



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Notes**

**Ezra**

**Version 85**

[en]

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## **unfoldingWord® Translation Notes**

**Ezra**

## Introduction to Ezra

### Part 1: General Introduction

#### Outline of Ezra

The first Jewish exiles return to Jerusalem from Persia (1:1–2:70)

The people rebuild and dedicate the temple in Jerusalem (3:1–6:22)

More exiles return; Ezra teaches the Law of Yahweh (7:1–8:36)

The problem of the people marrying foreigners, and how it is solved (9:1–10:44)

#### What is the Book of Ezra about?

The book of Ezra is about how the people of Israel returned from Babylon and tried to worship Yahweh again as the law required. To do this, they needed to rebuild their temple so that they could sacrifice to Yahweh. (See: **temple, house, house of God (p.486)**)

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

The book of Ezra is named for the priest Ezra who led the first group of Jews out of exile and back to Judah. Translators can use the traditional title “Ezra.” Or they might choose a clearer title, such as “The Book about Ezra.”

### Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

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

Foreigners worshiped many false gods. Yahweh did not allow his people to marry foreigners because he knew that this would cause the people of Israel to worship false gods. (See: **god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry (p.476)**)

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

Many of the Jews remained in Babylon instead of returning to the land of Israel. Many of them were successful in Babylon and desired to remain there. However, this meant that they were unable to worship Yahweh in Jerusalem as their ancestors had done.

### Part 3: Important Translation Issues

#### How does the Book of Ezra use the term “Israel”?

The book of Ezra uses the term “Israel” to refer to the kingdom of Judah. It was mostly made up of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The other ten tribes had ended their loyalty to any kings descended from David. God allowed the Assyrians to conquer the other ten tribes and take them into exile. As a result, they mixed with other people groups and did not return to the land of Israel. (See: **Israel, Israelites (p.478)**)

## **Are the events in the Book of Ezra told in the order that they actually happened?**

Some of the events in the Book of Ezra are not told in the order that they happened, but are grouped according to theme. Translators should pay attention to notes that signal when events are probably out of chronological order.



## Ezra 1

### Ezra 1 General Notes

### Structure and Formatting

The chapter records the story of the first Jews as they return from Persia to Judea.

### Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

#### King Cyrus

King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return because he wanted them to rebuild the temple. Those who stayed behind gave gifts to those who left to help them on their journey and resettlement. This practice was common under the reign of Cyrus and was used as a way to maintain peace throughout his kingdom. (See: **temple, house, house of God (p.486)**)

### Translation Issues in This Chapter

#### Jews

After they returned to Judea, the focus of the rest of the Old Testament is on the Jewish people.

## Ezra 1:1

### Now in year

The word **now** introduces a new event in the story. Use the normal method for introducing the beginning of a true story in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.423)**)

### Now in year one of Cyrus, the king of Persia

The original Jewish readers of this book would have known that this is not a reference to the year when Cyrus first became king of the Persians. Rather, it is a reference to the later year when, by conquering Babylon, he became king over the Jews, since Babylon is the nation that had previously conquered the Jews and taken them into exile. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “During the first year after Cyrus, the king of Persia, conquered Babylon and became ruler over the Jews” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### Now in year one of Cyrus, the king of Persia

This expression could mean that sometime during the first year that he ruled over the Jews, Cyrus issued the decree that this verse describes. However, it could also mean that he issued this decree as soon as he became their ruler. Alternate translation: “As soon as Cyrus, the king of Persia, conquered Babylon and became the ruler of the Jews”

### Now in year one

The Hebrew uses a cardinal number here, **one**, but there is not a significant difference in meaning between that and the way the Hebrew uses an ordinal number, “first,” in similar contexts elsewhere. If your language customarily uses ordinals for the numbers of years, you can do that here in your translation. Alternate translation: “In the first year” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

### of Cyrus

**Cyrus** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### Persia

**Persia** is the name of an empire. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### the word of Yahweh

Here, **word** refers to the thing that Yahweh spoke about. Alternate translation: “the promise that Yahweh had made” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### the word of Yahweh

What Yahweh had said specifically was that, after 70 years in exile, the Jews would be allowed to return to their homeland. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly, or you could put this information in a footnote. Alternate translation: “the promise that Yahweh had made that after 70 years in exile, the Jews would be allowed to return to their homeland” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Yahweh

**Yahweh** is the name of God that he revealed to his people in the Old Testament. It occurs many times in the book, and it will be helpful to your readers if you translate it consistently each time. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 411)**)

## from the mouth of Jeremiah

Here, **mouth** represents speaking. Alternate translation: “which Jeremiah spoke about” or “which Jeremiah announced” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

## Yahweh stirred up the spirit of Cyrus

Here the book uses one aspect of Cyrus, his spirit, to represent all of him. Alternate translation: “Yahweh put a desire to do something into Cyrus” (See: **Synecdoche (p.464)**)

## Yahweh stirred up the spirit of Cyrus

Here, the book speaks of Yahweh causing Cyrus to act by saying that he **stirred up** his spirit in the way that winds might stir up calm waters and make them move around. The meaning is that Yahweh directly influenced the heart and will of Cyrus to get him to do something. Alternate translation: “Yahweh put a desire to do something into Cyrus” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## So he caused & to pass

The word **so** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “As a result, he made ... to be sent” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p. 375)**)

## So he caused a sound to pass throughout all his kingdom

Here, **he** means Cyrus. In this context, the **sound** is a voice speaking a message, and the voice represents the message that it speaks. But since the message could not travel by itself, ultimately the reference is to the messengers who delivered it. Alternate translation: “Cyrus sent messengers out to proclaim a decree everywhere in his empire” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

## and also in writing

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. The meaning is: Cyrus also put this decree in writing. You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “and Cyrus also sent out written copies of the decree” or “and Cyrus also had his scribes write down the decree in his official records” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

## Ezra 1:2

### Yahweh, the God of heaven

Here Cyrus provides some background information to inform his subjects who Yahweh is. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, the God who is above all” or “Yahweh, the God who rules in heaven” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

### all the kingdoms of the earth

**All** is an exaggeration for emphasis. There were still some kingdoms on earth that Cyrus did not rule. However, he had conquered every other large empire in his part of the world that might have been a threat to him. Alternate translation: “to be unchallenged ruler over this entire land” (See: **Hyperbole (p.415)**)

### has given to me

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “has made me the king over” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### to build for him a house

Cyrus is not going to do the building personally. Rather, he means that he is giving the Jews, the people who worship Yahweh, permission and support to rebuild his temple, which the Babylonians had destroyed. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “to make it possible for the Jews, the people who worship him, to rebuild his temple” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### a house

Here, **house** means a temple. Cyrus speaks of this temple as if it would be a house in which God lived, since God’s presence would be there. Alternate translation: “a temple” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### in Jerusalem, which is in Judah

Here, Cyrus provides some background information about the city where he wants the Jews to rebuild the temple of Yahweh, since many of the recipients of his message might not have known where Jerusalem was. Alternate translation: “in Jerusalem, the capital city of the province of Judah” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

### in Jerusalem, which is in Judah

**Jerusalem** is the name of a city, and **Judah** is the name of the province in which it was located. These names occur many times in the book, and it will be helpful to your readers if you translate them consistently each time. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 1:3

### Whoever among you is from all his people

Here, **all** probably indicates that Cyrus is thinking of not only the people whom the Babylonians had taken into exile from the southern kingdom of Judah some decades before, and their descendants, but also any of the people whose ancestors the Assyrians had taken into exile from the northern kingdom of Israel nearly two centuries earlier. Cyrus now ruled over the territories to which both groups had been exiled. If any in the second group still had awareness and proof of their identity, and if they still wanted to honor and worship Yahweh, they could also return to Jerusalem and help rebuild the temple. (However, as 1:5 indicates, it was essentially Israelites from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin who actually did return.) To make this clear, you could include this information.

