the ground. He told his master to behold, he had what was his” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

having become afraid

This clause may refer to: (1) the result of knowing what the slave stated in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “this made me afraid, so, going away” (2) the reason why the slave went away and **hid** the master’s money in the ground. Alternate translation: “since I was afraid, going away” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

Matthew 25:26

said to him, 'Wicked and lazy slave! Did you know that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter

If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "said to him that he was a wicked and lazy slave. He knew that the master reaped where he did not sow and harvested where he did not scatter" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter

See how you translated the similar clauses in [25:24](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 25:27

Therefore, it was necessary for you to have put my money with the bankers, and having come, I would have received back {what is} mine with interest

This verse continues a direct quotation within a direct quotation that began in the previous verse. If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Therefore, it was necessary for him to have placed the master's money with the bankers, and having come, he would have received back his money with interest" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

to have put my money with the bankers, & with interest

Here, **bankers** refers to people who accept deposits of money and use them to make loans. They pay an **interest** premium on the deposits and charges an **interest** premium on the loans. If your culture does not have **bankers**, or if your culture does not allow **interest** payments, you could translate this in a different way that would be meaningful to your readers. Alternate translation: "to let someone borrow my money ... with a share of the profits" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 25:28

Therefore, take away the talent from him and give it to the one having the ten talents

This verse continues a direct quotation within a direct quotation that began in the previous verse. If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “Therefore, the master commanded that his other slaves take away the talent from him and give it to the one having the ten talents” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

take away the talent from him

The master says this command to other servants. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “you other servants take away the talent from him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 25:29

to everyone having

The master implies that **everyone having** are those servants who use what has been given to them faithfully to earn more money. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “to everyone who uses the money wisely that I have given him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

it will be given

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this with an active form, and you could state who will do the action. Alternate translation: “I will give it” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

it will be given and it will abound

Both occurrences of **it** here refer to more of what the master has already given to his servants. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “more of what he has will be given and what he has will abound” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

from the one not having, even what he has will be taken away from him

The master is speaking of a group of people in general, not of one particular person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “from the people not having, even what they have will be taken away from them” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1230)**)

from the one not having

The master implies that **the one not having** is any slave who does not use what he has been given faithfully to earn more money. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “from the one who does not use the money wisely that I have given him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

will be taken away

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this with an active form, and you could state who will do the action. Alternate translation: “I will take away” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 25:30

And throw the worthless slave out into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and grinding of the teeth

This verse continues a direct quotation within a direct quotation that began in the previous verses. If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "And the master commanded his slaves to throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness, where there would be weeping and grinding of the teeth" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

the outer darkness

See how you translated this in [8:12](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

weeping and grinding of the teeth

See how you translated this in [8:12](#). (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Matthew 25:31

Now

Now here indicates that Jesus has finished telling the story in [25:14–30](#) and is about to tell his disciples how he will judge people when he returns at the end time. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

the Son of Man

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person in [25:31–33](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

the Son of Man

The phrase **Son of Man** is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

in his glory

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “and shows how glorious he is” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

he will sit on his throne of glory

Jesus’ hearers would have known that a king sits on his **throne** in order to rule as king. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. See how you translated a similar expression in [19:28](#). Alternate translation: “he will sit on his glorious throne to rule as king” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 25:32

him & he will separate

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person throughout this verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

will be gathered all 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. The angels may be the ones doing the action, as suggested by [13:41](#), [13:49](#) and the reference to angels in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “his angels will gather all the nations” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

all the nations

Here, **nations** refers to people who live in **all the nations**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “people from all the nations” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats

Jesus compares separating people into two groups to a **shepherd** separating two different types of animals into two groups. If your readers would be unfamiliar with shepherding or these animals, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning in a non-figurative way. Alternate translation: “just as someone separates two different types of animals into two groups” or “into two groups” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

Matthew 25:33

he will place & his & his left

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person throughout this verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

the sheep & the goats

Here Jesus refers to true believers, whom he calls “the righteous ones” in [25:37](#), as **sheep**. He also refers to unbelievers as **goats**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the true believers ... the unbelievers” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

his right, & his left

In this verse Jesus is using the adjectives **right** and **left** as nouns in order to indicate his **right** and **left** sides. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could state that specifically. Alternate translation: “his right side ... his left side” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

on his right

The **right** side of a ruler was a position of great honor and authority. By placing the **sheep on his right**, Jesus was symbolically conferring honor and authority on them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “in the place of honor on his right” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Matthew 25:34

the King & his

Here, **the King** is another title for the Son of Man, who is Jesus. Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

on his right, 'Come, the ones having been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world

A direct quotation within a direct quotation begins here and continues until the end of 25:36. If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "at his right that they have been blessed by his Father and should come inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

his right

See how you translated **his right** in the previous verse. (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

the ones having been blessed by my Father

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "you whom my Father has blessed" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

by my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

prepared for you

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "that God has prepared for you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

inherit

Here Jesus speaks of being able to live in **the kingdom** of God as if **the kingdom** were property that people could **inherit** from their parents. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "live in" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

from the foundation of the world

Alternate translation: "since he first created the world"

Matthew 25:35

For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you gathered together with me

This verse is a direct quotation within a direct quotation that began in the previous verse and continues until the end of 25:36. If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “For he was hungry, and they gave him to eat; he was thirsty, and they gave him to drink; he was a stranger, and they invited him in” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

For

For here indicates that what follows is the reason why righteous people inherit the kingdom, as stated in the previous verse. Use the most natural way in your language to indicate a reason. Alternate translation: “Inherit the kingdom because” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

you gave me to eat; & you gave me to drink; & you gathered together with me

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “you gave me food to eat ... you gave me something to drink ... you invited me into your homes” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 25:36

I was} naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you cared for me; I was in prison, and you came to me

This verse is a direct quotation within a direct quotation that began in the previous [25:34](#) and continues until the end of this verse. If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "he was naked, and they clothed him; he was sick, and they cared for him; he was in prison, and they came to him" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

I was} naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you cared for me; I was in prison, and you came to me

This verse is a direct quotation within a direct quotation that began in [25:34](#) and continues until the end of this verse. If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "he was naked, and they clothed him; he was sick, and they cared for him; he was in prison, and they came to him" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Matthew 25:37

saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you being hungry and feed {you}? Or being thirsty and give {you} to drink

A direct quotation within a direct quotation begins here and continues until the end of [25:39](#). If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “asking their master when they saw him hungry and fed him or thirsty and gave him to drink” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

being thirsty and give {you} to drink

The **righteous ones** are leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from the previous clause and from the similar phrase in [25:35](#). Alternate translation: “when did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 25:38

And when did we see you a stranger and gather together with {you}? Or naked and clothe {you}

This verse is a direct quotation within a direct quotation that began in the previous verse and continues until the end of [25:39](#). If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “And they asked when they saw him a stranger and invited him in, or naked and clothed him.” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

gather together with {you}

See how you translated the similar phrase in [25:35](#). (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

naked and clothe {you}

The “righteous ones” are leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous clause. Alternate translation: “when did we see you naked and clothe you” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 25:39

And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you

A direct quotation within a direct quotation that began in [25:37](#) continues until the end of this verse. If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "And they asked when they saw him sick or in prison and came to him" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Matthew 25:40

the King

See how you translated the same use of **King** in [25:34](#). (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

to them

The pronoun **them** here refers to the “righteous ones” to whom **the King** spoke in the previous verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “to the righteous ones” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

to them, ‘Truly I say to you, you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me

If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “to them that he said truly to them, to the extent that they did it for one of the least of those brothers of his, they did it for him” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Truly I say to you

See how you translated this phrase in [5:18](#).

of & least

Alternate translation: “of the least significant”

brothers

Although the term **brothers** is masculine, Jesus is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “brothers and sisters” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1395)**)

brothers of mine

The phrase **brothers of mine** here does not refer to Jesus’ actual **brothers**, but he is referring to everyone who believes in him as his **brothers**. Jesus says this because he considers them to be part of his spiritual family. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “who are like brothers to me” or “who are like family to me” (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**) (See: **Kinship (p.1278)**)

you did for me

Alternate translation: “I consider that you did it for me” or “it is as if you did it for me”

Matthew 25:41

he will say also & his left

In this verse Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

his left

See how you translated this phrase in [25:33](#). (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

he will say also to the ones on his left, 'Go from me, the ones having been cursed, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels

Here a direct quotation within a direct quotation begins and continues until the end of [25:43](#). If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "he also will say to the ones on his left that they should depart from him, being accursed ones, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

the ones having been cursed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "you whom God has cursed" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

that has been prepared

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "that God has prepared" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 25:42

For I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and you did not give me to drink

This verse is a direct quotation within a direct quotation that began in the previous verse and continues until the end of 25:43. If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “For he was hungry, and they did not give him to eat; he was thirsty, and they did not give him to drink” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

For

For here indicates that what follows is the reason why the “accursed ones” must go “into the eternal fire,” as stated in the previous verse. Use the most natural way in your language to indicate a reason. Alternate translation: “Go into the eternal fire because” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

you did not give me to eat; & you did not give me to drink

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “you did not give me food to eat ... you did not give me something to drink” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 25:43

I was a stranger, and you did not gather together with me; {I was} naked, and you did not clothe me; {I was} sick and in prison, and you did not care for me

A direct quotation within a direct quotation that began in 25:41 continues until the end of this verse. If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "He was a stranger, and they did not invite him in; naked, and they did not clothe him; sick and in prison, and they did not care for him" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

you did not gather together with me; {I was} naked, and you did not clothe me; {I was} sick and in prison

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "you invited me into your homes; I was naked, and you did not clothe me; I was sick and in prison" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 25:44

they

The pronoun **they** here refers to the “accursed ones” on Jesus’ left side whom he spoke to in the previous two verses. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “those accursed ones” or “those on his left side” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not serve you

If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “asking their master when did they see him hungry, or hungry, or a stranger, or sick, or in prison, and did not serve him.” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Matthew 25:45

he will answer

Here Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

saying, 'Truly I say to you, as much as you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me

If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "saying that he said truly to them, to the extent that they did not do it for one of the least of those, they did not do it for him" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

Truly I say to you

See how you translated this phrase in [5:18](#).

of the least

See how you translated this phrase in [25:40](#).

of these

Here, **these** refers to believers, whom Jesus calls "brothers of mine" in [25:40](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "of these brothers of mine" or "of these people who are like family to me" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

you did not do for me

Alternate translation: "I consider that you did not do it for me" or "I was really the one whom you did not help"

Matthew 25:46

these

Here, **these** refers to the “accursed ones” on Jesus’ left side whom he has been speaking to in the previous three verses. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “those accursed ones” or “those on his left side” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

will go away into eternal punishment, & into eternal life

Here, **eternal punishment** refers to the place where the unrighteous people will be punished, and **eternal life** refers to place where the righteous people will be rewarded. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “will go away into the place where they will be eternally punished ... into the place where they will live eternally” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

into eternal life

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a clause would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the previous clause if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “will go into eternal life” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 26

Matthew 26 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in [26:31](#), which is quoted from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Sheep

Sheep are a common image used in Scripture to refer to the people of Israel. In [26:31](#), however, Jesus uses the words “the sheep” to refer to his disciples and to say that they would run away when he was arrested.

Passover

The Passover festival was when the Jews celebrated the day God killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians but “passed over” the Israelites and let them live.

The meaning of the “body” and “blood” of Jesus

[26:26–28](#) describes Jesus’ last meal with his followers. During this meal, Jesus said of the bread, “This is my body,” and of the wine, “This is my blood of the covenant, that is being poured out for many.” As Jesus instructed, Christian churches around the world re-enact this meal regularly, calling it “the Lord’s Supper,” the “Eucharist”, or “Holy Communion.” But they have different understandings of what Jesus meant by these sayings. Some churches believe that Jesus was speaking figuratively and that he meant that the bread and wine represented his body and blood. Other churches believe that he was speaking literally and that the actual body and blood of Jesus are really present in the bread and wine of this ceremony. Translators should be careful not to let how they understand this issue affect how they translate this passage.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Judas’ kiss for Jesus

[26:49](#) describes how Judas kissed Jesus so the soldiers would know whom to arrest. In this culture, when men greeted other men who were family or friends, they would **kiss** them on one cheek or on both cheeks. If your readers would find it embarrassing if you said that one man would kiss another man, you could explain the purpose of the gesture, or you could translate the expression in a more general way. You might say, for example, that Judas “kissed Jesus on the cheek as a greeting” or that Judas “gave Jesus a friendly greeting.” (See: **Symbolic Action** (p.1372))

“I am able to destroy the temple of God”

Two men accused Jesus of saying that he could destroy the temple in Jerusalem and then rebuild it “in three days” ([26:61](#)). They were accusing him of insulting God by claiming that God had given him the authority to destroy the temple and the power to rebuild it. What Jesus actually said was that if the Jewish authorities were to destroy this temple, he would certainly raise it up in three days ([John 2:19](#)).

Matthew 26:1

And it happened that when

See how you translated this phrase in [11:1](#). (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

all these words

Matthew is leaving out a word that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply the word from the context. Alternate translation: “speaking all these words” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

all these words

Here, **these words** refers to everything that Jesus taught in [24:3–25:46](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “all these teachings about what would happen in the future” or “all these teachings about his return to earth and the final judgment” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:2

the Son of Man

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

the Son of Man is handed over to be crucified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “someone will hand over the Son of Man to other people, who will crucify him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 26:3

were gathered together & the one called Caiaphas

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: “came together ... whose name was Caiaphas” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 26:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 26:5

Not during the festival

The chief priests and elders are leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “We should not kill Jesus during the festival” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

the festival

Here, **the festival** refers the Passover **festival**, as indicated in [26:2](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Passover festival” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:6

Now

Now here indicates that what follows in [26:6-13](#) is a new event that happened around the time of the events the story has just related. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "Around that time," (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

of Simon the leper

Matthew implies that this **Simon** is a man whom Jesus had healed from leprosy. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "of Simon, a man whom Jesus had healed of leprosy" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:7

him & his & he} reclining to eat

The pronoun **he** refers to Jesus. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus ... Jesus' ... as Jesus is reclining to eat" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

an alabaster jar of very expensive perfumed oil

Matthew is using the possessive form to describe a **jar** that is filled with **very expensive perfumed oil**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: "an alabaster jar full of very expensive perfumed oil" (See: **Possession (p.1330)**) (See: **Possession (p.1330)**)

an alabaster jar

Here, **alabaster jar** refers to a small container made out of expensive stone. If your readers would not be familiar with this stone, you could use the name of a stone in your area that is expensive and used for making costly containers, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: "a costly stone container" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

of very expensive perfumed oil

Here, **perfumed oil** refers to a liquid made from the oils of pleasant-smelling plants and flowers. This oil was put on a person's skin or hair in order for that person to smell pleasant. If your readers would not be familiar with this oil, you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: "of very precious scented liquid" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

he} reclining to eat

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: "as he was reclining to eat" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

he} reclining to eat

At a relaxed meal such as this one, it was the custom in this culture for host and guests to eat while lying down comfortably around a table that was close to the ground. You could translate this by using the expression in your language for the customary posture at a meal. See how you translated the similar phrase in 9:10. Alternate translation: "as he was sitting down at the table to eat" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 26:8

the disciples became very angry, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “the disciples became angry and said” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

For what {is} this waste

Alternate translation: “What is the purpose for this waste”

For what {is} this waste

Here the disciples are not asking for information. They ask this question to express their anger over the woman's actions. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “What a waste!” or “This is such a waste of perfume!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 26:9

this was able to be sold for much and given to

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: “she could have sold this for much and given” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

this

Here, **this** refers to the jar full of perfumed oil that the woman poured on Jesus’ head in [26:7](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “this perfumed oil” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

for much and given to

Matthew is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “for much money and that money to be given” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

the poor

Matthew is using the adjective **poor** as a noun in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “to people who are poor” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 26:10

Why are you causing trouble for the woman

Jesus is not asking for information here. He asks this question in order to rebuke his disciples. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You should not cause trouble for the woman!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

are you causing

Here, **you** is plural and refers to the disciples. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "are you disciples causing" (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1228)**) (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1228)**)

are you causing trouble & a good work

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **trouble** and **work**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "are you troubling ... something good" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 26:11

the poor

See how you translated **the poor** in [26:9](#). (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

you do not always have me

In this phrase Jesus implies that he would not always be with them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “you do not always have me with you” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:12

perfumed oil

See how you translated **perfumed oil** in [26:7](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 26:13

Truly I say to you

See how you translated this phrase in [5:18](#).

wherever this gospel is preached

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: “wherever people preach this gospel” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

also what she did will be spoken in remembrance of her

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “in memory of her people will speak of what she has done” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 26:14

Then & having gone to the chief priests

Then here indicates that what happens in this verse took place after what took place in the previous verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation (without a comma at the end of the verse): “After Jesus said this, ... went to the chief priests and” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1183)**)

of the Twelve

Matthew is using the adjective **Twelve** as a noun in order to indicate a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. See how you translated **Twelve** in 10:5. Alternate translation: “of the 12 apostles” or “of the 12 men whom he had appointed to be apostles” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

the one called

See how you translated **named** in 26:3. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 26:15

What

What here is referring to an amount of money. This is a polite way of asking to be paid money. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: “How much money” (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

him & for him

While the first occurrence of **him** in this verse refers to Jesus, the second occurrence of **him** refers to Judas Iscariot. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

for him

The phrase **for him** implies that the chief priests gave the **pieces of silver** to Judas. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “in order to give them to him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:16

he might hand him over

Matthew implies that Jesus would **betray** Jesus by helping the chief priests arrest him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “he might betray Jesus by helping the chief priests arrest him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:17

Now

Now here indicates that what follows in [26:17-25](#) a new event that happened shortly after the time of the events the story has just related. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "Some time later," (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

of the Festival of Unleavened Bread

Unleavened Bread here refers to the Festival of Unleavened Bread that began at Passover and lasted for one week. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "of the Festival of Unleavened Bread" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: "and they said" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

the Passover

Here, **the Passover** refers to the meal that people ate together on that occasion. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the Passover meal" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 26:18

Go into the city to so-and-so and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is near. I with my disciples am doing the Passover with you

This verse has three levels of direct quotations. If direct quotations inside direct quotations would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second-level and third-level direct quotations as indirect quotations.

Alternate translation: "Go into the city to such a man and say to him that the Teacher says that his time is near. He is doing the Passover at your house with his disciples." (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

the city

Here, **the city** refers to Jerusalem. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the city of Jerusalem" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

My time

My time here could refer to: (1) the time that Jesus had arranged beforehand with the **man** to use a room in his house for the Passover meal. Alternate translation: "The time I arranged with you" (2) the time God had appointed for Jesus to die. Alternate translation: "The time God appointed for me" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

the Passover

See how you translated the same use of **the Passover** in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 26:19

the Passover

See how you translated the same use of **the Passover** in the [26:17](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 26:20

he was reclining to eat

See how you translated this phrase in [26:7](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

the Twelve

See how you translated **the Twelve** in [26:14](#). (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

Matthew 26:21

Truly I say to you

See how you translated this phrase in [5:18](#).

Matthew 26:22

Surely not I, Lord

This could be: (1) a rhetorical question, which means that the apostles were sure they would not betray Jesus. Alternate translation: "Surely not I, Lord!" (2) a sincere question, which means that Jesus' statement troubled and confused them. Alternate translation: "Could it be me, Lord?" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Surely not I, Lord

The disciples are leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "Surely it is not I who will betray you, Lord" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 26:23

The one having dipped his hand with me in the bowl

This refers to someone using **his hand** to dip a piece of bread into some sauce or liquid food that is in a dish. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "The one having dipped bread with me into the sauce that is in the dish" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 26:24

The Son of Man departs just as it has been written about him. But woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is handed over

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, will depart just as it is written about me. But woe to that man by whom I am betrayed" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

departs

Here, **depart** is a polite way to refer to dying. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "will be put to death" (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

just as it has been written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. This phrase specifically refers to what the prophets wrote in the Hebrew Scriptures. Alternate translation: "just as the prophets wrote" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

just as it has been written

Jesus assumes that his hearers will understand that by using **it is written**, he means that it is prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Jesus is referring to the Scriptures. Alternate translation: "just as it has been written in the Scriptures" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

to that man through whom the Son of Man is handed over

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: "to that man who betrays the Son of Man" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

that man had not been born

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "that man's mother had not given birth to him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 26:25

Surely not I, Rabbi

Judas is not asking for information, but is using the question form here to deny that he will betray Jesus. If your readers would misunderstand this question, you can express it as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely it is not I, Rabbi!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Surely not I, Rabbi

The disciples are leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "Surely it is not I who will betray you, Rabbi" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

He says to him

He here refers to Jesus and **him** refers to **Judas**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus said to Judas" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

You said {it

This is an idiom that Jesus uses to give an affirmative answer to Judas' question. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "It is as you have said yourself" or "You are admitting it" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 26:26

Now

Now here indicates that what follows in 26:26–56 is a new event that happened shortly after the time of the events that the story has just related. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Soon after,” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

bread

The term **bread** refers to a loaf of **bread**, which is a lump of flour dough that a person has shaped and baked. The **bread** referred to here was a flat loaf of unleavened **bread** that was eaten as part of the Passover meal. Alternate translation: “a loaf of bread” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

bread

Since Jews did not eat **bread** made with yeast during this festival, this **bread** would not have had any yeast in it and it would have been flat. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “a flat loaf of unleavened bread” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

having blessed

This could mean: (1) Jesus thanked God for providing the **bread**. Alternate translation: “having blessed God for it” (2) Jesus asked God to bless the **bread**. Alternate translation: “having asked God to bless it” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Take, eat

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “Take some of this bread and eat it” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

This is my body

See the discussion in the General Notes to this chapter about how to translate this sentence. See also how it is translated in Mark 14:22. Christians understand this phrase to be: (1) a metaphor. Alternate translation: “This represents my body” (2) literal. Alternate translation: “My body is really present in this bread” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 26:27

a cup

Here, **cup** refers to both the **cup** and the wine that was in it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “a cup of wine” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

having given thanks

Matthew implies that Jesus thanked God for the wine. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “having given thanks to God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:28

this

Here, **this** refers to the wine in the cup that was mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “this wine” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

this is my blood of the covenant that is being poured out for many

See the discussion in the General Notes to this chapter about how to translate this sentence. See also how it is translated in Mark 14:24. This phrase could be: (1) a metaphor. Alternate translation: “this wine represents my blood that establishes the covenant, and it is my blood that I will pour out for many” (2) literal. Alternate translation: “my blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many, is really present in this wine” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

this is my blood of the covenant that is being poured out for many

The phrase **of the** introduces the purpose for Jesus shedding his **blood**. Jesus is stating that the purpose for him shedding his **blood** is to establish the new **covenant**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose. Alternate translation: “this is my blood which is being poured out for many for the purpose of establishing God’s covenant” or “This is my blood which is being poured out for many for the purpose of making God’s covenant with his people” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1170)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1170)**)

is being poured out

Jesus is referring to the way his **blood** is going to be **poured out** when he dies. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this with an active form. Alternate translation: “which I will pour out” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the forgiveness of sins

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **forgiveness** and **sins**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: “forgiving the sinful things people have done” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 26:29

certainly not

The phrase **certainly not** translates two negative words in Greek. Jesus uses them together for emphasis. If your language can use two negatives together for emphasis without them cancelling each other to create a positive meaning, it would be appropriate to use that construction here. (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.1200)**)

fruit of the vine

This is an idiom that refers to wine. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly, as in the UST. (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

that day

Here Jesus uses the term **day** to refer to a particular period of time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language, as in the UST. (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

I drink it new with you

Here, **new** could refer to: (1) Jesus, and therefore would mean “again” or “in a new way.” See the parallel account in Luke 22:18 where Jesus seems to mean this. Alternate translation: “I drink it in a new way with you” or “I drink it anew with you” (2) the wine and thus would be referring to drinking a new type or quality of wine. Alternate translation: “I drink new wine with you” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the kingdom of my Father

See how you translated the phrase “the kingdom of the heavens” in 3:2. If it would be helpful in your language to understand the abstract noun **kingdom**, you could express the idea behind it with a verb such as “rule,” as in the UST. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

of my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 26:30

having sung a hymn

A **hymn** is a song or poem that is sung to praise God. The Jews would traditionally sing a psalm from Psalms 113–118 at the end of the Passover meal, so the **hymn** that Jesus and his disciples sang was likely one of these psalms. If your readers would not be familiar with a **hymn**, you could use the name for religious songs in your culture, if you have them, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “having sung a psalm” or “having sung a song of praise to God” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 26:31

will be caused to stumble on me

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “will stumble because of me” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

will be caused to stumble on me

Jesus is speaking as if his disciples would literally **stumble** or fall down. He means that they will desert him. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “will leave me on account of what happens to me” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

it is written

Here Jesus uses the phrase **it is written** to introduce a quotation from an Old Testament book (Zechariah 13:7). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Jesus is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “it is written in the Scriptures” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

it is written

If your language does not use the passive form, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. What follows is a quotation from Zechariah 13:7. Alternate translation: “Zechariah wrote” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

for it is written, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: “because Zechariah the prophet wrote that God would strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock would be scattered” or “because Zechariah the prophet predicted in the Scriptures that God would strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock would be scattered” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered

Jesus is quoting a prophecy from [Zechariah 13:7](#) in which the prophet Zechariah speaks of the Messiah as if he were a **shepherd** and of the Messiah's followers as if they were **sheep** that belonged to his **flock**. Since this is a quotation from Scripture, translate the words directly rather than providing an explanation of them, even if your language does not customarily use such figures of speech. If you want to explain the meaning of the metaphor, we recommend that you do that in a footnote rather than in the Bible text. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

I will strike

Here, **I** refers to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “I, God, will strike” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

I will strike

Here, **strike** means to kill someone. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I will kill" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

the sheep of the flock will be scattered

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "the sheep of the flock will run away" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 26:32

I am raised up

Here, **raise up** is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I become alive again" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

I am raised up

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: "God raises me up" or "God brings me back to life" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

I will go before you into Galilee

Jesus implies that his disciples will meet him in **Galilee**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I will go ahead of you into Galilee and we will meet there" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:33

will be caused to stumble & will be caused to stumble

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “will stumble ... will stumble” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

will be caused to stumble & will be caused to stumble

See how you translated **stumble** in [26:31](#). Alternate translation: “will leave you ... will leave you” (See: **Metaphor (p. 1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 26:34

Truly I say to you

See how you translated the similar phrase in [5:18](#).

before a rooster crows

Jesus is referring to a certain time of day. A **rooster crows** just before the sun appears in the morning. In other words, Jesus is referring to dawn. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “before a rooster crows as morning begins” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

before a rooster crows

A **rooster** is a bird that calls out loudly around the time the sun comes up. If your readers would not be familiar with this bird, you could use the name of a bird in your area that calls out or sings just before dawn, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “before the birds begin to sing in the morning” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

you will deny me three times

Alternate translation: “you will deny three times that you know me”

Matthew 26:35

says

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “said” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

Matthew 26:36

called Gethsemane

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, as in the UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 26:37

the two sons of Zebedee

This phrase refers to the disciples James and John. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:38

he says

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “he said” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

My soul is very grieved

Here, **soul** refers to the whole person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “I am deeply sorrowful” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

to death

The phrase **to the point of death** refers to feeling like one is about to die. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “and I feel as if I could die” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 26:39

he fell on his face

This phrase is an idiom that means that he bowed down. Make sure that it is clear in your translation that Jesus did not fall down accidentally. Alternate translation: “he knelt down and touched the ground with his face” or “he bowed down to the ground” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

let this cup pass away from me

Jesus is referring to the suffering he will soon experience as if it were a **cup** of bitter-tasting liquid that he would have to drink. Alternate translation: “please spare me from these sufferings” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Yet, not as I will, but as you

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “Yet, do not do what I want, but do what you want to do” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

Matthew 26:40

he comes & finds & he says

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “he came ... found ... he said” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

the disciples

Here, **the disciples** refers specifically to Peter, James, and John. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Peter, James, and John” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

he says to Peter

Here Matthew implies that Jesus woke up **Peter** before speaking to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “he wakes up Peter and says to him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

were you not able to be alert

Although Jesus is speaking to **Peter**, **you** here is plural and refers to Peter, James, and John. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “were the three of you not able to stay alert” (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1228)**) (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1228)**)

So, were you not able to be alert with me for one hour

Jesus is not asking for information, but is using the question form here to scold Peter, James, and John. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “You surely should have been able to stay alert with me for one hour!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Matthew 26:41

you do not enter into temptation

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **temptation**, you can express the idea behind it with a verb such as “tempt.” Alternate translation: “nothing will tempt you to sin” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

The spirit

Jesus is describing the inner part of a person (which includes their desires and will) by association with their **spirit**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or use plain language. Alternate translation: “The inner self” or “The inner person” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

is} willing

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “is willing to do what is right” or “is willing to do what pleases God” or “is willing to obey me” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

the flesh {is} weak

Here, **flesh** could: (1) include the meaning of both option 2 and option 3 below and therefore **flesh** would refer to both the weakness of the human body and also to the deficiency of human desire and ability to do what is right. Alternate translation: “the body and your sinful human nature are weak” (2) refer to the human “body.” Alternate translation: “the body is weak” (3) refer to the sinful part of human nature that prefers to seek comfort and seek what it desires rather than obey God and do the things that please him. Alternate translation: “the sinful human nature is weak” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

Matthew 26:42

having gone away

Alternate translation: “after Jesus went away”

a second time

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression.

Alternate translation: “for time two” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**)

My Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

if this is not able to pass away unless I drink it

Here, **this** and **it** refer to the suffering that Jesus must endure, which he referred to as a “cup” of bitter-tasting liquid in 26:39. He speaks of this suffering as if it were a bitter liquid that he must **drink**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly Alternate translation: “if this suffering is not able to pass away unless I endure it” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

let your will be done

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “may what you want happen” or “do what you want to do” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 26:43

for

Here, **for** indicates that what follows is the reason why the three disciples were **sleeping**. Use the most natural way in your language to express a reason. Alternate translation: “since”(See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

their eyes were weighed down

The phrase **their eyes were weighed down** is an idiom meaning “they were very tired.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “they were very sleepy” or “they were very tired” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 26:44

a third time

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression.
Alternate translation: “for time three” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**)

Matthew 26:45

he comes & says

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “he came ... said” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

Are you still sleeping and resting

Jesus is not asking for information, but is using the question form here to scold Peter, James, and John. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “You should not still be sleeping and taking your rest!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Behold

Behold is used by Jesus here to get his disciples to pay attention to what is about to happen. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Pay attention” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the hour

Jesus is using the term **hour** to refer to a specific time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the specific time” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the Son of Man is handed over

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “someone is betraying the Son of Man” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the Son of Man is handed over

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: “I, the Son of Man, am being betrayed” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

into the hands of sinners

Here, **hands** refers to power or control. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “into the power of sinners” or “so that sinners will have power over him” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 26:46

Behold

Behold is used by Jesus here to get his disciples to pay attention to what is about to happen. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Pay attention" (See: **Metaphor (p. 1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 26:47

he still speaking

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “as he was still speaking” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

behold

Matthew uses the term **behold** to call the reader’s attention to what he is about to say. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use here. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

of the Twelve

See how you translated **the Twelve** in [26:14](#). (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1306)**)

and with him a large crowd

Matthew is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “and with him, there was a large crowd” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

clubs

A “club” is a hard piece of wood that a person uses for hitting people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “sticks for hitting people” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 26:48

Now

Now here is used to mark a break in the main story line. Here Matthew tells background information about Judas and the **signal** he planned to use to betray Jesus. (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

saying, “Whomever I kiss is he. Seize him

If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “saying that whomever he kissed was the one they should seize” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

Whomever I kiss

Alternate translation: “The one I kiss” or “The man whom I kiss”

Whomever I kiss

See the discussion in the General Notes to this chapter of the symbolic significance of a greeting **kiss ** in this culture. Alternate translation: “Whomever I greet him by kissing him on the cheek” or “Whomever I give a friendly greeting” (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/translate-symaction\]\]](#)) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

he

Here, **him** refers to Jesus, whom the crowd had come to arrest. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “is the one whom you want to arrest” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

Matthew 26:49

having approached Jesus

Alternate translation: "when Judas came up to Jesus"

he kissed him

See how you translated "kiss" in the previous verse. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p. 1372)**)

Matthew 26:50

for what are you present

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “do that for which you are here” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

they laid hands on

Here, **laid hands on** is an idiom which means to take hold of a person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “took hold of” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

they laid hands on Jesus and seized him

The phrases **laid hands on** and **seized** mean the same thing. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you could combine these phrases into one. Alternate translation: “seized Jesus” or “seized him” or “took hold of Jesus in order to arrest him” (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.1319)**)

Matthew 26:51

behold

Matthew uses the term **behold** here to call the reader's attention to what is about to happen. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use here. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 26:52

says

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you could use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “said” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

the ones having taken a sword

Here Jesus implies taking up **a sword** in order to kill someone. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the ones having taken up a sword to kill people” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

will perish by a sword

Here Jesus implies that these people **will perish** by someone killing them with **a sword**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “will be killed by someone else using a sword” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:53

Or do you think that I am not able to beg my Father, and he will provide me now with more than 12 legions of angels

Jesus is not asking for information but is using the question form here to emphasize the truth of what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “Surely you know that I am able to call upon my Father, and he will send me more than 12 legions of angels at once!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

do you think

Here, **you** is singular because Jesus is speaking to the person with the sword. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1228)**) (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1228)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

more than 12 legions of angels

The word “legion” is a military term that refers to a group of about 6,000 soldiers. Here Jesus means God would send a large number of **angels** and easily stop those who are arresting Jesus. The exact number of angels is not important. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “more than 12 very large groups of angels” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 26:54

How then

Here, **then** indicates that what follows is the result of the idea in the last verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Were I to do that, then how” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

that it is necessary to happen in this way

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “which say that this must happen” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

How then would the scriptures be fulfilled, that it is necessary to happen in this way

Jesus is not asking for information, but is using the question form here to emphasize the truth of what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “Then the scriptures would not be fulfilled that say that this must happen!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

would the scriptures be fulfilled

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “would I fulfill the scriptures” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the scriptures

Here, **the scriptures** refers to those parts of the Old Testament that refer to the atoning death of the Messiah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “those scriptures about what will happen to the Messiah” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:55

hour

Matthew is using the term **hour** to refer to a specific time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “point in time” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

As against a robber have you come out with swords and clubs to seize me

Jesus is not asking for information, but is using the question form here to rebuke **the crowd**. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “You did not need to come out with swords and clubs to seize me, as you would against a robber!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

clubs

See how you translated **clubs** in [26:47](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

the temple

Since only priests could enter **the temple** building, this refers to **the temple** courtyard. Jesus is using the word for the entire building to refer to one part of it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly, as in the UST. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

Matthew 26:56

the writings of the prophets

Here, **the writings of the prophets** refers to those parts of the Old Testament Scriptures that refer to the atoning death of the Messiah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “what the prophets wrote about the Messiah in the Scriptures” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “I would fulfill the writings of the prophets” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 26:57

led {him} away

If it would be helpful in your language, you could state more explicitly what the phrase they **led him away** means. Alternate translation: “took Jesus from where they had arrested him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

to Caiaphas the high priest, where

Here, **where** implies that they brought Jesus to the place where **Caiaphas** lived. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, which is where” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

were gathered together

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “had come together” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 26:58

But Peter was following him from a distance

Matthew provides this background information to help readers understand what happens next in the story. Use a natural way in your language for introducing background information. Alternate translation: "Now without getting to close, Peter followed Jesus" (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

And having entered inside

Alternate translation: "And after Peter went inside"