Alternate translation: "Which of you is an Israelite from any tribe" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### may his God be with him

Cyrus wishing that **God** will **be with** these Israelites is an idiom that expresses his wish that God would make their journey and the rebuilding project successful. If it is more natural in your language, you could say this at the end of the verse. Alternate translation: "May his God make him successful" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### and may he go up to Jerusalem

Cyrus says **go up** because the Jews would have to travel from a river valley up into the mountains in order to return from their places of exile to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "and let him return to Jerusalem" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### to Jerusalem, which is in Judah

Cyrus once again provides background information about the city. Alternate translation: "to Jerusalem, in the province of Judah" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

### the house of Yahweh

Here, **house** means a temple. Cyrus continues to speak of this temple as if it would be a house in which Yahweh lived, since Yahweh's presence would be there. Alternate translation: "a temple for Yahweh" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Yahweh, the God of Israel. He is the God who is in Jerusalem

Here Cyrus provides further background information to inform his subjects who Yahweh is. Alternate translation: "Yahweh, the God whom the people of Israel worship, who should have a temple in Jerusalem" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

### the God of Israel

The phrase **the God of Israel** does not mean that God belongs to Israel, but that this is the God whom Israel worships. Alternate translation: "the God whom Israel worships" (See: **Possession (p.446)**)

## Ezra 1:4

### And every one who is remaining in all of the places where he is sojourning there, let the men of his place lift him

The structure of this sentence may present difficulties for translation because the long phrase at the beginning actually describes who will receive the action, rather than who will do the action. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say first who will do the action. Alternate translation: "Let the people who live in any place where Jewish survivors are in exile help them"

### And every one who is remaining

This phrase refers to any Israelite who is a surviving member of the group that was taken into exile, or who is a descendant of someone in that group. The word **remaining** refers to people who are remaining or left over from a larger group. In this context, that larger group is all of the Israelites who lived in the land of Judah before the Babylonians conquered it. Alternate translation: "Any survivor of the Jews who were taken from their land" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### in all of the places where he is sojourning there

**Sojourning** means living somewhere other than in one's native land. Here, **he** refers to any Jew such as is described in the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "in any of the places where a Jew may be living in exile" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### where he is sojourning there

Saying **where** and **there** in the same phrase like this is a characteristic Hebrew construction, but it might represent an unnecessary duplication in your language. If it would be helpful in your language, you could omit any translation of the word "there." Alternate translation: "in which he is living"

### let the men of his place lift him

It is likely that both women and men would have helped to gather the supplies listed in the rest of this verse to support the returning Jews. So the term **men** here probably includes both groups. Alternate translation: "the people of that place should help him" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.471)**)

### let & lift him

**Lift** here is an idiom that means help. Alternate translation: "let ... help him by providing him" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the freewill offering

The book expects readers to know that these would be extra gifts, beyond the necessities already listed. They might include money to help rebuild the temple and vessels to be used in the temple, such as the ones listed in [1:7-11](#). Alternate translation: "any extra gifts that they want to give" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

**for the house of God, which is in Jerusalem**

**House** means a temple. Cyrus continues to speak of this temple as if it would be a house in which God lived, since God's presence would be there. The book repeatedly uses the expressions **house**, **house of God**, and "house of Yahweh" to mean the temple in Jerusalem. It will be helpful to your readers if you translate these expressions consistently every time. Alternate translation: "for the temple that the Jews will rebuild for God in Jerusalem" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 1:5

### Then & arose

The word **then** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous verses have described. Alternate translation: “In response to this decree ... prepared” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### Then & arose

In this context, the term **arose** means that these leaders took action to get an enterprise under way. It does not indicate that these leaders had been sitting or lying down and that they stood up. Alternate translation: “Then ... started making preparations” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the heads of the fathers

This is an abbreviated way of saying the heads of the father’s houses. Alternate translation: “the clan leaders” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### the heads of the fathers

Among the Israelites, the expression “father’s house” or “house of the father” originally described an extended-family group. It later came to be used more generally to refer to a larger clan within a tribe. In this expression, the word “house” (which does not appear in the abbreviated version here) describes all the people descended from a particular person. The term views all of those descendants as if they were one household living together. Alternate translation: “the clan leaders”

### the heads of

Here, **heads** is a figurative way of saying leaders. Alternate translation: “leaders” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### of Judah and Benjamin

These are the names of two of the tribes of Israel. Alternate translation: “of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### that is, all whose spirit God had stirred up

Here the book again speaks of God causing people to act by saying that he **stirred up** their spirits the way winds might stir up calm waters and get them to move around. The meaning is that God directly influenced the hearts and wills of these clan leaders to get them to do something. Alternate translation: “all those whom God had led to act” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### to go up

As in 1:3, the book says **go up** because the Jews would have to travel from a river valley up into the mountains in order to return from their places of exile to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “to return to Jerusalem” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)



## Ezra 1:6

### And all those around them

**All** is an exaggeration for emphasis. Every person who lived near a returning Jew did not necessarily provide support. But the expression indicates that the Jews received very generous support from many of their neighbors. Alternate translation: "And the people of their communities" (See: **Hyperbole (p.415)**)

### strengthened their hands

Here, **hands** represents strength and power. This expression means that the neighbors of the Jews gave them greater capacity to act and fulfill their project by supplying them with the items listed. Alternate translation: "enabled them by giving them" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### apart from all that was freely offered

This is a reference to the freewill offerings that are also mentioned in [1:4](#). Alternate translation: "in addition, the people freely gave extra gifts"

## Ezra 1:7

### And the king Cyrus brought out

**Cyrus** did not do this work himself. He ordered others to do it. If that is not understood in your language, you can say this explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### the vessels of the house of Yahweh that Nebuchadnezzar had brought out from Jerusalem and had put in the house of his gods

**Vessels** refers to the bowls, basins, and other objects that are listed in [1:9](#) and [1:10](#). The book assumes that readers will know that this verse is describing how Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, took these items from the temple in Jerusalem and then put them, as trophies of conquest, in a temple devoted to his own gods. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly in the text or in a footnote. Alternate translation: “the objects from the temple of Yahweh that Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had taken away from Jerusalem when he captured that city and then put in the temple of his own gods” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### Nebuchadnezzar

**Nebuchadnezzar** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 1:8

### And Cyrus, the king of Persia, brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer

Here, **by the hand of** is a metaphor that represents control and action. The expression means that Mithredath did this at the command of Cyrus and on his behalf. Mithredath would have commanded others to do the work; he would not have carried the things in his own hands. Alternate translation: “King Cyrus of Persia ordered his treasurer, Mithredath, to bring them out” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### And Cyrus, the king of Persia, brought them out by the hand of Mithredath

The implication is that these vessels had remained in the temple where Nebuchadnezzar had put them, and so **Mithredath brought them out** from there. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “King Cyrus of Persia had his treasurer, Mithredath, bring these vessels out from the temple where Nebuchadnezzar had put them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Mithredath

**Mithredath** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## the treasurer

This term describes the office of a person responsible for all of the valuable possessions of a kingdom and for the places where they are stored safely. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

### And he counted them out to Sheshbazzar

Here, **he** refers to Mithredath, and **them** refers to the objects for the temple. The expression **counted them out** probably does not mean that Mithredath handed Sheshbazzar the objects one at a time while announcing the number of each one. It probably means that Mithredath gave Sheshbazzar the objects along with a document that listed how many there were of each kind, as recorded in [1:9](#) and [1:10](#). Alternate translation: “Mithredath turned them over to Sheshbazzar along with a detailed list of them” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## to Sheshbazzar

This leader of the first group of exiles to return to Judah, who is called **Sheshbazzar** here and in [1:11](#), [5:14](#), and [5:16](#), seems to be the same person who is called Zerubbabel in the rest of the book. The reason for the difference in names is not clear. Some interpreters suggest that he was known as Sheshbazzar in the Persian court and that he used the name Zerubbabel as governor of Judah. There are examples in the Bible of Jews having both a Persian name and a Hebrew name. It would probably be best simply to translate both names consistently where they appear without calling attention to the difference, but you could add this possible explanation in a footnote. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## the ruler of Judah

The book says in [5:14](#) that Cyrus appointed Sheshbazzar to be the governor of the province of Judah. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use that phrase to describe him here. Alternate translation: “whom Cyrus had appointed to be the governor of the province of Judah”

## Ezra 1:9

### And this was their number

This expression means that what follows is the number of each kind of utensil that Cyrus is returning (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### knives

This word occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible, and there is some disagreement about its meaning. It is probably a borrowed term from a related language that means “knife,” but the ancient Greek translation took its meaning to be “replacements,” that is, basins to replace others that became unusable. You may see translations that follow the ancient Greek, but we recommend following the Hebrew.

## **Ezra 1:10**

### **bowls of silver of a second kind**

This means that these bowls were a different type of bowl than the gold ones just mentioned. This could also mean that they were second in rank of status or honor behind the gold bowls. It does not mean that the silver was of a different type than the silver in the basins described in [1:9](#).

## Ezra 1:11

### All the vessels of gold and of silver were 5400

This expression means that the total number of these gold and silver objects was **5,400**. Verses [1:9](#) and [1:10](#) actually list only 2,499 items, and it is not clear why the numbers are different. The explanation does not seem to be that the total here includes other miscellaneous items because the last item on the list itself is other vessels. It would probably be best simply to report this total without calling attention to the difference and trying to explain it, since there is no clear reason for it.

### Sheshbazzar brought up all this with the going up of the exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem

Like the similar expression in [1:3](#), here the book says **brought up** and **going up** because the Jews had to travel from a river valley up into the mountains to return from exile to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “Sheshbazzar brought all these vessels along when he traveled to Jerusalem with the group of Jews who had been taken away from their homeland but who were now returning from Babylon to Jerusalem” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the exiles

The abstract noun **exiles** refers, in this context, to the community of Jews who were living in Babylon because the Babylonians had relocated them away from their homeland when they conquered Jerusalem. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this term with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “the group of Jews who had been taken away from their homeland” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### from Babylon

**Babylon** is the name of a city. The book also uses this name for the empire that was once ruled from that city, and for the region that had been at the heart of this empire that became a province in the Persian Empire. The name occurs many times in the book, and it will be helpful to your readers if you translate it consistently each time. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2

### Ezra 2 General Notes

### Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

#### Genealogy

People had to prove through their genealogies that they were priests or that they were even Jews. (See: **priest, priesthood (p.482)**)

## Ezra 2:1

### the sons of the province

Here, **the sons of the province** is an idiom that means that these people originated in the province of Judah. Alternate translation: “the people from the province of Judah” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the province

**The province** means the province of Judah. The book is referring to Judah by something associated with it, its status as a province. (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### the ones who went up

**Went up** means traveled from Babylon back to Judah, since that involves going from a river valley up into the mountains. Alternate translation: “those who returned to Judah from Babylon” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### from the captivity of the exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had exiled to Babylon

The abstract nouns **captivity** and **exiles** refer to the way Nebuchadnezzar took these people prisoner and transported them away from their homeland. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind these terms with verbs. Alternate translation: “after Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had captured their ancestors, transported them to Babylon, and held them there in a foreign land” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### a man to his city

Here, **a man** means each one or each person. Alternate translation: “returning to live in the same towns where their families had lived before” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)



## Ezra 2:2

### who came with

This phrase introduces a list of the men who led this group back to Judah. Alternate translation: “traveling with”

### **Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah**

These are the names of eleven men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### **Jeshua**

This is the high priest, who has the same name as the Levite who is introduced in [2:40](#). The spelling of this name varies throughout the Bible. To be clear which man is being referred to, the UST will spell this name “Joshua” for the high priest and “Jeshua” for the Levite. You may want to consider whether doing something similar would be helpful for your readers. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### **This is the number of the men of the people of Israel**

In keeping with the practices of the time, the totals in the list that follows likely include just the men and not also the women and children. Alternate translation: “This is how many men came back from each Israelite clan and town”

## Ezra 2:3

### The sons of Parosh were 2, 172

This means that from the descendants of **Parosh**, **2,172** returned. To help make this clear for your readers, you could say something like “returned” throughout [2:3–42](#), after the name of each group and the number that is given.

### The sons of Parosh

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Parosh” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Parosh

**Parosh** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:4

### The sons of Shephatiah

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Shephatiah" (See: **Metaphor (p. 431)**)

### Shephatiah

**Shephatiah** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:5

### The sons of Arah

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Arah" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Arah

**Arah** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:6

### The sons of Pahath-Moab, of the sons of Jeshua and Joab

Here, **sons** means descendants. (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Pahath-Moab, & Jeshua

**Pahath-Moab** is the name of a man, and **Jeshua** and **Joab** are the names of two of his male descendants. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:7

### The sons of Elam

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Elam" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Elam

**Elam** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:8

### The sons of Zattu

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Zattu" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Zattu

**Zattu** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:9

### The sons of

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Zakkai” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Zakkai

**Zakkai** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)



## Ezra 2:10

### The sons of Bani

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Bani" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Bani

**Bani** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:11

### The sons of Bebai

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Bebai" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Bebai

**Bebai** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:12

### The sons of Azgad

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Azgad" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Azgad

**Azgad** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:13

### The sons of Adonikam

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Adonikam" (See: **Metaphor (p. 431)**)

### Adonikam

**Adonikam** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:14

### The sons of Bigvai

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Bigvai" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Bigvai

**Bigvai** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:15

### The sons of Adin

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Adin" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Adin

**Adin** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:16

### The sons of Ater

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Ater who were descendants of Hezekiah" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Ater, of Hezekiah

**Ater** is the name of a man, and **Hezekiah** is the name of one of his descendants. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:17

### The sons of Bezai

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Bezai" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Bezai

**Bezai** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)



## Ezra 2:18

### The sons of Jorah

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Jorah" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Jorah

**Jorah** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:19

### The sons of Hashum

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Hashum" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Hashum

**Hashum** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:20

### The sons of Gibbar

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Gibbar" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Gibbar

**Gibbar** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:21

### The sons of Bethlehem were 123

The list speaks here of the **sons of Bethlehem**. This is an idiom that means that these men were from families that had originally lived in that town. Alternate translation: "From the town of Bethlehem, 123 returned" (See: **Idiom (p. 419)**)

### Bethlehem

**Bethlehem** is the name of a town. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:22

### The men of Netophah were 56

**Netophah** is the name of a town. Alternate translation: "From the town of Netophah, 56 returned." (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

## Ezra 2:23

### The men of Anathoth were 128

**Anathoth** is the name of a town. Alternate translation: "From the town of Anathoth, 128 returned" (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

## Ezra 2:24

### The sons of Azmaveth

The list speaks here of the **sons of Azmaveth**. This is an idiom that means that these men were from families that had originally lived in that town. Alternate translation: "From the town of Azmaveth, 42 returned" (See: **Idiom (p. 419)**)

### Azmaveth

**Azmaveth** is the name of a town. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:25

### The sons of Kirjath-Arim, Kephirah, and Beeroth

The list speaks here of the **sons of Kirjath-Arim, Kephirah, and Beeroth**. This is an idiom that means that these men were from families that had originally lived in those towns. Alternate translation: “From the towns of Kirjath-Arim, Kephirah, and Beeroth” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### Kirjath-Arim, Kephirah, and Beeroth