Matthew 26:59

Now the chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin

Now here indicates that Matthew is making **the chief priests** and the **Sanhedrin** the subject of this part of the story instead of Peter. Use a natural way in your language for indicating this change in subjects. Alternate translation: "Now the men who were the chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin" (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1272)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1272)**)

false testimony

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **testimony**, you could express the idea behind this word by using a verbal phrase, as modeled by the UST, or by expressing the idea in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

so that they might put him to death

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **death**, you can express the idea behind this word by using a verb form such as "kill" or by expressing it some other way. Alternate translation: "so that they could have him killed" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

they might put him to death

Because the Roman authorities did not allow the **Sanhedrin** to execute people, the **Sanhedrin** had to convince the Roman authorities to execute people for them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "they might convince the Roman authorities to put him to death" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:60

they did not find {any}, many false witnesses having approached

Matthew implies that what the **many false witnesses** said was not sufficient to condemn Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “though many false witnesses came forward, they found none whose testimony was sufficient to condemn Jesus” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:61

This one said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild {it} in three days

If a direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "This one said that he was able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

This one said

Matthew records these men saying **This one** as a disrespectful way to refer to Jesus and to avoid saying his name. If your language has a similar way to refer to someone in an indirect but derogatory manner, you may use it here. Alternate translation: "This so-and-so" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:62

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 26:63

I make you swear by the living God that you tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God

The **high priest** is using a statement to give a command. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more natural form for a command. Alternate translation: "I command you by the living God: tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God!" (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1368)**) (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1368)**)

by the living God

This phrase indicates that **the high priest** wants **Jesus** to swear solemnly with God as a witness. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "with the living God as your witness" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the living God

See how you translated this phrase in [16:16](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

us

Here, **us** refers to the **high priest** and the rest of the Jewish council, so **us** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**)

the Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 26:64

says

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “said” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

You said {it

See how you translated this in [26:25](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

But I say to you, from now you will see

Here, **you** is plural because Jesus is speaking to the high priest and to the other people who were present. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1228)**) (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1228)**)

from now

The phrase **from now on** could be: (1) an idiom that refers to some time in the future. Alternate translation: “in the future” (2) from the time of Jesus’ trial and onward. Alternate translation: “hereafter” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: “me, the Son of Man,” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1223)**)

of power

Here, **the Power** refers to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the powerful God” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

sitting at the right hand of power

To sit **at the right hand** of God is a symbolic act of receiving great honor and authority from God. If there is a gesture with a similar meaning in your culture, you could consider using it here in your translation, or you could use plain language to express what sitting at the right hand of someone meant in Jesus’ culture. Alternate translation: “sitting in a place of honor beside the Power” or “sitting in a place of honor next to the Power” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

coming on the clouds of heaven

Alternate translation: “riding to earth on the clouds of heaven”

Matthew 26:65

tore his robes

In Jesus' culture the act of tearing one's clothes was a symbolic act done to show outrage or grief. If there is a gesture with a similar meaning in your culture, you could use it here in your translation, or you could use plain language to express what tearing one's clothes meant in Jesus' culture. Alternate translation: "tore his garments in outrage" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Why do we still have need of witnesses

The **high priest** is not asking for information, but is using the question form here to emphasize that he and the members of the council do not need to hear from any more witnesses. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "We do not have need of any more witnesses!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Behold

The **high priest** uses the term **Behold** to get the Jewish council to focus their attention on what he is about to say. Alternate translation: "Indeed" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 26:66

He is deserving of death

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **death**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "He deserves to die" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 26:67

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 26:68

Prophecy to us

Those people hitting Jesus did not believe that he was a real prophet and could **Prophecy**. When they demanded that Jesus **Prophecy**, they were challenging him to do something they believed he could not do. They were only asking Jesus to **Prophecy** in order to mock him. If it would be helpful in your language, consider expressing the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Prove that you really are a prophet and prophecy” or “Prophecy, if you really are a prophet” (See: **Irony (p.1275)**) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**)

Christ

Those hitting Jesus did not really think he is the **Christ**. They call him this to mock him. If it would be helpful in your language, consider expressing the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you so-called Christ” or “you who claim to be the Christ” (See: **Irony (p.1275)**) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**)

Matthew 26:69

Now

Now here indicates that what follows in [26:69-75](#) is a new event that happened around the time of the events the story has just related. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "Around that time" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Matthew 26:70

I do not know what you are saying

Peter used these words to deny that he had been with Jesus. This does not mean that Peter was unable to understand what the servant girl said. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I have no idea what you are talking about!" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 26:71

the gateway

This **gateway** was an opening in the wall that went around the courtyard. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the gateway of the courtyard” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

says

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “said” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

Matthew 26:72

with an oath, "I do not know the man

Here, the phrase **with an oath** means "to subject oneself to an oath" or "to put oneself under an oath." Here, Peter is invoking God's curse upon himself if what he is saying is not true. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: "by swearing, 'God is my witness that I do not know the man'" or "by making an oath and saying, 'God is my witness that I do not know the man'" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:73

from them

The pronoun **them** refers to Jesus' disciples. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "from among his disciples" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

for

Here, **for** indicates that what follows is the reason why these people thought Peter was one of Jesus' disciples. Use the most natural way in your language to express a reason. Alternate translation: "since"(See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

your speech makes you evident

This phrase implies that Peter's **speech** had an accent like the accent of someone from Galilee. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the way you speak makes it evident that you are from Galilee" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 26:74

to curse

Here, the phrase **to curse** means “to invoke a curse from God upon oneself.” Here, Peter is invoking God’s curse upon himself if what he is saying is not true. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “to invoke God’s curse upon himself if what he was saying was not true” or “to ask God to curse him if what he was saying was false” or “to invoke God’s destruction upon himself if what he was saying was false” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

to swear, “I do not know the man

Here, the phrase **to swear** means “to subject oneself to an oath” or “to put oneself under an oath.” Here, Peter is invoking God’s curse upon himself if what he is saying is not true. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “to swear by saying, ‘God is my witness that I do not know the man whom you are talking about’” or “to promise by making an oath and saying, ‘God is my witness that I do not know the man whom you are talking about’” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

a rooster crowed

See how you translated **rooster** and “crow” in [26:34](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 26:75

that he had said: “Before a rooster crows you will deny me three times

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “that he had told him that before a rooster crowed, he would deny him three times” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1195)**)

Before a rooster crows you will deny me three times

See how you translated this statement in [26:34](#).

having gone outside

This expression means that Peter left the courtyard and went completely **outside** the house of the high priest. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Peter went out of the courtyard and away from the house” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27

Matthew 27 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

“The curtain of the temple was split in two”

The curtain in the temple was an important symbol that showed that people needed to have someone speak to God for them. They could not speak to God directly, because all people are sinful and God hates sin. God split the curtain to show that Jesus' people can now speak to God directly because Jesus has paid for their sins.

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried (27:60) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Sarcasm

In 27:28–29 the soldiers were insulting Jesus when they put a “scarlet robe” on him, placed a “crown of thorns” on his head, said, “Hail, King of the Jews,” and knelt down in front of him. These actions were symbolic of things that people would do to honor a king, but the soldiers did not really believe that Jesus was a king. By pretending that they thought Jesus was a king, and by putting a “crown of thorns” on Jesus' head instead of a regular crown, and by spitting on him and “striking him on his head” (see 27:30) the soldiers showed that they did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-irony\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/translate-symaction\]\]](#)) and **mock, mocker, mockery, ridicule, scoff at, laughingstock (p.1408)**)

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

Golgotha

The word “Golgotha” is an Aramaic word. Matthew used Greek letters to express the sound of this Aramaic word so that his readers would know how it sounded, and then he told them it meant “Place of a Skull.” You may also use the letters of your language to express the sound of this Aramaic word. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1193)**)

Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?

This is an Aramaic phrase. Matthew used Greek letters to express the sound of this Aramaic phrase so that his readers would know how it sounded, and then he told them that it meant “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” You may also use the letters of your language to express the sounds of these Aramaic words. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1193)**)

Matthew 27:1

Now

Now here indicates that what follows in this verse and the next verse is a new event that happened right after the time of the events the story has just related. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “And then” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

so as to put him to death

Because the Roman authorities did not allow the Jewish leaders to execute people, the Jewish leaders had to convince the Roman authorities to execute people for them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “so as to convince the Roman authorities to put him to death” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

so as to

Here, **so as to** introduces a purpose clause. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: “so that they could” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1170)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1170)**)

put him to death

See how you translated **death** in [26:59](#). (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 27:2

having bound him

The Jewish religious leaders commanded that Jesus should be **bound** but did not bind him themselves. It would have been their guards who actually bound Jesus and **led him away**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “commanding the guards to bind him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

they led {him} away

Here, **they** refers to the Jewish leaders and temple guards who were accusing Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Jewish authorities and their guards led him away” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

they led {him} away

Here Matthew implies that **they led** Jesus **away** from Caiaphas’ house. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “they led him away from Caiaphas’ house” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

handed {him} over to Pilate

Alternate translation: “delivered him over to Pilate” or “transferred control of Jesus to Pilate”

Matthew 27:3

Then

Then here indicates that Matthew has stopped telling the story of Jesus' trial so he can tell the story of how Judas killed himself. If your language has a way of showing that a new story is starting, you could use that here. Alternate translation: "Around that time" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

that he was condemned

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: "that the Jewish leaders had condemned Jesus" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders

This phrase refers to the money that **the chief priests** had given **Judas** to betray Jesus, as mentioned in [26:15](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "those 30 pieces of silver that they had given to him earlier to the chief priests and elders" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:4

innocent blood

Here, **blood** refers to the death of someone. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “a person who does not deserve to die” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

What {is that} to us

The Jewish leaders are not asking for information. They are using this question to emphasize that they do not care about what Judas has done. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “That is not our problem!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

us

Here, **us** refers to the Jewish leaders who are speaking to Judas, so **us** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1221)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1221)**)

You will see

This sentence is an idiom that the Jewish leaders used to deny being responsible for what Judas had done. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly or use an equivalent idiom in your language. Alternate translation: “That is your responsibility” or “That is none of our business” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 27:5

having thrown the pieces of silver into the temple

This clause means that Judas threw **the pieces of silver** into **the temple** building itself, where only priests were allowed to go. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “having thrown the pieces of silver into the temple building” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:6

It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Because it is the price of blood, it is not lawful to put this into the treasury" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

It is not lawful

Here, **lawful** refers to being permitted according to Jewish religious laws. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Our religious laws do not allow us" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

them

Here, **this** refers to the 30 **pieces of silver** that Judas threw into the temple. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "this silver" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

the treasury

The **treasury** refers to the place in the temple where they kept the money given to the temple. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the place where we keep the money that belongs to the temple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the price of blood

The **chief priests** are using the possessive form to describe a **price** that is paid for **blood**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: "the price that was paid for blood" (See: **Possession (p.1330)**) (See: **Possession (p.1330)**)

of blood

Here, **blood** refers to the death of a person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "of a man dying" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 27:7

them

Here, **them** refers to the 30 pieces of silver that Judas threw into the temple. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “those pieces of silver” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

the field of the potter

This phrase could refer to: (1) what the local people called the field. Alternate translation: “the Field of the Potter” (2) a **field** that had clay used by people who make pots. Alternate translation: “the field where people dug clay for making pots” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

for

Here, **for** introduces a purpose clause. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation (without a comma preceding): “so that they could make it” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1170)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1170)**)

for strangers

Here, **strangers** refers to people who died in Jerusalem and did not live in the city. They could have been Jews visiting from other areas or non-Jewish foreigners. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “for people from outside Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:8

that field has been called

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “people call that field” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

to this day

Here, **this day** refers to the time when Matthew wrote this book. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “up to the time when this book was written” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:9

was fulfilled {what} was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “this fulfilled what the prophet Jeremiah spoke” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

was fulfilled {& saying

Here, **saying** introduces a paraphrase of some Old Testament verses ([Zechariah 11:12–13](#), [Jeremiah 13:5](#)). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Matthew is quoting from important texts. Alternate translation: “was fulfilled. He had said in the Scriptures” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1346)**)

And

From **And** here to the end of the next verse, Matthew is paraphrasing some Old Testament verses ([Zechariah 11:12–13](#), [Jeremiah 13:5](#)). It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off all of this material with quotation marks or with whatever punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1348)**) (See: **Quote Markings (p.1348)**)

the price of the one having been priced, whom they from the sons of Israel priced

If your language does not use this passive form, you could state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the price the sons of Israel set on him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the sons of Israel

Here, the word **sons** means “descendants.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the descendants of Israel” or “the people of Israel” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 27:10

and they gave them for the field of the potter, just as the Lord directed me

This verse continues the paraphrase of [Zechariah 11:12-13](#) and [Jeremiah 13:5](#) that Matthew introduced in the previous verse. You may need to indicate this with a closing quotation mark at the end of this verse or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1348)**) (See: **Quote Markings (p.1348)**)

they gave them

Here, **they** refers to “the sons of Israel” and **it** refers to the “30 pieces of silver” mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the people of Israel gave the pieces of silver” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

they gave them for

This phrase means that the people bought **the field** with the pieces of silver. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “with it they bought” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the field of the potter

See how you translated this phrase in [27:7](#). (See: **Possession (p.1330)**) (See: **Possession (p.1330)**)

Matthew 27:11

Now

Now here indicates that what follows is the continuation of the story of Jesus' trial before Pilate, which began in [27:2](#). If your language has a way of continuing a story after a break from the main story line, you could use it here.

Jesus was stood

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "someone made Jesus stand" (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**)

You say {it

You say so is an idiom. Jesus is using it to acknowledge that what Pilate has said is true. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. See how you translated the similar phrase in [26:25](#). Alternate translation: "Yes, it is as you say" (See: **Idiom (p. 1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p. 1255)**)

Matthew 27:12

when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “when the chief priests and the elders accused him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 27:13

says

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “said” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you

Pilate is not asking for information, but is using the question form here to express how surprised he is that Jesus does not defend himself. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “Surely you hear everything they are bringing against you!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you

Pilate implies that he expects Jesus to defend himself in response to the accusations made against him by the Jewish leaders. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Do you not hear everything they are bringing against you? You should answer!” or “Do you not hear everything they are bringing against you? Why don’t you answer them?” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:14

not even to one word

This phrase could mean: (1) Jesus did not say anything in response to what Pilate said in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “with even a single word” (2) Jesus did not respond to even one of the accusations that the Jewish leaders had made against him. In this case **word** would be translated as “charge.” Alternate translation: “with regard to even one charge” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

so as to amaze

Here, **so as to** introduces a result clause. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a result clause. Alternate translation: “so that he amazed” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

Matthew 27:15

Now

Now here marks a break in the main story line so Matthew can give information to help the reader understand what happens in [27:17–26](#). Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

the festival

Here, **the festival** refers the Passover celebration. See how you translated the same use of this phrase in [26:5](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

to the crowd

The word **crowd** is a singular noun that refers to a group of people. If your language does not use nouns in that way, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “to the group of people” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1154)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1154)**)

Matthew 27:16

Now

Now is used here to mark a continuation of the break in the main story line which began in the preceding verse. Matthew introduces more background information, this time about **Barabbas**, to help readers understand what happens next. Use a natural way in your language for introducing background information. Alternate translation: “And” (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

they were holding

Here, **they** refers to the Roman authorities. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Roman authorities were holding” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

named

See how you translated **named** in [26:3](#). (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 27:17

they being gathered together

See how you translated **gathered together** in [26:3](#). (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the one called Christ

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “whom some people call the Christ” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 27:18

For

For here indicates that what follows is the reason why Pilate asked the question in the previous verse. Use the most natural way in your language to indicate a reason. Alternate translation: “Pilate asked this because” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

they handed him over

Here, **they** refers to the chief priests and elders of the Jewish people, the first **him** refers to Jesus, and the second **him** refers to Pilate. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the chief priests and elders had handed Jesus over to Pilate” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

because of envy

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **envy**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “because they envied him” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 27:19

Now, he sitting

Alternate translation: "But while Pilate was sitting"

the judgment seat

The **judgment seat** was a special chair in which a leader sat when he was making an official judgment. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **judgment**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "the seat used for judging people" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

sent

Here, **sent word** means that Pilate's **wife** sent a person to tell Pilate a message by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "sent someone to tell him a message" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Nothing to you and to that righteous one

This sentence is an idiom that indicates that Pilate's wife did not want Pilate to be involved with anything related to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Have nothing to do with that righteous one" or "Let there be nothing between you and that righteous one" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

for

For here indicates that what follows is the reason why Pilate's wife told him what she said in the previous sentence. Use the most natural way in your language to indicate a reason. Alternate translation: "I say this because" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

Matthew 27:20

But

Here, **now** is used to mark a break in the main story line. Matthew tells background information about why the people chose Barabbas to be released. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

they would ask for Barabbas but would destroy Jesus

Here Matthew implies that **the crowds** asked Pilate **for Barabbas** to be released from prison and for Roman soldiers to **kill Jesus**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “they would ask Pilate for Barabbas to be released from prison, but have the Roman soldiers kill Jesus” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:21

the two

Matthew quotes Pilate using the adjective **two*** as a noun in order to refer to the two men, Jesus and Barabbas*. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "the two prisoners" (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-nominaladj\]\]](#)) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p. 1306)**)

Matthew 27:22

says & They all say

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “said ... They all answered” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

the one called Christ

See how you translated this phrase in [27:17](#). (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Let him be crucified

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: “Crucify him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Let him be crucified

The Romans executed some criminals by nailing them to a wooden beam with a crossbar and setting the beam upright so that the criminals would slowly suffocate. That was what it meant to have someone **crucified**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Let him be nailed to a cross” or “Let him be executed!” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Let him be crucified

Here, the phrase **Let him be crucified** is an imperative, but since the crowd cannot command Pilate to do this, you could translate this phrase as an expression of what they want. Alternate translation: “We want you to nail him to a cross to execute him” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**)

Matthew 27:23

For what evil did he do

Pilate does not expect the crowd to tell him what Jesus has done wrong. Rather, he is using the question form to emphasize to the crowd that Jesus is innocent. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: "There is no reason to execute this man, because he has not done anything wrong!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1361)**)

evil

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **evil**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "evil thing" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Let him be crucified

See how you translated this in the previous verse. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 27:24

having seen that he is benefiting nothing, but instead a riot is happening

These two clauses indicate the reason why **Pilate** did what is described in the rest of the verse. Use the most natural way in your language to indicate a reason. Alternate translation: “because he saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but instead a riot was starting” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p. 1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

he is benefiting nothing, & a riot is happening

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “he was accomplishing nothing ... a riot was starting” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

washed his hands opposite the crowd

Pilate **washed his hands** as a sign to the people that he was not responsible for Jesus’ death. If there is a gesture with similar meaning in your culture, you could consider using it here in your translation. (See: **Symbolic Action (p. 1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

the blood

Here Pilate uses **blood** to refer to a person’s death. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the death” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

You will see

See how you translated the similar idiom in [27:4](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 27:25

His blood {be} on us and on our children

The phrase **be on us and on our children** is an idiom that means that the crowd was accepting the responsibility for what was happening. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "We and our children will be responsible for his blood" (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

blood

See how you translated the same use of **blood** in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

us & our

Here, **us** and **our** refer to the Jewish people, so **us** and **our** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**)

children

Here, **children** refers to future descendants in general, not only to the **children** of the people who were speaking. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "future generations" (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

Matthew 27:26

he released & he handed {him} over so that he might be crucified

The first two occurrences of **he** refer to Pilate, but **him** and the third occurrence of **he** refer to **Jesus**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Pilate released ... Pilate handed Jesus over so that Jesus would be crucified” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

he released Barabbas & having flogged Jesus

Matthew assumes that his readers will know that Pilate did not actually release **Barabbas** or flog **Jesus**, but ordered his soldiers to do those things. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “he commanded his soldiers to release Barabbas ... having commanded his soldiers to flog Jesus” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

having flogged

If your readers would not be familiar with this form of punishment, you could explain explicitly what flogging was. Flogging was a Roman penalty in which soldiers whipped a person with a whip to which were attached pieces of bone and metal to increase the whip’s capacity to do harm to the person being flogged. Alternate translation: “having whipped Jesus with a whip to which someone had attached pieces of bone and metal” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

he handed {him} over

Matthew is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “he handed him over to his soldiers” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

he might be crucified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “they would crucify him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 27:27

the Praetorium

The **Praetorium** was where the Roman **governor** stayed when he was in Jerusalem and where the Roman soldiers in Jerusalem lived. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the palace where the governor and his soldiers lived” or “the Roman governor’s residence” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the whole cohort

Matthew assumes that his readers will know that a **cohort** was a unit of Roman soldiers. A **cohort** normally numbered around 600 men but could sometimes refer to as few as 200 men. Here, by saying **the whole cohort**, Matthew most likely means that all the soldiers from the **cohort** who were on duty at that time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the whole unit of soldiers” or “the whole unit of soldiers who were on duty there” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:28

And having stripped him

Alternate translation: "And having pulled off his clothes"

they placed a scarlet cloak on him

In Roman culture, a **scarlet robe** was worn by kings. The soldiers put a **scarlet robe** on Jesus in order to mock him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. See the discussion of this in the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: "they put a scarlet robe on him in order to mock him by pretending that they believed he really was a king" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

scarlet

The word **scarlet** refers to a color. Since Mark records in [Mark 15:17](#) that the color of this **robe** was "purple," the color closely resembled both **scarlet** and "purple." If your readers would be unfamiliar with these colors, you could use the closest equivalent color that they would be familiar with. Alternate translation: "dark red" or "crimson" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 27:29

a crown of thorns

Matthew is using the possessive form to describe a **crown** that is made from branches with **thorns** on them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “a crown made from thorns” (See: **Possession (p.1330)**) (See: **Possession (p.1330)**)

thorns

Matthew uses the word **thorns** to refer to small branches with **thorns** on them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “thorny branches” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.1379)**)

a crown of thorns, they put {it} on his head and a reed in his right hand

In Roman culture, a **crown** was worn by a king, and a king held a scepter in his right hand. In order to mock Jesus, the soldiers put a **crown** made from **thorns** on Jesus' head and put **a reed in his right hand** that resembled a king's scepter. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. See the discussion of this in the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: “a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and a reed in his right hand in order to mock him by pretending that they believed he really was a king” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

having knelt down

The act of kneeling down was normally done as a way of honoring kings. The soldiers actually mean to communicate the opposite of the literal meaning of this action. These soldiers do not really believe that Jesus is a king, but rather, they have **knelt down** to mock him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could provide a brief explanation. See the discussion of this in the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: “having knelt down as if honoring a king” (See: **Irony (p.1275)**) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**)

they mocked him, saying, “Rejoice, King of the Jews

Hail was a common greeting, but the soldiers used this greeting in order to mock Jesus. They did not believe that Jesus was really the **King of the Jews**. They actually meant to communicate the opposite of the literal meaning of their words, as Matthew indicates when he says that **they mocked him**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “they mocked him by saying, ‘Hail, you so-called King of the Jews’” (See: **Irony (p.1275)**) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**)

Matthew 27:30

the reed

Here, *the reed* refers to the stick the soldiers had put in Jesus' right hand in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the reed from his hand" (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#)) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 27:32

Now

Now here indicates that this verse is a break in the main story line. Matthew does this in order to give information about **Simon** from **Cyrene**. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

coming out

Your language may say “going out” rather than **coming out** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. (See: **Go and Come (p.1234)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1234)**)

coming out

Here, **coming out** implies that Jesus and the soldiers came out of the city of Jerusalem. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “as they came out of the city” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

They pressed this one into service so that he would carry his cross

Here, **they** refers to the Roman soldiers, **he** refers to **Simon**, and **his** refers to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “whom the soldiers forced to go with them so that he could carry Jesus’ cross” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

Matthew 27:33

a place called Golgotha, which is called

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: “a place that people called Golgotha, which means” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Golgotha

Here Matthew writes out the sounds of this Jewish Aramaic word using Greek letters. Since Matthew translates the meaning later in the verse, you may write out this word using the most similar sounds in your language. See the discussion of **Golgotha** in the General Notes for this chapter. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1193)**) (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1193)**)

Matthew 27:34

wine mixed with gall to drink

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: “wine, which they had mixed with gall, to drink” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

gall

Here, **gall** refers to a bitter tasting liquid that was a pain-relieving medicine. Mark specifically identifies this as liquid that came from the myrrh plant (Mark 15:23. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “bitter, pain-relieving medicine”(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:35

casting a lot

The term **lots** refers to objects with different markings on various sides that were used to decide randomly among several possibilities. They were tossed onto the ground to see which marked side would come up on top. If your readers would not be familiar with **lots**, you could use a general expression for gambling. Alternate translation: "by gambling" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

casting a lot

Matthew implies that the soldiers were **casting lots** in order to determine who would take which pieces of Jesus' clothing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "by casting lots to decide who would take which ones" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:36

they were guarding him there

Matthew implies that the soldiers **kept guard over** Jesus to prevent anyone from rescuing him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “they kept guard over him there to prevent people from rescuing him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:37

his charge

Here, **the charge** refers to the written explanation of the crime Jesus was accused of committing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “a written explanation of the crime they were accusing him of doing” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

having been written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “which someone had written” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 27:38

are being crucified

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you could use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “were crucified” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

Then two robbers are being crucified with him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “Then the soldiers crucified two robbers with him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

one at his right and one at his left

Alternate translation: “one robber on his right side and one robber on his left side” or “one on a cross on the right side of him and one on a cross on the left side of him”

Matthew 27:39

wagging their heads

The people's action of **shaking their heads** at Jesus showed that they felt disdain for him and that they disapproved of him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a gesture with a similar meaning in your culture, or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "showing disdain for him by shaking their heads" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

Matthew 27:40

The one destroying the temple and in three days rebuilding {it

The people refer to Jesus by what he earlier prophesied that he would do. Alternate translation: “You who said you would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

If you are the Son of God, also come down from the cross

The people did not believe that Jesus was **the Son of God**, so they wanted him to prove it if it was true. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “If you are the Son of God, prove it by coming down from the cross” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 27:41

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 27:42

He saved others

Here, the Jewish leaders are using irony. They do not really believe that Jesus **saved** other people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "He supposedly saved other people" (See: **Irony (p.1275)**) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**)

He saved others

In context, the Jewish leaders are implicitly referring to how Jesus **saved others** by healing their diseases, releasing them from demon-possession, and saving them from other physical problems. They did not think that Jesus saved them from sin or divine judgment. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: "He supposedly saved other people by doing miracles for them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

He is the King of Israel! Let him come down

Here, the Jewish leaders are using irony. They do not really believe that Jesus is **the King of Israel**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "He calls himself the King of Israel. So let him come down" or "If he really is the King of Israel, let him come down" (See: **Irony (p.1275)**) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**)

He is the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him

The Jewish leaders are suggesting a hypothetical situation since they do not believe that Jesus actually has the power to **come down from the cross**. Use whatever form in your language would be most natural to communicate this. Alternate translation: "Suppose he really is the King of Israel. Then let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe that he is the King of Israel" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1175)**)

Matthew 27:43

He has trusted in God; let him deliver {him} now, if he wants him

Here, the Jewish leaders are using irony. They do not really believe that Jesus **has trusted in God**, that God would **rescue him**, or that God **wants him**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "He claims to trust in God. So let God rescue him now, if he even wants him" or "If he really trusts in God and God really wants him, then let God rescue him now" (See: **Irony (p.1275)**) (See: **Irony (p.1275)**)

For he said, 'I am the Son of God

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would not be used in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "For he said that he is the Son of God." (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

the Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 27:44

the robbers having being crucified with him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the robbers whom the soldiers were crucifying with him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 27:45

Now

Now here indicates that what follows is a new event that happened after the time of the events the story has just related. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “And then” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

the sixth hour & the ninth hour

If you decide to translate these phrases in the way that the biblical culture reckoned time, but your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: “hour six ... hour nine” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**)

the sixth hour

In this culture, people began counting the hours each day beginning around daybreak at six o'clock in the morning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this in the way the people of your culture reckon time. Alternate translation: “noon” or “12:00 PM”

darkness happened

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **darkness**, you could express it in a different way. Alternate translation: “it became dark” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

the ninth hour

In this culture, people began counting the hours each day beginning around daybreak at six o'clock in the morning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this in the way the people of your culture reckon time. Alternate translation: Alternate translation: “3:00 PM”

Matthew 27:46

the ninth hour

See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse.

cried out with a loud voice

This is an idiom that means **Jesus** raised the volume of his **voice**. Alternate translation: “cried out loudly” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani

This sentence is what **Jesus cried out** in the Jewish Aramaic language. Jesus is quoting from [Psalm 22:1](#). See the discussion of this sentence in the General Notes for this chapter. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1193)**) (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1193)**)

Matthew 27:47

having heard {it}, were saying

Matthew implies that the people did not understand what Jesus said. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “having heard it, misunderstood and said” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:48

with vinegar

Here, **sour wine** refers to the inexpensive **wine** that common people in Jesus' culture would usually drink to quench thirst. Therefore, the person who gave Jesus this **sour wine** was acting kindly. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. See how **sour wine** is translated in [Mark 15:36](#) and [John 19:29](#). Alternate translation: "with common wine" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

a sponge

A **sponge** is a small object that can soak up and hold liquid that comes out of it when the **sponge** is squeezed. If your readers would not be familiar with this object, you could use the name of something your readers would use for soaking up liquid, or you could use a general expression. See how **sponge** is translated in [Mark 15:36](#) and [John 19:29](#). Alternate translation: "something to soak up liquid" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 27:49

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Matthew 27:50

having cried out again with a loud voice

See how you translated **cried out with a loud voice** in [27:46](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

released his spirit

This clause is an idiom that means “willingly died.” If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. See how a similar phrase is translated in [John 19:30](#). Alternate translation: “he allowed himself to die” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 27:51

behold

Matthew uses the term **behold** here to call the reader's attention to the surprising event that he describes next in the story. Your language may have a similar expression that you could use here. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

the curtain of the temple was split in two from top to bottom

See the General Notes to this chapter for an explanation of the symbolic significance of this action. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1372)**)

was split & the earth was shaken, and the rocks were split

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: "God tore ... God shook the earth, and God split the rocks apart" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the curtain of the temple

Matthew assumes that his readers will know that he is referring to **the curtain** that separated the Most Holy Place from the rest of **the temple**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the curtain in front of the Most Holy Place" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:52

And the tombs were opened, and many bodies

If your language does not use this passive form, you can state this in active form. Alternate translation: “And God opened the tombs, and he raised many of the bodies” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

having fallen asleep

Here, **fallen asleep** refers to being dead. This is a polite way of referring to something unpleasant. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different polite way of referring to this or use plain language. Alternate translation: “who had passed away” or “who had died” (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.1215)**)

were raised

Here, **raised** is an idiom that refers to causing someone who has died to become alive again. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “were caused to live again” or “were made alive again” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 27:53

having come out from the tombs after his resurrection, they entered into the holy city

This could mean: (1) the saints came **out from the tombs** before Jesus came back to life, but did not enter **into the holy city** until after Jesus came back to life. Alternate translation: "having come out from the tombs, after his resurrection they entered into the holy city" (2) the saints came **out from the tombs** after Jesus came back to life. Alternate translation: "having come out from the tombs after his resurrection, they entered into the holy city"

Matthew 27:54

Now

Now here indicates that what follows is a new event that happened right after the events told in [27:50-51](#). Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “And then” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

the ones with him guarding Jesus

This phrase refers to the other soldiers who were guarding Jesus with **the centurion**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the other soldiers with him who were guarding Jesus” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

having seen the earthquake and the things having happened

Matthew implies that the soldiers felt **the earthquake** and saw **the things that happened**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

a Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 27:55

serving him

This phrase indicates the purpose for the **women** following **Jesus from Galilee**. Use the most natural way in your language to indicate a purpose. Alternate translation: “for the purpose of serving him” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1170)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1170)**)

Matthew 27:56

Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph

Because **Mary** was a very common name at this time and because Matthew refers to two different women with the name **Mary** in this verse, he provides this background information to help readers know to which **Mary** he is referring to in each case. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "Mary, who came from Magdala, and another Mary, who was the mother of James and Joseph" (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

of James & Joseph

James and **Joseph** were common names for men at this time. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

of the sons of Zebedee

See how you translated the similar phrase in [26:37](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:57

Now

Now here indicates that what follows in [27:57-61](#) is a new event that happened right after the time of the events the story has just related. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “After that” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Arimathea

Arimathea is the name of a city in Israel. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1239)**)

who also himself was disciplined by Jesus

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “whom Jesus had disciplined as well” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 27:58

asked for the body of Jesus

The reason that Joseph asked **Pilate for the body of Jesus** was so that he could bury it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: “asked for permission to get the body of Jesus in order to bury it” or “asked that he be given the body of Jesus so that he could bury it” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Then Pilate commanded {it} to be given {to him}

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “Then Pilate ordered the soldiers to give it to him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 27:59

Joseph, having taken the body, wrapped it

Matthew assumes that his readers would know that other people helped **Joseph** take Jesus' body and prepare it for the tomb. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Joseph and the people who helped him, having taken the body, wrapped it" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

wrapped it in a clean linen cloth

This was the burial custom in this culture. If your readers would not be familiar with such a custom, you could describe it more specifically, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: "wrapped it in a fine linen burial cloth" or "prepared it for burial" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

in a clean linen cloth

The term **linen cloth** refers to a high quality cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant. If your readers would be unfamiliar with **linen**, you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: "a fine cloth" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 27:60

which he had cut in the rock

Matthew implies that Joseph had hired workers to **cut** the tomb **into the rock**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “that he had had workers cut into the rock” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

put it & having rolled a large stone against

Matthew assumes that his readers would know that other people helped **Joseph** when he **laid** Jesus’ body in the **tomb** and **rolled a large stone** over the entrance. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Joseph and the people who helped him laid it ... they rolled a large stone against” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 27:61

opposite the tomb

Alternate translation: "across from the tomb"

Matthew 27:62

Now

Now here indicates that what follows in [27:62–66](#) is a new event that happened after the time of the events the story has just related. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “After those things happened,” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

the next day, which is after the Day of Preparation

Here, **the Preparation** refers to the day before the Sabbath on which Jews would prepare for the Sabbath so that they would not have to do work on that day. Therefore, **the next day** here refers to the Sabbath. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the next day, which was after the day on which Jews prepared for the Sabbath” or “the next day, which was the Sabbath” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

were gathered together

See how you translated **gathered together** in [26:3](#). (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 27:63

that deceiver & still living

Alternate translation: "Jesus, the deceiver, when he was alive"

said, & After three days I am being raised up

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would not be used in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "said that after three days he would be raised up" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

After three days

Jesus was referring to **three days** after he died. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "After three days of being dead" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

I am being raised up

The Jewish leaders quote Jesus using the present tense to refer to a future event. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the future tense in your translation. Alternate translation: "I will be raised up" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

I am being raised up

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: "God will raise me up" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

I am being raised up

Here, **raised up** is an idiom that refers to a dead person becoming alive again. See how you translated **raised up** in [20:19](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 27:64

command

Here, **command** is an imperative, but since the Jewish leaders cannot command Pilate to do this, you could translate this phrase as an expression of what they want. Alternate translation: “we want you to command” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1258)**)

the tomb to be secured

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “your soldiers to make the tomb secure” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the third day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “day three” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**)

having come

Your language may say “gone” rather than **come** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: “having gone” (See: **Go and Come (p.1234)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.1234)**)

having come

The Jewish leaders imply here that Jesus’ **disciples** might **come** to the tomb in which Jesus was buried. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “having come to Jesus’ tomb” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

say to the people, ‘He has been raised up from the dead,’ and

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would not be used in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “might say to the people that he has been raised up from the dead, and” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

He has been raised up

See how you translated **raised up** in the previous verse. (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

from the dead

Here, the phrase translated **the dead ones** refers to **dead** people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “from the place where dead people are” (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

the last deception

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **deception**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “the last time they deceive people” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

Matthew 27:65

a guard

The word **guard** here is a singular noun that refers to a group of soldiers. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: “a group of guards” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1154)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1154)**)

Matthew 27:66

having sealed the stone

This means that a seal was put on the **stone** that covered the entrance of Jesus' **tomb**. The seal would break if someone moved the **stone**, thus indicating that the **stone** was moved. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "having placed a seal on the stone that was against the entrance of the tomb" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the guard

See how you translated the same use of **guard** in the previous verse. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1154)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1154)**)

Matthew 28

Matthew 28 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried ([28:1](#)) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter. (See: **grave, gravediggers, tomb, burial place (p.1405)**)

“Make disciples”

The last two verses ([28:19–20](#)) are commonly known as “The Great Commission” because they contain a very important command given to all Christians. Christians are to “make disciples” by going to people, sharing the gospel with them, and training them to live according to what Jesus commanded. (See: **disciple (p.1402)**)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

An angel of the Lord

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about angels in white clothing appearing to the women at Jesus’ tomb. Two of the authors called them men, but that is only because the angels looked like male humans. Two of the authors wrote about two angels, but the other two authors wrote about only one of them. It is best to translate each of these passages as it appears in the ULT without trying to make the passages all say exactly the same thing. (See: [Matthew 28:1–2](#) and [Mark 16:5](#) and [Luke 24:4](#) and [John 20:12](#))

Matthew 28:1

Now

Now here indicates that what follows in this verse and the next verse is a new event that happened soon after the time of the events the story has just related in the previous chapter. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “And then” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Now after the Sabbath, at the dawning on the first of the week

Alternate translation: “Now after the Sabbath ended, as the sun came up on the first day of the week”

on the first of the week

Matthew uses **first** to imply the **first** day **of the week**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “on the first day of the week” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the first of the week

Here Matthew is actually using a cardinal number, “one,” in the original language to mean **first**. If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can also use a cardinal number here in your translation. Alternate translation: “on day one of the week” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1313)**)

the other Mary

This **Mary** is the mother of James and Joseph, as stated in [27:56](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. See how you translated **the other Mary** in [27:61](#) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 28:2

behold

Matthew uses the term **behold** here to call the reader's attention to the suddenness of the event that he describes next in the story. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "all of the sudden" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

for

Here, **for** indicates that what follows is the reason why the **earthquake happened**. Use the most natural way in your language to indicate a reason. Alternate translation: "due to the fact that" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1179)**)

rolled away the stone

This clause implies that the angel **rolled away the stone** that was covering the entrance to the tomb in which Jesus' body had been placed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "rolled away the stone that was covering the entrance of the tomb" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 28:3

Now

Now here indicates that this verse is a break in the main story line. Matthew does this in order to give information about an angel at Jesus' tomb. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**) (See: **Background Information (p.1138)**)

was like lightning

The point of this comparison is that the **appearance** of the angel was very bright, as **lightning** is very bright. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: "was extremely bright, like lightning" (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

his clothing white as snow

Matthew is leaving out a word that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous clause. Alternate translation: "his clothing was white like snow" (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.1207)**)

white as snow

The point of this comparison is that the **clothing** of the angel was pure **white**, as **snow** is pure white. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: "was pure white, like snow" (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

white as snow

Matthew is comparing the angel's clothing to **snow** because **snow** is a very white substance. If your readers would not be familiar with **snow**, you could use the name of something in your area that is known to be very white, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: "white as cotton" or "very, very white" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1386)**)

Matthew 28:4

the ones guarding were shaken from the fear of him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the guards’ fear of him caused them to shake” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

became as dead

Matthew compares **the guards** to **dead men** because **dead men** lie on the ground and do not move. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “fell to the ground and lay still” (See: **Simile (p.1365)**) (See: **Simile (p.1365)**)

Matthew 28:5

to the women

Here, **the women** refers to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary mentioned in [28:1](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the one having been crucified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “whom people have crucified” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

Matthew 28:6

he was raised up

See how you translated this phrase in [27:64](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

Matthew 28:7

having gone quickly

Here the angel is using a statement to give a command. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this as a command, as in the UST. (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1368)**) (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1368)**)

say to his disciples, 'He has been raised up from the dead. And behold, he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "tell his disciples that he has been raised up from the dead ones. And behold, he is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see him" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

He has been raised up from the dead

See how you translated this sentence in [27:64](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**) (See: **Idiom (p.1255)**)

behold, & Behold

The angel uses **behold** twice in this verse because he wants the disciples to focus their attention on what he is saying. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "pay attention ... Pay attention to what" (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

you & you will see & to you

All occurrences of **you** are plural in this verse and refer to the disciples. You may need to translate these as plural in your language. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1228)**) (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1228)**)

Matthew 28:8

they ran

Here, **they** refers to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary mentioned in [28:1](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary ran” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

Matthew 28:9

behold

Matthew uses the term **behold** here to call the reader's attention to the suddenness of the event that he describes next in the story. See how you translated the same use of **behold** in [28:2](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

seized his feet

Here, Matthew implies that the two women knelt down on the ground when they **took hold of his feet**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "got down on their knees and held onto his feet" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 28:10

says

To call attention to a development in the story, Matthew uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you could use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “said” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**) (See: **Predictive Past (p.1333)**)

to my brothers

Here Jesus refers to his disciples as if they were all **brothers** in his family. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “my disciples” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

Matthew 28:11

Now

Now here indicates that what follows in 28:11–15 is a new event that happened during the time of the events the story has just related in 28:9–10. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “At the time” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

they

Here, **they** refers to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. See how you translated **they** in 28:8. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

behold

Matthew uses the term **behold** here to call the reader’s attention to what is about to happen. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use here. (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

of the guard

Here, **the guards** refers to the Roman soldiers who had been guarding Jesus’ tomb. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “of the Roman guards who had been at the tomb” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the city

Here, **the city** refers to Jerusalem. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the city of Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 28:12

having been gathered together

See how you translated **gathered together** in [26:3](#). (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1126)**)

they gave

Here, **they** refers to the chief priests mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the chief priests gave” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1339)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1339)**)

Matthew 28:13

Say, 'His disciples, having come at night, stole him, we sleeping

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Say that his disciples, having come by night, stole him while we are sleeping" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**) (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1354)**)

we

Here, **we** refers to the Roman soldiers who guarded Jesus' tomb, so **we** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1221)**)

Matthew 28:14

this is heard by the governor

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the governor hears this report” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

the governor

Here, **the governor** refers to Pilate, as indicated in [27:2](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Pilate” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

we

Here, **we** refers to the Jewish chief priests and elders, so **we** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1221)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1221)**)

will persuade

Here the chief priests and elders imply that they will **persuade the governor** not to punish the soldiers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “will persuade him not to punish you” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 28:15

did as they were taught

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: “did what the priests had told them to do” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

today

Here, **today** refers to the time when Matthew wrote this book. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “when this book was written” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 28:16

Now

Now here indicates that what follows in [28:16–20](#) is a new event that happened after the time of the events the story has just related. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “And then” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1266)**)

Matthew 28:17

they doubted

Matthew implies that **some** of the disciples **doubted** that the person they were seeing was really Jesus and that he had really become alive again. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "some of the disciples doubted that it was Jesus and that he had become alive again" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

Matthew 28:18

All authority was given to me

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "My Father has given me all authority" (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.1126)**)

All authority was given to me

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **authority** you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "I have been authorized to rule" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1121)**)

in heaven and on the earth

Here, **heaven** and **earth** are used together to refer to everyone and everything everywhere. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "over everything everywhere" (See: **Merism (p.1286)**) (See: **Merism (p.1286)**)

Matthew 28:19

Having gone

In this clause Jesus is using a statement to give a command. If it would be helpful in your language, you can use a more natural form for a command, as in the UST. (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1368)**) (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1368)**)

all the nations

Here, **nations** refers to people who live in **all the nations**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “of people in all the nations” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

disciple all the nations

The phrase **make disciples** implies telling people the gospel message so that they can believe it and become Jesus’ **disciples**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. See the discussion of this phrase in the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: “preach the gospel to people of all the nations so that they will become Jesus’ disciples” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

the name

Here, **name** represents the authority of **the Father**, **the Son**, and **the Holy Spirit**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the authority” (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.1302)**)

into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

Here **in name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit** could mean: (1) by being baptized, the **disciples of all the nations** would be acknowledging God’s authority over their lives. Alternate translation: “to express their allegiance to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (2) **the name** is the authority by which **disciples** are baptized. Alternate translation: “by the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1134)**)

of the Father, & of the Son

Father and **Son** are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**) (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1389)**)

Matthew 28:20

teaching

Jesus is using a statement to give a command. If it would be helpful in your language, you can use a more natural form for a command, as in the UST. (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1368)**) (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1368)**)

behold

Here Jesus uses **behold** to emphasize the truth of what he is about to say. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “truly” (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.1294)**)

all the days

Alternate translation: “all the time”

until the end of the age

Alternate translation: “until the end of this age” or “until the end of the world”



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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: [Matthew 21:23](#); [Matthew 22:16](#); [Matthew 22:29](#)

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Referenced in: [Matthew 3 General Notes](#); [Matthew 6:13](#); [Matthew 6:14](#); [Matthew 6:15](#); [Matthew 7:2](#); [Matthew 7:13](#); [Matthew 7:14](#); [Matthew 7:27](#); [Matthew 7:28](#); [Matthew 9:6](#); [Matthew 9:8](#); [Matthew 9:35](#); [Matthew 10:1](#); [Matthew 10:21](#); [Matthew 12:18](#); [Matthew 12:20](#); [Matthew 12:31](#); [Matthew 12:36](#); [Matthew 13:21](#); [Matthew 13:35](#); [Matthew 16:28](#); [Matthew 20:18](#); [Matthew 21:23](#); [Matthew 21:27](#); [Matthew 21:32](#); [Matthew 22:29](#); [Matthew 22:30](#); [Matthew 22:31](#); [Matthew 24:12](#); [Matthew 24:14](#); [Matthew 24:20](#); [Matthew 25:31](#); [Matthew 26:10](#); [Matthew 26:28](#); [Matthew 26:29](#); [Matthew 26:41](#); [Matthew 26:59](#); [Matthew 26:66](#); [Matthew 27:1](#); [Matthew 27:18](#); [Matthew 27:19](#); [Matthew 27:23](#); [Matthew 27:45](#); [Matthew 27:64](#); [Matthew 28:18](#)

Active or Passive

Some languages use both active and passive sentences. In active sentences, the subject does the action. In passive sentences, the subject is the one that receives the action. Here are some examples with their subjects bolded:

- Active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
- Passive: **The house** was built in 2010.

Translators whose languages do not use passive sentences will need to know how they can translate passive sentences that they find in the Bible. Other translators will need to decide when to use a passive sentence and when to use the active form.

This page answers the question: *What do active and passive mean, and how do I translate passive sentences?*

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

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

Verbs ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

Some languages have both active and passive forms of sentences.

- In the active form, the subject does the action and is always mentioned.
- In the passive form, the action is done to the subject, and the one who does the action is not always mentioned.

In the examples of active and passive sentences below, we have bolded the subject.

- active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
- passive: **The house** was built by my father in 2010.
- passive: **The house** was built in 2010. (This does not tell who did the action.)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

All languages use active forms. Some languages use passive forms, and some do not. Some languages use passive forms only for certain purposes, and the passive form is not used for the same purposes in all of the languages that use it.

Purposes for the Passive

- The speaker is talking about the person or thing the action was done to, not about the person who did the action.
- The speaker does not want to tell who did the action.
- The speaker does not know who did the action.

Translation Principles Regarding the Passive

- Translators whose language does not use passive forms will need to find another way to express the idea.
- Translators whose language has passive forms will need to understand why the passive is used in a particular sentence in the Bible and decide whether or not to use a passive form for that purpose in his translation of the sentence.

Examples From the Bible

Then their shooters shot at your soldiers from off the wall, and some of the king's servants **were killed**, and your servant Uriah the Hittite **was killed** too. (2 Samuel 11:24 ULT)

This means that the enemy's shooters shot and killed some of the king's servants, including Uriah. The point is what happened to the king's servants and Uriah, not who shot them. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on the king's servants and Uriah.

When the men of the city arose early in the morning, and see, the altar of Baal **was torn down**.
(Judges 6:28a ULT)

The men of the town saw what had happened to the altar of Baal, but they did not know who broke it down. The purpose of the passive form here is to communicate this event from the perspective of the men of the town.

It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)

This describes a situation in which a person ends up in the sea with a millstone around his neck. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on what happens to this person. Who does these things to the person is not important.

Translation Strategies

If your language would use a passive form for the same purpose as in the passage that you are translating, then use a passive form. If you decide that it is better to translate without a passive form, here are some strategies that you might consider.

(1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who or what did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action. (2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who or what did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone." (3) Use a different verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21b ULT)

The king's servants gave Jeremiah a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

(2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."

It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)

It would be better for him if **they were to put** a millstone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea. It would be better for him if **someone were to put** a heavy stone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea.

(3) Use a different verb in an active sentence.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21 ULT)

He **received** a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Abstract Nouns (p.1119)

Word Order ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 20:28](#); [Matthew 21:2](#); [Matthew 21:4](#); [Matthew 21:13](#); [Matthew 21:21](#); [Matthew 22:3](#); [Matthew 22:4](#); [Matthew 22:10](#); [Matthew 22:14](#)

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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 (p.1119)
[Word Order \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: Matthew 1 General Notes; Matthew 1:16; Matthew 1:18; Matthew 1:20; Matthew 1:22; Matthew 2:5; Matthew 2:15; Matthew 2:16; Matthew 2:17; Matthew 2:18; Matthew 2:23; Matthew 3:3; Matthew 3:6; Matthew 3:10; Matthew 3:13; Matthew 3:16; Matthew 4:1; Matthew 4:4; Matthew 4:6; Matthew 4:7; Matthew 4:10; Matthew 4:12; Matthew 4:14; Matthew 4:24; Matthew 5:4; Matthew 5:6; Matthew 5:9; Matthew 5:10; Matthew 5:13; Matthew 5:14; Matthew 5:19; Matthew 5:21; Matthew 5:24; Matthew 5:25; Matthew 5:27; Matthew 5:29; Matthew 5:31; Matthew 5:32; Matthew 5:33; Matthew 5:38; Matthew 5:43; Matthew 6:1; Matthew 6:2; Matthew 6:5; Matthew 6:7; Matthew 6:9; Matthew 6:10; Matthew 6:29; Matthew 6:30; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 7:1; Matthew 7:2; Matthew 7:7; Matthew 7:19; Matthew 7:24; Matthew 7:25; Matthew 7:26; Matthew 8:3; Matthew 8:8; Matthew 8:9; Matthew 8:12; Matthew 8:13; Matthew 8:16; Matthew 8:17; Matthew 8:24; Matthew 8:28; Matthew 8:33; Matthew 9:2; Matthew 9:5; Matthew 9:15; Matthew 9:17; Matthew 9:21; Matthew 9:22; Matthew 9:25; Matthew 9:29; Matthew 9:30; Matthew 9:32; Matthew 9:33; Matthew 10:18; Matthew 10:19; Matthew 10:22; Matthew 10:26; Matthew 10:29; Matthew 10:30; Matthew 11:5; Matthew 11:7; Matthew 11:10; Matthew 11:11; Matthew 11:19; Matthew 11:20; Matthew 11:21; Matthew 11:23; Matthew 11:27; Matthew 12:13; Matthew 12:17; Matthew 12:22; Matthew 12:25; Matthew 12:31; Matthew 12:32; Matthew 12:33; Matthew 12:37; Matthew 12:39; Matthew 12:44; Matthew 13 General Notes; Matthew 13:2; Matthew 13:6; Matthew 13:11; Matthew 13:12; Matthew 13:19; Matthew 13:35; Matthew 13:44; Matthew 13:47; Matthew 13:48; Matthew 13:57; Matthew 14 General Notes; Matthew 14:2; Matthew 14:8; Matthew 14:9; Matthew 14:11; Matthew 14:20; Matthew 14:36; Matthew 15:12; Matthew 15:13; Matthew 15:22; Matthew 15:24; Matthew 15:28; Matthew 16:4; Matthew 16:21; Matthew 17:2; Matthew 17:18; Matthew 17:22; Matthew 17:23; Matthew 18:6; Matthew 18:8; Matthew 18:9; Matthew 18:16; Matthew 18:19; Matthew 18:24; Matthew 18:25; Matthew 18:34; Matthew 19:5; Matthew 19:11; Matthew 19:12; Matthew 19:13; Matthew 19:25; Matthew 19:26; Matthew 20:18; Matthew 20:19; Matthew 20:23; Matthew 20:28; Matthew 21:2; Matthew 21:4; Matthew 21:10; Matthew 21:13; Matthew 21:21; Matthew 21:42; Matthew 21:43; Matthew 21:44; Matthew 22:3; Matthew 22:4; Matthew 22:7; Matthew 22:8; Matthew 22:10; Matthew 22:14; Matthew 22:29; Matthew 22:30; Matthew 22:31; Matthew 22:41; Matthew 23:5; Matthew 23:7; Matthew 23:8; Matthew 23:10; Matthew 23:12; Matthew 23:37; Matthew 24:2; Matthew 24:6; Matthew 24:9; Matthew 24:10; Matthew 24:11; Matthew 24:12; Matthew 24:13; Matthew 24:14; Matthew 24:15; Matthew 24:22; Matthew 24:24; Matthew 24:28; Matthew 24:29; Matthew 24:40; Matthew 24:41; Matthew 24:43; Matthew 25:7; Matthew 25:10; Matthew 25:29; Matthew 25:32; Matthew 25:34; Matthew 25:41; Matthew 26:2; Matthew 26:3; Matthew 26:9; Matthew 26:13; Matthew 26:14; Matthew 26:24; Matthew 26:28; Matthew 26:31; Matthew 26:32; Matthew 26:33; Matthew 26:36; Matthew 26:42; Matthew 26:45; Matthew 26:54; Matthew 26:56; Matthew 26:57; Matthew 27:3; Matthew 27:8; Matthew 27:9; Matthew 27:11; Matthew 27:12; Matthew 27:16; Matthew 27:17; Matthew 27:22; Matthew 27:23; Matthew 27:26; Matthew 27:33; Matthew 27:34; Matthew 27:37; Matthew 27:38; Matthew 27:44; Matthew 27:51; Matthew 27:52; Matthew 27:57; Matthew 27:58; Matthew 27:62; Matthew 27:63; Matthew 27:64; Matthew 28:4; Matthew 28:5; Matthew 28:12; Matthew 28:14; Matthew 28:15; Matthew 28:18

Apostrophe

Description

An apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him. He does this to tell his listeners his message or feelings about that person or thing in a very strong way.

This page answers the question: *What is the figure of speech called an apostrophe?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use apostrophe, and readers could be confused by it. They may wonder who the speaker is talking to, or think that the speaker is crazy to talk to things or people who cannot hear.

Examples from the Bible

Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on you. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

King Saul was killed on Mount Gilboa, and David sang a sad song about it. By telling these mountains that he wanted them to have no dew or rain, he showed how sad he was.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to you. (Luke 13:34a ULT)

Jesus was expressing his feelings for the people of Jerusalem in front of his disciples and a group of Pharisees. By speaking directly to Jerusalem as though its people could hear him, Jesus showed how deeply he cared about them.

He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar, altar!** This is what Yahweh says, 'See, ... on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

The man of God spoke as if the altar could hear him, but he really wanted the king, who was standing there, to hear him.

Translation Strategies

If apostrophe would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. But if this way of speaking would be confusing to your people, let the speaker continue speaking to the people that are listening to him as he tells **them** his message or feelings about the people or thing that cannot hear him. See the example below.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar, altar!** This is what Yahweh says, 'See, ... on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

He said this about the altar: "This is what Yahweh says **about this altar**. 'See, ... they will burn people's bones on **it**.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on **you**. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

As for these mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on **them**. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 2:6](#); [Matthew 11:21](#); [Matthew 11:23](#); [Matthew 23:37](#)

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.

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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.

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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.**"

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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.

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Next we recommend you learn about:

Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 16:1](#); [Matthew 21:4](#); [Matthew 21:5](#); [Matthew 21:12](#); [Matthew 21:21](#); [Matthew 21:23](#); [Matthew 22:4](#); [Matthew 22:7](#); [Matthew 22:16](#); [Matthew 22:29](#); [Matthew 22:44](#)

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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.

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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.

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Translation Strategies

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Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 1:11](#); [Matthew 1:12](#); [Matthew 1:18](#); [Matthew 1:22](#); [Matthew 2:2](#); [Matthew 2:11](#); [Matthew 2:13](#); [Matthew 2:16](#); [Matthew 3:9](#); [Matthew 3:11](#); [Matthew 4:6](#); [Matthew 4:8](#); [Matthew 4:13](#); [Matthew 4:16](#); [Matthew 4:18](#); [Matthew 5:11](#); [Matthew 5:14](#); [Matthew 5:18](#); [Matthew 5:21](#); [Matthew 5:23](#); [Matthew 5:25](#); [Matthew 5:38](#); [Matthew 5:41](#); [Matthew 6:1](#); [Matthew 6:8](#); [Matthew 6:9](#); [Matthew 6:16](#); [Matthew 6:17](#); [Matthew 7:1](#); [Matthew 7:2](#); [Matthew 7:7](#); [Matthew 7:12](#); [Matthew 7:22](#); [Matthew 7:24](#); [Matthew 8:2](#); [Matthew 8:4](#); [Matthew 8:10](#); [Matthew 8:20](#); [Matthew 8:29](#); [Matthew 8:31](#); [Matthew 9:1](#); [Matthew 9:4](#); [Matthew 9:12](#); [Matthew 9:16](#); [Matthew 9:27](#); [Matthew 9:34](#); [Matthew 10:5](#); [Matthew 10:8](#); [Matthew 10:11](#); [Matthew 10:15](#); [Matthew 10:20](#); [Matthew 10:29](#); [Matthew 10:39](#); [Matthew 10:40](#); [Matthew 10:41](#); [Matthew 10:42](#); [Matthew 11:3](#); [Matthew 11:7](#); [Matthew 11:17](#); [Matthew 11:18](#); [Matthew 11:22](#); [Matthew 11:24](#); [Matthew 12:1](#); [Matthew 12:2](#); [Matthew 12:4](#); [Matthew 12:5](#); [Matthew 12:25](#); [Matthew 12:38](#); [Matthew 12:40](#); [Matthew 13 General Notes](#); [Matthew 13:4](#); [Matthew 13:7](#); [Matthew 13:17](#); [Matthew 13:19](#); [Matthew 13:20](#); [Matthew 13:22](#); [Matthew 13:23](#); [Matthew 13:24](#); [Matthew 13:34](#); [Matthew 13:45](#); [Matthew](#)

13:49; Matthew 13:54; Matthew 13:56; Matthew 14:6; Matthew 14:12; Matthew 14:13; Matthew 14:31; Matthew 14:34; Matthew 15:2; Matthew 15:5; Matthew 15:6; Matthew 15:21; Matthew 16:1; Matthew 16:16; Matthew 17:15; Matthew 17:24; Matthew 17:27; Matthew 18:5; Matthew 18:8; Matthew 18:9; Matthew 18:10; Matthew 18:19; Matthew 18:23; Matthew 18:34; Matthew 19:7; Matthew 19:12; Matthew 19:17; Matthew 19:21; Matthew 19:24; Matthew 20:3; Matthew 20:5; Matthew 20:8; Matthew 20:17; Matthew 20:24; Matthew 21:2; Matthew 21:4; Matthew 21:5; Matthew 21:12; Matthew 21:15; Matthew 21:21; Matthew 21:23; Matthew 21:41; Matthew 21:42; Matthew 22:4; Matthew 22:6; Matthew 22:7; Matthew 22:16; Matthew 22:17; Matthew 22:28; Matthew 22:29; Matthew 22:44; Matthew 23:15; Matthew 23:16; Matthew 23:18; Matthew 23:19; Matthew 23:21; Matthew 23:22; Matthew 23:27; Matthew 23:32; Matthew 24:3; Matthew 24:6; Matthew 24:8; Matthew 24:15; Matthew 24:17; Matthew 24:18; Matthew 24:19; Matthew 24:34; Matthew 24:36; Matthew 24:39; Matthew 24:40; Matthew 24:45; Matthew 25:1; Matthew 25:3; Matthew 25:9; Matthew 25:10; Matthew 25:11; Matthew 25:12; Matthew 25:13; Matthew 25:15; Matthew 25:24; Matthew 25:28; Matthew 25:29; Matthew 26:1; Matthew 26:5; Matthew 26:6; Matthew 26:11; Matthew 26:15; Matthew 26:16; Matthew 26:17; Matthew 26:18; Matthew 26:24; Matthew 26:26; Matthew 26:27; Matthew 26:28; Matthew 26:29; Matthew 26:31; Matthew 26:32; Matthew 26:37; Matthew 26:40; Matthew 26:52; Matthew 26:54; Matthew 26:56; Matthew 26:57; Matthew 26:59; Matthew 26:60; Matthew 26:61; Matthew 26:63; Matthew 26:71; Matthew 26:72; Matthew 26:73; Matthew 26:74; Matthew 26:75; Matthew 27:1; Matthew 27:2; Matthew 27:3; Matthew 27:5; Matthew 27:6; Matthew 27:7; Matthew 27:8; Matthew 27:10; Matthew 27:13; Matthew 27:15; Matthew 27:20; Matthew 27:26; Matthew 27:27; Matthew 27:28; Matthew 27:29; Matthew 27:30; Matthew 27:32; Matthew 27:34; Matthew 27:35; Matthew 27:36; Matthew 27:40; Matthew 27:42; Matthew 27:47; Matthew 27:48; Matthew 27:51; Matthew 27:54; Matthew 27:56; Matthew 27:58; Matthew 27:59; Matthew 27:60; Matthew 27:62; Matthew 27:63; Matthew 27:64; Matthew 27:66; Matthew 28:1; Matthew 28:2; Matthew 28:5; Matthew 28:9; Matthew 28:11; Matthew 28:14; Matthew 28:15; Matthew 28:17; Matthew 28:19

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 (p.1263)

Referenced in: [Matthew 3:4](#); [Matthew 4:12](#); [Matthew 8:30](#); [Matthew 9:21](#); [Matthew 10:2](#); [Matthew 12:10](#); [Matthew 13:1](#); [Matthew 13:32](#); [Matthew 14 General Notes](#); [Matthew 14:3](#); [Matthew 14:13](#); [Matthew 14:22](#); [Matthew 14:24](#); [Matthew 17:13](#); [Matthew 26:48](#); [Matthew 26:58](#); [Matthew 27:15](#); [Matthew 27:16](#); [Matthew 27:20](#); [Matthew 27:32](#); [Matthew 27:56](#); [Matthew 28:3](#)

Biblical Distance

Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man's hand.
- The **span** or handspace 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.

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 [\(UTA PDF\)](#)

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: [Matthew 6:27](#)

Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

An **extended metaphor** is an explicit metaphor that uses multiple images and multiple ideas at the same time. This is in contrast to a **simple metaphor**, which uses only a single Image and a single Idea. The difference between an extended metaphor and a **complex metaphor** is that an extended metaphor is explicitly stated by a writer/speaker, but a complex metaphor is not.

This page answers the question: *What is an extended metaphor?*

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

Metaphor (p.1288)

Simile ([UTA PDF](#))

Explanation of an Extended Metaphor

When using a metaphor, a writer/speaker uses a physical Image in order to express an abstract Idea about some immediate Topic, with at least one point of comparison between the Topic and the Image. In an extended metaphor, the writer/speaker explicitly states the Topic, and then describes multiple images and communicates multiple ideas.

In Isaiah 5:1b-7, the prophet Isaiah uses a vineyard (the **Image**) to express God's disappointment (the **Idea**) with the nation of Israel (the **Topic**) for their unfaithfulness to God and his covenant with them as his people. Farmers care for their gardens, and a farmer would feel disappointed if his vineyard produced bad fruit. If a vineyard produced only bad fruit for a long enough time, the farmer would eventually stop caring for it. We call this an extended metaphor because the prophet describes in detail multiple images relating to a vineyard as well as multiple aspects of God's disappointment.

1b My well beloved had a **vineyard** on a very fertile hill. 2 He **spaded it, removed the stones, and planted it** with an excellent kind of vine. He **built a tower** in the middle of it, and also **built a winepress**. He **waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced wild grapes**. 3 So now, inhabitant of Jerusalem and man of Judah; judge between me and my vineyard. 4 What more could have been done for my vineyard, that I have not done for it? **When I looked for it to produce grapes, why did it produce wild grapes?** 5 Now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will remove the hedge; I will turn it into a pasture; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled down. 6 I will lay it waste, and it will not be pruned nor hoed. Instead, briars and thorns will spring up. I will also command the clouds not to rain on it. 7 For **the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts is the house of Israel**, and the man of Judah his pleasant planting; **he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a shout for help**. (Isa 5:1b-7 ULT)

Other Examples From the Bible

In Psalm 23, the psalmist uses the physical **Image** of a shepherd to describe the way that God (the **Topic**) shows great concern and care (the **Idea**) for his people. The psalmist describes multiple aspects of what shepherds do for sheep (leads them to pasture and to water, protects them, etc.). The psalmist also describes multiple aspects of how God takes care of him (gives him life, righteousness, comfort, etc.). Shepherds give sheep what they need, take them to safe places, rescue them, guide them, and protect them. What God does for his people is like these actions.

1 Yahweh is my shepherd; I will lack nothing. 2 He **makes me** to lie down in green pastures; he **leads me** beside tranquil water. 3 He **brings back** my life; he **guides me** along right paths for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through a valley of darkest shadow, I will not fear harm since you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me. (Psalm 23:1-4 ULT)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not realize that the images represent other things.
- People may not be familiar with the things that are used as images.
- Extended metaphors are often so profound that it would be impossible for a translator to show all of the meaning generated by the metaphor.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of the extended metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning more clear to the target audience than it was to the original audience.
- When someone uses an extended metaphor, the images are an important part of what he is trying to say.
- If the target audience is not familiar with some of the images, you will need to find some way of helping them understand the images so that they can understand the whole extended metaphor.

Translation Strategies

Consider using the same extended metaphor if your readers will understand it in the same way the original readers would have understood it. If not, here are some other strategies:

- (1) If the target audience would think that the images should be understood literally, translate the metaphor as a simile by using words such as “like” or “as.” It may be enough to do this in just the first sentence or two.
- (2) If the target audience would not know the image, find a way of translating it so they can understand what the image is.
- (3) If the target audience still would not understand, then state it clearly.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the target audience would think that the images should be understood literally, translate the metaphor as a simile by using words such as “like” or “as.” It may be enough to do this in just the first sentence or two. See Psalm 23:1-2 as an example:

Yahweh is **my shepherd**; I will lack nothing. He makes **me** to lie down in green pastures; **he leads me** beside tranquil water. (ULT)

Can be translated as:

“Yahweh is **like** a shepherd to me, so I will lack nothing. **Like** a shepherd who makes his sheep lie down in green pastures and leads them by peaceful waters, Yahweh helps me to rest peacefully.”

- (2) If the target audience would not know the image, find a way of translating it so they can understand what the image is.

My well beloved had a **vineyard** on a very fertile hill. He **spaded** it, removed the stones, and planted it with **an excellent kind of vine**. He built a **tower** in the middle of it, and also built a **winepress**. He waited for it to produce grapes, but it only produced **wild grapes**. (Isaiah 5:1b-2 ULT)

May be translated as:

My well beloved had a **grapevine garden** on a very fertile hill. He **dug up the ground** and removed the stones, and planted it with **the best grapevines**. He built a **watchtower** in the middle of it, and also built a **tank where he could crush the juice out of the grapes**. He

waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced **wild grapes that were not good for making wine**.

(3) If the target audience still would not understand, then state it clearly.

Yahweh is **my shepherd**; I will lack nothing. (Psalm 23:1 ULT)

“Yahweh **cares for me** like a shepherd that cares for his sheep, so I will lack nothing.”

For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts **is** the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant planting; he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a shout for help. (Isaiah 5:7 ULT)

Can be translated as:

For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts **represents** the house of Israel, and the men of Judah **are like** his pleasant planting; he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help.

or as:

So as a farmer stops caring for a grapevine garden that produces bad fruit, Yahweh will stop protecting Israel and Judah, **because they do not do what is right**. He waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 6:22](#); [Matthew 6:23](#); [Matthew 11:29](#); [Matthew 11:30](#)

Biblical Money

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of money in the Bible?*

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.

1 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](#).)

1 "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.

1 "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.

1 "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.

1 "The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2"

The footnotes would look like:

1 [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

1 "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 (p.1191)

Translate Unknowns (p.1383)

Referenced in: [Matthew 22:19](#)

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- (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.

1 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](#).)

1 "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.

1 "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.

1 "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.

1 "The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2"

The footnotes would look like:

1 [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

1 "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 (p.1191)

Translate Unknowns (p.1383)

Referenced in: [Matthew 17:24](#); [Matthew 17:27](#); [Matthew 18:24](#); [Matthew 18:28](#); [Matthew 20:2](#); [Matthew 20:9](#); [Matthew 20:10](#); [Matthew 22:19](#); [Matthew 25:15](#); [Matthew 25:16](#)

Biblical Volume

Description

The following terms are the most common units of volume used in the Bible to state how much a certain container could hold. The containers and measurements are given for both liquids (such as wine) and dry solids (such as grain). The metric values are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the measures of volume that are in the Bible?*

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

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal\]\]](#)

Type	Original Measure	Liters
Dry	omer	2 liters
Dry	ephah	22 liters
Dry	homer	220 liters
Dry	cor	220 liters
Dry	seah	7.7 liters
Dry	lethek	114.8 liters
Liquid	metrete	40 liters
Liquid	bath	22 liters
Liquid	hin	3.7 liters
Liquid	kab	1.23 liters
Liquid	log	0.31 liters

Translation Principles

- The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
- Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
- Whatever measures you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kinds of measures in the text or a footnote.
- If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one hin as “3.7 liters,” readers might think that the measurement is exactly 3.7 liters, not 3.6 or 3.8. It would be better to use a more approximate measure such as “three and a half liters” or “four liters.”
- When God tells people how much of something to use, and when people use those amounts in obedience to him, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much they used.

When the unit of measure is stated

Translation Strategies

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

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Isaiah 5:10 below.

For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one bath, and one homer of seed will yield only an ephah. (Isaiah 5:10 ULT)

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

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one **bat**, and one **homer** of seed will yield only an **efa**."

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

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22 liters** and **220 liters** of seed will yield only **22 liters**."

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22**, and **ten baskets** of seed will yield only **one basket**."

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **six gallons**, and **six and a half bushels** of seed will yield only **20 quarts**."

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

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **one bath (six gallons)**, and **one homer (six and a half bushels)** of seed will yield only **an ephah (20 quarts)**."

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

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only 22 liters¹, and 220 liters² of seed will yield only 22 liters³."

The footnotes would look like:

[1] one bath [2] one homer [3] one ephah

When the unit of measure is implied

Sometimes the Hebrew does not specify a particular unit of volume but only uses a number. In these cases, many English versions, including the ULT and UST, add the word “measure.”

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 measures** of wine, there were only 20. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.
- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”
- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.
- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Haggai 2:16 below.

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty measures** of wine, there were only **20**. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.

When you came to a heap of **20** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”

When you came to a heap of **20 amounts** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty amounts** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.

When you came to a heap of **20 baskets** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 jars** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

When you came to a heap for **20 liters** of grain, there were only **ten liters**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 liters** of wine, there were only **20 liters**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Fractions ([UTA PDF](#))

Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 13:33](#)

Collective Nouns

Description

This page answers the question: *What are collective nouns and how can I translate them?*

A collective noun is a singular noun that refers to a group of something. Examples: a **family**, **clan**, or **tribe** is a group of people who are related to each other; a **flock** is a group of birds or sheep; a **fleet** is a group of ships; and an **army** is a group of soldiers.

Many collective nouns are used exclusively as a singular replacement for a group as in the examples above. Frequently in the Bible the name of an ancestor is used, through a process of metonymy, as a collective noun referencing the group of his descendants. In the Bible, sometimes the singular noun will take a singular verb form, other times it will take a plural verb form. This may depend on how the author is thinking about the group, or whether the action is being done as a group or as individuals.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

There are several issues that require care when translating collective nouns. Further care is needed because the language you are translating into may not use collective nouns in the same way as the language you are translating from. Issues include:

The source language may have a collective noun for a group that the target language does not and vice-versa. You may have to translate a collective noun with a plural noun in your language, or you may need to translate a plural noun with a collective noun in your language.

Subject-verb agreement. Different languages or dialects may have different rules about using singular or plural verbs with collective nouns. Examples (from Wikipedia):

a singular noun with a singular verb: The team *is* in the dressing room.

a singular noun with a plural verb which is correct in British, but not American, English: The team *are* fighting among themselves. The team *have* finished the project.