**Kirjath-Arim, Kephirah, and Beeroth** are the names of towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)



## Ezra 2:26

### The sons of the Ramah and Geba

The list speaks here of the **sons of Ramah and Geba**. This is an idiom that means that these men were from families that had originally lived in those towns. Alternate translation: "From the towns of Ramah and Geba" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the Ramah and Geba

**Ramah** and **Geba** are the names of towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:27

### The men of Michmas were 122

**Michmas** is the name of a town. Alternate translation: "From the town of Michmas, 122 returned" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:28

### The men of Bethel and the Ai were 223

**Bethel** and **Ai** are the names of towns. Alternate translation: "From the towns of Bethel and Ai, 223 returned" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:29

### The sons of Nebo

The list speaks here of the **sons of Nebo**. This is an idiom that means that these men were from families that had originally lived in this town. Alternate translation: "From the town of Nebo" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### Nebo

**Nebo** is the name of a town. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:30

### The sons of Magbish

The list speaks here of the **sons of Magbish**. This is an idiom that means that these men were from families that had originally lived in those towns. Alternate translation: "From the town of Magbish" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### Magbish

**Magbish** is the name of a town. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:31

### The sons of the other Elam

The list speaks here of the **sons of Elam**. This is an idiom that means that these men were from families that had originally lived in this town. ("The other Elam" indicates that this is the town of that name, not the person of that name mentioned in [2:7](#).) Alternate translation: "From the town of Elam" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### Elam

Here, **Elam** is the name of a town. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:32

### The sons of Harim

The list speaks here of the **sons of Harim**. This is an idiom that means that these men were from families that had originally lived in this town. Alternate translation: "From the town of Harim" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### Harim

**Harim** is the name of a town. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:33

### The sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono

The list speaks here of the **sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono**. This is an idiom that means that these men were from families that had originally lived in these towns. Alternate translation: "From the towns of Lod, Hadid, and Ono" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### Lod, Hadid, and Ono

**Lod, Hadid, and Ono** are the names of towns. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)



## Ezra 2:34

### The sons of Jericho

Here, the list speaks of the **sons of Jericho**. This is an idiom that means that these men were from families that had originally lived in this city. Alternate translation: "From the city of Jericho" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## Ezra 2:35

### The sons of Senaah

The list speaks here of the **sons of Senaah**. This is an idiom that means that these men were from families that had originally lived in this town. Alternate translation: "From the town of Senaah" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### Senaah

**Senaah** is the name of a town. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:36

### The priests

**The priests** were men chosen to offer sacrifices to God on behalf of God's people, and to perform other duties and functions to represent God to the people and to represent the people to God. Alternate translation: "This is how many men returned from each family of priests"

### the sons of Jedaiah of the house of Jeshua were 973

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Jedaiah who were descendants of Jeshua, 973 returned" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Jedaiah & Jeshua

**Jedaiah** is the name of a man, and **Jeshua** is the name of one of his male descendants. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### of the house of Jeshua

Here, **house** describes all the people descended from a particular person. The book is describing all of the descendants **of Jeshua** as if they were one household living together. Alternate translation: "who were descendants of Jeshua" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

## Ezra 2:37

### The sons of Immer

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Immer" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Immer

**Immer** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:38

### The sons of Pashhur

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Pashhur" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Pashhur

**Pashhur** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:39

### The sons of Harim

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Harim" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Harim

**Harim** is the name of a man. Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Harim" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:40

### The Levites

**The Levites** were descendants of Levi. They had the special assignment of helping the priests. Alternate translation: “Some Levites also returned” or “Some of the descendants of Levi also returned” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

### the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the sons of Hodaviah

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: “from the descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel, who were descended from Hodaviah” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Jeshua and Kadmiel, & Hodaviah

**Jeshua and Kadmiel** are men’s names, and **Hodaviah** is the name of their male ancestor. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:41

### The

**The ones who sang** refers to vocal musicians who led in worship, in processions, and ceremonies, producing music and chants that emphasized and enhanced the occasion. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

### the sons of Asaph

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: “who were descendants of Asaph” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Asaph

**Asaph** is a man’s name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)



## Ezra 2:42

### The sons of the gatekeepers

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "Some of the descendants of the gatekeepers also returned" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### the gatekeepers

Here, **the gatekeepers** refers to people who had been assigned to the gates of the city of Jerusalem and to the gates of the temple within the city. They were responsible for controlling access to these places. They would open and close the gates at times and for reasons set by the authorities. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

### the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, and the sons of Shobai

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Shallum, & Ater, & Talmon, & Akkub, & Hatita, & Shobai

These are the names of six men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:43

### The temple servants

The term **Nethinim** describes servants who worked in the temple. Alternate translation: “The temple servants” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

### The temple servants

Alternate translation: “Some of the descendants of the temple servants also returned”

### the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: “they were from the descendants of Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth” beginning a series that will continue through [2:54](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Ziha, & Hasupha, & Tabbaoth

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:44

### the sons of Keros, the sons of Siaha, the sons of Padon

Here, **sons** means descendants. If you continue the sentence from [2:43](#), you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Keros, Siaha, Padon," (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 2:45

### the sons of Lebanah, the sons of Hagabah, the sons of Akkub

Here, **sons** means descendants. If you continue the sentence from [2:43](#), you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Lebanah, Hagabah, Akkub," (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 2:46

### the sons of Hagab, the sons of Shalmi, and the sons of Hanan

Here, **sons** means descendants. If you continue the sentence from [2:43](#), you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Hagab, Shalmi, Hanan," (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:47

### the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, the sons of Reaiah

Here, **sons** means descendants. If you continue the sentence from [2:43](#), you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah," (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 2:48

### the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda, the sons of Gazzam

Here, **sons** means descendants. If you continue the sentence from [2:43](#), you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Rezin, Nekoda, Gazzam," (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 2:49

### the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah, the sons of Besai

Here, **sons** means descendants. If you continue the sentence from [2:43](#), you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Uzza, Paseah, Besai," (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)



## Ezra 2:50

### the sons of Asnah, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephusim

Here, **sons** means descendants. If you continue the sentence from [2:43](#), you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Asnah, Meunim, Nephusim," (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 2:51

### the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur

Here, **sons** means descendants. If you continue the sentence from [2:43](#), you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur," (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 2:52

### the sons of Bazluth, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha

Here, **sons** means descendants. If you continue the sentence from [2:43](#), you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha," (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 2:53

### the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Temah

Here, **sons** means descendants. If you continue the sentence from [2:43](#), you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Barkos, Sisera, Temah," (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 2:54

### the sons of Nezhiah, and the sons of Hatipha

Here, **sons** means descendants. If you continue the sentence from [2:43](#), you can just list the names of these two men, and end the series in this verse. Alternate translation: “Nezhiah, and Hatipha” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 2:55

### The sons of the servants of Solomon

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: “Some of the descendants of the laborers who had worked for the kingdom also returned” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### the servants of Solomon

By **servants of Solomon**, this list does not mean officials who served in Solomon’s court. Rather, this phrase refers to people whom Solomon first conscripted as laborers. They were descendants of the groups that were living in the land of Canaan before the Israelites occupied it. They and their descendants remained conscripted laborers (slaves) under later kings. Alternate translation: “the laborers that King Solomon first conscripted” or “the laborers who had worked for the kingdom under Solomon” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

### the sons of Sotai, the sons of Hassophereth, the sons of Peruda

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: “they were from the descendants of Sotai, Hassophereth, Peruda,” beginning a series that will continue through [2:57](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Sotai, & Hassophereth, & Peruda