Pronoun agreement. Similar to the previous, care needs to be taken to use the correct pronoun plurality and possibly gender or noun class to agree with the number/gender/class of the noun used. See the biblical examples below.

Clarity of referent. Especially if there is a mismatch in your translation between the verb and noun or pronoun concerning any of the factors above, readers may be confused about who or what is being referenced.

Examples from the Bible

And Joab and all the **army** which was with him arrived (2 Samuel 3:23a ULT)

The word in bold is written in singular form in both Hebrew and English, but it refers to a group of warriors that fight together.

and though the **flock** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls. (Habakkuk 3:17b ULT)

The word in bold is singular and refers to a group of sheep.

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **crowd** was coming to him, and he was teaching **them**. (Mark 2:13 ULT)

Note in this example that the noun is singular but the pronoun is plural. This may or may not be allowed or natural in your language.

Do not let **your heart** be troubled. **You** believe in God; believe also in me. (John 14:1 ULT)

In this verse, the words translated “your” and “you” are plural, referring to many people. The word “heart” is singular in form, but it refers to all of their hearts as a group.

And he shall take the **hair** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **it** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. (Num 6:18b ULT)

The word **hair** is singular, but it refers to many hairs, not just one.

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go.” (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

Here, “Israel” is singular, but means “the Israelites” by metonymy.

Translation Strategies

If your language has a collective (singular) noun that refers to the same group as referenced by the collective noun in the source text, then translate the word using that term. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Translate the collective noun with a plural noun.
- (2) Add a plural word to the collective noun so that you can use a plural verb and pronouns.
- (3) Use a phrase to describe the group that the collective noun references. A useful strategy here can be to use a general collective noun that refers to a group of people or things.
- (4) If your language uses a collective noun for something that is a plural noun in the source language, you can translate the plural noun as a collective noun and, if necessary, change the form of the verb and any pronouns so that they agree with the singular noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the collective noun with a plural noun.

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go.” (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **the Israelites** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **the Israelites** go.”

And he shall take the **hair** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **it** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. (Num 6:18b ULT)

And he shall take the **hairs** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **them** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

- (2) Add a plural word to the collective noun so that you can use a plural verb and pronouns.

And Joab and all the **army** which was with him arrived (2 Samuel 3:23a ULT)

And Joab and all the **army men who were** with him arrived

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **crowd** was coming to him, and he was teaching **them**. (Mark 2:13 ULT)

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **people of the crowd were** coming to him, and he was teaching **them**.

- (3) Use a phrase to describe the group that the collective noun references. A useful strategy here can be to use a general collective noun that refers to a group of people or things.

and though the **flock** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls. (Habakkuk 3:17b ULT)

and though the **group of sheep** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls.

And Pharaoh said, "Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go." (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

And Pharaoh said, "Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **the people of Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **the people of Israel** go."

(4) If your language uses a collective noun for something that is a plural noun in the source language, you can translate the plural noun as a collective noun and, if necessary, change the form of the verb and any pronouns so that they agree with the singular noun.

Now this John had his clothing from the **hairs** of a camel and a leather belt around his waist (Matthew 3:4a ULT)

Now this John had his clothing from the **hair** of a camel and a leather belt around his waist

You shall not make for yourself a carved figure nor any likeness that {is} in **the heavens** above, or that {is} in the earth beneath, or that {is} in **the waters** under the earth. (Deuteronomy 5:8 ULT)

You shall not make for yourself a carved figure nor any likeness that is in **heaven** above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in **the water** under the earth.

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 13:2](#); [Matthew 27:15](#); [Matthew 27:65](#); [Matthew 27:66](#)

Connect — Background Information

Time Relationship

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

This page answers the question: *How can I translate clauses that give background information?*

Background Clause

Description

A background clause is one that describes something that is ongoing. Then, in the same sentence, another clause indicates an event that begins to happen during that time. These events are also simultaneous events, but they have the further relationship of background event and main event because the event that is already happening serves as the background for the other event, the one that is in focus. The background event simply provides the time frame or other context for the main event or events.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate a shift in time in different ways. You (the translator) need to understand how these shifts in time are indicated in the original languages in order to communicate them clearly in your own language. Background clauses often indicate a time that began long before the event that is in focus. Translators need to understand how both the source language and the target language communicate background events. Some English words that indicate background events are “now,” “when,” “while,” and “during.” Those words can also indicate simultaneous events. To tell the difference, ask yourself if all of the events seem to be equal in importance and started at about the same time. If so, they are probably simultaneous events. But if an event(s) is ongoing and another event(s) just started, then the ongoing event(s) is probably background to the other event(s). Some common phrases that indicate background events are “in those days” and “at that time.”

Examples From OBS and the Bible

When Solomon was old, he also worshiped their gods. (OBS Story 18 Frame 3)

Solomon began to worship foreign gods at a time when he was old. Being old is the background event. Worshiping other gods is the main event.

And his parents went **every year** to Jerusalem to the Feast of the Passover. And when he was 12 years old, they went up according to the custom of the feast. (Luke 2:41-42 ULT)

The first event—going to Jerusalem—is ongoing and started long ago. We know this because of the words “every year.” Going to Jerusalem is the background event. Then an event begins that started during the time “when he was twelve years old.” So the main event is the specific time Jesus and his family traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover festival **when he was twelve years old**.

And it came about that, **while** they were there, the days were fulfilled for her to give birth. (Luke 2:6 ULT)

Being in Bethlehem is the background event. The birth of the baby is the main event.

And in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—**while** Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **during** the high priesthood of

Annas and Caiaphas—the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness.
(Luke 3:1-2 ULT)

This example begins with five background clauses (marked by commas), signalled as background by the words “while” and “during.” Then the main event happens: “the word of God came to John.”

Translation Strategies

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

- (1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that what follows is a Background Clause, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.
- (2) If your language marks Background Clauses in a different way than using connecting words (such as by using different verb forms), then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

And in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—**while** Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **during** the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness.
(Luke 3:1-2 ULT)

- (1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that what follows is a background clause, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.

It happened during the time that Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, **and during the time that** Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, **and during the time that** his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, **and during the time that** Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **and also during the time that** Annas and Caiaphas were high priests—**that** the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

- (2) If your language marks background clauses in a different way than using connecting words, such as with different verb forms, then use that way.

Pontius Pilate **was governing** Judea, and Herod **was ruling over** Galilee, and his brother Philip **was ruling over** the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias **was ruling over** Abilene, and Annas and Caiaphas **were being** high priests—the word of God **came** to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

Example of Differences in Time Relationship Connecting Words:

Category	Example
Background setting	Yahweh's word was rare in those days ;
Background repeated	there was no frequent prophetic vision.
Introduction of main event	At that time, when Eli
Background	whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see well,
Simultaneous background	was lying down in his own bed.
Simultaneous background	The lamp of God had not yet gone out,
Simultaneous background	and Samuel was lying down to sleep in the temple of Yahweh,
Simultaneous background	where the ark of God was.
Main event	Yahweh called to Samuel,
Sequential event	who said, "Here I am." (1 Sam 3:1-4 ULT)

In the above example, the first two lines talk about a condition that was going on for a long time. This is the general, long-term background. We know this from the phrase "in those days." After the introduction of the main event ("At that time,"), there are several lines of simultaneous background. The first one is introduced by "when," and then three more follow, with the last connected by "and." The background clause introduced by "where" explains a little more about the background clause before it. Then the main event happens, followed by more events. Translators will need to think about the best way to show these relationships in their language.

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 1:19](#); [Matthew 1:21](#); [Matthew 1:23](#); [Matthew 4:18](#); [Matthew 10:4](#)

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.

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Referenced in: [Matthew 20:28](#)

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: [Matthew 4:4](#); [Matthew 5:15](#); [Matthew 5:17](#); [Matthew 5:33](#); [Matthew 9:17](#); [Matthew 10:6](#); [Matthew 10:20](#); [Matthew 10:28](#); [Matthew 11:19](#); [Matthew 13:21](#); [Matthew 15:8](#); [Matthew 16:17](#); [Matthew 19:26](#); [Matthew 20:23](#); [Matthew 20:26](#); [Matthew 20:28](#)

Connect — Exception Clauses

Exceptional Relationship

This page answers the question: *How can I translate exception clauses?*

Description

Exceptional relationship connectors exclude one or more items or people from a group.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

English indicates exceptional relationships by first describing a group (Part 1) and then stating what is not in that group by using words like “except,” “but not,” “other than,” “besides,” “unless,” “however ... not,” and “only” (Part 2). Some languages do not indicate in this way that one or more items or people are excluded from a group. Instead, they have other ways of doing this. In some languages this type of construction does not make sense because the exception in Part 2 seems to contradict the statement in Part 1. Translators need to understand who (or what) is in the group and who (or what) is excluded in order to be able to accurately communicate this in their language.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

God told Adam that he could eat from **any** tree in the garden **except** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (OBS Story 1 Frame 11)

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for there is **no one** to redeem it **besides** you, and I am after you. (Ruth 4:4b ULT)

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Not** a man escaped **except for** 400 young men, who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 ULT)

The man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” Jacob said, “I will **not** let you go **unless** you bless me.” (Genesis 32:26 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If the way that Exceptional Clauses are marked in the source language is also clear in your language, then translate the Exceptional Clauses in the same way.

- (1) Very often, the exception in Part 2 contradicts something that was negated in Part 1. In this case, the translator can phrase the same idea without the contradiction by deleting the negative and using a word like “**only**.”
- (2) Reverse the order of the clauses so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

Examples of Translation Strategy Applied

- (1) Very often, the exception in Part 2 contradicts something that was negated in Part 1. In this case, the translator can phrase the same idea without the contradiction by deleting the negative and using a word like “**only**.”

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Not a man escaped except for 400 young men**, who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 ULT)

- Part 1: (**Not** a man escaped)
- Part 2: (**except for** 400 young men)

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Only** 400 young men escaped; they rode on camels and fled.

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for there is **no one** to redeem it **besides** you, and I am after you. (Ruth 4:4 ULT)

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for **you are first in line to redeem it {only you can redeem it}**, and I am after you.

The man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." Jacob said, "I will **not** let you go **unless** you bless me." (Genesis 32:26 ULT)

The man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." Jacob said, "I will let you go **only if** you bless me."

(2) Reverse the order of the clauses, so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

God told Adam that he could eat from **any** tree in the garden **except** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (OBS Story 1 Frame 11)

God told Adam that he could **not** eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but he could eat from **any other** tree in the garden.

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 21:19](#)

Connect — Exception Clauses

Exceptional Relationship

This page answers the question: *How can I translate exception clauses?*

Description

Exceptional relationship connectors exclude one or more items or people from a group.

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- (2) Reverse the order of the clauses so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

Examples of Translation Strategy Applied

- (1) Very often, the exception in Part 2 contradicts something that was negated in Part 1. In this case, the translator can phrase the same idea without the contradiction by deleting the negative and using a word like “**only**.”

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Not a man escaped except for 400 young men**, who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 ULT)

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- Part 2: (**except for** 400 young men)

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Only** 400 young men escaped; they rode on camels and fled.

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for there is **no one** to redeem it **besides** you, and I am after you. (Ruth 4:4 ULT)

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for **you are first in line to redeem it {only you can redeem it}**, and I am after you.

The man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." Jacob said, "I will **not** let you go **unless** you bless me." (Genesis 32:26 ULT)

The man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." Jacob said, "I will let you go **only if** you bless me."

(2) Reverse the order of the clauses, so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

God told Adam that he could eat from **any** tree in the garden **except** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (OBS Story 1 Frame 11)

God told Adam that he could **not** eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but he could eat from **any other** tree in the garden.

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 5:13](#); [Matthew 5:32](#); [Matthew 12:31](#); [Matthew 12:39](#); [Matthew 14:17](#); [Matthew 15:24](#); [Matthew 17:8](#); [Matthew 19:9](#); [Matthew 21:19](#); [Matthew 24:36](#)

Connect — Factual Conditions

Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate factual conditions?*

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

Factual Conditions

Description

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From OBS and the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

“**It is true that** Yahweh is God, so worship him!”

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

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

”

Referenced in: [Matthew 12:28](#)

Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Logical Relationships

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

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

Goal (or Purpose) Relationship

Description

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From OBS and the Bible

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

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

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

Here the prepositional phrase begins with “in order to.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

“Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **so that she can glean it**, and do not rebuke her!”

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

The shepherds said to each other, “Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem **so that we can see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us.”

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

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

“... 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: [Matthew 24:45](#); [Matthew 26:28](#); [Matthew 27:1](#); [Matthew 27:7](#); [Matthew 27:55](#)

Connect — Hypothetical Conditions

Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate hypothetical conditions?*

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

Hypothetical Condition

Description

A Hypothetical Condition is a condition in which the second event (the “then” clause) will only take place if the first event (the “if” clause) takes place or is fulfilled in some way. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

It is important that translators understand whether or not something is a Hypothetical Condition so that they translate it in the correct way. For example, some of God’s promises to Israel were conditional, based on whether or not Israel obeyed God. However, many of God’s promises to Israel were not conditional; God would keep these promises whether or not the Israelites obeyed. It is important that you (the translator) know the difference between these two types of promises and communicate each one accurately in your own language. Also, sometimes conditions are stated in an order different than the order in which they would happen. If the target language would state the clauses in a different order, then you will need to make that adjustment.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

There are two hypothetical conditions in this frame. In both of these conditions, the first event (the “if clause”) is stated after the “then” clause. If this is unnatural or confusing, the clauses can be restated in the more natural order. The first hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites obeyed God, then God would bless and protect them. The second hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites did not obey God, then God would punish them.

If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? (Genesis 4:7a ULT)

If Cain does what is right, then he will be accepted. The only way for Cain to be accepted is by doing what is right.

... **if** this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. (Acts 5:38b-39aULT)

There are two hypothetical conditions here: (1) If it is true that this plan is of men, then it will be overthrown; (2) If it is true that this plan is of God, then it cannot be overthrown.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.
- (2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like “then.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.

God promised to bless the people and protect them **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

If the people obeyed these laws, God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, God said that he would punish them.

(2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like “then.”

God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

If the people obeyed these laws, **then** God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, **then** God said that he would punish them.

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... **if** this plan or this work is of men, **then** it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, **then** you will not be able to overthrow them;

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 21:3](#)

Connect — Hypothetical Conditions

Conditional Relationships

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Examples From OBS and the Bible

God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

There are two hypothetical conditions in this frame. In both of these conditions, the first event (the “if clause”) is stated after the “then” clause. If this is unnatural or confusing, the clauses can be restated in the more natural order. The first hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites obeyed God, then God would bless and protect them. The second hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites did not obey God, then God would punish them.

If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? (Genesis 4:7a ULT)

If Cain does what is right, then he will be accepted. The only way for Cain to be accepted is by doing what is right.

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There are two hypothetical conditions here: (1) If it is true that this plan is of men, then it will be overthrown; (2) If it is true that this plan is of God, then it cannot be overthrown.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.
- (2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like “then.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.

God promised to bless the people and protect them **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

If the people obeyed these laws, God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, God said that he would punish them.

(2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like “then.”

God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

If the people obeyed these laws, **then** God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, **then** God said that he would punish them.

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... **if** this plan or this work is of men, **then** it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, **then** you will not be able to overthrow them;

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 4:3](#); [Matthew 4:9](#); [Matthew 5:19](#); [Matthew 5:20](#); [Matthew 8:2](#); [Matthew 11:21](#); [Matthew 11:23](#); [Matthew 12:7](#); [Matthew 18:3](#); [Matthew 21:3](#); [Matthew 21:21](#); [Matthew 21:25](#); [Matthew 27:42](#)

Connect — Reason-and-Result 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 the reason-result relationship?*

Reason-and-Result Relationships

Description

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

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

Examples From OBS and the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

- (1) The kingdom of God belongs to you who are poor. **Therefore**, the poor are blessed.
- (2) Blessed are the poor, **because** yours is the kingdom of God.
- (3) **The reason that** the poor are blessed **is because** yours is the kingdom of God.

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

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

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

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

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Referenced in: [Matthew 21:26](#)

Connect — Reason-and-Result 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 the reason-result relationship?*

Reason-and-Result Relationships

Description

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

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

Examples From OBS and the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

- (1) The kingdom of God belongs to you who are poor. **Therefore**, the poor are blessed.
- (2) Blessed are the poor, **because** yours is the kingdom of God.
- (3) **The reason that** the poor are blessed **is because** yours is the kingdom of God.

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

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

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

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

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Referenced in: [Matthew 1:24](#); [Matthew 2:2](#); [Matthew 10:18](#); [Matthew 12:41](#); [Matthew 12:42](#); [Matthew 13:58](#); [Matthew 14:3](#); [Matthew 16:17](#); [Matthew 18:16](#); [Matthew 18:21](#); [Matthew 19:8](#); [Matthew 19:22](#); [Matthew 21:26](#); [Matthew 21:40](#); [Matthew 23:8](#); [Matthew 23:9](#); [Matthew 23:10](#); [Matthew 23:13](#); [Matthew 24:4](#); [Matthew 25:13](#); [Matthew 25:14](#); [Matthew 25:25](#); [Matthew 25:35](#); [Matthew 25:42](#); [Matthew 26:43](#); [Matthew 26:54](#); [Matthew 26:73](#); [Matthew 27:6](#); [Matthew 27:14](#); [Matthew 27:18](#); [Matthew 27:19](#); [Matthew 27:24](#); [Matthew 28:2](#)

Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

Time Relationships

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

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

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](#).

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Referenced in: [Matthew 21:29](#); [Matthew 22:13](#); [Matthew 22:15](#); [Matthew 22:23](#)

Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

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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](#).

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Referenced in: [Matthew 2:1](#); [Matthew 5:24](#); [Matthew 9:14](#); [Matthew 9:25](#); [Matthew 14:3](#); [Matthew 16:21](#); [Matthew 17:1](#); [Matthew 19:1](#); [Matthew 20:20](#); [Matthew 21:29](#); [Matthew 22:13](#); [Matthew 22:15](#); [Matthew 22:23](#); [Matthew 23:1](#); [Matthew 25:5](#); [Matthew 26:14](#)

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: [Matthew 1:20](#)

Connecting Words and Phrases

Description

This page answers the question: *How do connecting words work to join parts of the text in different ways?*

As humans, we write our thoughts in phrases and sentences. We usually want to communicate a series of thoughts that are connected to each other in different ways. **Connecting words and phrases** show how these thoughts are related to each other. For example, we can show how the following thoughts are related by using the Connecting Words in bold type:

- It was raining, **so** I opened my umbrella.
- It was raining, **but** I did not have an umbrella. **So** I got very wet.

Connecting words or phrases can connect phrases or clauses within a sentence. They can connect sentences to each other. They can also connect entire chunks to one another in order to show how the chunk before relates to the chunk after the connecting word. Very often, the connecting words that connect entire chunks to one another are either conjunctions or adverbs.

It was raining, but I did not have an umbrella, so I got very wet.

Now I must change my clothes. Then I will drink a cup of hot tea and warm myself by the fire.

In the above example, the word **now** connects the two short chunks of text, showing the relationship between them. The speaker must change his clothes, drink hot tea, and warm himself because of something that happened earlier (that is, he got wet in the rain).

Sometimes people might not use a connecting word because they expect the context to help the readers understand the relationship between the thoughts. Some languages do not use connecting words as much as other languages do. They might say:

- It was raining. I did not have an umbrella. I got very wet.

You (the translator) will need to use the method that is most natural and clear in the target language. But in general, using connecting words whenever possible helps the reader to understand the ideas in the Bible most clearly.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You need to understand the relationship between paragraphs, between sentences, and between parts of sentences in the Bible, and how connecting words and phrases can help you to understand the relationship between the thoughts that they are connecting.
- Each language has its own ways of showing how thoughts are related.
- You need to know how to help readers understand the relationship between the thoughts in a way that is natural in your language.

Translation Principles

- You need to translate in a way that readers can understand the same relationship between thoughts that the original readers would have understood.
- Whether or not a connecting word is used is not as important as readers being able to understand the relationship between the ideas.

The Different Types of Connections

Listed below are different types of connections between ideas or events. These different types of connections can be indicated by using different connecting words. When we write or translate something, it is important to use the right connecting word so that these connections are clear for the reader. If you would like additional information, simply click the colored, hyperlinked word to be directed to a page containing definitions and examples for each type of connection.

- [Sequential Clause](#) — a time relationship between two events in which one happens and then the other happens.
- [Simultaneous Clause](#) — a time relationship between two or more events that occur at the same time.
- [Background Clause](#) — a time relationship in which the first clause describes a long event that is happening at the time when the beginning of the second event happens, which is described in the second clause.
- [Exceptional Relationship](#) — one clause describes a group of people or items, and the other clause excludes one or more items or people from the group.
- [Hypothetical Condition](#) — the second event will only take place if the first one takes place. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.
- [Factual Condition](#) — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true, so that the condition is guaranteed to happen.
- [Contrary-to-Fact Condition](#) — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain that it is not true. See also: [Hypothetical Statements](#).
- [Goal Relationship](#) — a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first.
- [Reason and Result Relationship](#) — a logical relationship in which one event is the reason for the other event, the result.
- [Contrast Relationship](#) — one item is being described as different or in opposition to another.

Examples from the Bible

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT)

The word “instead” introduces something that contrasts with what was said before. The contrast here is between what Paul did not do and what he did do. The word “then” introduces a sequence of events. It introduces something that Paul did after he returned to Damascus.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

The word “therefore” links this section with the section before it, signaling that the section that came before gave the reason for this section. “Therefore” usually links sections larger than one sentence. The word “and” links only two actions within the same sentence, that of breaking commandments and teaching others. In this verse the word “but” contrasts what one group of people will be called in God’s kingdom with what another group of people will be called.

We place nothing as a stumbling block in front of anyone, **so that** our ministry might not be discredited. **Instead**, we commend ourselves in everything as God’s servants. (2 Corinthians 6:3-4 ULT)

Here the words “so that” connect what follows as the reason for what came before; the reason that Paul does not place stumbling blocks is that he does not want his ministry brought into disrepute. “Instead” contrasts what Paul does (prove by his actions that he is God’s servant) with what he said he does not do (place stumbling blocks).

General Translation Strategies

See each type of Connecting Word above for specific strategies

If the way the relationship between thoughts is shown in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, then consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).
- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be strange to use one and people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.
- (3) Use a different connecting word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).

Jesus said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Then immediately they left the nets and followed him. (Mark 1:17-18 ULT)

They followed Jesus because he told them to. Some translators may want to mark this clause with the connecting word "so."

Jesus said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." **So**, immediately they left the nets and followed him.

- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be odd to use one, and if people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Some languages would prefer not to use connecting words here because the meaning is clear without them and using them would be unnatural. They might translate like this:

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments, teaching others to do so as well, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT) (Galatians 1:16-18 ULT)

Some languages might not need the words "instead" or "then" here. They might translate like this:

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me. I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. After three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days.

- (3) Use a different connecting word.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Instead of a word like “therefore,” a language might need a phrase to indicate that there was a section before it that gave the reason for the section that follows. Also, the word “but” is used here because of the contrast between the two groups of people. But in some languages, the word “but” would show that what comes after it is surprising because of what came before it. So “and” might be clearer for those languages. They might translate like this:

Because of that, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.
And whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

”

Referenced in: [Matthew 9:17](#); [Matthew 12:50](#); [Matthew 13:40](#); [Matthew 22:14](#)

Copy or Borrow Words

Description

Sometimes the Bible includes things that are not part of your culture and for which your language may not have a word. The Bible also includes people and places for which you may not have names.

When that happens you can “borrow” the word from the Bible in a familiar language and use it in your translation in your own language. This means that you basically copy it from the other language. This page tells how to “borrow” words. (There are also other ways to translate words for things that are not in your language. See [Translate Unknowns](#).)

This page answers the question: *What does it mean to borrow words from another language and how can I do it?*

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

Translate Unknowns (p.1383)

Examples From the Bible

Seeing one fig tree along the roadside, he went to it. (Matthew 21:19a ULT)

If there are no fig trees where your language is spoken, there might not be a name for this kind of tree in your language.

Above him were the **seraphim**; each one had six wings; with two each covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (Isaiah 6:2 ULT)

Your language might not have a name for this kind of creature.

The declaration of the word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of **Malachi**. (Malachi 1:1 ULT)

Malachi might not be a name that people who speak your language use.

Translation Strategies

There are several things to be aware of when borrowing words from another language.

- Different languages use different scripts, such as the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Devanagari, and Korean scripts. These scripts use different shapes to represent the letters in their alphabets.
- Languages that use the same script might pronounce the letters in that script differently. For example, when speaking German, people pronounce the letter “j” the same way that people pronounce the letter “y” when speaking English.
- Languages do not all have the same sounds or combinations of sounds. For example, many languages do not have the soft “th” sound in the English word “think,” and some languages cannot start a word with a combination of sounds like “st” as in “stop.”

There are several ways to borrow a word.

- (1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.
- (2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.
- (3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.

.A man's name in Hebrew letters — זְפַנְיָה
"Zephaniah" — The same name in Roman letters

(2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.

Zephaniah — This is a man's name.
"Zephaniah" — The name as it is spelled in English, but you can pronounce it according to the rules of your language.

(3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Zephaniah — If your language does not have the "z," you could use "s." If your writing system does not use "ph" you could use "f." Depending on how you pronounce the "i" you could spell it with "i" or "ai" or "ay."
"Sefania"
"Sefanaia"
"Sefanaya"

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 16:17](#); [Matthew 21:9](#); [Matthew 21:15](#)

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Description

Sometimes the Bible includes things that are not part of your culture and for which your language may not have a word. The Bible also includes people and places for which you may not have names.

When that happens you can “borrow” the word from the Bible in a familiar language and use it in your translation in your own language. This means that you basically copy it from the other language. This page tells how to “borrow” words. (There are also other ways to translate words for things that are not in your language. See [Translate Unknowns](#).)

This page answers the question: *What does it mean to borrow words from another language and how can I do it?*

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

Translate Unknowns (p.1383)

Examples From the Bible

Seeing one fig tree along the roadside, he went to it. (Matthew 21:19a ULT)

If there are no fig trees where your language is spoken, there might not be a name for this kind of tree in your language.

Above him were the **seraphim**; each one had six wings; with two each covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (Isaiah 6:2 ULT)

Your language might not have a name for this kind of creature.

The declaration of the word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of **Malachi**. (Malachi 1:1 ULT)

Malachi might not be a name that people who speak your language use.

Translation Strategies

There are several things to be aware of when borrowing words from another language.

- Different languages use different scripts, such as the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Devanagari, and Korean scripts. These scripts use different shapes to represent the letters in their alphabets.
- Languages that use the same script might pronounce the letters in that script differently. For example, when speaking German, people pronounce the letter “j” the same way that people pronounce the letter “y” when speaking English.
- Languages do not all have the same sounds or combinations of sounds. For example, many languages do not have the soft “th” sound in the English word “think,” and some languages cannot start a word with a combination of sounds like “st” as in “stop.”

There are several ways to borrow a word.

- (1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.
- (2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.
- (3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.

.A man's name in Hebrew letters — זְפַנְיָהּ
 "Zephaniah" — The same name in Roman letters

(2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.

Zephaniah — This is a man's name.
 "Zephaniah" — The name as it is spelled in English, but you can pronounce it according to the rules of your language.

(3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Zephaniah — If your language does not have the "z," you could use "s." If your writing system does not use "ph" you could use "f." Depending on how you pronounce the "i" you could spell it with "i" or "ai" or "ay."
 "Sefania"
 "Sefanaia"
 "Sefanaya"

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 5:22](#); [Matthew 10:25](#); [Matthew 21:9](#); [Matthew 21:15](#); [Matthew 27 General Notes](#); [Matthew 27:33](#); [Matthew 27:46](#)

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "I do not know at what time I will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that he did not know at what time he would arrive.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
(Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, "**Go, show yourself to the priest ...**"

And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming**,
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**"
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, '**Look, here it is!**' or, '**There it is!**'

This page answers the question: *What are direct and indirect quotations?*

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

Pronouns (UTA PDF)

Verbs (UTA PDF)

Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1344)

Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it. If the kind of quote used in that context is not natural for your language, follow these strategies.

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, **“Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”** (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him to tell no one, but **to go and show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for his cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.**

- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

And he commanded him **to tell no one**, but, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him, **“Tell no one.** But go and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

Quotes within Quotes (p.1351)

Referenced in: [Matthew 2:4](#); [Matthew 9:5](#); [Matthew 11:18](#); [Matthew 11:19](#); [Matthew 12:47](#); [Matthew 13:30](#); [Matthew 13:51](#); [Matthew 14:26](#); [Matthew 17:7](#); [Matthew 19:5](#); [Matthew 22:32](#); [Matthew 22:43](#); [Matthew 24:26](#); [Matthew 26:48](#); [Matthew 26:75](#)

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 “**useless**.” 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)

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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: [Matthew 21:21](#)

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.

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...**not even** one iota or one serif may pass away from the law
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Next we recommend you learn about:

Verbs ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 5:20](#); [Matthew 10:26](#); [Matthew 10:29](#); [Matthew 11:27](#); [Matthew 12:24](#); [Matthew 13:34](#); [Matthew 13:57](#); [Matthew 17:20](#); [Matthew 18:3](#); [Matthew 18:10](#); [Matthew 19:14](#); [Matthew 21:21](#); [Matthew 23:23](#); [Matthew 24:22](#); [Matthew 24:34](#); [Matthew 25:9](#); [Matthew 26:29](#)

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: [Matthew 22:37](#); [Matthew 22:38](#)

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Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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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.

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- (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."

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

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

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

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 2:18](#); [Matthew 5:12](#); [Matthew 11:1](#); [Matthew 11:25](#); [Matthew 11:29](#); [Matthew 21:21](#); [Matthew 22:37](#); [Matthew 22:38](#); [Matthew 23:33](#); [Matthew 24:24](#); [Matthew 24:36](#)

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis¹ occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, **nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.**
(Psalm 1:5 ULT)

There is ellipsis in the second part because “nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **will** sinners **stand** in the assembly of the righteous.

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)

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](#))

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 **sinner in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinner 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: [Matthew 2:3](#); [Matthew 2:5](#); [Matthew 5:17](#); [Matthew 5:22](#); [Matthew 5:25](#); [Matthew 5:41](#); [Matthew 6:30](#); [Matthew 7:10](#); [Matthew 8:9](#); [Matthew 8:18](#); [Matthew 8:20](#); [Matthew 9:12](#); [Matthew 9:13](#); [Matthew 9:28](#); [Matthew 10:21](#); [Matthew 10:23](#); [Matthew 10:24](#); [Matthew 10:25](#); [Matthew 10:34](#); [Matthew 10:35](#); [Matthew 11:3](#); [Matthew 11:8](#); [Matthew 11:9](#); [Matthew 11:14](#); [Matthew 12:4](#); [Matthew 12:19](#); [Matthew 12:41](#); [Matthew 12:42](#); [Matthew 13:5](#); [Matthew 13:7](#); [Matthew 13:8](#); [Matthew 13:11](#); [Matthew 13:16](#); [Matthew 13:19](#); [Matthew 13:23](#); [Matthew 14:19](#); [Matthew 15:34](#); [Matthew 15:36](#); [Matthew 16:5](#); [Matthew 16:17](#); [Matthew 19:9](#); [Matthew 19:30](#); [Matthew 20:28](#); [Matthew 20:33](#); [Matthew 22:21](#); [Matthew 22:32](#); [Matthew 22:39](#); [Matthew 22:42](#); [Matthew 24:6](#); [Matthew 24:7](#); [Matthew 25:2](#); [Matthew 25:10](#); [Matthew 25:15](#); [Matthew 25:17](#); [Matthew 25:18](#); [Matthew 25:35](#); [Matthew 25:37](#); [Matthew 25:38](#); [Matthew 25:42](#); [Matthew 25:43](#); [Matthew 25:46](#); [Matthew 26:1](#); [Matthew 26:5](#); [Matthew 26:9](#); [Matthew 26:22](#); [Matthew 26:25](#); [Matthew 26:26](#); [Matthew 26:39](#); [Matthew 26:41](#); [Matthew 26:47](#); [Matthew 26:50](#); [Matthew 26:54](#); [Matthew 27:26](#); [Matthew 28:3](#)

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis¹ occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, **nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.**
(Psalm 1:5 ULT)

There is ellipsis in the second part because “nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **will** sinners **stand** in the assembly of the righteous.

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)

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 [\(UTA PDF\)](#)

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:

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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 **sinner in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinner 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.”

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Referenced in: [Matthew 11:14](#); [Matthew 20:28](#); [Matthew 20:33](#); [Matthew 22:32](#); [Matthew 22:39](#); [Matthew 22:42](#)

End of Story

Description

There are different types of information that may be given at the end of a story. Often this is background information. This background information is different from the actions that make up the main part of the story. A book of the Bible is often made up of many smaller stories that are part of the larger story of the book itself. For example, the story of Jesus' birth is a smaller story in the larger story of the book of Luke. Each of these stories, whether large or small, can have background information at the end of it.

This page answers the question: *What kinds of information are given at the end of a story?*

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

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Background Information ([UTA PDF](#))

The following are purposes for end of story information:

- to summarize the story
- to give a comment about what happened in the story
- to connect a smaller story to the larger story it is a part of
- to tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends
- to tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends
- to tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of presenting these kinds of information. If you (the translator) do not use your language's ways of doing this, readers may not know:

- that this information is ending the story
- what the purpose of the information is
- how the information is related to the story

Translation Strategies

- Translate the particular kind of information at the end of a story the way your language expresses that kind of information.
- Translate it so that people will understand how it relates to the story it is part of.
- If possible, translate the end of the story in a way that people will know where that story ends and the next begins.

Examples From the Bible

- To summarize the story

Then the rest of the men should follow, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. **In this way it happened that all of us were brought safely to the land.** (Acts 27:44 ULT)

- To give a comment about what happened in the story

Many of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of everyone. Then they counted the value of them, and found it was 50,000 pieces of silver. **So the word of the Lord was spreading and prevailing with power.** (Acts 19:19-20 ULT)

- To tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoiced in God my savior." **And Mary stayed with her about three months and then returned to her house.** (Luke 1:46-47, 56 ULT)

- To tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends

All who those who heard it were amazed concerning the things that were spoken to them by the shepherds. **But Mary kept all the things, pondering them in her heart.** (Luke 2:18-19 ULT)

- To tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

"Woe to you, experts in the Jewish law, because you have taken away the key of knowledge; you do not enter in yourselves, and you hinder those who are entering." **After he went from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to fiercely oppose him and argued against him about many things, lying in wait to trap him in something from his mouth.** (Luke 11:52-54 ULT)

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 7:28](#); [Matthew 13:53](#)

Euphemism

Description

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private.

... they found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa.
(1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

This means that Saul and his sons “were dead.” It is a euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

This page answers the question: *What is a euphemism?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples From the Bible

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so **he did not say specifically** what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man?**” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

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

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.
- (2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT) — Some languages might use euphemisms like these:

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **dig a hole**”

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **have some time alone**”

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man?**” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not **slept with a man?**"

(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

They found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

"They found Saul and his sons **dead** on Mount Gilboa."

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 1:18](#); [Matthew 1:25](#); [Matthew 2:18](#); [Matthew 2:20](#); [Matthew 9:20](#); [Matthew 9:24](#); [Matthew 10:29](#); [Matthew 16:25](#); [Matthew 21:25](#); [Matthew 24:19](#); [Matthew 24:34](#); [Matthew 24:39](#); [Matthew 26:15](#); [Matthew 26:24](#); [Matthew 27:52](#)

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: [Matthew 7:21](#); [Matthew 11:21](#); [Matthew 15:7](#)

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

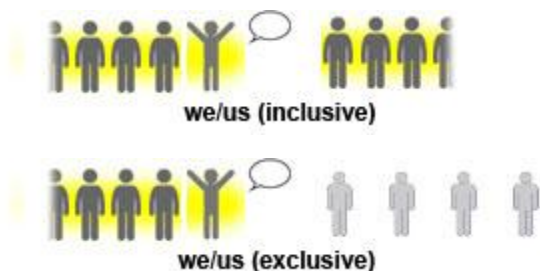
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also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

This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

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



Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

Exclusive

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

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

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

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

Inclusive

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

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

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

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1393)

Referenced in: [Matthew 15:15](#)

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

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

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Examples From the Bible

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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 (p.1393)

Referenced in: [Matthew 3:15](#); [Matthew 8:25](#); [Matthew 8:31](#); [Matthew 11:3](#); [Matthew 17:4](#); [Matthew 17:19](#); [Matthew 20:18](#); [Matthew 20:22](#); [Matthew 25:9](#); [Matthew 26:63](#); [Matthew 27:4](#); [Matthew 27:25](#); [Matthew 28:13](#); [Matthew 28:14](#)

First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as “I” and the person he is speaking to as “you.” Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than “I” or “you.”

Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns “I” and “we.” (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun “you.” (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns “he,” “she,” “it,” and “they.” (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like “the man” or “the woman” are also third person.

This page answers the question: *What are first, second, and third person, and how do I translate when a third person form does not refer to the third person?*

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

Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Pronouns ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses the third person to refer to himself or to the people he is speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant “I” or “you.”

Examples From the Bible

Sometimes people used the third person instead of “I” or “me” to refer to themselves.

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34 ULT)

David referred to himself in the third person as “your servant” and used “his.” He was calling himself Saul’s servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words “God’s” and “his.” He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful.

Sometimes people use the third person instead of “you” or “your” to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

Abraham answered and said, “Look, I have undertaken to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!” (Genesis 18:27 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as “My Lord” rather than as “you.” He did this to show his humility before God.

So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

After saying “each of you,” Jesus used the third person “his” instead of “your.”

Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean “I” or “you” would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”
- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34)

But David said to Saul, “**I, your servant**, used to keep **my** father’s sheep.”

- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **mine**? Can you thunder with a voice like **mine**?”

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **your** brother from your heart.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Forms of You (UTA PDF)

Referenced in: [Matthew 8:20](#); [Matthew 9:6](#); [Matthew 10:23](#); [Matthew 11:15](#); [Matthew 11:19](#); [Matthew 11:27](#); [Matthew 12:6](#); [Matthew 12:8](#); [Matthew 12:32](#); [Matthew 12:39](#); [Matthew 12:40](#); [Matthew 12:41](#); [Matthew 12:42](#); [Matthew 13:9](#); [Matthew 13:37](#); [Matthew 13:41](#); [Matthew 16:4](#); [Matthew 16:13](#); [Matthew 16:27](#); [Matthew 16:28](#); [Matthew 17:9](#); [Matthew 17:12](#); [Matthew 17:22](#); [Matthew 17:23](#); [Matthew 19:28](#); [Matthew 20:18](#); [Matthew 20:19](#); [Matthew 20:28](#); [Matthew 23:10](#); [Matthew 24:27](#); [Matthew 24:30](#); [Matthew 24:31](#); [Matthew 24:33](#); [Matthew 24:36](#); [Matthew 24:37](#); [Matthew 24:44](#); [Matthew 25:21](#); [Matthew 25:31](#); [Matthew 25:32](#); [Matthew 25:33](#); [Matthew 25:34](#); [Matthew 25:40](#); [Matthew 25:41](#); [Matthew 25:45](#); [Matthew 26:2](#); [Matthew 26:24](#); [Matthew 26:45](#); [Matthew 26:64](#)

First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as “I” and the person he is speaking to as “you.” Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than “I” or “you.”

Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns “I” and “we.” (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun “you.” (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns “he,” “she,” “it,” and “they.” (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like “the man” or “the woman” are also third person.

This page answers the question: *What are first, second, and third person, and how do I translate when a third person form does not refer to the third person?*

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

Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Explicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Pronouns ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses the third person to refer to himself or to the people he is speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant “I” or “you.”

Examples From the Bible

Sometimes people used the third person instead of “I” or “me” to refer to themselves.

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34 ULT)

David referred to himself in the third person as “your servant” and used “his.” He was calling himself Saul’s servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words “God’s” and “his.” He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful.

Sometimes people use the third person instead of “you” or “your” to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

Abraham answered and said, “Look, I have undertaken to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!” (Genesis 18:27 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as “My Lord” rather than as “you.” He did this to show his humility before God.

So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

After saying “each of you,” Jesus used the third person “his” instead of “your.”

Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean “I” or “you” would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”
- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34)

But David said to Saul, “**I, your servant**, used to keep **my** father’s sheep.”

- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **mine**? Can you thunder with a voice like **mine**?”

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **your** brother from your heart.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Forms of You ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 20:28](#)

Forms of You

Singular, Dual, and Plural

Some languages have more than one word for “you” based on how many people the word “you” refers to. The **singular** form refers to one person, and the **plural** form refers to more than one person. Some languages also have a **dual** form which refers to two people, and some languages have other forms that refer to three or four people.

This page answers the question: *What are the different forms of you?*

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

Forms of ‘You’ — Singular ([UTA PDF](#))

Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural ([UTA PDF](#))

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

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

- [Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups](#)

Formal and Informal

Some languages have more than one form of “you” based on the relationship between the speaker and the person he or she is talking to. People use the **formal** form of “you” when speaking to someone who is older, or has higher authority, or is someone they do not know very well. People use the **informal** form when speaking to someone who is not older, or does not have higher authority, or is a family member or close friend.

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

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- [Forms of “You” — Formal or Informal](#)

Masculine and Feminine

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

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

”

Referenced in: [Matthew 5:11](#); [Matthew 5:25](#); [Matthew 5:29](#); [Matthew 5:36](#); [Matthew 5:40](#); [Matthew 5:43](#); [Matthew 6:1](#); [Matthew 6:5](#); [Matthew 6:25](#); [Matthew 6:27](#); [Matthew 8:11](#); [Matthew 9:6](#); [Matthew 11:14](#); [Matthew 11:21](#); [Matthew 11:23](#); [Matthew 11:28](#); [Matthew 13:11](#); [Matthew 13:16](#); [Matthew 13:17](#); [Matthew 14:16](#); [Matthew 16:19](#); [Matthew 16:28](#); [Matthew 17:27](#); [Matthew 18:8](#); [Matthew 18:9](#); [Matthew 18:14](#); [Matthew 18:35](#); [Matthew 20:22](#); [Matthew 21:32](#); [Matthew 21:43](#); [Matthew 23:11](#)

Forms of 'You' — Singular

Description

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

This page answers the question: *How do I know if the word 'you' is singular?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Forms of You ([UTA PDF](#))

Pronouns ([UTA PDF](#))

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategies for finding out how many people “you” refers to

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

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

Referenced in: [Matthew 5 General Notes](#); [Matthew 6 General Notes](#); [Matthew 6:3](#); [Matthew 6:17](#); [Matthew 6:22](#); [Matthew 7 General Notes](#); [Matthew 7:3](#); [Matthew 26:10](#); [Matthew 26:40](#); [Matthew 26:53](#); [Matthew 26:64](#); [Matthew 28:7](#)

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

Generic noun phrases refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things. This happens frequently in proverbs, because proverbs tell about things that are true about people in general.

This page answers the question: *What are generic noun phrases and how can I translate them?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Can **a man** walk on hot coals without scorching his feet? So is **the man who goes in to his neighbor's wife; the one who touches her** will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28-29 ULT)

The phrases in bold above do not refer to a specific man. They refer to any man who does these things.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of showing that noun phrases refer to something in general. You (the translator) should refer to these general ideas in ways that are natural in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The **righteous person** is kept away from trouble and it comes upon **the wicked** instead. (Proverbs 11:8 ULT)

The bold phrases above do not refer to a specific person but to anyone who does what is right or anyone who is wicked.

People curse **the man who refuses to sell grain**. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

This does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who refuses to sell grain.

Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

The phrase "a good man" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who is good. The phrase "a man who makes evil plans" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who makes evil plans.

Translation Strategies

If your language can use the same wording as in the ULT to refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things, consider using the same wording. If not, here are some strategies you might use.

- (1) Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.
- (2) Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.
- (3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."
- (4) Use the plural form, as in "people."
- (5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.

Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

"Yahweh gives favor to **the good man**, but he condemns **the man who makes evil plans**." (Proverbs 12:2)

(2) Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **a man** who refuses to sell grain."

(3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **any man** who refuses to sell grain."

(4) Use the plural form, as in "people" (or in this sentence, "men").

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **men** who refuse to sell grain"

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **whoever** refuses to sell grain."

Next we recommend you learn about:

When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1393)

Referenced in: [Matthew 4:4](#); [Matthew 4:7](#); [Matthew 4:10](#); [Matthew 5 General Notes](#); [Matthew 5:3](#); [Matthew 5:4](#); [Matthew 5:8](#); [Matthew 5:15](#); [Matthew 5:19](#); [Matthew 5:43](#); [Matthew 6:2](#); [Matthew 6:5](#); [Matthew 6:7](#); [Matthew 6:24](#); [Matthew 9:17](#); [Matthew 10:22](#); [Matthew 10:23](#); [Matthew 10:42](#); [Matthew 12:29](#); [Matthew 12:36](#); [Matthew 13:12](#); [Matthew 13:19](#); [Matthew 16:24](#); [Matthew 16:25](#); [Matthew 18:4](#); [Matthew 18:5](#); [Matthew 18:12](#); [Matthew 19:9](#); [Matthew 23:26](#); [Matthew 24 General Notes](#); [Matthew 24:7](#); [Matthew 24:13](#); [Matthew 25:29](#)

Go and Come

Description

This page answers the question: *What do I do if the word "go" or "come" is confusing in a certain sentence?*

Different languages have different ways of determining whether to use the words "go" or "come" and whether to use the words "take" or "bring" when talking about motion. For example, when saying that they are approaching a person who has called them, English speakers say "I'm coming," while Spanish speakers say "I'm going." You will need to study the context in order to understand what is meant by the words "go" and "come" (and also "take" and "bring"), and then translate those words in a way that your readers will understand which direction people are moving in.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of talking about motion. The biblical languages or your source language may use the words "go" and "come" or "take" and "bring" differently than your language uses them. If these words are not translated in the way that is natural in your language, your readers may be confused about which direction people are moving.

Examples From the Bible

Yahweh said to Noah, "**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark." (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

In some languages, this would lead people to think that Yahweh was in the ark.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.
Then you will be free from my oath. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to his servant. Abraham's relatives lived far away from where he and his servant were standing and he wanted his servant to **go** to them, not **come** toward Abraham.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14a ULT)

Moses is speaking to the people in the wilderness. They had not yet gone into the land that God was giving them. In some languages, it would make more sense to say, "When you have **gone** into the land ..."

They **brought** him up to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (Luke 2:22b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to say that they **took** or **carried** Jesus to the temple.

Then see, there was a man whose name was Jairus, and he was a leader of the synagogue. And falling at the feet of Jesus, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

The man was not at his house when he spoke to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to **go** with him to his house.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to ask what did you come out to see.

Translation Strategies

If the word used in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other strategies.

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.
- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.
(Genesis 24:41 ULT)

But you will be free from my oath if you **go** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you come out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14 ULT)

“When you have **arrived** in the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ...”

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark ...” (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Enter**, you and all your household, into the ark ...”

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you travel out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

”

Referenced in: [Matthew 21:19](#); [Matthew 21:23](#); [Matthew 21:28](#)

Go and Come

Description

This page answers the question: *What do I do if the word "go" or "come" is confusing in a certain sentence?*

Different languages have different ways of determining whether to use the words "go" or "come" and whether to use the words "take" or "bring" when talking about motion. For example, when saying that they are approaching a person who has called them, English speakers say "I'm coming," while Spanish speakers say "I'm going." You will need to study the context in order to understand what is meant by the words "go" and "come" (and also "take" and "bring"), and then translate those words in a way that your readers will understand which direction people are moving in.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of talking about motion. The biblical languages or your source language may use the words "go" and "come" or "take" and "bring" differently than your language uses them. If these words are not translated in the way that is natural in your language, your readers may be confused about which direction people are moving.

Examples From the Bible

Yahweh said to Noah, "**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark." (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

In some languages, this would lead people to think that Yahweh was in the ark.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. Then you will be free from my oath. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to his servant. Abraham's relatives lived far away from where he and his servant were standing and he wanted his servant to **go** to them, not **come** toward Abraham.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14a ULT)

Moses is speaking to the people in the wilderness. They had not yet gone into the land that God was giving them. In some languages, it would make more sense to say, "When you have **gone** into the land ..."

They **brought** him up to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (Luke 2:22b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to say that they **took** or **carried** Jesus to the temple.

Then see, there was a man whose name was Jairus, and he was a leader of the synagogue. And falling at the feet of Jesus, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

The man was not at his house when he spoke to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to **go** with him to his house.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to ask what did you come out to see.

Translation Strategies

If the word used in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other strategies.

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.
- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.
(Genesis 24:41 ULT)

But you will be free from my oath if you **go** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you come out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14 ULT)

“When you have **arrived** in the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ...”

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark ...” (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Enter**, you and all your household, into the ark ...”

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you travel out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

”

Referenced in: [Matthew 21:19](#); [Matthew 21:23](#); [Matthew 21:28](#); [Matthew 27:32](#); [Matthew 27:64](#)

Hendiadys

Description

In a hendiadys, a speaker uses two words that mean different things and that are connected with “and.” These two words work together to express a single idea. Usually one of the words is the primary idea and the other word further describes the primary one.

This page answers the question: *What is hendiadys and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

... his own **kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

Though “kingdom” and “glory” are both nouns, “glory” actually tells what kind of kingdom it is: it is a **kingdom of glory** or **a glorious kingdom**.

Two phrases connected by “and” can also be a hendiadys when they refer to a single person, thing, or event.

while we look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

Titus 2:13 contains two hendiadyses. “The blessed hope” and “appearing of the glory” refer to the same thing and serve to strengthen the idea that the return of Jesus Christ is greatly anticipated and wonderful. Also, “our great God” and “Savior Jesus Christ” refer to one person, not two.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Often a hendiadys contains an abstract noun. Some languages may not have a noun with the same meaning.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that the second word is further describing the first one.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that only one person or thing is meant, not two.

Examples From the Bible

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

“A mouth” and “wisdom” are nouns, but in this figure of speech “wisdom” describes what comes from the mouth.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

“Willing” and “obedient” are adjectives, but “willing” describes “obedient.”

Translation Strategies

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

- (1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.
- (2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.
- (3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.
- (4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the

other.

(5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

For I will give you **wise words** ...

Walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own glorious kingdom**.

(2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

for I will give you **words of wisdom**.

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own kingdom of glory**.

(3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

If you are **willingly obedient** ...

(4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the other.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

The adjective "obedient" can be substituted with the verb "obey."

if you **obey willingly** ...

(4) and (5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

We look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

The noun "glory" can be changed to the adjective "glorious" to make it clear that Jesus' appearing is what we hope for. Also, "Jesus Christ" can be moved to the front of the phrase and "great God and Savior" put into a relative clause that describes the one person, Jesus Christ.

We look forward to receiving **what we are longing for, the blessed and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, who is our great God and Savior**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Doublet (p.1203)

Referenced in: [Matthew 9:35](#); [Matthew 10:19](#)

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

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

Translate Unknowns (p.1383)

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 (p.1191)

Referenced in: [Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew](#); [Matthew 1:3](#); [Matthew 1:5](#); [Matthew 1:16](#); [Matthew 1:23](#); [Matthew 2:1](#); [Matthew 2:22](#); [Matthew 4:25](#); [Matthew 8:28](#); [Matthew 10:28](#); [Matthew 12:42](#); [Matthew 14:3](#); [Matthew 14:34](#); [Matthew 15:39](#); [Matthew 16:17](#); [Matthew 16:18](#); [Matthew 21:1](#); [Matthew 21:17](#); [Matthew 27:56](#); [Matthew 27:57](#)

Hyperbole

Description

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

It rains here every night.

The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.

The speaker means this as a **generalization** if he means that it rains here most nights.

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

This page answers the question: *What are hyperboles? What are generalizations? How can I translate them?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Hyperbole

In hyperbole, a figure of speech that uses exaggeration, a speaker deliberately describes something with an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it. He expects people to understand that he is exaggerating.

They will not leave **stone upon stone in you**. (Luke 19:44b ULT)

This is an exaggeration. It means that the enemies will completely destroy Jerusalem.

Moses was educated in **all the wisdom of the Egyptians**. (Acts 7:22a ULT)

This hyperbole means that he had learned everything an Egyptian education could offer.

Generalization

This is a statement that is true most of the time or in most situations that it could apply to.

The one who ignores instruction **will have poverty and shame**, but **honor will come** to him who learns from correction. (Proverbs 13:18)

These generalizations tell about what normally happens to people who ignore instruction and what normally happens to people who learn from correction. There may be some exceptions to these statements, but they are generally true.

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as **the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words**. (Matthew 6:7)

This generalization tells about what Gentiles were known for doing. Many Gentiles did this. It does not matter if a few did not. The point was that the hearers should not join in this well-known practice.

Even though a hyperbole or a generalization may have a strong-sounding word like "all," "always," "none," or "never," it does not necessarily mean **exactly** "all," "always," "none," or "never." It simply means "most," "most of the time," "hardly any," or "rarely."

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.

If readers realize that a statement is not literally true, they need to be able to understand whether it is a hyperbole, a generalization, or a lie. (Though the Bible is completely true, it tells about people who did not always tell the truth.)

Examples From the Bible

Examples of Hyperbole

If your hand causes you to stumble, **cut it off**. It is better for you to enter into life maimed ... (Mark 9:43a ULT)

When Jesus said to cut off your hand, he meant that we should **do whatever extreme things** we need to do in order not to sin. He used this hyperbole to show how extremely important it is to try to stop sinning.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel with 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The bolded phrase is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that the Philistine army was overwhelming in number. It means that there were **many, many** soldiers in the Philistine army.

But as his anointing teaches you **everything** and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27b ULT)

This is a hyperbole. It expresses the assurance that God's Spirit teaches us about **all things that we need to know**. God's Spirit does not teach us about everything that it is possible to know.

When they found him, they also said to him, "**Everyone** is looking for you." (Mark 1:37 ULT)

The disciples probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for Jesus, but that **many people** were looking for him, or that all of Jesus' closest friends there were looking for him. This is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that they and many others were worried about him.

Examples of Generalization

Can **any good thing** come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46b ULT)

This rhetorical question is meant to express the generalization that there is nothing good in Nazareth. The people there had a reputation for being uneducated and not strictly religious. Of course, there were exceptions.

One of them, of their own prophets, has said, "**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies**." (Titus 1:12 ULT)

This is a generalization that means that Cretans had a reputation to be like this because, in general, this is how Cretans behaved. It is possible that there were exceptions.

A lazy hand causes a person to be poor, but the hand of the diligent person gains riches. (Proverbs 10:4 ULT)

This is generally true, and it reflects the experience of most people. It is possible that there are exceptions in some circumstances.

Caution

- Do not assume that something is an exaggeration just because it seems to be impossible. God does miraculous things.

They saw Jesus **walking on the sea** and coming near the boat. (John 6:19b ULT)

This is not hyperbole. Jesus really walked on the water. It is a literal statement.

- Do not assume that the word “all” is always a generalization that means “most.”

Yahweh is righteous in **all** his ways and gracious in **all** he does. (Psalms 145:17 ULT)

Yahweh is always righteous. This is a completely true statement.

Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole or generalization would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here are other options.

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.
- (4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and **a great number of troops**.

- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”

The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame. (Proverbs 13:18a ULT)

In general, the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame

When you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the **Gentiles do**, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. (Matthew 6:7 ULT)

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles **generally** do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

Almost all the country of Judea and **almost all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. or:

Many of the country of Judea and **many** of the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

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Referenced in: [Matthew 2:3](#); [Matthew 3:5](#); [Matthew 3:9](#); [Matthew 4:23](#); [Matthew 4:24](#); [Matthew 5:18](#); [Matthew 5:29](#); [Matthew 5:30](#); [Matthew 7:3](#); [Matthew 8:34](#); [Matthew 9:35](#); [Matthew 10:22](#); [Matthew 12:15](#); [Matthew 14:35](#); [Matthew 16:26](#); [Matthew 18:8](#); [Matthew 18:9](#); [Matthew 19:24](#); [Matthew 21:26](#); [Matthew 23:9](#); [Matthew 23:24](#)

Hypothetical Situations

Consider these phrases: “If the sun stopped shining ...” “What if the sun stopped shining ...” “Suppose the sun stopped shining ...” and “If only the sun had not stopped shining.” We use such expressions to set up hypothetical situations, imagining what might have happened or what could happen in the future but probably will not. We also use them to express regret or wishes. Hypothetical expressions occur often in the Bible. You (the translator) need to translate them in a way that people will know that the event did not actually happen and so that they will understand why the event was imagined.

This page answers the question: *What is a hypothetical situation?*

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

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

Hypothetical situations are situations that are not real. They can be in the past, present, or future. Hypothetical situations in the past and present have not happened, are not happening now, and ones in the future are not expected to happen.

People sometimes tell about conditions and what would happen if those conditions were met, but they know that these things have not happened or probably will not happen. (The conditions comprise a phrase that starts with “if.”)

- If he had lived to be 100 years old, he would have seen his grandson’s grandson. (But he did not.)
- If he lived to be 100 years old, he would still be alive today. (But he is not.)
- If he lives to be 100 years old, he will see his grandson’s grandson. (But he probably will not.)

People sometimes express wishes about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- I wish he had come.
- I wish he were here.
- I wish he would come.

People sometimes express regrets about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- If only he had come.
- If only he were here.
- If only he would come.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to recognize the different kinds of hypothetical situations in the Bible and understand that they are unreal.
- Translators need to know their own language’s ways of talking about different kinds of hypothetical situations.

Examples From the Bible

Hypothetical Situations in the Past

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **If the mighty deeds had been done** in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, **they would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

Here in Matthew 11:21, Jesus said that **if** the people living in the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon had been able to see the miracles that he performed, they would have repented long ago. The people of Tyre and Sidon did not actually see his miracles, and they did not repent. He said this to rebuke the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida who had seen his miracles and yet did not repent.

Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, **if you had been here, my brother would not have died.**” (John 11:21 ULT)

Martha said this to express her wish that Jesus would have come sooner so that her brother would not have died. But Jesus did not come sooner and her brother did die.

Hypothetical Situations in the Present

And no man puts new wine into old wineskins. **But if he did do that, the new wine would burst the wineskins, and it would be spilled out, and the wineskins would be destroyed.** (Luke 5:37 ULT)

Jesus told about what would happen if a person were to put new wine into old wineskins. But no one would do that. He used this imaginary situation as an example to show that there are times when it is unwise to mix new things with old things. He did this so that people could understand why his disciples were not fasting as people traditionally did.

Jesus said to them, “What man would there be among you, who, **if he had just one sheep, and if this sheep fell into a deep hole on the Sabbath, would not grasp hold of it and lift it out?**” (Matthew 12:11 ULT)

Jesus asked the religious leaders what they would do on the Sabbath if one of their sheep fell into a hole. He was not saying that their sheep would fall into a hole. He used this imaginary situation to show them that they were wrong to judge him for healing people on the Sabbath.

Hypothetical Situation in the Future

Unless those days are shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:22 ULT)

Jesus was talking about a future time when very bad things would happen. He told what would happen if those days of trouble were to last a long time. He did this to show how bad those days will be—so bad that if they lasted a long time, no one would be saved. But then he clarified that God will shorten those days of trouble so that the elect (those he has chosen) will be saved.

Expressing Emotion About a Hypothetical Situation

People sometimes talk about hypothetical situations in order to express regrets and wishes. Regrets are about the past and wishes are about the present and future.

The Israelites said to them, “**If only we had died by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt when we were sitting by the pots of meat and were eating bread to the full.** For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill our whole community with hunger.” (Exodus 16:3 ULT)

Here the Israelites were afraid that they would have to suffer and die of hunger in the wilderness, and so they wished that they had stayed in Egypt and died there with full stomachs. They were complaining, expressing regret that this had not happened.

I know what you have done, and that you are neither cold nor hot. **I wish that you were either cold or hot!** (Revelation 3:15 ULT)

Jesus wished that the people were either hot or cold, but they are neither. He was rebuking them, expressing anger at this.

Translation Strategies

Find out how people speaking your language show:

- that something could have happened, but did not.
- that something could be true now, but is not.
- that something could happen in the future, but will not unless something changes.
- that they wish for something, but it does not happen.
- that they regret that something did not happen.

Use your language's ways of showing these kinds of things.

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

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Referenced in: [Matthew 21:26](#)

Hypothetical Situations

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- that they regret that something did not happen.

Use your language's ways of showing these kinds of things.

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

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Referenced in: [Matthew 18:15](#); [Matthew 18:16](#); [Matthew 18:17](#); [Matthew 21:26](#); [Matthew 22:25](#); [Matthew 24:23](#)

Idiom

An idiom is a figure of speech made up of a group of words that, as a whole, has a meaning that is different from what one would understand from the meanings of the individual words. Someone from outside of the culture usually cannot understand an idiom without someone inside the culture explaining its true meaning. Every language uses idioms. Some English examples are:

- You are pulling my leg. (This means, “You are teasing me by telling me something that is not true.”)
- Do not push the envelope. (This means, “Do not take a matter to its extreme.”)
- This house is under water. (This means, “The debt owed for this house is greater than its actual value.”)
- We are painting the town red. (This means, “We are going around town tonight celebrating very intensely.”)

This page answers the question: *What are idioms and how can I translate them?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

An idiom is a phrase that has a special meaning to the people of the language or culture who use it. Its meaning is different than what a person would understand from the meanings of the individual words that form the phrase.

He **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

The words “set his face” is an idiom that means “decided.”

Sometimes people may be able to understand an idiom from another culture, but it might sound like a strange way to express the meaning.

I am not worthy that you would **come under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

The phrase “come under my roof” is an idiom that means “enter my house.”

Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

This idiom means “Listen carefully and remember what I say.”

Purpose: An idiom is probably created in a culture somewhat by accident when someone describes something in an unusual way. But, when that unusual way communicates the message powerfully and people understand it clearly, other people start to use it. After a while, it becomes a normal way of talking in that language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People can easily misunderstand idioms in the original languages of the Bible if they do not know the cultures that produced the Bible.
- People can easily misunderstand idioms that are in the source language Bibles if they do not know the cultures that made those translations.
- It is useless to translate idioms literally (according to the meaning of each word) when the target language audience will not understand what they mean.

Examples From the Bible

Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Look, we are your **flesh and bone**.” (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

This means, “We and you belong to the same race, the same family.”

■ The children of Israel went out **with a high hand**. (Exodus 14:8b ASV)

This means, "The Israelites went out defiantly."

■ the one who **lifts up my head** (Psalm 3:3b ULT)

This means, "the one who helps me."

Translation Strategies

If the idiom would be clearly understood in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.
- (2) Use a different idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.

Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Look, we are your **flesh and bone**." (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

■ Look, we all **belong to the same nation**.

Then he **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

■ He started to travel to Jerusalem, **determined to reach it**.

I am not worthy that you would come **under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

■ I am not worthy that you should enter **my house**.

- (2) Use an idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

■ **Be all ears** when I say these words to you.

My **eyes grow dim** from grief. (Psalm 6:7a ULT)

■ I am crying my **eyes out**

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 20:28](#); [Matthew 22:13](#); [Matthew 22:16](#); [Matthew 22:43](#); [Matthew 22:44](#)

Idiom

An idiom is a figure of speech made up of a group of words that, as a whole, has a meaning that is different from what one would understand from the meanings of the individual words. Someone from outside of the culture usually cannot understand an idiom without someone inside the culture explaining its true meaning. Every language uses idioms. Some English examples are:

- You are pulling my leg. (This means, “You are teasing me by telling me something that is not true.”)
- Do not push the envelope. (This means, “Do not take a matter to its extreme.”)
- This house is under water. (This means, “The debt owed for this house is greater than its actual value.”)
- We are painting the town red. (This means, “We are going around town tonight celebrating very intensely.”)

This page answers the question: *What are idioms and how can I translate them?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

An idiom is a phrase that has a special meaning to the people of the language or culture who use it. Its meaning is different than what a person would understand from the meanings of the individual words that form the phrase.

He **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

The words “set his face” is an idiom that means “decided.”

Sometimes people may be able to understand an idiom from another culture, but it might sound like a strange way to express the meaning.

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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.

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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)

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■ **Be all ears** when I say these words to you.

My **eyes grow dim** from grief. (Psalm 6:7a ULT)

■ I am crying my **eyes out**

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Referenced in: [Matthew 1:18](#); [Matthew 3:4](#); [Matthew 3:12](#); [Matthew 3:15](#); [Matthew 4:19](#); [Matthew 4:21](#); [Matthew 5:2](#); [Matthew 5:3](#); [Matthew 5:4](#); [Matthew 5:8](#); [Matthew 5:25](#); [Matthew 7:23](#); [Matthew 8 General Notes](#); [Matthew 8:8](#); [Matthew 8:9](#); [Matthew 8:20](#); [Matthew 9:30](#); [Matthew 10:8](#); [Matthew 10:19](#); [Matthew 10:21](#); [Matthew 10:27](#); [Matthew 11:5](#); [Matthew 11:10](#); [Matthew 11:11](#); [Matthew 11:12](#); [Matthew 11:26](#); [Matthew 11:29](#); [Matthew 12:19](#); [Matthew 12:30](#); [Matthew 12:32](#); [Matthew 12:33](#); [Matthew 12:40](#); [Matthew 12:42](#); [Matthew 13:6](#); [Matthew 13:15](#); [Matthew 13:21](#); [Matthew 13:32](#); [Matthew 13:38](#); [Matthew 14:13](#); [Matthew 14:15](#); [Matthew 15:8](#); [Matthew 15:28](#); [Matthew 15:30](#); [Matthew 16:21](#); [Matthew 16:22](#); [Matthew 16:24](#); [Matthew 16:28](#); [Matthew 17:2](#); [Matthew 17:6](#); [Matthew 17:18](#); [Matthew 17:23](#); [Matthew 18:1](#); [Matthew 18:10](#); [Matthew 18:27](#); [Matthew 18:30](#); [Matthew 18:35](#); [Matthew 19:5](#); [Matthew 19:17](#); [Matthew 19:29](#); [Matthew 20:12](#); [Matthew 20:22](#); [Matthew 20:23](#); [Matthew 20:28](#); [Matthew 21:43](#); [Matthew 22:13](#); [Matthew 22:16](#); [Matthew 22:43](#); [Matthew 22:44](#); [Matthew 23:15](#); [Matthew 23:23](#); [Matthew 23:31](#); [Matthew 23:33](#); [Matthew 24:7](#); [Matthew 24:11](#); [Matthew 24:19](#); [Matthew 24:29](#); [Matthew 24:31](#); [Matthew 24:37](#); [Matthew 24:38](#); [Matthew 24:43](#); [Matthew 24:44](#); [Matthew 24:50](#); [Matthew 24:51](#); [Matthew 25:8](#); [Matthew 26:25](#); [Matthew 26:29](#); [Matthew 26:32](#); [Matthew 26:38](#); [Matthew 26:39](#); [Matthew 26:43](#); [Matthew 26:45](#); [Matthew 26:50](#);

Matthew 26:55; Matthew 26:64; Matthew 26:70; Matthew 27:4; Matthew 27:11; Matthew 27:19; Matthew 27:24;
Matthew 27:25; Matthew 27:46; Matthew 27:50; Matthew 27:52; Matthew 27:63; Matthew 27:64; Matthew 28:6;
Matthew 28:7

Imperatives — Other Uses

Description

Imperative sentences are mainly used to express a desire or requirement that someone do something. In the Bible, sometimes imperative sentences have other uses.

This page answers the question: *What other uses are there for imperative sentences in the Bible?*

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

Sentence Types ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use an imperative sentence for some of the functions that they are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Speakers often use imperative sentences to tell or ask their listeners to do something. In Genesis 26, God spoke to Isaac and told him not to go to Egypt but to live where God would tell him to live.

Now Yahweh appeared to him and said, “**Do not go down** to Egypt; **live** in the land that I tell you to live in.” (Genesis 26:2 ULT)

Sometimes imperative sentences in the Bible have other uses.

Imperatives that make things happen

God can make things happen by commanding that they happen. Jesus healed a man by commanding that the man be healed. The man could not do anything to obey the command, but Jesus caused him to be healed by commanding it. (In this context, the command “Be clean” means to “be healed” so that others around would know that it was safe to touch the man again.)

“I am willing. **Be clean.**” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

In Genesis 1, God commanded that there should be light, and by commanding it, he caused it to exist. Some languages, such as the Hebrew of the Bible, have commands that are in the third person. English does not do that, and so it must turn the third-person command into a general, second-person command, as in the ULT:

God said, “**Let there be** light,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

Languages that have third-person commands can follow the original Hebrew, which translates into English as something like “light must be.”

Imperatives that function as blessings

In the Bible, God blesses people by using imperatives. This indicates what his will is for them.

God blessed them and said to them, “**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

Imperatives that function as conditions

An imperative sentence can also be used to tell the **condition** under which something will happen. The proverbs mainly tell about life and things that often happen. The purpose of Proverbs 4:6 below is not primarily to give a command, but to teach what people can expect to happen **if** they love wisdom.

Do not abandon wisdom and she will watch over you; **love** her and she will keep you safe.
(Proverbs 4:6 ULT)

The purpose of Proverbs 22:6, below, is to teach what people can expect to happen if they teach their children the way they should go.

Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.
- (2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like “so” to show that what happened was a result of what was said.
- (3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.

Be clean. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

“You are now clean.” “I now cleanse you.”

God said, “**Let there be light**,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

God said, “**There is now light**” and there was light.

God blessed them and said to them, “**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

God blessed them and said to them, “**My will for you is that you be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **I want you to have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

- (2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like “so” to show that what happened was a result of what was said.

God said, “**Let there be light**,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

God said, ‘Let there be light,’ **so** there was light. God said, “Light must be;” **as a result**, there was light.

- (3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translated as:

“**If** you teach a child the way he should go, **then** when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction.”

”

Referenced in: [Matthew 8:8](#); [Matthew 12:13](#); [Matthew 18:26](#); [Matthew 18:29](#); [Matthew 20:21](#); [Matthew 25:11](#); [Matthew 27:22](#); [Matthew 27:64](#)

Information Structure

Description

Different languages arrange the parts of the sentence in different ways. In English, a sentence normally has the subject first, then the verb, then the object, then other modifiers, like this: Peter painted his house yesterday.

Many other languages normally put these things in a different order such as: Painted yesterday Peter his house.

Although all languages have a normal order for parts of a sentence, this order can change depending on what information the speaker or writer considers to be the most important.

Suppose that someone is answering the question, "What did Peter paint yesterday?" The person asking the question already knows all of the information in our sentence above except for the object, "his house." Therefore, that becomes the most important part of the information, and a person answering in English might say "His house is what Peter painted (yesterday)."

This puts the most important information first, which is normal for English. Many Other Languages would normally put the most important information last. In the flow of a text, the most important information is usually what the writer considers to be new information for the reader. In some languages the new information comes first, and in others it comes last.

This page answers the question: *How do languages arrange the parts of a sentence?*

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

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Different languages arrange the parts of a sentence in different ways. If you (the translator) copy the order of the parts of a sentence from the source, it may not make sense in your language.
- Different languages put important or new information in different places in the sentence. If you keep the important or new information in the same place that it had in the source language, it may be confusing or give the wrong message in your language.

Examples From the Bible

They all ate until they were satisfied. (Mark 6:42 ULT)

The parts of this sentence were in a different order in the original Greek source language. They were like this: And they ate all and they were satisfied.

In English, this means that the people ate everything. But the next verse says that they took up twelve baskets full of leftover pieces of food. In order for this to not be so confusing, the translators of the ULT put the parts of the sentence in the right order for English.

And the day began to end, and the twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so that, going into the surrounding villages and countryside, they may find lodging and food, because we are here in an desolate place." (Luke 9:12 ULT)

In this verse, what the disciples say to Jesus puts the important information first, that he should send the crowd away. In languages that put the important information last, people would understand that the reason that they gave, being in an isolated place, is the most important part of their message to Jesus. They might then think that the disciples are afraid of the spirits in that place, and that sending the people to buy food is a way to protect them from the spirits. That is the wrong message.

Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers treated the false prophets in the same way. (Luke 6:26 ULT)

In this verse, the most important part of the information is first, that “woe” is coming on the people for what they are doing. The reason that supports that warning comes last. This could be confusing for people who expect the important information to come last.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Study how your language arranges the parts of a sentence, and use that order in your translation.
- (2) Study where your language puts the new or important information, and rearrange the order of information so that it follows the way it is done in your language.

Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Study how your language arranges the parts of a sentence, and use that order in your translation.

This is the verse in the original Greek order:

And he went out from there and came to the hometown his, and they followed him the disciples his. (Mark 6:1)

The ULT has put this into the normal order for English:

Now Jesus went out from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. (Mark 6:1 ULT)

- (2) Study where your language puts the new or important information and rearrange the order of information so that it follows the way it is done in your language.

And the day began to end, and the twelve came and said to him, “Send the crowd away so that, going into the surrounding villages and countryside, they may find lodging and food, because we are here in a desolate place.” (Luke 9:12 ULT)

If your language puts the important information last, you can change the order of the verse.

Now the day was about to come to an end, and the twelve came to him and said, “Because we are here in an desolate place, send the crowd away that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and food.”

Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets. (Luke 6:26 ULT)

If your language puts the important information last, you can change the order of the verse.

When all men speak well of you, which is just as people’s ancestors treated the false prophets, then woe to you!

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Word Order \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Matthew 2:8](#)

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 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 (p.1269)

Referenced in: [Matthew 21:1](#); [Matthew 21:18](#); [Matthew 22:41](#)

Introduction of a New Event

Description

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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.

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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:

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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.

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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 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 (p.1269)

Referenced in: [Matthew 1:18](#); [Matthew 3:1](#); [Matthew 3:13](#); [Matthew 4:1](#); [Matthew 4:18](#); [Matthew 5:1](#); [Matthew 8:1](#); [Matthew 9:18](#); [Matthew 10:1](#); [Matthew 11:1](#); [Matthew 12:1](#); [Matthew 12:22](#); [Matthew 13:1](#); [Matthew 13:36](#); [Matthew 13:54](#); [Matthew 15:1](#); [Matthew 15:21](#); [Matthew 15:29](#); [Matthew 16:5](#); [Matthew 16:13](#); [Matthew 17:22](#); [Matthew 17:24](#); [Matthew 19:1](#); [Matthew 19:13](#); [Matthew 21:1](#); [Matthew 21:18](#); [Matthew 22:41](#); [Matthew 25:19](#); [Matthew 25:31](#); [Matthew 26:1](#); [Matthew 26:6](#); [Matthew 26:17](#); [Matthew 26:26](#); [Matthew 26:69](#); [Matthew 27:1](#); [Matthew 27:3](#); [Matthew 27:45](#); [Matthew 27:54](#); [Matthew 27:57](#); [Matthew 27:62](#); [Matthew 28:1](#); [Matthew 28:11](#); [Matthew 28:16](#)

Introduction of New and Old Participants

Description

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

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

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](#))

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 his 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 (p.1337)

Referenced in: [Matthew 22:35](#)

Introduction of New and Old Participants

Description

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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.

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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.

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■ **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.
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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 (p.1337)

Referenced in: [Matthew 3:1](#); [Matthew 8:2](#); [Matthew 9:14](#); [Matthew 9:18](#); [Matthew 15:22](#); [Matthew 22:35](#); [Matthew 26:59](#)

Irony

Description

Irony is a figure of speech in which the sense that the speaker intends to communicate is actually the opposite of the literal meaning of the words. Sometimes a person does this by using someone else's words, but in a way that communicates that he does not agree with them. People do this to emphasize how different something is from what it should be, or how someone else's belief about something is wrong or foolish. It is often humorous.

This page answers the question: *What is irony and how can I translate it?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "People who are well do not have need of a physician, but those who have sickness. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
(Luke 5:31-32 ULT)

When Jesus spoke of "the righteous," he was not referring to people who were truly righteous, but to people who wrongly believed that they were righteous. By using irony, Jesus communicated that they were wrong to think that they were better than others and did not need to repent.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

If someone does not realize that a speaker is using irony, he will think that the speaker actually believes what he is saying. He will understand the passage to mean the opposite of what it was intended to mean.

Examples From the Bible

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9b ULT)

Here Jesus praises the Pharisees for doing something that is obviously wrong. Through irony, he communicates the opposite of praise: He communicates that the Pharisees, who take great pride in keeping the commandments, are so far from God that they do not even recognize that their traditions are breaking God's commandments. The use of irony makes the Pharisee's sin more obvious and startling.

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. **"Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled."** (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

People worshiped idols as if their idols had knowledge or power, and Yahweh was angry at them for doing that. So he used irony and challenged their idols to tell what would happen in the future. He knew that the idols could not do this, but by speaking as if they could, he mocked the idols, making their inability more obvious, and rebuked the people for worshiping them.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is many!** (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Job thought that he was wise. Yahweh used irony to show Job that he was not so wise. The two phrases in bold above are irony. They emphasize the opposite of what they say, because they are so obviously false. They emphasize that Job could not possibly answer God's questions about the creation of light because Job was not born until many, many years later.

Already you are satisfied! Already you have become rich! **You began to reign** apart from us, and I wish you really did reign, so that we also might reign with you. (1 Corinthians 4:8 ULT)

The Corinthians considered themselves to be very wise, self-sufficient, and not in need of any instruction from the Apostle Paul. Paul used irony, speaking as if he agreed with them, to show how proudly they were acting and how far from being wise they really were.

Translation Strategies

If the irony would be understood correctly in your language, translate it as it is stated. If not, here are some other strategies.

- (1) Translate the irony in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.
- (2) Translate the actual, intended meaning of the statement of irony. (Remember: The true meaning of the irony is **not** found in the literal words of the speaker, but instead the true meaning is found in the opposite of the literal meaning of the speaker's words.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

You think that you are doing well when you reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!

or:

You act like it is good to reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!

I did not come to call **the righteous**, but sinners to repentance. (Luke 5:32 ULT)

I did not come to call **people who think that they are righteous** to repentance, but to call people who know that they are sinners to repentance.

- (2) Translate the actual, intended meaning of the statement of irony.

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

You are doing a terrible thing when you reject the commandment of God so you may keep your tradition!

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. **"Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled."** (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

'Present your case,' says Yahweh; 'present your best arguments for your idols,' says the King of Jacob. **Can your idols bring us their own arguments or come forward to declare to us what will happen** so we may know these things well? **No!** We cannot hear them because **they cannot speak** to tell us their earlier predictive declarations, so we cannot reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is many!** (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You act like you know how light and darkness were created, as if you were there; as if you are as old as creation, but you are not!**

Next we recommend you learn about:

Litotes ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 6:2](#); [Matthew 6:16](#); [Matthew 8:12](#); [Matthew 9:12](#); [Matthew 11:25](#); [Matthew 23:32](#); [Matthew 26:68](#); [Matthew 27:29](#); [Matthew 27:42](#); [Matthew 27:43](#)

Kinship

Description

This page answers the question: *What are kinship terms and how can I translate them?*

Kinship terms refer to those words used to describe people related to one another in familial relationships. These terms vary widely in their specificity from language to language. They range from the (Western) nuclear or immediate family (father-son, husband-wife) out to broad clan relationships in other cultures.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Depending on the language translators may need to use specific terms to designate the accurate kinship relationship. In some languages a different term may be used based on siblings' birth order. In others, the side of the family (father's or mother's), age, marital status, etc. may determine the term used. Different terms may be used based on the gender of the speaker and/or addressee. Translators may need to make sure they know the exact relationship between two related people in the Bible to find the correct term. Sometimes these terms are difficult even for native speakers to remember and translators may need to seek community help in finding the correct term. Another complicating issue is that the Bible may not give enough information about the relationship for translators to determine the correct term in the language being translated into. In this case, translators will have to use a more general term or simply pick a satisfactory term based on the limited information available.

Sometimes terms that seem like kinship terms are used for people who are not necessarily related. For instance, an older person may refer to a younger man or woman as "my son" or "my daughter."

Examples from the Bible

Then Yahweh said to Cain, "Where is Abel **your brother**?" He said, "I do not know. Am I **my brother's** keeper?" (Genesis 4:9 ULT)

Abel was Cain's younger brother.

Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flock and said to them, "I see **your father's** attitude toward me has changed, but the God of my father has been with me." (Genesis 31:4-5 ULT)

Jacob is referring here to his father-in-law. In some languages there may be a specific term for a man's father-in-law, however, in this case it is better to retain the form **your father** as Jacob may be using it to distance himself from Laban.

And Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro **his father-in-law**, the priest of Midian. (Exodus 3:1a ULT)

Unlike the previous instance, if your language has a term for a man's father-in-law this is a good place to use it.

And **his sister** stationed herself at a distance to know what would be done to him. (Exodus 2:4 ULT)

From context we know that this was Miriam, Moses's older sister. In some languages this may require a specific term. In others, the term for older sister may be only used when the younger sibling is addressing and/or referring to his or her sister.

Then she and **her daughters-in-law** arose to return from the fields of Moab (Ruth 1:6a ULT)

Ruth & Orpah are Naomi's daughters-in-law.

Then she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has turned back to her people and to her gods." (Ruth 1:15 ULT)

Orpah had been the wife of Ruth's husband's brother. This may be a different term in your language than if she had been Ruth's husband's sister.

Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Will you not listen to me, **my daughter**?" (Ruth 2:8a ULT)

Boaz is not Ruth's father; he is simply using the term to address a younger woman.

And behold, **your relative** Elizabeth—she also has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren. (Luke 1:36 ULT)

While the KJV translated this as **cousin**, the term simply means a related woman.

Translation Strategies

(1) Find out the exact relationship specified and translate using the term your language uses.

(2) If the text does not specify the relationship as clearly as your language would, either:

(a) settle on a more general term.

(b) use a specific term if required by your language, choosing the one that is most likely to be correct.

Translation Strategies Applied

This is not an issue in English, so the following illustrations draw on other languages.

In Korean, there are several terms for brother and sister; the use of them depends on the speaker's (or referent's) sex and birth order. Examples are from the Korean Living Bible, found on biblegateway.com

Genesis 30:1 Rachel is jealous of her "eonni," which is the term a woman uses for her older sister.

Genesis 34:31 Simeon and Levi refer to Dinah as "nui," a general term for sister.

Genesis 37:16 Joseph refers to his brothers as "hyeong," which is the term a man uses for his older brother(s).

Genesis 45:12 Joseph refers to Benjamin as "dongsaeng," which roughly means sibling, usually younger.

In Russian, in-law terms are complex. For instance, "nevěstka" is the term for a brother's (or brother-in-law's) wife; a woman uses the same term for her daughter-in-law but her husband would call the same daughter-in-law "snoxá." Examples from the Russian Synodal Version.

Genesis 38:25 Tamar sends a message to her father-in-law, Judah. The term used is "svekor." This is used for a woman's husband's father.

Exodus 3:1 Moses is watching his father-in-law's herd. The term used is "test'." This is used for a man's wife's father.

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 5:16](#); [Matthew 5:22](#); [Matthew 5:45](#); [Matthew 7:3](#); [Matthew 9:22](#); [Matthew 9:27](#); [Matthew 12:49](#); [Matthew 15:22](#); [Matthew 17:26](#); [Matthew 18:15](#); [Matthew 18:21](#); [Matthew 20:30](#); [Matthew 25:40](#)

Litany

Description

A litany is a figure of speech in which the various components of a thing are listed in a series of very similar statements. The speaker does this to indicate that what he is saying should be understood as comprehensive and without exceptions.

This page answers the question: *What is the figure of speech called litany?*

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 litanies, and readers could be confused by them. They may wonder why the speaker seems to be saying the same thing over and over again.

Examples From the Bible

Though they dig into Sheol, there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to heaven, there I will bring them down. Though they hide on the top of Carmel, there I will search and take them. Though they are hidden from my sight in the bottom of the sea, there will I give orders to the serpent, and it will bite them. Though they go into captivity, driven by their enemies before them, there will I give orders to the sword, and it will kill them. (Amos 9:2-4 ULT)

In this passage Yahweh is telling the people of Israel that when he punishes them, none of them will escape.

But you should not have looked on the day of your brother, on the day of his misfortune. And you should not have rejoiced over the sons of Judah in the day of their perishing. And you should not have made your mouth great in a day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of my people in the day of their calamity. Yes, you! You should not have looked on his evil in the day of his calamity. And you women should not have looted his wealth in the day of his calamity. And you should not have stood at the crossroads to cut down his fugitives. And you should not have delivered up his survivors in a day of distress. (Obadiah 1:12-14)

In this passage Yahweh is telling the people of Edom that they should have helped the people of Judah when they were conquered by the Babylonians.

Translation Strategies

If the litany is understood as it is in the ULT, then translate the litany as it is. If it is not understood, then try one or more of the following strategies.

- (1) Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany.
- (2) You can put each sentence of the litany on a separate line. Also, if each sentence in the litany has two parts, you can format the litany so that the equivalent parts of each sentence line up. Use this or any other type of formatting that will show that each sentence is reinforcing the same meaning.
- (3) You can eliminate words like "and," "but," and "or" at the beginning of sentences so that it will be clearer that the component parts of the litany are all being listed in a row.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) combined with (3):

Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany;

You can eliminate words like “and,” “but,” and “or” at the beginning of sentences so that it will be clearer that the component parts of the litany are all being listed in a row.

You did nothing to help the Israelites when strangers carried away their wealth. They conquered all the cities of Judah, and they even plundered Jerusalem. And you were just as bad as those foreigners, because you did nothing to help:

You should not have looked on the day of your brother, on the day of his misfortune. You should not have rejoiced over the sons of Judah in the day of their perishing. You should not have made your mouth great in a day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of my people in the day of their calamity. Yes, you! You should not have looked on his evil in the day of his calamity. You women should not have looted his wealth in the day of his calamity. You should not have stood at the crossroads to cut down his fugitives. You should not have delivered up his survivors in a day of distress. (Obadiah 1:11-14)

In the above example, verse 11 provides the summary and meaning for the litany that follows in verses 12-14.

(1) combined with (2):

Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany;

You can put each sentence of the litany on a separate line. Also, if each sentence in the litany has two parts, you can format the litany so that the equivalent parts of each sentence line up. Use this or any other type of formatting that will show that each sentence is reinforcing the same meaning.

Not one of them will get away, not one of them will escape:

Though they dig into Sheol,	there my hand will take them.
Though they climb up to heaven,	there I will bring them down.
Though they hide on the top of Carmel,	there I will search and take them.
Though they are hidden from my sight in the bottom of the sea,	there will I give orders to the serpent, and it will bite them.
Though they go into captivity, driven by their enemies before them,	there will I give orders to the sword, and it will kill them.

(Amos 9:1b-4 ULT)

In the above example, the sentence before the litany explains its overall meaning. That sentence can be placed as an introduction. The second half of each sentence can be formatted in a descending staircase pattern as above, or lined up evenly like the first half of each sentence, or in another way. Use whatever format best shows that these sentences are all communicating the same truth, that it is not possible to escape from God.

”

Referenced in: [Matthew 11:5](#)

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: [Matthew 2:6](#); [Matthew 11:11](#)

Merism

Definition

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it. By referring to the extreme parts, the speaker intends to include also everything in between those parts.

"I am **the alpha and the omega**," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8 ULT)

I am **the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end**. (Revelation 22:13, ULT)

This page answers the question: *What does the word merism mean and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a merism that includes everything from the beginning to the end. It means eternal.

... I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth** ..., (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

Heaven and earth is a merism that includes everything that exists.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use merism. The readers of those languages may think that the phrase only applies to the items mentioned. They may not realize that it refers to those two things and everything in between.

Examples From the Bible

From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

This bolded phrase is a merism because it speaks of the east and the west and everywhere in between. It means "everywhere."

He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13)

The bolded phrase is merism because it speaks of old people and young people and everyone in between. It means "everyone."

Translation Strategies

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

- (1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.
- (2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything**.

From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

In all places, people should praise Yahweh's name.

(2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything, including both what is in heaven and what is on earth**.

He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13 ULT)

He will bless **all those** who honor him, regardless of whether they are **young or old**.

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 22:10](#); [Matthew 22:40](#)

Merism

Definition

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it. By referring to the extreme parts, the speaker intends to include also everything in between those parts.

"I am **the alpha and the omega**," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8 ULT)

I am **the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end**. (Revelation 22:13, ULT)

This page answers the question: *What does the word merism mean and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a merism that includes everything from the beginning to the end. It means eternal.

... I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth** ..., (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

Heaven and earth is a merism that includes everything that exists.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use merism. The readers of those languages may think that the phrase only applies to the items mentioned. They may not realize that it refers to those two things and everything in between.

Examples From the Bible

From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

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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: [Matthew 4:2](#); [Matthew 4:23](#); [Matthew 8:11](#); [Matthew 11:25](#); [Matthew 12:40](#); [Matthew 22:10](#); [Matthew 22:40](#); [Matthew 23:15](#); [Matthew 23:35](#); [Matthew 24:35](#); [Matthew 28:18](#)

Metaphor

Description

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

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

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

This page answers the question: *What is a metaphor and how can I translate a Bible passage that has one?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Simile ([UTA PDF](#))

The Parts of a Metaphor

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

Every metaphor has three parts:

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

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

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

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

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

Passive Metaphors

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

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

Patterned Pairs of Concepts Acting as Metaphors

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

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

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

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

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

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

Active Metaphors

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

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

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

And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox ...” (Luke 13:32a ULT)

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

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

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

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

Purposes of Metaphor

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

Translation Principles

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **immediately bowed down in front of him.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I will make you to become **fishers of men**. (Mark 1:17b ULT)

I will make you to become **people who gather men**. Now you gather fish.

I will make you **gather people**.

To learn more about specific metaphors, see [Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns](#).

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 20:28](#); [Matthew 20:33](#); [Matthew 21:5](#); [Matthew 21:9](#); [Matthew 22:15](#); [Matthew 22:29](#); [Matthew 22:40](#); [Matthew 22:42](#)

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: [Matthew 1:1](#); [Matthew 1:20](#); [Matthew 1:23](#); [Matthew 2:6](#); [Matthew 3:3](#); [Matthew 3:7](#); [Matthew 3:8](#); [Matthew 3:9](#); [Matthew 3:10](#); [Matthew 3:11](#); [Matthew 3:12](#); [Matthew 4:4](#); [Matthew 4:16](#); [Matthew 4:19](#); [Matthew 5:6](#); [Matthew 5:13](#); [Matthew 5:14](#); [Matthew 5:16](#); [Matthew 5:29](#); [Matthew 5:30](#); [Matthew 5:34](#); [Matthew 5:35](#); [Matthew 5:36](#); [Matthew 6:2](#); [Matthew 6:3](#); [Matthew 6:12](#); [Matthew 6:20](#); [Matthew 6:21](#); [Matthew 6:22](#); [Matthew 6:27](#); [Matthew 6:29](#); [Matthew 6:30](#); [Matthew 7:2](#); [Matthew 7:3](#); [Matthew 7:6](#); [Matthew 7:13](#); [Matthew 7:14](#); [Matthew 7:15](#); [Matthew 7:16](#); [Matthew 7:17](#); [Matthew 7:19](#); [Matthew 7:20](#); [Matthew 8:11](#); [Matthew 8:22](#); [Matthew 10:6](#); [Matthew 10:25](#); [Matthew 10:28](#); [Matthew 10:39](#); [Matthew 10:40](#); [Matthew 10:42](#); [Matthew 11:7](#); [Matthew 11:10](#); [Matthew 11:25](#); [Matthew 11:28](#); [Matthew 12:4](#); [Matthew 12:20](#); [Matthew 12:27](#); [Matthew 12:29](#); [Matthew 12:30](#); [Matthew 12:34](#); [Matthew 12:39](#); [Matthew 12:44](#); [Matthew 12:50](#); [Matthew 13:14](#); [Matthew 13:15](#); [Matthew 13:19](#); [Matthew 13:20](#); [Matthew 13:21](#); [Matthew 13:22](#); [Matthew 13:23](#); [Matthew 13:24](#); [Matthew 13:41](#); [Matthew 13:42](#); [Matthew 15 General Notes](#); [Matthew 15:13](#); [Matthew 15:14](#); [Matthew 15:24](#); [Matthew 15:27](#); [Matthew 16 General Notes](#); [Matthew 16:4](#); [Matthew 16:6](#); [Matthew 16:11](#); [Matthew 16:18](#); [Matthew 16:19](#); [Matthew 16:23](#); [Matthew 16:25](#); [Matthew 18:6](#); [Matthew 18:7](#); [Matthew 18:9](#); [Matthew 18:18](#); [Matthew 19:5](#); [Matthew 19:6](#); [Matthew 19:8](#); [Matthew 19:21](#); [Matthew 20:28](#); [Matthew 20:33](#); [Matthew 21:5](#); [Matthew 21:9](#); [Matthew 21:13](#); [Matthew 21:15](#); [Matthew 21:29](#); [Matthew 21:33](#); [Matthew 21:42](#); [Matthew 21:43](#); [Matthew 21:44](#); [Matthew 22:15](#); [Matthew 22:24](#); [Matthew 22:29](#); [Matthew 22:40](#); [Matthew 22:42](#); [Matthew 23:4](#); [Matthew 23:8](#); [Matthew 23:13](#); [Matthew 23:15](#); [Matthew 23:16](#); [Matthew 23:17](#); [Matthew 23:19](#); [Matthew 23:23](#); [Matthew 23:24](#); [Matthew 23:25](#); [Matthew 23:26](#); [Matthew 23:30](#); [Matthew 23:31](#); [Matthew 23:32](#); [Matthew 23:33](#); [Matthew 23:35](#); [Matthew 23:37](#); [Matthew 23:38](#); [Matthew 24:4](#); [Matthew 24:5](#); [Matthew 24:8](#); [Matthew 24:10](#); [Matthew 24:11](#); [Matthew 24:12](#); [Matthew 24:24](#); [Matthew 24:33](#); [Matthew 25:6](#); [Matthew 25:21](#); [Matthew 25:24](#); [Matthew 25:26](#); [Matthew 25:33](#); [Matthew 25:34](#); [Matthew 26:26](#); [Matthew 26:28](#); [Matthew 26:31](#); [Matthew 26:33](#); [Matthew 26:39](#); [Matthew 26:42](#); [Matthew 26:45](#); [Matthew 26:46](#); [Matthew 26:47](#); [Matthew 26:51](#); [Matthew 26:65](#); [Matthew 27:9](#); [Matthew 27:51](#); [Matthew 28:2](#); [Matthew 28:7](#); [Matthew 28:9](#); [Matthew 28:10](#); [Matthew 28:11](#); [Matthew 28:20](#)

Metonymy

Description

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

This page answers the question: *What is a metonymy?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

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

The blood represents Christ's death.

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

The cup represents the wine that is in the cup.

Metonymy can be used

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Who warned you to flee from God’s coming **punishment**?”

To learn about some common metonymies, see [Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies](#).

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Referenced in: [Matthew 20:30](#); [Matthew 21:9](#); [Matthew 21:10](#); [Matthew 21:31](#); [Matthew 22:2](#); [Matthew 22:17](#)

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To learn about some common metonymies, see [Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies](#).

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Referenced in: [Matthew 2:3](#); [Matthew 2:6](#); [Matthew 2:11](#); [Matthew 2:18](#); [Matthew 3:2](#); [Matthew 3:5](#); [Matthew 4:17](#); [Matthew 4:23](#); [Matthew 5:3](#); [Matthew 5:10](#); [Matthew 5:12](#); [Matthew 5:16](#); [Matthew 5:17](#); [Matthew 5:19](#); [Matthew 5:28](#); [Matthew 5:30](#); [Matthew 5:45](#); [Matthew 6:1](#); [Matthew 6:9](#); [Matthew 6:10](#); [Matthew 6:33](#); [Matthew 7:11](#); [Matthew 7:12](#); [Matthew 7:21](#); [Matthew 7:22](#); [Matthew 8 General Notes](#); [Matthew 8:10](#); [Matthew 8:11](#); [Matthew 8:12](#); [Matthew 8:16](#); [Matthew 8:34](#); [Matthew 9:4](#); [Matthew 9:10](#); [Matthew 10:6](#); [Matthew 10:7](#); [Matthew 10:9](#); [Matthew 10:12](#); [Matthew 10:13](#); [Matthew 10:15](#); [Matthew 10:19](#); [Matthew 10:22](#); [Matthew 10:27](#); [Matthew 10:32](#); [Matthew 10:33](#); [Matthew 10:34](#); [Matthew 10:38](#); [Matthew 11:11](#); [Matthew 11:13](#); [Matthew 11:15](#); [Matthew 11:20](#); [Matthew 11:21](#); [Matthew 11:22](#); [Matthew 11:23](#); [Matthew 11:24](#); [Matthew 12:23](#); [Matthew 12:25](#); [Matthew 12:26](#); [Matthew 12:28](#); [Matthew 12:32](#); [Matthew 12:34](#); [Matthew 12:43](#); [Matthew 12:50](#); [Matthew 13:9](#); [Matthew 13:11](#); [Matthew 13:15](#); [Matthew 13:19](#); [Matthew 13:20](#); [Matthew 13:24](#); [Matthew 13:27](#); [Matthew 13:31](#); [Matthew 13:33](#); [Matthew 13:35](#); [Matthew 13:38](#); [Matthew 13:41](#); [Matthew 13:43](#); [Matthew 13:44](#); [Matthew 13:45](#); [Matthew 13:47](#); [Matthew 13:52](#); [Matthew 13:55](#); [Matthew 13:57](#); [Matthew 14:3](#); [Matthew 15:8](#); [Matthew 15:11](#); [Matthew 15:18](#); [Matthew 15:23](#); [Matthew 16:18](#); [Matthew 16:19](#); [Matthew 16:24](#); [Matthew 16:28](#); [Matthew 17:5](#); [Matthew 17:22](#); [Matthew 17:25](#); [Matthew 18:1](#); [Matthew 18:3](#); [Matthew 18:4](#); [Matthew 18:5](#); [Matthew 18:7](#); [Matthew 18:14](#); [Matthew 18:16](#); [Matthew 18:19](#); [Matthew 18:20](#); [Matthew 18:35](#); [Matthew 19:1](#); [Matthew 19:5](#); [Matthew 19:6](#); [Matthew 19:8](#); [Matthew 19:12](#); [Matthew 19:14](#); [Matthew 19:21](#); [Matthew 19:22](#); [Matthew 19:23](#); [Matthew 19:28](#); [Matthew 19:29](#); [Matthew 19:30](#); [Matthew 20:21](#); [Matthew 20:23](#); [Matthew 20:27](#); [Matthew 21:9](#); [Matthew 21:10](#); [Matthew 21:16](#); [Matthew 21:25](#); [Matthew 21:31](#); [Matthew 21:42](#); [Matthew 21:43](#); [Matthew 22:2](#); [Matthew 22:13](#); [Matthew 22:15](#); [Matthew 22:37](#); [Matthew 22:46](#); [Matthew 23:2](#); [Matthew 23:13](#); [Matthew 23:30](#); [Matthew 23:33](#); [Matthew 23:35](#); [Matthew 23:37](#); [Matthew 23:39](#); [Matthew 24:1](#); [Matthew 24:5](#); [Matthew 24:7](#); [Matthew 24:9](#); [Matthew 24:14](#); [Matthew 24:35](#); [Matthew 24:48](#); [Matthew 25:1](#); [Matthew 25:13](#); [Matthew 25:30](#); [Matthew 25:31](#); [Matthew 25:32](#); [Matthew 25:46](#); [Matthew 26:17](#); [Matthew 26:18](#); [Matthew 26:19](#); [Matthew 26:23](#); [Matthew 26:27](#); [Matthew 26:31](#); [Matthew 26:34](#); [Matthew 26:41](#); [Matthew 26:45](#); [Matthew 26:64](#); [Matthew 27:4](#); [Matthew 27:6](#); [Matthew 27:14](#); [Matthew 27:19](#); [Matthew 27:24](#); [Matthew 27:25](#); [Matthew 27:37](#); [Matthew 28:19](#)

Nominal Adjectives

Description

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

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

The adjective “rich” comes before the word “man” and describes “man.”

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

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

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

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

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

This page answers the question: *How do I translate adjectives that act like nouns?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

Blessed are **people who are meek**.

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 22:28](#)

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

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Blessed are **people who are meek**.

"

Referenced in: Matthew 5:3; Matthew 5:5; Matthew 5:39; Matthew 11:5; Matthew 11:25; Matthew 12:7; Matthew 12:22; Matthew 13:43; Matthew 13:48; Matthew 13:49; Matthew 15:30; Matthew 15:31; Matthew 17:17; Matthew 19:21; Matthew 19:23; Matthew 19:27; Matthew 20:27; Matthew 21:14; Matthew 22:10; Matthew 22:25; Matthew 22:26; Matthew 22:27; Matthew 22:28; Matthew 22:31; Matthew 22:32; Matthew 22:44; Matthew 23:8; Matthew 23:9; Matthew 23:11; Matthew 23:17; Matthew 23:23; Matthew 23:29; Matthew 24:24; Matthew 25:33; Matthew 25:34; Matthew 25:41; Matthew 26:9; Matthew 26:11; Matthew 26:14; Matthew 26:20; Matthew 26:47; Matthew 27:21

Numbers

Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words ("five") or as numerals ("5"). Some numbers are very large, such as "two hundred" (200), "twenty-two thousand" (22,000), or "one hundred million" (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

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

Translate Unknowns (p.1383)

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: [Matthew 4:2](#); [Matthew 13:23](#); [Matthew 14:21](#); [Matthew 15:38](#); [Matthew 16:9](#); [Matthew 16:10](#);
[Matthew 18:22](#)

Order of Events

Description

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

This page answers the question: *Why are some events not listed in the order they happened, and how do I translate them?*

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

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Verbs ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

Background Information ([UTA PDF](#))

Connecting Words and Phrases ([UTA PDF](#))

Introduction of a New Event (p.1263)

Verse Bridges ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 10:5](#)

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: [Matthew 10:2](#); [Matthew 16:21](#); [Matthew 17:23](#); [Matthew 20:3](#); [Matthew 20:19](#); [Matthew 22:25](#); [Matthew 22:26](#); [Matthew 26:42](#); [Matthew 26:44](#); [Matthew 27:45](#); [Matthew 27:64](#); [Matthew 28:1](#)

Parables

A parable is a short story that teaches something(s) that is true, and delivers the lesson in a way that is easy to understand and hard to forget.

Description

A parable is a short story that is told to teach something(s) that is true. Though the events in a parable could happen, they did not actually happen. They are told only to teach the lesson(s) that the listener is meant to learn. Parables rarely contain the names of specific people. (This may help you identify what is a parable and what is an account of a real event.) Parables often use figures of speech such as [simile](#) and [metaphor](#).

This page answers the question: *What is a parable?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Then he also told them a parable. "A blind man is not able to guide a blind man, is he? Would not both fall into a pit?" (Luke 6:39 ULT)

This parable teaches that if a person does not have spiritual understanding, he cannot help someone else to understand spiritual things.

Examples From the Bible

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket but, rather, on the lampstand, and it shines for everyone in the house. Let your light shine before people in such a way that they see your good deeds and praise your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:15-16 ULT)

This parable teaches us not to hide the way we live for God from other people.

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all other seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

This parable teaches that the kingdom of God may seem small at first, but it will grow and spread throughout the world.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If a parable is hard to understand because it has unknown objects in it, you can replace the unknown objects with objects that people in your culture know. However, be careful to keep the lesson the same.
- (2) If the teaching of the parable is unclear, consider telling a little about what it teaches in the introduction, such as "Jesus told this story about being generous."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If a parable is hard to understand because it has unknown objects in it, you can replace the unknown objects with objects that people in your culture know. However, be careful to keep the lesson the same.

Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the **lampstand**?" (Mark 4:21 ULT)

If people do not know what a lampstand is, you could substitute something else that people put a light on so it can give light to the house.

Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on **a high shelf?**"

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and **sowed** in his field. It is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

To sow seeds means to toss them so that they scatter on the ground. If people are not familiar with sowing, you can substitute planting.

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and **planted** in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

(2) If the teaching of the parable is unclear, consider telling a little about what it teaches in the introduction, such as "Jesus told this story about being generous."

Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the lampstand?" (Mark 4:21 ULT)

Jesus told them a parable about why they should witness openly. Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the lampstand?" (Mark 4:21 ULT)

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

Then Jesus presented another parable to them about how the kingdom of God grows. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 21:28](#)

Parables

A parable is a short story that teaches something(s) that is true, and delivers the lesson in a way that is easy to understand and hard to forget.

This page answers the question: *What is a parable?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

A parable is a short story that is told to teach something(s) that is true. Though the events in a parable could happen, they did not actually happen. They are told only to teach the lesson(s) that the listener is meant to learn. Parables rarely contain the names of specific people. (This may help you identify what is a parable and what is an account of a real event.) Parables often use figures of speech such as [simile](#) and [metaphor](#).

Then he also told them a parable. "A blind man is not able to guide a blind man, is he? Would not both fall into a pit?" (Luke 6:39 ULT)

This parable teaches that if a person does not have spiritual understanding, he cannot help someone else to understand spiritual things.

Examples From the Bible

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket but, rather, on the lampstand, and it shines for everyone in the house. Let your light shine before people in such a way that they see your good deeds and praise your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:15-16 ULT)

This parable teaches us not to hide the way we live for God from other people.

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all other seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

This parable teaches that the kingdom of God may seem small at first, but it will grow and spread throughout the world.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If a parable is hard to understand because it has unknown objects in it, you can replace the unknown objects with objects that people in your culture know. However, be careful to keep the lesson the same.
- (2) If the teaching of the parable is unclear, consider telling a little about what it teaches in the introduction, such as "Jesus told this story about being generous."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If a parable is hard to understand because it has unknown objects in it, you can replace the unknown objects with objects that people in your culture know. However, be careful to keep the lesson the same.

Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the **lampstand**?" (Mark 4:21 ULT)

If people do not know what a lampstand is, you could substitute something else that people put a light on so it can give light to the house.

Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on **a high shelf?**"

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and **sowed** in his field. It is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

To sow seeds means to toss them so that they scatter on the ground. If people are not familiar with sowing, you can substitute planting.

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and **planted** in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

(2) If the teaching of the parable is unclear, consider telling a little about what it teaches in the introduction, such as "Jesus told this story about being generous."

Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the lampstand?" (Mark 4:21 ULT)

Jesus told them a parable about why they should witness openly. Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the lampstand?" (Mark 4:21 ULT)

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

Then Jesus presented another parable to them about how the kingdom of God grows. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 11:17](#); [Matthew 12:29](#); [Matthew 12:43](#); [Matthew 13:3](#); [Matthew 13:18](#); [Matthew 13:24](#); [Matthew 13:31](#); [Matthew 13:44](#); [Matthew 13:47](#); [Matthew 13:52](#); [Matthew 18:23](#); [Matthew 20:1](#); [Matthew 21:28](#); [Matthew 21:33](#); [Matthew 24:43](#); [Matthew 24:44](#); [Matthew 25 General Notes](#); [Matthew 25:1](#); [Matthew 25:14](#)

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.

This page answers the question: *What is parallelism?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Parallelism is 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: [Matthew 3:3](#); [Matthew 4:16](#); [Matthew 5:30](#); [Matthew 6:24](#); [Matthew 7:7](#); [Matthew 8:17](#); [Matthew 10:26](#); [Matthew 10:27](#); [Matthew 11:30](#); [Matthew 12:20](#); [Matthew 12:25](#); [Matthew 13:34](#); [Matthew 19:14](#); [Matthew 24:7](#); [Matthew 24:31](#); [Matthew 24:50](#); [Matthew 25:24](#); [Matthew 26:50](#)

Personification

Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples From the Bible

You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

- (1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
- (2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
- (3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

This page answers the question: *What is personification?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — God speaks of sin as if it were a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.

Sin is at your door, **waiting to attack you**.

(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — This can be translated with the word “as.”