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:56

### the sons of Jaalah, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel

Here, **sons** means descendants. If you continue the sentence from [2:55](#), you can just list the names of these three men. Alternate translation: "Jaalah, Darkon, Giddel," (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

**Ezra 2:57**

**the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth Hazzebaim, and the sons of Ami**

Here, **sons** means descendants. If you continue the sentence from [2:55](#), you can just list the names of these four men, and end the series in this verse. Alternate translation: "Shephatiah, Hattil, Pochereth Hazzebaim, and Ami" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)



## **Ezra 2:58**

### **All the temple servants and the sons of the servants of Solomon were 392**

Alternate translation: "Altogether, 392 men returned who were descendants of temple servants or of laborers who had worked for the kingdom of Solomon"

## Ezra 2:59

### And these were the ones who went up

As in 2:1, **went up** means traveled from Babylon back to Judah, since that involved going from a river valley up into the mountains. Alternate translation: “Some others returned to Judah” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon, and Immer

These are the names of five towns in Babylonia. Alternate translation: “who had been living in the towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon, and Immer” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### but they were not able to tell

Alternate translation: “but they had no records to prove”

### the house of their fathers or their seed, whether they were from Israel

All three of these phrases, **the house of their fathers**, **their seed**, and **whether they were from Israel**, mean very similar things. They are used together to give clarity and emphasis. The first phrase refers to a person being able to name a well-known ancestor. The second phrase refers to a person being able to list his ancestors going back to the one that is well-known. The third phrase summarizes the other two: if a person cannot name an ancestor or recite his ancestry, then he cannot claim to be from Israel. If there would be no distinction between these phrases in your language, you could combine them into one phrase. Alternate translations: “that their ancestors had been Israelites” or “what clan they were from or who their ancestors were, whether they were really Israelites” (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

### the house of their fathers

Among the Israelites, the expressions father’s house or **house of their fathers** originally described an extended-family group. It later came to be used more generally to refer to a larger clan within a tribe. In this expression, the word “house” describes all the people descended from a particular person. The term views all of those descendants as if they were one household living together. Alternate translation: “what clan they were from” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### or their seed

Here, **seed** means “ancestors.” In the Bible, the term often describes a person’s descendants. But here, “their seed” means “whose seed they were,” so the term is describing the ancestors of these people. Alternate translation: “or who their ancestors were” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## Ezra 2:60

### The sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, and the sons of Nekoda were 652

Alternate translation: "In this group were 652 men from the descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda"

### The sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, and the sons of Nekoda

Here, **sons** means descendants. Either the men named here were not recognized clan heads of Israel, or the 652 people could not prove that they were descendants of these men. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Delaiah, & Tobiah, & Nekoda

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 2:61

### And from the sons of the priests

Alternate translation: "Some of the men who returned from those towns were descendants of the priests"

### And from the sons of the priests

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "And descendants of the priests" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### the sons of Habaiah; the sons of Hakkoz; and the sons of Barzillai

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: "they were from the descendants of Habaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Habaiah; & Hakkoz; & Barzillai

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### who took a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite

You could start a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "Barzillai married a woman who was one of the descendants of Barzillai the Gileadite"

### from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite

Here, **daughters** means female descendants. Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Barzillai the Gileadite" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### so he was called by their name

Alternate translation: "and he took the name of her clan as his own name"

## Ezra 2:62

### These ones sought their record among the ones who were enrolled by genealogy

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "They searched for a mention of their names in the lists of people who were descendants of the priests" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### These ones sought their record among the ones who were enrolled by genealogy, but they were not found

There are two possible meanings for what these people **sought** in the **record**. (1) They were seeking their own names from among a list of descendants from Israelite clan leaders. See the UST. (2) They were seeking the names of the clan leaders listed in verse 61 from among a list of names of Israelite clan leaders. Alternate translation: "The people in that group searched in the documents that had the names of the ancestors of all the clans, but they did not find the names of these men" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### but they were not found

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "but they were not able to find any mention of their names there" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### And they were desecrated from the priesthood

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "So the Jewish officials did not allow them to be priests" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### And they were desecrated from the priesthood

The abstract noun **priesthood** refers to the work that a priest does and the status that a priest holds as a representative of God to the people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this term with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "And so they were not allowed to serve as priests" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

## Ezra 2:63

### the Tirshatha

**Tirshatha** was the formal Persian title for the governor of a province, so this would be referring to Sheshbazzar, who may be the same person as Zerubbabel. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the title with a word like “governor;” or you could state the title and then explain it. Alternate translation: “the Tirshatha, that is, the governor” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

### And & said to them that they must not eat from the holiest holy food

The phrase **the holiest holy food** refers to the most sacred part of the food offerings, which was reserved for only the priests to eat. Alternate translation: “told them that they would not be allowed to eat the most sacred food” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### until a priest stood

Here, **stood** is a figurative way of saying that a person had assumed the duties of his office. Here, **priest** means specifically the high priest, since he was the one who would have possession of the objects that this verse describes. Alternate translation: “until the high priest was once again on duty” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### with Urim and with Thummim

This was a pair of objects that the high priest kept in the breastpiece of his robe. It is unknown exactly what type of objects they were, but they were used to answer yes-or-no questions and to decide between two alternatives. If the priest, without looking, pulled out the Urim, that meant one answer, while if he pulled out the Thummim, that meant the other answer. If it would be helpful in your language, you could describe these objects by their function rather than by their names. Alternate translation: “and could use the sacred objects to decide their cases” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

## Ezra 2:64

### All the assembly, as one, was 42, 360

The expression **as one** means all together. Alternate translation: "The total number of men who returned was 42,360" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

**Ezra 2:65**

**apart from their male servants and their female servants, these were 7, 337**

Alternate translation: "not counting their 7,337 male and female servants"

**and for them were 200 men who sang and women who sang**

This group of those **who sang** is a different group from those in [2:41](#). Those were Levites who sang in connection with Israel's worship. The group here is a class of servants who were employed to provide music for public and private events. Alternate translation: "and the 200 male and female singers whom they employed" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)



## **Ezra 2:66**

### **Their horses were 736. Their mules were 245**

Alternate translation, beginning a sentence that will continue through the next verse: "The group also brought back with them 736 horses, 245 mules"

## **Ezra 2:67**

**Their camels were 435. Their donkeys were 6, 720**

Alternate translation, concluding the sentence from the previous verse: "435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys"

## Ezra 2:68

### And & some from the heads of

The word **and** introduces a new event in the story. Use the most natural way in your language to introduce this new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.423)**)

### And & some from the heads of the fathers

Here, **heads of the fathers** is an abbreviated way of saying the heads of father's houses. The full expression "house of their fathers" was used in [2:59](#). See how you translated it there, and review the note there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "some of the clan leaders" (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### And & some from the heads of

Here, **heads** is a figurative way of saying leaders. Alternate translation: "And ... leaders of" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### to the house of Yahweh which is in Jerusalem, & for the house of God

As in [1:3-4](#), the expressions **house of Yahweh** and **house of God** both refer to the same temple. The book speaks of this temple as if it would be a house in which God lived, since God's presence would be there. Alternate translation: "the temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem ... the temple of God" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### to cause it to stand upon its place

This expression indicates that these gifts were given towards the costs of rebuilding the temple on its former site. The expression envisions the rebuilt temple as like a living thing that would **stand** in that location. Alternate translation: "to rebuild it on its former site" (See: **Personification (p.444)**)

## Ezra 2:69

### to the treasury of the work

**The work** means the project of rebuilding the temple. The **treasury** was where all of the money would be kept safely until it was needed. Alternate translation: “to the fund for rebuilding the temple”