Sin is crouching at the door, **just as a wild animal does as it waits to attack a person..**

(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Even the **winds and the sea obey him**. (Matthew 8:27b ULT) — The men speak of the “wind and the sea” as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus, just as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.

He even **controls the winds and the sea**.

NOTE: We have broadened our definition of “personification” to include “zoomorphism” (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and “anthropomorphism” (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics) because the translation strategies for them are the same.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Apostrophe ([UTA PDF](#))

Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 3:7](#); [Matthew 3:17](#); [Matthew 4:24](#); [Matthew 6:24](#); [Matthew 6:28](#); [Matthew 6:34](#); [Matthew 8:15](#); [Matthew 8:27](#); [Matthew 9:15](#); [Matthew 9:22](#); [Matthew 9:26](#); [Matthew 13:22](#); [Matthew 14:2](#); [Matthew 18:9](#)

Politeness

Description

This page answers the question: *How do I translate politeness into my language?*

People say certain things, or say things in a certain way, in order to communicate that they respect the people to whom they are speaking. We can refer to this as speaking politely. The ways of speaking politely are generally agreed on by those who share a culture. People also use polite ways of speaking to avoid offending others. This can be especially important if the person being addressed has an influential or powerful position.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

Every language has ways to communicate politeness to other speakers of that language, but different languages do not communicate politeness in the same ways. A phrase that is polite in one language may be offensive in another language, or it may simply be confusing. Translators need to recognize politeness in the Bible and communicate the same polite meaning using the appropriate form of politeness in the target language.

Examples From the Bible

▮ **do not trouble yourself** (Luke 7:6 ULT)

The centurion sent friends to give Jesus this polite message that Jesus should not come to his house.

▮ **I ask you, have me excused** (Luke 14:18 ULT)

In this culture, this was a polite formula for declining a social invitation.

▮ **May I find favor in your eyes, my lord**, since you have comforted me, and since you have spoken to the heart of **your female servant**. (Ruth 2:13 ULT)

Ruth uses several phrases of politeness as she talks to Boaz. **May I find favor in your eyes** is an idiomatic phrase that communicates that Boaz is in a high position, **my lord** is an honorific form of address, and she refers to herself humbly as **your female servant** even though she is not actually one of his servants.

▮ Please let **a little** water be brought... Let me also bring **a bit** of bread (Genesis 18:4-5 ULT)

Abraham described his generosity as something small in order to be polite. This was a way to communicate to his guests that they were not imposing on him at all.

Honorifics

A specific category of politeness is the way that people address other people who are important, powerful, or worthy of honor in other ways. We can refer to this form of politeness as using honorific language. Honorific language can be in the form of special titles or, in some languages, special forms of the words used.

▮ to the **most excellent** Governor Felix (Acts 23:26 ULT)

The expression **most excellent** was an honorific title by which people addressed Roman government officials.

▮ **O king, live forever!** (Daniel 5:10 ULT)

This was the polite and respectful way to address the king before saying anything else to him.

Politeness under other categories

People often use language that is non-standard or figurative to communicate politeness. In these cases, there will be a Translation Note under the category of the figure of speech rather than under the category of politeness. The Note will discuss the issue of the figurative speech and then also mention that this is being used to be polite. For example, the following verses will have Translation Notes under the categories given rather than under politeness.

Metaphor

Men, **brothers and fathers**, hear my defense to you now. (Acts 22:1 ULT)

Paul is using the word **brothers** to refer to his fellow Israelites. He is using the word **fathers** to refer either to Jewish leaders who may be present or to Jewish men who are older than he is. In both cases he is speaking respectfully.

Idiom

I beg of you, about whom is the prophet saying this...? (Acts 8:34 ULT)

The Ethiopian official is using an idiomatic expression as a polite way to introduce a request.

Symbolic action

And having fallen down, they worshiped him (Matt 2:11 ULT)

The act of kneeling down before someone showed deep respect for the person.

Speaking of oneself in the third person

please do not pass by **your servant**. (Gen 18:3 ULT)

Abraham refers to himself as **your servant** here in order to show respect to his guests.

Euphemism

And having said this, **he fell asleep**. (Acts 7:60 ULT)

Luke is describing the death of Stephen when he says **he fell asleep**. He is using this polite way of referring to something unpleasant to avoid offending his readers.

Other Uses of the Imperative

You pray to the Lord for me, so that nothing of which you have spoken may come upon me. (Acts 8:24 ULT)

The verb **pray** is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command.

Rhetorical question

Lord, are you not concerned that my sister has left me alone to serve? (Luke 10:40 ULT)

Martha is complaining that Jesus is allowing Mary to sit listening to him when there is so much work to do. But Martha respects Jesus, so she uses the question form to make her complaint more polite.

Translation Strategies

If the phrase used in the ULT would be natural and be a polite expression in your language, consider using it. If not, use the strategy below.

(1) Use a phrase that would be both natural and polite in your language for this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a phrase that would be both natural and polite in your language for this situation.

do not trouble yourself (Luke 7:6 ULT)

I do not want you to go out of your way
or
Please do not bother

I ask you, have me excused (Luke 14:18 ULT)

Please accept my apology for not being able to attend

May I find favor in your eyes, my lord, since you have comforted me, and since you have spoken to the heart of **your female servant**. (Ruth 2:13 ULT)

You are too kind to me, good sir; you have comforted me and you have spoken to my heart even though I am not worthy of it.

Please let **a little** water be brought... Let me also bring **a bit** of bread (Genesis 18:4-5 ULT)

I have plenty of water... I also have plenty of food

O king, live forever! (Daniel 5:10 ULT)

Your majesty, I wish you well

I beg of you, about whom is the prophet saying this...? (Acts 8:34 ULT)

Please tell me, about whom is the prophet saying this...?

You pray to the Lord for me, so that nothing of which you have spoken may come upon me. (Acts 8:24 ULT)

Please pray to the Lord for me so that nothing of which you have spoken may come upon me.

or

I ask you to pray to the Lord for me so that nothing of which you have spoken may come upon me.

Lord, are you not concerned that my sister has left me alone to serve? (Luke 10:40 ULT)

Lord, it seems as if you do not care that my sister has left me alone to serve.

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 21:3](#); [Matthew 22:16](#)

Possession

Description

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

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

This page answers the question: *What is possession and how can I translate phrases that show it?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

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

- Ownership — Someone owns something.
 - The clothes of me - my clothes — The clothes that I own
- Social Relationship — Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.
 - The mother of John — John's mother - the woman who gave birth to John, or the woman who cared for John
 - A teacher of Israel - Israel's teacher — a person who teaches Israel
- Association — A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.
 - The sickness of David - David's sickness — the sickness that David is experiencing
 - the fear of the Lord — the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord
- Contents — Something has something in it.
 - a bag of clothes — a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes
- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.
 - my head — the head that is part of my body
 - the roof of a house — the roof that is part of a house

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Events and Possession

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategies for learning what the relationship is between the two nouns

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

"On their heads were **gold crowns**"

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

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

Whoever gives you a **cup that has water in it** to drink ... will not lose his reward.

Wealth is worthless on **the day of wrath**. (Proverbs 11:4a ULT)

Wealth is worthless on **the day when God shows his wrath**. or: Wealth is worthless on the **day when God punishes people because of his wrath**.

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

Notice that I am not speaking to your children, who have not known or seen **the punishment of Yahweh your God**. (Deuteronomy 11:2a ULT)

Notice that I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen **how Yahweh, the God whom you worship, punished the people of Egypt**.

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

You will only observe and see **how Yahweh punishes the wicked**.

You will receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. (Acts 2:38b ULT)

You will receive the **Holy Spirit, whom God will give to you**.

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 21:11](#)

Possession

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

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 - A teacher of Israel - Israel's teacher — a person who teaches Israel
- Association — A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.
 - The sickness of David - David's sickness — the sickness that David is experiencing
 - the fear of the Lord — the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord
- Contents — Something has something in it.
 - a bag of clothes — a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes
- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.
 - my head — the head that is part of my body
 - the roof of a house — the roof that is part of a house

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Events and Possession

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategies for learning what the relationship is between the two nouns

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

"On their heads were **gold crowns**"

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

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

Whoever gives you a **cup that has water in it** to drink ... will not lose his reward.

Wealth is worthless on **the day of wrath**. (Proverbs 11:4a ULT)

Wealth is worthless on **the day when God shows his wrath**. or: Wealth is worthless on the **day when God punishes people because of his wrath**.

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

Notice that I am not speaking to your children, who have not known or seen **the punishment of Yahweh your God**. (Deuteronomy 11:2a ULT)

Notice that I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen **how Yahweh, the God whom you worship, punished the people of Egypt**.

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

You will only observe and see **how Yahweh punishes the wicked**.

You will receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. (Acts 2:38b ULT)

You will receive the **Holy Spirit, whom God will give to you**.

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 9:38](#); [Matthew 15:9](#); [Matthew 21:11](#); [Matthew 26:7](#); [Matthew 27:6](#); [Matthew 27:10](#); [Matthew 27:29](#)

Predictive Past

Description

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

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

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

This page answers the question: *What is the predictive past?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Verbs ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 9:37](#); [Matthew 23:38](#); [Matthew 24:22](#); [Matthew 25:11](#); [Matthew 25:19](#); [Matthew 26:7](#); [Matthew 26:35](#); [Matthew 26:38](#); [Matthew 26:40](#); [Matthew 26:45](#); [Matthew 26:47](#); [Matthew 26:52](#); [Matthew 26:64](#); [Matthew 26:71](#); [Matthew 27:13](#); [Matthew 27:22](#); [Matthew 27:24](#); [Matthew 27:38](#); [Matthew 27:63](#); [Matthew 28:10](#)

Pronouns

Description

Pronouns are words that people might use instead of using a noun when referring to someone or something. Some examples are "I," "you," "he," "it," "this," "that," "himself," "someone," and others. The personal pronoun is the most common type of pronoun.

This page answers the question: *What are pronouns, and what kinds of pronouns are in some languages?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns refer to people or things and show whether the speaker is referring to himself, the person he is speaking to, or someone or something else. The following are kinds of information that personal pronouns may provide. Other types of pronouns may give some of this information, as well.

Person

- First Person — The speaker and possibly others (I, me, we, us)
 - [Exclusive and Inclusive "We"](#)
- Second Person — The person or people that the speaker is talking to and possibly others (you)
 - [Forms of You](#)
- Third Person — Someone or something other than the speaker and those he is talking to (he, she, it, they)

Number

- Singular — one (I, you, he, she, it)
- Plural — more than one (we, you, they)
 - [Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups](#)
- Dual — two (Some languages have pronouns specifically for two people or two things.)

Gender

- Masculine — he
- Feminine — she
- Neuter — it

Relationship to other words in the sentence

- Subject of the verb: I, you, he, she, it, we, they
- Object of the verb or preposition: me, you, him, her, it, us, them
- Possessor with a noun: my, your, his, her, its, our, their
- Possessor without a noun: mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs

Other Types of pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns refer to another noun or pronoun in the same sentence: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.

- John saw **himself** in the mirror. The word "himself" refers to John.

Interrogative Pronouns are used to make a question that needs more than just a yes or no for an answer: what, which, who, whom, whose.

- **Who** built the house?

Relative Pronouns mark a relative clause. The relative pronouns, who, whom, whose, which and that give more information about a noun in the main part of the sentence. Sometimes, the relative adverbs when and where can also be used as relative pronouns.

- I saw the house **that John built**. The clause “that John built” tells which house I saw.
- I saw the man **who built the house**. The clause “who built the house” tells which man I saw.

Demonstrative Pronouns are used to draw attention to someone or something and to show distance from the speaker or something else. The demonstrative pronouns are: this, these, that, and those.

- Have you seen **this** here?
- Who is **that** over there?

Indefinite pronouns are used when no particular noun is being referred to. The indefinite pronouns are: any, anyone, someone, anything, something, and some. Sometimes a personal pronoun is used in a generic way to do this: you, they, he or it.

- He does not want to talk to **anyone**.
- **Someone** fixed it, but I do not know who.
- **They** say that **you** should not wake a sleeping dog.

In the last example, “they” and “you” just refer to people in general.

”

Referenced in: [Matthew 8:4](#)

Pronouns — When to Use Them

Description

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

This page answers the question: *How do I decide whether or not to use a pronoun?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

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

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

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

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

Again **Jesus** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **Jesus** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath.

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This may be translated as:

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

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 20:29](#); [Matthew 22:20](#)

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- In some languages, marking on the verb helps people know who the subject is. (See [Verbs](#).) In some of these languages, listeners rely on this marking to help them understand who the subject is. Speakers will use a pronoun, noun phrase, or proper name only when they want either to emphasize or to clarify who the subject is.

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

Again **Jesus** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **Jesus** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath.

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

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

This may be translated as:

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

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 2:15](#); [Matthew 10:19](#); [Matthew 11:17](#); [Matthew 12:9](#); [Matthew 13:24](#); [Matthew 15:8](#); [Matthew 15:14](#); [Matthew 15:15](#); [Matthew 15:30](#); [Matthew 16:12](#); [Matthew 16:17](#); [Matthew 17:12](#); [Matthew 17:19](#);

Matthew 20:5; Matthew 20:22; Matthew 20:29; Matthew 21:35; Matthew 21:45; Matthew 22:20; Matthew 22:30;
Matthew 24:3; Matthew 25:2; Matthew 25:5; Matthew 25:10; Matthew 25:14; Matthew 25:29; Matthew 25:40;
Matthew 25:44; Matthew 25:45; Matthew 25:46; Matthew 26:7; Matthew 26:9; Matthew 26:15; Matthew 26:25;
Matthew 26:48; Matthew 26:73; Matthew 27:2; Matthew 27:6; Matthew 27:7; Matthew 27:10; Matthew 27:16;
Matthew 27:18; Matthew 27:26; Matthew 27:32; Matthew 28:8; Matthew 28:11; Matthew 28:12

Proverbs

Description

Proverbs are short sayings that give wise advice or teach something that is generally true about life. People enjoy proverbs because they give a lot of wisdom in few words. Proverbs in the Bible often use metaphor and parallelism. Proverbs should not be understood as absolute and unchangeable laws. Rather, proverbs offer general advice to a person about how to live his life.

Hatred stirs up conflicts, but love covers over all offenses. (Proverbs 10:12 ULT)

Here is another example from the book of Proverbs.

Look at the ant, you lazy person, consider her ways, and be wise. It has no commander, officer, or ruler, yet it prepares its food in the summer, and during the harvest it stores up what it will eat. (Proverbs 6:6-8 ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are proverbs, and how can I translate them?*

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

Metaphor (p.1288)

Parallelism ([UTA PDF](#))

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Each language has its own ways of saying proverbs. There are many proverbs in the Bible. They need to be translated in the way that people say proverbs in your language so that people recognize them as proverbs and understand what they teach.

Examples From the Bible

A good name is to be chosen over great riches, and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

This means that it is better to be a good person and to have a good reputation than it is to have a lot of money.

Like vinegar on the teeth and smoke in the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him. (Proverbs 10:26 ULT)

This means that a lazy person is very annoying to those who send him to do something.

The way of Yahweh protects those who have integrity, but it is destruction for the wicked. (Proverbs 10:29 ULT)

This means that Yahweh protects people who do what is right, but he destroys those who are wicked.

Translation Strategies

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

- (1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.
- (2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.
- (3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.
- (4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.

A good name is to be chosen over great riches,
and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

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

It is better to have a good name than to have great riches,
and to be favored by people than to have silver and gold.

Wise people choose a good name over great riches,
and favor over silver and gold.

Try to have a good reputation rather than great riches.

Will riches really help you?
I would rather have a good reputation.

(2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.

Like **snow in summer** or rain in harvest,
so a fool does not deserve honor. (Proverbs 26:1 ULT)

It is not natural for **a cold wind to blow in the hot season** or for it to rain
in the harvest season;
And it is not natural to honor a foolish person.

(3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.

Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring. (Proverbs 27:1a ULT)

Do not count your chickens before they hatch.

(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

There is a generation that curses their father
and does not bless their mother.
There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes,
and yet they are not washed of their filth. (Proverbs 30:11-12 ULT)

People who do not respect their parents think that they are righteous,
and they do not turn away from their sin.

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 8:20](#); [Matthew 9:12](#); [Matthew 9:15](#); [Matthew 9:16](#); [Matthew 9:17](#); [Matthew 9:37](#); [Matthew 10:10](#); [Matthew 10:24](#); [Matthew 10:26](#); [Matthew 10:29](#); [Matthew 10:39](#); [Matthew 10:41](#); [Matthew 11:19](#); [Matthew 12:25](#); [Matthew 12:33](#); [Matthew 12:35](#); [Matthew 13:12](#); [Matthew 15:26](#); [Matthew 24:28](#)

Quotations and Quote Margins

Description

This page answers the question: *What are quote margins and where should I put them?*

When saying that someone said something, we often tell who spoke, whom they spoke to, and what they said. The information about who spoke and whom they spoke to is called the quote margin. What the person said is the quotation. (This is also called a quote.) In some languages the quote margin may come first, last, or even in between two parts of the quotation.

The quote margins are bolded below.

- **She said**, “The food is ready. Come and eat.”
- “The food is ready. Come and eat,” **she said**.
- “The food is ready,” **she said**. “Come and eat.”

Also in some languages, the quote margin may have more than one verb meaning “said.”

But his mother **answered** and **said**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.” (Luke 1:60 ULT)

When writing that someone said something, some languages put the quote (what was said) in quotation marks called inverted commas (“ ”). Some languages use other symbols around the quotation, such as these angle quote marks (« »), or something else.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to put the quote margin where it is most clear and natural in their language.
- Translators need to decide whether they want the quote margin to have one or two verbs meaning “said.”
- Translators need to decide which marks to use around the quotation.

Examples From the Bible

Quote margin before the quote

Then Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in her days.” (Luke 1:18 ULT)

Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and **they said to him**, “Teacher, what should we do?” (Luke 3:12 ULT)

So **he said to them**, “Collect nothing more than what you have been ordered.” (Luke 3:13 ULT)

Quote margin after the quote

Yahweh relented concerning this. “It will not happen,” **he said**. (Amos 7:3 ULT)

Quote margin between two parts of the quote

“I will hide my face from them,” **he said**, “and I will see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful.” (Deuteronomy 32:20 ULT)

For look, days are coming—**this is Yahweh’s declaration**—when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah. (Jeremiah 30:3a ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.
- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.

He said, "Therefore, those among you who are leaders should go down with us. If there is something wrong with the man, let them accuse him." (Acts 25:5 ULT)

"Therefore, those who can should go there with us," **he said**. "If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."

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"Therefore, those who can," **he said**, "should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."

- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

But his mother **answered and said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John." (Luke 1:60 ULT)

But his mother **replied**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."

But his mother **said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."

But his mother **answered** like this. "No. Rather, he will be called John," she **said**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Direct and Indirect Quotations ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 21:4](#); [Matthew 22:43](#)

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- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

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- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.

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- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

But his mother **answered and said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John." (Luke 1:60 ULT)

But his mother **replied**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."

But his mother **said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."

But his mother **answered** like this. "No. Rather, he will be called John," she **said**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Direct and Indirect Quotations ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 1:22](#); [Matthew 2:5](#); [Matthew 2:15](#); [Matthew 3:3](#); [Matthew 4:4](#); [Matthew 4:6](#); [Matthew 8:17](#); [Matthew 13:3](#); [Matthew 13:35](#); [Matthew 15:7](#); [Matthew 19:5](#); [Matthew 21:4](#); [Matthew 26:8](#); [Matthew 26:17](#); [Matthew 26:31](#); [Matthew 27:9](#)

Quote Markings

Description

Some languages use quotation marks to mark off direct quotes from the rest of the text. English uses the mark " immediately before a quote and " immediately after it.

- John said, "I do not know when I will arrive."

Quotation marks are not used with indirect quotes.

- John said that he did not know when he would arrive.

When there are several layers of quotations inside of other quotations, it might be hard for readers to understand who is saying what. Alternating two kinds of quotation marks can help careful readers to keep track of them. In English, the outermost quotation has double quote marks, and the next quotation within it has single marks. If there is a third embedded quote, that quotation again has double quotation marks.

- Mary said, "John said, 'I do not know when I will arrive.'"
- Bob said, "Mary told me, 'John said, "I do not know when I will arrive.''"

Some languages use other kinds of quotation marks: Here are some examples: , ' ' " " < > « » 7 — .

Examples From the Bible

The examples below show the kind of quotation markings used in the ULT.

A quotation with only one layer

A first layer direct quote has double quotation marks around it.

So the king replied, "That is Elijah the Tishbite." (2 Kings 1:8b ULT)

Quotations with two layers

A second layer direct quote has single quotation marks around it. We have printed it and the phrase in bold type for you to see them clearly.

They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, '**Pick it up and walk**'?" (John 5:12 ULT)

He sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village ahead of you. As you enter, you will find a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it to me. If any one asks you, '**Why are you untying it?**'" you will say thus, '**The Lord has need of it.**'" (Luke 19:29b-31 ULT)

A quotation with three layers

A third layer direct quote has double quotation marks around it. We have printed it in bold type for you to see them clearly.

Abraham said, "Because I thought, 'Surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. When God caused me to leave my father's

This page answers the question: *How can quotes be marked, especially when there are quotes within quotes?*

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

Direct and Indirect Quotations ([UTA PDF](#))

house and travel from place to place, I said to her, 'You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, "**He is my brother.**"' (Genesis 20:11-13 ULT)

A quotation with four layers

A fourth layer direct quote has single quotation marks around it. We have printed it in bold for you to see it clearly.

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: '**Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.**'"'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

Quote Marking Strategies

Here are some ways you may be able to help readers see where each quote starts and ends so they can more easily know who said what.

- (1) Alternate two kinds of quote marks to show layers of direct quotation. English alternates double quote marks and single quote marks.
- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes in order to use fewer quote marks, since indirect quotes do not need them. (See [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#).)
- (3) If a quotation is very long and has many layers of quotation in it, indent the main overall quote, and use quote marks only for the direct quotes inside of it.

Examples of Quote Marking Strategies Applied

- (1) Alternate two kinds of quotation marks to show layers of direct quotation as shown in the ULT text below.

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

- (2) Translate one or more of the quotes as indirect quotes in order to use fewer quotation marks, since indirect quotes do not need them. In English, the word "that" can introduce an indirect quote. In the example below, everything after the word "that" is an indirect quote of what the messengers said to the king. Within that indirect quote, there are some direct quotes marked with double and single quotation marks.

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

They told him **that** a man came to meet them who said to them, "Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, 'Yahweh says this: "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"'"

- (3) If a quotation is very long and has many layers of quotation in it, indent the main overall quote, and use quote marks only for the direct quotes inside of it.

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

They said to him,

A man came to meet us who said to us, "Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, 'Yahweh says this: "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'""

Next we recommend you learn about:

Quotes within Quotes (p.1351)

Referenced in: [Matthew 24:15](#); [Matthew 27:9](#); [Matthew 27:10](#)

Quotes within Quotes

Description

A quotation may have a quote within it, and quotes that are inside of other quotes can also have quotes within them. When a quote has quotes within it, we say there are “layers” of quotation, and each of the quotes is a layer. When there are many layers of quotes inside of quotes, it can be hard for listeners and readers to know who is saying what. Some languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes to make it easier.

This page answers the question: *What is a quote within a quote, and how can I help the readers understand who is saying what?*

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

Direct and Indirect Quotations ([UTA PDF](#))

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

When there is a quote within a quote, the listener needs to know who the pronouns refer to. For example: if a quote that is inside a quote has the word “I,” the listener needs to know whether “I” refers to the speaker of the inner quote or the outer quote.

Some languages make this clear by using different kinds of quotes when there are quotes within quotes.

They may use direct quotes for some and indirect quotes for others.

Some languages do not use indirect quotes.

Examples From the Bible

A quotation with only one layer

But Paul said, “I, however, was indeed born a citizen.” (Acts 22:28b ULT)

Quotations with two layers

Jesus answered and said to them, “Be careful that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name. They will say, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will lead many astray.” (Matthew 24:4-5 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to his disciples. The second layer is what other people will say.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king.” (John 18:37b ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to Pilate. The second layer is what Pilate said about Jesus.

A quotation with three layers

Abraham said, “... I said to her, ‘You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, **“He is my brother.”**” (Genesis 20:11a, 13 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Abraham responded to Abimelech. The second layer is what Abraham had told his wife. The third layer is what he wanted his wife to say. (We have bolded the third layer.)

A quotation with four layers

They said to him, “A man came to meet us who said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Yahweh says this: **‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal- Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.’**”” (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

The outermost layer is what the messengers said to the king. The second layer is what the man who had met the messengers told them. The third is what that man wanted the messengers to say to the king. The fourth is what Yahweh said. (We have bolded the fourth layer.)

Translation Strategies

Some languages use only direct quotes. Other languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes. In those languages it might sound strange and perhaps even be confusing if there are many layers of direct quotes.

- (1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes.
- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. (See [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#).)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes. In the example below we have bolded the indirect quotes in the ULT and the quotes that we have changed to direct quotes below it.

Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul, saying, "There is a certain man was left here as a prisoner by Felix. So I am uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked **if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there to be judged concerning these things**. But when Paul appealed **to keep him in custody for the decision of the emperor**, I ordered him **to be held in custody until when I could send him to Caesar**." (Acts 25:14b, 20-21 ULT)

Festus presented Paul's case to the king. He said, "A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner. I was uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked him, '**Will you go to Jerusalem to be judged there concerning these things?**' But when Paul said, '**I want to be kept in custody for the emperor's decision,**' I told the guard, '**Keep him in custody until when I can send him to Caesar.**'"

- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. In English the word "that" can come before indirect quotes. It is bolded in the examples below. The pronouns that changed because of the indirect quote are also bolded.

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Speak to them and say, 'During the evenings you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be satisfied with bread. And you will know that I am Yahweh your God.'" (Exodus 16:11-12 ULT)

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They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

They told him **that** a man had come to meet **them** who said to **them**, "Go back to the king who sent you, and tell him **that** Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"

Quote Markings [\(UTA PDF\)](#)

Next we recommend you learn about:

Quote Markings [\(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Matthew 21:3](#); [Matthew 21:16](#); [Matthew 21:21](#); [Matthew 21:26](#); [Matthew 22:4](#); [Matthew 22:32](#)

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They said to him, “A man came to meet us who said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Yahweh says this: **‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal- Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.’**”” (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

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They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

They told him **that** a man had come to meet **them** who said to **them**, "Go back to the king who sent you, and tell him **that** Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"

Quote Markings [\(UTA PDF\)](#)

Next we recommend you learn about:

Quote Markings [\(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Matthew 3:3](#); [Matthew 13:14](#); [Matthew 14:2](#); [Matthew 14:4](#); [Matthew 15:4](#); [Matthew 15:5](#); [Matthew 19:5](#); [Matthew 21:3](#); [Matthew 21:13](#); [Matthew 21:16](#); [Matthew 21:21](#); [Matthew 21:25](#); [Matthew 21:26](#); [Matthew 22:4](#); [Matthew 22:24](#); [Matthew 23:30](#); [Matthew 24:3](#); [Matthew 24:5](#); [Matthew 24:48](#); [Matthew 25:6](#); [Matthew 25:8](#); [Matthew 25:9](#); [Matthew 25:11](#); [Matthew 25:12](#); [Matthew 25:20](#); [Matthew 25:21](#); [Matthew 25:22](#); [Matthew 25:24](#); [Matthew 25:25](#); [Matthew 25:26](#); [Matthew 25:27](#); [Matthew 25:28](#); [Matthew 25:30](#); [Matthew 25:34](#); [Matthew 25:35](#); [Matthew 25:36](#); [Matthew 25:37](#); [Matthew 25:38](#); [Matthew 25:39](#); [Matthew 25:40](#); [Matthew 25:41](#); [Matthew 25:42](#); [Matthew 25:43](#); [Matthew 25:44](#); [Matthew 25:45](#); [Matthew 26:18](#); [Matthew 26:31](#); [Matthew 26:61](#); [Matthew 27:43](#); [Matthew 27:63](#); [Matthew 27:64](#); [Matthew 28:7](#); [Matthew 28:13](#)

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 original speaker communicated in his.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

If your son asks you for a loaf of bread, **would you give him a stone?**

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

What virgin would forget her jewelry, and what bride would forget her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!

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: [Matthew 21:28](#); [Matthew 22:18](#); [Matthew 22:45](#)

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)

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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.

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- (1) Add the answer after the question.
- (2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
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Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? **None of you would do that!**

(2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.

What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed. (Luke 13:18-19a ULT)

This is what the kingdom of God is like. It is like a mustard seed ...

Are you insulting the high priest of God? (Acts 23:4b ULT) (Acts 23:4 ULT)

You should not insult God's high priest!

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

I wish I had died when I came out from the womb!

And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!

(3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

You still rule the kingdom of Israel, **do you not?**

(4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

If your son asks you for a loaf of bread, **would you give him a stone?**

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

What virgin would forget her jewelry, and what bride would forget her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!

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?

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Referenced in: Matthew 3:7; Matthew 3:14; Matthew 5:13; Matthew 5:46; Matthew 5:47; Matthew 6:25; Matthew 6:26; Matthew 6:27; Matthew 6:28; Matthew 6:30; Matthew 7:3; Matthew 7:4; Matthew 7:9; Matthew 7:10; Matthew 7:11; Matthew 7:16; Matthew 7:22; Matthew 8 General Notes; Matthew 8:26; Matthew 8:27; Matthew 8:29; Matthew 9:4; Matthew 9:5; Matthew 9:11; Matthew 9:15; Matthew 10:29; Matthew 11:7; Matthew 11:8; Matthew 11:9; Matthew 11:16; Matthew 11:23; Matthew 12:3; Matthew 12:4; Matthew 12:5; Matthew 12:11; Matthew 12:12; Matthew 12:26; Matthew 12:27; Matthew 12:29; Matthew 12:34; Matthew 12:48; Matthew 13:27; Matthew 13:55; Matthew 13:56; Matthew 14:31; Matthew 15:2; Matthew 15:3; Matthew 15:16; Matthew 15:17; Matthew 15:33; Matthew 16:8; Matthew 16:9; Matthew 16:10; Matthew 16:11; Matthew 16:26; Matthew 17:17; Matthew 18:12; Matthew 18:33; Matthew 19:4; Matthew 19:5; Matthew 19:17; Matthew 20:13; Matthew 20:15; Matthew 21:16; Matthew 21:25; Matthew 21:28; Matthew 21:42; Matthew 22:12; Matthew 22:18; Matthew 22:31; Matthew 22:43; Matthew 22:45; Matthew 23:17; Matthew 23:19; Matthew 23:33; Matthew 24:2; Matthew 24:45; Matthew 26:8; Matthew 26:10; Matthew 26:22; Matthew 26:25; Matthew 26:40; Matthew 26:45; Matthew 26:53; Matthew 26:54; Matthew 26:55; Matthew 26:65; Matthew 27:4; Matthew 27:13; Matthew 27:23

Simile

Description

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. The simile focuses on a particular trait the two items have in common, and it includes the words “like,” “as,” or “than.”

This page answers the question: *What is a simile?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were troubled and discouraged, **like sheep not having a shepherd**. (Matthew 9:36)

Jesus compared the crowds of people to sheep without a shepherd. Sheep grow frightened when they do not have a good shepherd to lead them in safe places. The crowds were like that because they did not have good religious leaders.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, so be as wise **as the serpents** and harmless **as the doves**. (Matthew 10:16 ULT)

Jesus compared his disciples to sheep and their enemies to wolves. Wolves attack sheep; Jesus' enemies would attack his disciples.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

God's word is compared to a two-edged sword. A two-edged sword is a weapon that can easily cut through a person's flesh. God's word is very effective in showing what is in a person's heart and thoughts.

Purposes of Simile

- A simile can teach about something that is unknown by showing how it is similar to something that is known.
- A simile can emphasize a particular trait, sometimes in a way that gets people's attention.
- Similes help form a picture in the mind or help the reader experience what he is reading about more fully.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not know how the two items are similar.
- People may not be familiar with both of the items being compared.

Examples From the Bible

Suffer hardship with me, **as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3 ULT)

In this simile, Paul compares suffering with what soldiers endure, and he encourages Timothy to follow their example.

Just as the lightning flashing from a place under the sky shines to another place under the sky, so will the Son of Man be. (Luke 17:24b ULT)

This verse does not tell how the Son of Man will be like the lightning. But in context we can understand from the verses before it that just as lighting flashes suddenly and everyone can see it, the Son of Man will come suddenly and everyone will be able to see him. No one will have to be told about it.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the correct meaning of a simile, consider using it. If they would not, here are some strategies you can use:

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience. (2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote. (3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — This compares the danger that Jesus' disciples would be in with the danger that sheep are in when they are surrounded by wolves.

See, I send **you out among wicked people** and you will be in danger from them **as sheep are in danger when they are among wolves**.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

For the word of God is living and active and **more powerful than a very sharp two-edged sword**.

(2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — If people do not know what sheep and wolves are, or that wolves kill and eat sheep, you could use some other animal that kills another.

See, I send you out **as chickens in the midst of wild dogs**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to gather your children together, **as a mother closely watches over her infants**, but you refused!

If you have faith **as a grain of mustard** ... (Matthew 17:20)

If you have faith even as small **as a tiny seed**,

(3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT)

See, I send you out among **people who will want to harm you**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to **protect you**, but you refused!

Next we recommend you learn about:

Metaphor (p.1288)

Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 3:16](#); [Matthew 7:24](#); [Matthew 7:26](#); [Matthew 9:36](#); [Matthew 10:16](#); [Matthew 13:24](#); [Matthew 13:33](#); [Matthew 13:40](#); [Matthew 13:43](#); [Matthew 13:44](#); [Matthew 13:45](#); [Matthew 13:47](#); [Matthew 13:52](#); [Matthew 17:2](#); [Matthew 17:20](#); [Matthew 18:3](#); [Matthew 18:4](#); [Matthew 18:14](#); [Matthew 18:17](#); [Matthew 23:37](#); [Matthew 24:27](#); [Matthew 24:39](#); [Matthew 25:32](#); [Matthew 28:3](#); [Matthew 28:4](#)

Statements — Other Uses

Description

Normally statements are used to give information. Sometimes they are used in the Bible for other functions.

This page answers the question: *What other uses are there for statements?*

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

Sentence Types ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use a statement for some of the functions that statements are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Statements are normally used to give **information**. All of the sentences in John 1:6-8 below are statements, and their function is to give information.

There was a man who was sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness in order to testify about the light, that all might believe through him. John was not the light, but came that he might testify about the light. (John 1:6-8 ULT)

A statement can also be used as a **command** to tell someone what to do. In the examples below, the high priest used statements with the verb “will” to tell people what to do.

He commanded them, saying, “This is what you **must** do. A third of you who come on the Sabbath **will** keep watch over the king’s house, and a third **will** be at the Sur Gate, and a third at the gate behind the guardhouse.” (2 Kings 11:5 ULT)

A statement can also be used to give **instructions**. The speaker below was not just telling Joseph about something Joseph would do in the future; he was telling Joseph what he needed to do.

She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

A statement can also be used to make a **request**. The man with leprosy was not just saying what Jesus was able to do. He was also asking Jesus to heal him.

Behold, a leper came to him and bowed before him, saying, “Lord, if you are willing, **you are able to make me clean**.” (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

A statement can also be used to **perform** something. By telling Adam that the ground was cursed because of him, God actually cursed it.

... **cursed is the ground** because of you; (Genesis 3:17b ULT)

By telling a man that his sins were forgiven, **Jesus forgave** the man’s sins.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “**Son, your sins are forgiven**.” (Mark 2:5 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a sentence type** that would express that function.

(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **add a sentence type** that would express that function.

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a verb form** that would express that function.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a sentence type that would express that function.

She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

The phrase “you will call his name Jesus” is an instruction. It can be translated using the sentence type of a normal instruction.

She will give birth to a son. **Name him Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins.

(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, add a sentence type that would express that function.

Lord, if you are willing, **you are able to make me clean**. (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

The function of “you are able” is to make a request. In addition to the statement, a request can be added.

Lord, you are able to make me clean. If you are willing, **please do so**.
OR:
Lord, if you are willing, **please heal me**. I know that you are able to do so.

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a verb form that would express that function.

She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

She will give birth to a son, and **you must call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins.

Son, your sins are forgiven. (Mark 2:5 ULT)

Son, I forgive your sins.
OR:
Son, God hereby forgives your sins.

”

Referenced in: [Matthew 22:24](#); [Matthew 26:63](#); [Matthew 28:7](#); [Matthew 28:19](#); [Matthew 28:20](#)

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 (p.1383)

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: [Matthew 21:8](#)

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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.

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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.

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- (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: [Matthew 4:9](#); [Matthew 8:12](#); [Matthew 9:18](#); [Matthew 9:23](#); [Matthew 10:14](#); [Matthew 13:42](#); [Matthew 14:19](#); [Matthew 15:25](#); [Matthew 18:26](#); [Matthew 18:29](#); [Matthew 21:8](#); [Matthew 22:13](#); [Matthew 22:44](#); [Matthew 24:51](#); [Matthew 25:30](#); [Matthew 25:33](#); [Matthew 26 General Notes](#); [Matthew 26:48](#); [Matthew 26:49](#); [Matthew 26:64](#); [Matthew 26:65](#); [Matthew 27:24](#); [Matthew 27:39](#); [Matthew 27:51](#)

Symbolic Prophecy

Description

This page answers the question: *What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?*

Symbolic prophecy is a type of message that God gave to a prophet so that the prophet would tell others. These messages use images and symbols to show what God will do in the future.

The main books that have these prophecies are Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation. Shorter examples of symbolic prophecy are also found in other Scriptures, such as in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

The Bible tells both how God gave each message and what the message was. When God gave the messages, he often did so in miraculous ways such as in dreams and visions. (See [Dream](#) and [Vision](#) for help translating “dreams” and “visions.”) When prophets saw these dreams and visions, they often saw images and symbols about God and heaven. Some of these images included a throne, golden lamp stands, a powerful man with white hair and white clothes, and eyes like fire and legs like bronze. Some of these images were seen by more than one prophet.

The prophecies about the world also contain images and symbols. For example, in some of the prophecies, strong animals represent kingdoms, horns represent kings or kingdoms, a dragon or serpent represents the devil, the sea represents the nations, and weeks represent longer periods of time. Some of these images were also seen by more than one prophet.

The prophecies tell about the evil in this world, how God will judge the world and punish sin, and how God will establish his righteous kingdom in the new world he is creating. They also tell about things that will happen concerning heaven and hell.

Much of prophecy in the Bible is presented as poetry. In some cultures people assume that if something is said in poetry, then it might not be true or very important. However, the prophecies in the Bible are true and very important, whether they are presented in poetic forms or non-poetic forms.

Sometimes the past tense is used in these books for events that happened in the past. However, sometimes the past tense is used for events that would happen in the future. There are two reasons for this. When prophets told about things that they saw in a dream or vision, they often used the past tense because their dream was in the past. The other reason for using the past tense to refer to future events was to emphasize that those events would certainly happen. The events were so certain to happen, it was as if they had already happened. We call this second use of the past tense “the predictive past.” (See [Predictive Past](#).)

Some of these things happened after the prophets told about them, and some of them will happen at the end of this world.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some of the images are hard to understand because we have never seen things like them before.
- Descriptions of things that we have never seen or that do not exist in this world are hard to translate.
- In places where God or the prophet used the past tense, readers may have difficulty knowing whether he was talking about something that had already happened or something that would happen later.

Translation Principles

- Translate the images in the text. Do not try to interpret them and translate their meaning.
- When an image appears in more than one place in the Bible, and it is described in the same way, try to translate it the same way in all those places.
- If either poetic forms or non-poetic forms would imply to your readers that the prophecy is not true or is unimportant, use a form that would not imply those things.

- Sometimes it is difficult to understand in what order the events described in the various prophecies happen. Simply write them as they appear in each prophecy.
- Translate tense in a way that the readers can understand what the speaker meant. If readers would not understand the predictive past, it is acceptable to use the future tense.
- Some of the prophecies were fulfilled after the prophets wrote about them. Some of them have not been fulfilled yet. Do not clarify in the prophecy when these prophecies were fulfilled or how they were fulfilled.

Examples From the Bible

The following passages describe powerful beings that Ezekiel, Daniel, and John saw. Images mentioned in these visions include hair that is white as wool, a voice like many waters, a golden belt, and legs or feet like polished bronze. Though the prophets saw various details, it would be good to translate the details that are the same in the same way. The bolded phrases in the passage from Revelation also occur in the passages from Daniel and Ezekiel.

In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a son of man, wearing a robe that reached down to his feet and he wore a golden sash across his chest. **His head and hair were as white as wool**—as white as snow—and his eyes were like a flame of fire. **His feet were like polished bronze**, like bronze that had been refined in a furnace, and **his voice was like the sound of many rushing waters**. He had seven stars in his right hand, and a sword with two sharp edges was coming out of his mouth. His face was shining like the sun at its strongest. (Revelation 1:13-16 ULT)

As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow, and **the hair of his head was like pure wool**. (Daniel 7:9 ULT)

I looked up and saw a man dressed in linen, with a belt around his waist made of pure gold from Uphaz. His body was like topaz, his face was like lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and **his feet were like polished bronze**, and the sound of his words was like the sound of a great crowd. (Daniel 10:5-6 ULT)

Behold! The glory of the God of Israel came from the east; **his voice was like the sound of many waters**, and the earth shone with his glory! (Ezekiel 43:2 ULT)

The following passage shows the use of the past tense to refer to past events. The bolded verbs refer to past events.

The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, that he **saw** concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. (Isaiah 1:1 ULT)

Hear, heavens, and give ear, earth; for Yahweh **has spoken**: (Isaiah 1:2a ULT)

“**I have nourished** and **brought up** children, but they **have rebelled** against me.” (Isaiah 1:2b ULT)

The following passage shows the future tense and different uses of the past tense. The bolded verbs are examples of the predictive past, where the past tense is used to show that the events certainly will happen.

The gloom will be dispelled from her who was in anguish. In an earlier time he humiliated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the later time he will make it glorious, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness **have seen** a great light; those who have lived in the land of the shadow of death, the light **has shone** on them. (Isaiah 9:1-2 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- If the prophecy uses the past tense to talk about the future and this would be misunderstood in your language, use the strategies in [Predictive Past](#).

- If the images in the prophecy are of things that are unknown in your culture, use the strategies in [Translate Unknowns](#).

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 24 General Notes](#)

Synecdoche

Description

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole thing, or uses the whole to refer to a part.

■ **My soul** magnifies the Lord. (Luke 1:46b ULT)

Mary was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said “my soul,” which means the inner, emotional part of herself, to refer to her whole self.

■ So **the Pharisees** said to him, “Look, why are they doing that which is not lawful?” (Mark 2:24a ULT)

The Pharisees who were standing there did not all say the same words at the same time. Instead, it is more likely that one man representing the group said those words.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some readers may not recognize the synecdoche and thus misunderstand the words as a literal statement.
- Some readers may realize that they are not to understand the words literally, but they may not know what the meaning is.

Example From the Bible

■ Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

“My hands” is a synecdoche for the whole person because clearly the arms and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved in the person’s accomplishments. The hands are chosen to represent the person because they are the parts of the body most directly involved in the work.

Translation Strategies

If the synecdoche would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

■ “**My soul** magnifies the Lord.” (Luke 1:46b ULT)

■ “**I** magnify the Lord.”

So **the Pharisees** said to him ... (Mark 2:24a ULT)

■ **A representative of the Pharisees** said to him ...

Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

■ I looked on all the deeds that **I** had accomplished

This page answers the question: *What is a synecdoche, and how can I translate such a thing into my language?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Next we recommend you learn about:

Metonymy (p.1300)

Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 21:23](#)

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Textual Variants

Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However, people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, or some mistook one word for another that looked like it. Occasionally, they added words or even whole sentences, either by accident or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles include some of these sentences that were added. In the ULT, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

This page answers the question: *Why does the ULT have missing or added verses, and should I translate them?*

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

Choosing a Source Text ([UTA PDF](#))

Original Manuscripts ([UTA PDF](#))

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

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

Examples From the Bible

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

¹⁰ See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ ^[1]

^[1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

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

53 [Then everyone went to his own house ... 11 She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."] ^[2]

^[2] Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

Translation Strategies

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

- (1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.
- (2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." ¹⁶ [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

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[1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Chapter and Verse Numbers ([UTA PDF](#))

Original Manuscripts ([UTA PDF](#))

Terms to Know ([UTA PDF](#))

The Original and Source Languages ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew](#); [Matthew 6:13](#); [Matthew 19:9](#); [Matthew 23:14](#)

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**

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... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

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Next we recommend you learn about:

Copy or Borrow Words (p.1191)

How to Translate Names ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 13:25](#); [Matthew 21:2](#); [Matthew 21:5](#); [Matthew 21:7](#); [Matthew 21:14](#); [Matthew 22:10](#)

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Copy or Borrow Words (p.1191)

How to Translate Names ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Matthew 2 General Notes](#); [Matthew 2:1](#); [Matthew 3:4](#); [Matthew 3:12](#); [Matthew 4:18](#); [Matthew 4:24](#); [Matthew 5:25](#); [Matthew 5:35](#); [Matthew 5:40](#); [Matthew 6:6](#); [Matthew 6:19](#); [Matthew 6:28](#); [Matthew 7:6](#); [Matthew 8:6](#); [Matthew 8:14](#); [Matthew 9:2](#); [Matthew 9:32](#); [Matthew 9:37](#); [Matthew 10:4](#); [Matthew 10:9](#); [Matthew 10:10](#); [Matthew 10:17](#); [Matthew 10:29](#); [Matthew 11:16](#); [Matthew 11:19](#); [Matthew 12:1](#); [Matthew 12:10](#); [Matthew 12:20](#); [Matthew 12:23](#); [Matthew 13:25](#); [Matthew 13:31](#); [Matthew 13:33](#); [Matthew 13:44](#); [Matthew 13:45](#); [Matthew 13:52](#); [Matthew 13:55](#); [Matthew 14:6](#); [Matthew 14:8](#); [Matthew 14:25](#); [Matthew 15:2](#); [Matthew 15:17](#); [Matthew 16:19](#); [Matthew 17:4](#); [Matthew 17:15](#); [Matthew 18:6](#); [Matthew 19:7](#); [Matthew 19:24](#); [Matthew 20:19](#); [Matthew 21:2](#); [Matthew 21:5](#); [Matthew 21:7](#); [Matthew 21:14](#); [Matthew 21:33](#); [Matthew 22:10](#); [Matthew 23:5](#); [Matthew 23:23](#); [Matthew 23:24](#); [Matthew 23:37](#); [Matthew 24:18](#); [Matthew 24:20](#); [Matthew 24:28](#); [Matthew 24:38](#); [Matthew 25:7](#); [Matthew 25:27](#); [Matthew 26:7](#); [Matthew 26:12](#); [Matthew 26:20](#); [Matthew 26:26](#); [Matthew 26:30](#); [Matthew 26:34](#); [Matthew 26:47](#); [Matthew 26:53](#); [Matthew 26:55](#); [Matthew 26:74](#); [Matthew 27:22](#); [Matthew 27:26](#); [Matthew 27:28](#); [Matthew 27:35](#); [Matthew 27:48](#); [Matthew 27:59](#); [Matthew 28:3](#)

Translating Son and Father

Door43 supports Bible translations that represent these concepts when they refer to God.

Biblical Witness

“Father” and “Son” are names that God calls himself in the Bible.

The Bible shows that God called Jesus his Son:

After he was baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and ... a voice came out of the heavens saying, **“This is my beloved Son.** I am very pleased with him.” (Matthew 3:16-17 ULT)

The Bible shows that Jesus called God his Father:

Jesus ... said, “I praise you **Father**, Lord of heaven and earth ... no one knows the **Son** except the **Father**, and no one knows the **Father** except the **Son**.” (Matthew 11:25a, 27b ULT) (See also: John 6:26-57)

Christians have found that “Father” and “Son” are the ideas that most essentially describe the eternal relationship of the First and Second Persons of the Trinity to each other. The Bible indeed refers to them in various ways, but no other terms reflect the eternal love and intimacy between these Persons, nor the interdependent eternal relationship between them.

Jesus referred to God in the following terms:

Baptize them into **the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.** (Matthew 28:19b ULT)

The intimate, loving relationship between the Father and the Son is eternal, just as they are eternal. The Father **loves** the Son. (See John 3:35-36; 5:19-20 ULT)

I love the Father, and just as the Father commanded me, thus I do. (John 14:31 ULT)

No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son. (Luke 10:22b ULT)

The terms “Father” and “Son” also communicate that the Father and the Son are of the same essence; they are both eternal God.

Jesus said, “Father, ... glorify your Son so that the Son will glorify you ... I glorified you on the earth ... Now Father, glorify me ... with the glory that **I had with you before the world was made.**” (John 17:1, 4a, 5 ULT)

But in these last days, {God the Father} has spoken to us through a Son, whom he appointed to be the heir of all things. Through him, he also made the universe. He is the brightness of God’s glory and **the very exact representation of his being.** He holds everything together by the word of his power. (Hebrews 1:2-3a ULT)

Jesus said to him, “I have been with you for so long and you still do not know me, Philip? **Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.** How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:9 ULT)

This page answers the question: *Why are these concepts important in referring to God?*

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

Create Faithful Translations ([UTA PDF](#))

Son of God and God the Father ([UTA PDF](#))

Human Relationships

Human fathers and sons are not perfect, but the Bible still uses those terms for the Father and Son, who are perfect.

Just as today, human father-son relationships during Bible times were never as loving or perfect as the relationship between Jesus and his Father. But this does not mean that the translator should avoid the concepts of father and son. The Scriptures use these terms to refer to God, the perfect Father and Son, as well as to sinful human fathers and sons. In referring to God as Father and Son, choose words in your language that are widely used to refer to a human “father” and “son.” In this way you will communicate that God the Father and God the Son are of the same divine essence (they are both God), just as a human father and son are of the same human essence (they are both human and share the same human characteristics).

Translation Strategies

- (1) Think through all the possibilities within your language to translate the words “son” and “father.” Determine which words in your language best represent the divine “Son” and “Father.”
- (2) If your language has more than one word for “son,” use the word that has the closest meaning to “only son” (or “first son” if necessary).
- (3) If your language has more than one word for “father,” use the word that has the closest meaning to “birth father,” rather than “adoptive father.”

(See *God the Father and Son of God* pages in [unfoldingWord® Translation Words](#) for help translating “Father” and “Son.”)

”

Referenced in: [Matthew 3:17](#); [Matthew 4:3](#); [Matthew 4:6](#); [Matthew 5:45](#); [Matthew 5:48](#); [Matthew 6:1](#); [Matthew 6:6](#); [Matthew 6:8](#); [Matthew 6:14](#); [Matthew 6:18](#); [Matthew 6:26](#); [Matthew 6:32](#); [Matthew 7:11](#); [Matthew 7:21](#); [Matthew 8:29](#); [Matthew 10:20](#); [Matthew 10:23](#); [Matthew 10:29](#); [Matthew 10:32](#); [Matthew 11:19](#); [Matthew 11:25](#); [Matthew 11:27](#); [Matthew 12:8](#); [Matthew 12:50](#); [Matthew 13:43](#); [Matthew 14:33](#); [Matthew 15:13](#); [Matthew 16:16](#); [Matthew 16:17](#); [Matthew 16:27](#); [Matthew 18:10](#); [Matthew 18:14](#); [Matthew 18:19](#); [Matthew 18:35](#); [Matthew 20:23](#); [Matthew 23:9](#); [Matthew 24:36](#); [Matthew 25:31](#); [Matthew 25:34](#); [Matthew 26:29](#); [Matthew 26:39](#); [Matthew 26:42](#); [Matthew 26:53](#); [Matthew 26:63](#); [Matthew 27:40](#); [Matthew 27:43](#); [Matthew 27:54](#); [Matthew 28:19](#)

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(See *God the Father and Son of God* pages in [unfoldingWord® Translation Words](#) for help translating "Father" and "Son.")

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Referenced in: [Matthew 13:43](#); [Matthew 15:13](#); [Matthew 16:27](#)

When Masculine Words Include Women

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

Description

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

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

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

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 \(UTA PDF\)](#)

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: [Matthew 21:25](#)

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

”

Referenced in: [Matthew 6:1](#); [Matthew 6:5](#); [Matthew 6:14](#); [Matthew 6:15](#); [Matthew 10:32](#); [Matthew 10:33](#); [Matthew 12:41](#); [Matthew 15:20](#); [Matthew 16:26](#); [Matthew 19:6](#); [Matthew 19:26](#); [Matthew 21:25](#); [Matthew 23:5](#); [Matthew 23:7](#); [Matthew 23:13](#); [Matthew 25:40](#)

When to Keep Information Implicit

Description

Sometimes it is better not to state assumed knowledge or implicit information explicitly. This page gives some direction about when not to do this.

This page answers the question: *When should I not make implicit information explicit?*

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

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1131)
Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Translation Principles

- If a speaker or author intentionally left something unclear, do not try to make it more clear.
- If the original audience did not understand what the speaker meant, do not make it so clear that your readers would find it strange that the original audience did not understand.
- If you need to explicitly state some assumed knowledge or implicit information, try to do it in a way that does not make your readers think that the original audience needed to be told those things.
- Do not make implicit information explicit if it confuses the message or leads the reader to forget what the main point is.
- Do not make assumed knowledge or implicit information explicit if your readers already understand it.

Examples From the Bible

From the eater came forth food; and from the strong one came forth sweetness. (Judges 14:14 ULT)

This was a riddle. Samson purposely said this in a way that it would be hard for his enemies to know what it meant. Do not make it clear that the eater and the strong thing was a lion and that the sweet thing to eat was honey.

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

Some possible implicit information here is that the disciples should beware of the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. But Jesus' disciples did not understand this. They thought that Jesus was talking about real yeast and bread. So it would not be appropriate to state explicitly that the word "yeast" here refers to false teaching. The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant until they heard what Jesus said in Matthew 16:11.

"How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he was not telling them to beware of yeast in bread, but to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matthew 16:11-12 ULT)

Only after Jesus explained that he was not talking about bread did they realize that he was talking about the false teaching of the Pharisees. Therefore, it would be wrong to explicitly state the implicit information in Matthew 16:6.

Translation Strategies

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies applied.

"

Referenced in: [Matthew 9:20](#); [Matthew 11:2](#); [Matthew 13:47](#); [Matthew 23:27](#)



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 78

Christ, Messiah

Facts:

The terms “Messiah” and “Christ” mean “Anointed One” and refer to Jesus, God’s Son.

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

Translation Suggestions:

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

(See also: [How to Translate Names](#))

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

Bible References:

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

Examples from the Bible stories:

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

- **21:9** The prophet Isaiah prophesied that the **Messiah** would be born from a virgin.
- **43:7** "But God raised him to life again to fulfill the prophecy which says, 'You will not let your **Holy One** rot in the grave.'"
- **43:9** "But know for certain that God has caused Jesus to become both Lord and **Messiah**!"
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus **Christ** so that God will forgive your sins."
- **46:6** Saul reasoned with the Jews, proving that Jesus was the **Messiah**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4899, G33230, G55470

"

Referenced in: [Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew](#)

disciple

Definition:

The term “disciple” refers to a person who spends much time with a teacher, learning from that teacher’s character and teaching.

- The people who followed Jesus around, listening to his teachings and obeying them, were called his “disciples.”
- John the Baptist also had disciples.
- During Jesus’ ministry, there were many disciples who followed him and heard his teachings.
- Jesus chose twelve disciples to be his closest followers; these men became known as his “apostles.”
- Jesus’ twelve apostles continued to be known as his “disciples” or “the 12.”
- Just before Jesus went up to heaven, he commanded his disciples to teach other people about how to become Jesus’ disciples, too.
- Anyone who believes in Jesus and obeys his teachings is called a disciple of Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “disciple” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “follower” or “student” or “pupil” or “learner.”
- Make sure that the translation of this term does not refer only to a student who learns in a classroom.
- The translation of this term should also be different from the translation of “apostle.”

(See also: [apostle](#), [believe](#), [Jesus](#), [John \(the Baptist\)](#), [the twelve](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 6:1
- Acts 9:26-27
- Acts 11:26
- Acts 14:22
- John 13:23
- Luke 6:40
- Matthew 11:3
- Matthew 26:33-35
- Matthew 27:64

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **30:8** He (Jesus) gave the pieces to his **disciples** to give to the people. The **disciples** kept passing out the food, and it never ran out!
- **38:1** About three years after Jesus first began preaching and teaching publicly, Jesus told his **disciples** that he wanted to celebrate this Passover with them in Jerusalem, and that he would be killed there.
- **38:11** Then Jesus went with his **disciples** to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus told his **disciples** to pray that they would not enter into temptation.
- **42:10** Jesus said to his **disciples**, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So go, make **disciples** of all people groups by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3928, G31000, G31010, G31020

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Referenced in: [Matthew 28 General Notes](#)

fruit, fruitful, unfruitful

Definition:

The term “fruit” refers to the part of a plant that can be eaten. Something that is “fruitful” produces a lot of fruit. Something that is “unfruitful” does not produce fruit.

- In general, the expression “fruit of” refers to anything that comes from or that is produced by something else. For example, the phrase “the fruit of every tree” refers to the fruit that comes from these trees.
- The expression “fruit of the land” refers generally to everything that the land produces for people to eat. This includes not only fruits such as grapes or dates, but also vegetables, nuts, and grains.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate the term “fruit” using the general word for “fruit” that is commonly used in the project language to refer to the edible fruit of a fruit tree. In many languages it may be more natural to use the plural “fruits” whenever it refers to more than one fruit.
- When used literally, the term “fruitful” could be translated as “producing much fruit.”
- The expression “fruit of the land” could also be translated as “food that the land produces” or “food crops that are growing in that region.”
- When used literally, the expression “will be more fruitful” could also be translated as “will produce more fruit.”

(See also: [descendant](#), [grain](#), [grape](#), [Holy Spirit](#), [vine](#), [womb](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 1:11
- Matthew 7:17

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0004, H1061, H1063, H1069, H2233, H2981, H3581, H3759, H3899, H3978, H4022, H5108, H6509, H6529, H7019, H8393, H8570, G10810, G25900, G25920, G25930, G37030, G50520, G53520

”

Referenced in: [Matthew 7 General Notes](#)

grave, gravediggers, tomb, burial place

Definition:

The terms “tomb” and “grave” refer to a place where people put the body of a person who has died. A “burial place” is a more general term that also refers to this.

- The Jews sometimes used natural caves as tombs, and sometimes they dug caves into rock in the side of a hill.
- In New Testament times, it was common to roll a large, heavy stone in front of the opening of a tomb in order to close it.
- If the target language the word for a tomb can only refer to a hole in which the body is placed below the ground, other ways to translate this could include “cave” or “hole in the side of a hill.”
- The phrase “the grave” is often used generally and figuratively to refer to the condition of being dead or a place where the souls of dead people are.

(See also: [bury](#), death)

Bible References:

- Acts 2:29-31
- Genesis 23:6
- Genesis 50:5
- John 19:41
- Luke 23:53
- Mark 5:1-2
- Matthew 27:53
- Romans 3:13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **32:4** The man lived among the **tombs** in the area.
- **37:6** Jesus asked them, “Where have you put Lazarus?” They told him, “In the **tomb**. Come and see.”
- **37:7** The **tomb** was a cave with a stone rolled in front of its opening.
- **40:9** Then Joseph and Nicodemus, two Jewish leaders who believed Jesus was the Messiah, asked Pilate for Jesus’ body. They wrapped his body in cloth and placed it in a **tomb** cut out of rock. Then they rolled a large stone in front the **tomb** to block the opening.
- **41:4** He (the angel) rolled away the stone that was covering the entrance to the **tomb** and sat on it. The soldiers guarding the **tomb** were terrified and fell to the ground like dead men.
- **41:5** When the women arrived at the **tomb**, the angel told them, “Do not be afraid. Jesus is not here. He has risen from the dead, just like he said he would! Look in the **tomb** and see.” The women looked into the **tomb** and saw where Jesus’ body had been laid. His body was not there!

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1430, H6900, H6913, H7585, H7845, G34180, G34190, G50280

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Referenced in: [Matthew 28 General Notes](#)

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: [Matthew 15 General Notes](#)

mock, mocker, mockery, ridicule, scoff at, laughingstock

Definition:

The terms “mock,” “ridicule,” and “scoff at” all refer to making fun of someone, especially in a cruel way.

- Mocking often involves imitating people’s words or actions with the intent to embarrass them or show contempt for them.
- The Roman soldiers mocked or ridiculed Jesus when they put a robe on him and pretended to honor him as king.
- A group of young people ridiculed or scoffed at Elisha when they called him a name, making fun of his bald head.
- The term “scoff at” can also refer to ridiculing an idea that is not considered believable or important.
- A “mocker” is someone who mocks and ridicules consistently.

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 3:4
- Acts 2:12-13
- Galatians 6:6-8
- Genesis 39:13-15
- Luke 22:63-65
- Mark 10:34
- Matthew 9:23-24
- Matthew 20:19
- Matthew 27:29

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **21:12** Isaiah prophesied that people would spit on, **mock**, and beat the Messiah.
- **39:5** The Jewish leaders all answered the high priest, “He deserves to die!” Then they blindfolded Jesus, spit on him, hit him, and **mocked** him.
- **39:12** The soldiers whipped Jesus, and put a royal robe and a crown made of thorns on him. Then they **mocked** him by saying, “Look, the King of the Jews!”
- **40:4** Jesus was crucified between two robbers. One of them **mocked** Jesus, but the other said, “Do you have no fear of God?”
- **40:5** The Jewish leaders and the other people in the crowd **mocked** Jesus. They said to him, “If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross and save yourself! Then we will believe you.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1422, H2048, H2049, H2778, H2781, H3213, H3887, H3931, H3932, H3933, H3934, H3944, H3945, H4167, H4485, H4912, H5058, H5607, H6026, H6711, H7046, H7048, H7814, H7832, H8103, H8148, H8437, H8595, G15920, G17010, G17020, G17030, G23010, G26060, G34560, G55120

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Referenced in: [Matthew 27 General Notes](#)

parable

Definition:

The term “parable” usually refers to a short story or object lesson that is used to explain or teach a moral truth.

- Jesus used parables to teach his disciples. Although he also told parables to the crowds of people, he did not always explain the parable.
- A parable could be used to reveal truth to his disciples while hiding that truth from people like the Pharisees who did not believe in Jesus.
- The prophet Nathan told David a parable to show the king his terrible sin.
- The story of the Good Samaritan is an example of a parable that is a story. Jesus’ comparison of old and new wineskins is an example of a parable that was an object lesson to help the disciples understand Jesus’ teachings.

(See also: [Samaria](#))

Bible References:

- Luke 5:36
- Luke 6:39
- Luke 8:4
- Luke 8:9-10
- Mark 4:1
- Matthew 13:3
- Matthew 13:10
- Matthew 13:13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1819, H4912, G38500, G39420

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Referenced in: [Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew](#)

prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess

Definition:

A “prophet” is a man who speaks God’s messages to people. A woman who does this is called a “prophetess.”

- Often prophets warned people to turn away from their sins and obey God.
- A “prophecy” is the message that the prophet speaks. To “prophesy” means to speak God’s messages.
- Often the message of a prophecy was about something that would happen in the future.
- Many prophecies in the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.
- In the Bible the collection of books written by prophets are sometimes referred to as “the prophets.”
- For example the phrase, “the law and the prophets” is a way of referring to all the Hebrew scriptures, which are also known as the “Old Testament.”
- An older term for a prophet was “seer” or “someone who sees.”
- Sometimes the term “seer” refers to a false prophet or to someone who practices divination.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “prophet” could be translated as “God’s spokesman” or “man who speaks for God” or “man who speaks God’s messages.”
- A “seer” could be translated as “person who sees visions” or “man who sees the future from God.”
- The term “prophetess” could be translated as “spokeswoman for God” or “woman who speaks for God” or “woman who speaks God’s messages.”
- Ways to translate “prophecy” could include, “message from God” or “prophet message.”
- The term “prophesy” could be translated as “speak words from God” or “tell God’s message.”
- The figurative expression, “law and the prophets” could also be translated as “the books of the law and of the prophets” or “everything written about God and his people, including God’s laws and what his prophets preached.” (See: [synecdoche](#))
- When referring to a prophet (or seer) of a false god, it may be necessary to translate this as “false prophet (seer)” or “prophet (seer) of a false god” or “prophet of Baal,” for example.

(See also: [Baal](#), [divination](#), [false god](#), [false prophet](#), [fulfill](#), [law](#), [vision](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
- Acts 3:25
- John 1:43-45
- Malachi 4:4-6
- Matthew 1:23
- Matthew 2:18
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalm 51:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they trusted in God and believed that Moses was a **prophet** of God.
- **17:13** God was very angry about what David had done, so he sent the **prophet** Nathan to tell David how evil his sin was.
- **19:1** Throughout the history of the Israelites, God sent them **prophets**. The **prophets** heard messages from God and then told the people God’s messages.

- **19:6** All the people of the entire kingdom of Israel, including the 450 **prophets** of Baal, came to Mount Carmel.
- **19:17** Most of the time, the people did not obey God. They often mistreated the **prophets** and sometimes even killed them.
- **21:9** The **prophet** Isaiah **prophesied** that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- **43:5** "This fulfills the **prophecy** made by the **prophet** Joel in which God said, 'In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.'"
- **43:7** "This fulfills the **prophecy** which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.'"
- **48:12** Moses was a great **prophet** who proclaimed the word of God. But Jesus is the greatest **prophet** of all. He is the Word of God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2372, H2374, H4853, H5012, H5013, H5016, H5017, H5029, H5030, H5031, H5197, G24950, G43940, G43950, G43960, G43970, G43980, G55780

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Referenced in: [Matthew 24 General Notes](#)

Sabbath

Definition:

The term “Sabbath” refers to the seventh day of the week, which God commanded the Israelites to set apart as a day of rest and doing no work.

- After God finished creating the world in six days, he rested on the seventh day. In the same way, God commanded the Israelites to set aside the seventh day as a special day to rest and worship him.
- The command to “keep the Sabbath holy” is one of the ten commandments that God wrote on the stone tablets that he gave Moses for the Israelites.
- Following the Jewish system of counting days, the Sabbath begins on Friday at sundown and lasts until Saturday at sundown.
- Sometimes in the Bible the Sabbath is called “Sabbath day” rather than only the Sabbath.

Translation Suggestions:

- This could also be translated as “resting day” or “day for resting” or “day of not working” or “God’s day of rest.”
- Some translations capitalize this term to show that it is a special day, as in “Sabbath Day” or “Resting Day.”
- Consider how this term is translated in a local or national language.

(See also: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: rest)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 31:2-3
- Acts 13:26-27
- Exodus 31:14
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Lamentations 2:6
- Leviticus 19:3
- Luke 13:14
- Mark 2:27
- Matthew 12:2
- Nehemiah 10:32-33

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:5** “Always be sure to keep the **Sabbath day** holy. That is, do all your work in six days, for the seventh day is a day for you to rest and to honor me.”
- **26:2** Jesus went to the town of Nazareth where he had lived during his childhood. On the **Sabbath**, he went to the place of worship.
- **41:3** The day after Jesus was buried was a **Sabbath** day, and the Jews were not permitted to go to the tomb on that day.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4868, H7676, H7677, G43150, G45210

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Referenced in: [Matthew 12 General Notes](#)

Satan, devil, evil one

Facts:

Although the devil is a spirit being that God created, he rebelled against God and became God's enemy. The devil is also called "Satan" and "the evil one."

- The devil hates God and all that God created because he wants to take the place of God and be worshiped as God.
- Satan tempts people to rebel against God.
- God sent his Son, Jesus, to rescue people from Satan's control.
- The name "Satan" means "adversary" or "enemy."
- The word "devil" means "accuser."

Translation Suggestions:

- The word "devil" could also be translated as "the accuser" or "the evil one" or "the king of evil spirits" or "the chief evil spirit."
- "Satan" could be translated as "Opponent" or "Adversary" or some other name that shows that he is the devil.
- These terms should be translated differently from demon and evil spirit.
- Consider how these terms are translated in a local or national language.

(See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [demon](#), [evil](#), [kingdom of God](#), [tempt](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:8
- 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20
- 1 Timothy 5:15
- Acts 13:10
- Job 1:8
- Mark 8:33
- Zechariah 3:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **21:1** The snake who deceived Eve was **Satan**. The promise meant that the Messiah who would come would defeat **Satan** completely.
- **25:6** Then **Satan** showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and all their glory and said, "I will give you all this if you bow down and worship me."
- **25:8** Jesus did not give in to **Satan's** temptations, so **Satan** left him.
- **33:6** So Jesus explained, "The seed is the word of God. The path is a person who hears God's word, but does not understand it, and the **devil** takes the word from him."
- **38:7** After Judas took the bread, **Satan** entered into him.
- **48:4** God promised that one of Eve's descendants would crush **Satan's** head, and **Satan** would wound his heel. This meant that **Satan** would kill the Messiah, but God would raise him to life again, and then the Messiah will crush the power of **Satan** forever.
- **49:15** God has taken you out of **Satan's** kingdom of darkness and put you into God's kingdom of light.

- **50:9** "The weeds represent the people who belong to the **evil one**. The enemy who planted the weeds represents the **devil**."
- **50:10** "When the world ends, the angels will gather together all the people who belong to the **devil** and throw them into a raging fire, where they will cry and grind their teeth in terrible suffering."
- **50:15** When Jesus returns, he will completely destroy **Satan** and his kingdom. He will throw **Satan** into hell where he will burn forever, along with everyone who chose to follow him rather than to obey God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7700, H7854, H8163, G11390, G11400, G11410, G11420, G12280, G41900, G45660, G45670

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Referenced in: [Matthew 4 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 controls them and causes them to sin.
- A “sinner” is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word “sinners” was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who didn’t keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term “sinner” was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- To “sin” could also be translated as to “disobey God” or to “do wrong.”
- Depending on the context “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebellious against God.”
- Depending on the context the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people don’t see or know about.
- The term “sin” should be general, and different from the terms for “wickedness” and “evil.”

(See also: [disobey](#), [evil](#), [flesh](#), [tax collector](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3
- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31

- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, "I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children."
- **13:12** God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- **20:1** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- **21:13** The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no **sin**. He would die to receive the punishment for other people's **sin**.
- **35:1** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinner**s who had gathered to hear him.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**."
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**."
- **48:8** We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- **49:17** Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

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Referenced in: [Matthew 24 General Notes](#)

Son of Man, son of man

Definition:

The title “Son of Man” was used by Jesus to refer to himself. He often used this term instead of saying “I” or “me.”

- In the Bible, “son of man” could be a way of referring to or addressing a man. It could also mean “human being.”
- Throughout the Old Testament book of Ezekiel, God frequently addressed Ezekiel as “son of man.” For example he said, “You, son of man, must prophesy.”
- The prophet Daniel saw a vision of a “son of man” coming with the clouds, which is a reference to the coming Messiah.
- Jesus also said that the Son of Man will be coming back someday on the clouds.
- These references to the Son of Man coming on the clouds reveal that Jesus the Messiah is God.

Translation Suggestions:

- When Jesus uses the term “Son of Man” it could be translated as “the One who became a human being” or “the Man from heaven.”
- Some translators occasionally include “I” or “me” with this title (as in “I, the Son of Man”) to make it clear that Jesus was talking about himself.
- Check to make sure that the translation of this term does not give a wrong meaning (such as referring to an illegitimate son or giving the wrong impression that Jesus was only a human being).
- When used to refer to a person, “son of man” could also be translated as “you, a human being” or “you, man” or “human being” or “man.”

(See also: [heaven](#), son, [Son of God](#), [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 7:56
- Daniel 7:14
- Ezekiel 43:6-8
- John 3:12-13
- Luke 6:5
- Mark 2:10
- Matthew 13:37
- Psalms 80:17-18
- Revelation 14:14

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0120, H0606, H1121, H1247, G04440, G52070

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Referenced in: [Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew](#)

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