### 61000 gold darics

In ancient times, **gold darics** each weighed about 8 or 8.5 grams, or about a quarter of an ounce. You could try to express this in terms of modern money values, but if you did, that could cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate, since those values can change over time. Instead, you might say something general like “61,000 gold coins,” or give the equivalent weight, or use the biblical term in the text and give the weight in a note. (See: **Biblical Money (p.363)**)

### and 5000 silver minas

In ancient times, **silver minas** each weighed about half a kilogram, or about 1.25 pounds. However, as in the case of darics, it would probably be best to say something general like “5,000 silver bars,” or give the equivalent weight, or use the biblical term and give the equivalent weight in a footnote. (See: **Biblical Money (p.363)**)

### and 100 tunics of the priests

**Tunics** were the special garments that priests would wear while performing their duties in the temple. Alternate translation: “100 special garments for the priests to wear” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

## Ezra 2:70

**So the priests, and the Levites, and some from the people, and the singers, and the gatekeepers, and the temple servants dwelt in their cities. So all Israel was in their cities**

This is a summary conclusion to the list. See how you translated each of these terms within the list: priests in v. 36, Levites in v. 40, singers in v. 41, gatekeepers in v. 42, and temple servants in v. 43. Review the notes to each of these verses if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: “So the priests, Levites, other Israelites, singers, gatekeepers, and temple servants returned to Judah and settled in the places where their ancestors had formerly lived”

### **So all Israel was in their cities**

This sentence summarizes the previous sentence, which was itself a summary of the chapter. It shows the result of the journey, that the return of the Israelites was accomplished successfully. You could include this meaning with the previous sentence if stating it separately might be confusing for your readers because of the repetition. Its meaning is included in the alternate translation suggested for the previous sentence. (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

## Ezra 3

### Ezra 3 General Notes

### Structure and Formatting

This chapter begins the story of the building of the temple and re-establishment of worship in the new temple.  
(See: **temple, house, house of God** (p.486))

### Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

#### Rebuilding the temple

They immediately began the temple worship even though the temple had not yet been built because they feared the people of the surrounding nations.

## Ezra 3:1

### Then & came

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 in your language, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: "After this group had returned to Judah" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### Then the seventh month came

This phrase refers to the beginning of the seventh month in the Jewish religious calendar, which is the first month in the Jewish civic calendar. The phrase is actually giving the reason why the people gathered in Jerusalem at this time. It was the start of a new year, and the leadership had decided to resume community worship, including daily sacrifices, as of the beginning of that year, as [3:6](#) indicates. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "At the start of the seventh month, because it was the beginning of a new civic year" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### the seventh month

Alternate translation: "month seven" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

### the seventh month

You could convert the Hebrew **month** into an equivalent on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the equivalency will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to use the number of the Hebrew month. (See: **Hebrew Months (p.405)**)

### and the sons of Israel were in their cities. And the people were gathered together & to Jerusalem

Here the book repeats some background information to remind readers why the Israelites were not all in Jerusalem already and would have had to come there from various places. Alternate translation: "the Israelites came from the different places where they had settled and they gathered ... in Jerusalem" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

### and the sons of Israel

Here, **sons** means descendants. The book is envisioning all of the Israelites as descendants of the patriarch Jacob, who was also known as Israel. Alternate translation: "the Israelites" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### And the people were gathered together

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "And they gathered together" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

## **as one man**

**As one man** is an idiom that means they gathered as if they were a single person, that is, all in one place at the same time for the same purpose. Alternate translation: “as if they were a single person” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)



## Ezra 3:2

### Then arose

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 in your language, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: "Once everyone had gathered, arose" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### Then arose

In this context, the word **arose** means they took action to get an enterprise under way. It does not indicate that these leaders had been sitting or lying down and that they stood up. Alternate translation: "Then took action" or "Then carried out their plans" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### Jeshua the son of Jozadak

**Jeshua** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in [2:2](#). **Jozadak** is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and his brothers the priests

Here, **brothers** is likely a figurative way of saying fellow priests, although it is possible that some of the biological brothers of Jeshua were included in this group. Jeshua himself was the high priest at this time. Alternate translation: "his fellow priests" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel

**Zerubbabel** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in [2:2](#). **Shealtiel** is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and his brothers

Here, **brothers** appears to be a figurative way of saying fellow leaders. The other seven men listed in [2:2](#) as leaders of the group that returned from exile may be particularly in view. Alternate translation: "and his fellow leaders" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### and they built the altar of the God of Israel to offer up burnt up offerings on it

This was a way of resuming regular community worship even before construction began on the new temple. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "and they built a new altar to the God of Israel so that the priests could start offering sacrifices right away on behalf of the community" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### burnt up offerings

The book assumes that readers will know that this means whole burnt offerings, that is, sacrifices that were burned up completely on the altar. These were offered to express a desire to be in good standing with God through the complete sacrifice of something valuable and also through the creation of an aroma, the smell of roasting

meat, that was considered to be pleasing to God. If your language has a special term for such offerings, you can use it in your translation. Alternate translation: “whole burnt offerings” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## as is written in the law of Moses

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “as God had commanded the people of Israel to do through Moses” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

## Moses, the man of God

Here the book repeats some background information to remind readers who Moses was. Alternate translation: “Moses, that godly man” or “Moses, that man who knew God well” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

## Moses

**Moses** is the name of a man. It occurs many times throughout the book, and it will be helpful to your readers if you translate it consistently each time. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 3:3

### And they set up the altar on its foundation, for dread was on them because of the peoples of the lands

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases since the second phrase gives the reason for the action that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “Because they were afraid of the people from other groups who lived around them, thinking they might attack them, they wanted to ask God for help and protection, so they made rebuilding the altar their first priority” or “Because they were afraid of the people from other groups who lived around them, thinking they might try to stop them from rebuilding the temple, they wanted to get started on rebuilding as quickly as possible, and so they began right away with the altar” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### And they set up the altar on its foundation

This phrase likely means that the priests and leaders built this new altar right at the place where the altar had been located within the former temple. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that as an alternate translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### for dread was on them because of the peoples of the lands

The book does not say specifically why the Israelites were afraid of the people from other groups who lived around them. Two possibilities are that they were afraid these people might attack them or that they might try to keep them from rebuilding the temple, in both cases to stop them from re-establishing themselves in their former homeland. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could suggest one of these explanations explicitly. Alternate translation: “because they were afraid that the people from other groups who lived around them might attack them, they wanted to ask God for help and protection” or “because they were afraid that the people from other groups who lived around them might try to stop them from rebuilding the temple, they wanted to get started on rebuilding as quickly as possible” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### dread was on them

Here the book uses a spatial metaphor of **dread** or fear landing **on** or resting **on** the Israelites to express that the Israelites felt that emotion. Alternate translation: “they were very afraid” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### because of the peoples of the lands

This was the expression that the Jews used to refer to members of other people groups, including some that the Assyrians had brought into the area who were originally from other places (**lands**) but who were now living in and around the province of Judah. Alternate translation: “people from other groups” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### Then they offered up on it burnt up offerings to Yahweh, burnt up offerings at the morning and at the evening

The word **then** at the beginning of this sentence indicates that the activity it describes took place after the events the story has been describing. Specifically, this was a continuous activity, not something the leaders did just on that occasion. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a phrase such as “from that time on.” Alternate translation: “From that time on, the priests offered sacrifices to Yahweh on this altar every morning and every evening” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

## **Then they offered up on it burnt up offerings to Yahweh, burnt up offerings at the morning and at the evening**

As [3:2](#) notes, God had commanded these daily **offerings** in the law of Moses. By resuming them, the leaders and priests were restoring the regular worship life of the community. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “From that time on, the priests offered sacrifices to Yahweh on this altar every morning and every evening. By doing that, they restored the regular worship life of the community” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 3:4

### Then they performed

The word **Then** indicates that the events the story will now recount came after the event it has just related. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using an equivalent phrase. The next event is specifically the Festival of Tabernacles, which the law of Moses said to observe from the fifteenth through the twenty-second days of the seventh month. So that event would have taken place about two weeks after the Israelites first gathered in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “Later that month” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship** (p.378))

### Then they performed the Festival of Huts

This phrase describes the Israelites celebrating an observance that is also known as the Festival of Tabernacles. The purpose of this festival was to remind the Israelites how Yahweh had cared for their ancestors when they lived in temporary shelters as they traveled through the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “The Israelites celebrated the Festival of Tabernacles to remember how God had taken care of their ancestors when they had only temporary shelters to live in as they traveled through the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p. 354))

### as is written

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “as God had commanded the people of Israel to do through Moses” (See: **Active or Passive** (p.349))

### with a burnt up offering day by day, by number according to the ordinance of the matter of the day, on its day

These expressions refer to the way the law of Moses commanded the Israelites to offer a different number of sacrifices on each of the eight days of this festival. Alternate translation: “they offered burnt offerings every day, and on each day they offered the number of sacrifices that the law specified for that day” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

## Ezra 3:5

### And after this was

This phrase indicates that the activity it describes took place after the one it has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a phrase such as “And from that time on.” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

**a continual burnt up offering, and for the new moons, and for all the consecrated appointed times of Yahweh, and for everyone who freely offered a freewill offering to Yahweh**

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. The meaning seems to be that once the daily morning and evening sacrifices had been re-instituted, the less frequent sacrifices were resumed as well, including those for the new moon, for the annual festivals, and on the occasion of freewill offerings. You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “the priests offered sacrifices every morning and evening, and they also offered sacrifices for the new moon festivals, for the festivals that Yahweh had commanded them to observe each year, and whenever anyone freely offered an animal to Yahweh” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

## Ezra 3:6

### From day one

The Hebrew uses a cardinal number here, **one**, but there is not a significant difference in meaning between that and the way the Hebrew uses an ordinal number, **first**, in similar contexts elsewhere. If your language customarily uses ordinals for the numbers of days, you can do that here in your translation. Alternate translation: “Starting on the first day” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

### they began to offer up burnt up offerings to Yahweh, but the temple of Yahweh had not been founded

This sentence draws a contrast between the conditions under which readers would have expected sacrifices to resume and the conditions under which they actually did resume. You could use a connecting phrase such as “even though” between the two clauses to indicate this contrast. Alternate translation: “they resumed offering sacrifices to Yahweh, even though they had not yet rebuilt the temple of Yahweh” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.368)**)

### but the temple of Yahweh had not been founded

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “the Jewish leaders had not yet rebuilt the temple of Yahweh” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### but the temple of Yahweh had not been founded

This phrase likely means specifically that no one had laid a foundation yet for the new temple. That would have been the first step in construction. However, this seems to be a figurative way of describing the entire process of building the temple by referring to one part of that process, its first step. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Jewish leaders had not yet rebuilt the temple of Yahweh” (See: **Synecdoche (p.464)**)

## Ezra 3:7

### And they gave

Here, the word **and** indicates that the sentence it introduces will explain what people did as a result of the situation that the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “And so they gave” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p.375))

### And they gave silver to the masons and to the carpenters

The implication is that the Jewish leaders did this, and the rest of the things the verse describes, in order to start construction on the new temple. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “In order to start building a new temple, the Jewish leaders hired masons and carpenters” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

### And they gave silver to the masons and to the carpenters

**Gave** is an idiom that means the Jewish leaders paid money to these workers in exchange for their expected labor. The money was not a gift. Alternate translation: “And they hired masons and carpenters” (See: **Idiom** (p.419))

### And they gave silver

Here, **silver** means money. Though the payment may have been in the form of silver bars, such as are described in [2:69](#), it may also have been in the form of some other type of money. The book is describing a payment by reference to something that was the most common type of money. Alternate translation: “And they paid money” (See: **Metonymy** (p.437))

### to the masons

The term **masons** describes workers who build things from stone. Alternate translation: “stoneworkers” (See: **Translate Unknowns** (p.468))

### and to the carpenters

The term **carpenters** describes workers who build things from wood. Alternate translation: “woodworkers” (See: **Translate Unknowns** (p.468))

### and food, and drink, and oil to the Sidonians and to the Tyrians

This phrase describes a further step that the Jewish leaders took to rebuild the temple. The words **they gave**, earlier in the sentence, apply to this phrase as well. In this case, **gave** would now have the sense of “sent,” since the leaders sent the **food, drink, and oil** to people in distant cities. Alternate translation: “and they also sent grain and wine and olive oil to people who lived in the cities of Sidon and Tyre” (See: **Idiom** (p.419))

### and food, and drink, and oil

While these are all general terms that describe categories of things, the book is likely using them to refer to specific items within each category. While **food** means anything to eat, here it probably means grain, which the Israelites grew in their land and which they could transport relatively easily. Similarly, **drink** means anything to drink, but it



probably means wine, and **oil** probably means olive oil, because these were both things that the Israelites also produced and could transport. Alternate translation: “and grain and wine and olive oil” (See: **Synecdoche (p.464)**)

## to the Sidonians and to the Tyrians

These are the names of two people groups. The terms describe the residents of the cities of Sidon and Tyre, which were located on the seacoast north of Israel. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## to bring

This phrase describes the purpose for which the Jewish leaders took the actions just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a term such as “so that” to indicate this. Alternate translation: “so that they would bring” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.372)**)

## trees of cedar

The term **cedar** refers to large fir trees with strong, beautiful, aromatic wood that were valued for construction. Such trees grew plentifully and grew to great heights in the region of Lebanon. Alternate translation: “cedar trees” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

## from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa

The **sea of Joppa** is not the name of a body of water. Instead, that term refers to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea at the port city of Joppa. This full phrase means that the people of Tyre and Sidon were to cut cedar trees in Lebanon and transport them to Israel by floating them along the seacoast to the port of Joppa. Alternate translation: “by sea from Lebanon to Joppa” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## Lebanon

**Lebanon** is the name of a place. It was a mountainous region located along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Israel. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Joppa

**Joppa** is the name of a city. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## according to the permission of Cyrus, the king of Persia, given to them

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “for King Cyrus of Persia had authorized them to do this” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

## according to the permission of Cyrus, the king of Persia, given to them

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the abstract noun **permission** with a verb. Alternate translation: “since King Cyrus of Persia had authorized them to do this” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

## according to the permission of Cyrus, the king of Persia, given to them

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this sentence earlier or even first in the verse since it gives the reason for the actions that the rest of the verse describes. You could also show the connection by beginning the next sentence with a phrase such as “and so.” Alternate translation: “King Cyrus of Persia had authorized the

Jewish leaders to get the materials they needed to rebuild the temple, and so" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

## Ezra 3:8

### Then in the second year of their coming

The word **Then** at the beginning of this phrase indicates that the events the story will now relate came after the events it has just described. Alternate translation: “Then in the second year after they came” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### Then in the second year of their coming to the house of God in Jerusalem, in the second month

“Then in month two of year two after arriving at the house of God in Jerusalem” or “Then in the springtime of the second year since they came to the house of God in Jerusalem” or “Seven months after they had come to the house of God in Jerusalem” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

### Then in the second year of their coming to the house of God in Jerusalem

At this time, there was no temple in Jerusalem. So this phrase means one of two things: (1) The book could be referring implicitly to the place where God's temple belonged. It seems that the people thought of the temple site as God's temple, even though it was in ruins. Alternate translation: “In the second year after they returned from exile to the site of God's temple in Jerusalem.” or (2) The book could be referring implicitly to the purpose for which they came. Alternate translation: “In the second year after they returned to Jerusalem in order to build a temple there for God.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### the house of God

“the temple” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### in the second month

The book does not say explicitly why the Jewish leaders started the actual construction of the new temple at this time. One possibility is that once they had ordered the necessary materials, as [3:7](#) describes, it took seven months for enough materials to be delivered for construction to begin. Another possibility is that the leaders waited until spring because winter would have been a bad time to start building. Yet another possibility is that they wanted to lay the foundation of this new temple in the second month of the year for ceremonial reasons, because that was the month in which King Solomon had laid the foundation of the original temple. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could put these explanations in a footnote.

### Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel

**Zerubbabel** is the name of a man, and **Shealtiel** is the name of his father. See how you translated these names in [3:2](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and Jeshua the son of Jozadak

**Jeshua** is the name of a man, and **Jozadak** is the name of his father. See how you translated these names in [3:2](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## and the rest of their brothers the priests and the Levites

Here, **brothers** seems to be a figurative way of saying fellow leaders, since the priests and Levites were also leaders in the community like Zerubbabel, the governor, and Jeshua, the high priest. Alternate translation: “and their fellow leaders, the priests and Levites” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## and all the ones who came from captivity to Jerusalem

The abstract noun **captivity** refers to the way the Babylonians had transported many of the Jews away from their homeland when they conquered Jerusalem. (These included many of the parents or grandparents of the people here, but also some of these people themselves, as [3:12](#) indicates.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this term with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “and the rest of the people who had returned to Jerusalem from where their enemies had taken them” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

## began

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete because they were understood by the original readers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply them from the context, or you could use a term such as “so” to indicate this. Alternate translation: “so they appointed” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

## the Levites from a son of 20 years and above

Here, **son of 20 years and above** is an idiom that indicates a person’s age. Alternate translation: “the Levites who were at least 20 years old” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## to act as overseers for the work of the house of Yahweh

In this context, **the work of the house** is an abbreviated way of referring to the project of constructing a temple. Alternate translation: “to supervise the construction of the temple for Yahweh” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

## the house of Yahweh

See how you translated this expression in [1:3](#). Alternate translation: “the temple for Yahweh” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 3:9

### And & stood

Here, the word **and** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “So ... helped” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### Jeshua

**Jeshua** is the name of a man, but he is not the high priest mentioned in the previous verse. Rather, he is the Levite clan leader listed in [2:40](#) as one of the exiles who returned to Judah. See how you translated his name there. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### his sons and his brothers

The terms **sons** and **brothers** do not seem to be figurative here. Rather, they would describe the biological sons and brothers of Jeshua as men who worked closely with him in supervising the construction of the new temple. So it would be appropriate to use the usual terms in your language for these close relationships.

### Kadmiel

**Kadmiel** is the name of a man. He is another Levite clan leader listed in [2:40](#). See how you translated his name there. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and his sons

Here as well, the term **sons** does not seem to be figurative. Rather, it describes the biological sons of Kadmiel as men who helped supervise the temple construction.

### the sons of Judah

Here, **sons** does mean “descendants.” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### the sons of Judah

**Judah** is the name of a man. According to [2:40](#), Jeshua and Kadmiel were the leaders of two Levite clans that were both descended from a man named Hodaviah. It is possible that this is an alternate spelling of that same name. Alternate translation: “who were all descendants of Hodaviah” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### And & stood as one to act as overseers for the ones doing the work

As in [2:63](#), **stood** is a figurative way of saying that a person assumed the duties of his office. Alternate translation: “joined together to supervise the workers” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### as one

**As one** is an idiom that means these men all behaved as if they were a single person. That is, they all did the same thing; they worked unitedly towards a common goal. Alternate translation: “together” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## for the ones doing the work at the house of God

As in 2:69 and 3:8, **the work** means the project of rebuilding the temple. Alternate translation: “of the workers who were rebuilding the temple”

## the sons of Henadad, their sons, and their brothers the Levites

The relationship of this list of names to the rest of the verse is not entirely clear. There are 2 possibilities. (1) This is a list of the people who did the actual construction work on the new temple under the supervision of Jeshua, Kadmiel, and their relatives. Alternate translation: “Those workers were the sons and grandsons of a man named Henadad and all the other Levites” (2) The people listed here helped Jeshua, Kadmiel, and their relatives supervise other people who did the construction work. Alternate translation: “The sons and grandsons of a man named Henadad and all the other Levites helped them supervise the workers” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## and their brothers the Levites

There are two possibilities for the referent of **their** here. (1) It could refer to Jeshua and Kadmiel, in which case **their brothers the Levites** would be a figurative way of saying “their fellow Levites,” as opposed to their biological brothers mentioned earlier in the verse. Alternate translation: “and all the other Levites who had returned from exile” (2) However, **their** could refer to the sons of Henadad. It would still mean “fellow Levites.” The only difference would be that it would also mean that Henadad and his sons and grandsons were also Levites themselves. Alternate translation: “and the others who were Levites as they were” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## the sons of Henadad, their sons

The **sons of Henadad** seems to mean the actual sons of a man named Henadad. Likewise, **their sons** seems to mean the actual sons of those men. The book does not mention Henadad anywhere else and it does not provide any further information about him, so it would probably be best simply to state his name. Alternate translation: “the sons and grandsons of a man named Henadad” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 3:10

### Then the ones who were building laid the foundation of the temple of Yahweh

The word **Then** at the beginning of this sentence indicates that it will describe something that took place after the event the story has just related. (Specifically, now that all the necessary supervisors were in place, the construction work could begin.) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### Then the ones who were building laid the foundation of the temple of Yahweh

There are two possibilities for the meaning of **laid the foundation**. (1) This means that the workers had finished the foundation and perhaps set the entire temple floor in stone. The ceremony with music would be to mark the completion of this important step. Alternate translation: “Then the builders completed the floor of the temple of Yahweh” or (2) It means that they started to lay the foundation, and the ceremony with the music is to mark the start of the building. Alternate translation: “Then the builders started to lay the foundation of the temple of Yahweh” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### And they caused to stand the clothed priests with the trumpets

Unlike in [2:63](#) and [3:9](#), here **stand** means that the **priests** and **Levites** literally stood. They took up standing positions around the foundation and played their instruments. Alternate translation: “And they had the priests, wearing their sacred garments, come to the temple site and play their trumpets”

### clothed

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind this passive verb form with a phrase that uses an active form. Alternate translation: “wearing their sacred garments” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with the cymbals

The book expects readers to know that **the Levites** of this clan were vocal musicians who led the community in worship, particularly on ceremonial occasions such as this one. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “and they had the Levites who were descendants of Asaph sing and play their cymbals” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### and the Levites, the sons of Asaph

Here, **sons** means descendants. Alternate translation: “and the Levites who were descendants of Asaph” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Asaph

**Asaph** is a man’s name. See how you translated it in [2:41](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## with the cymbals

The word **cymbals** refers to a set of two thin, round metal plates that are hit together to make a loud sound. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

## to praise Yahweh in accordance with the hands of David, the king of Israel

You could place this phrase at the beginning of this sentence, before the one that describes how the priests and Levites were positioned, since it explains why the leaders put them in those positions. You could then show the connection by using a word like “so” to introduce the information about the priests and Levites. Alternate translation: “To celebrate this occasion, the leaders wanted to worship Yahweh in the way that King David of Israel had commanded, so” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

## in accordance with the hands of David, the king of Israel

Here, the phrase **the hands of David, the king** is used to represent his authority to give commands. Alternate translation: “as David, king of Israel, had commanded” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

## David, the king of Israel

Here the book provides some background information to describe more fully who David was. Alternate translation: “King David of Israel” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)



## Ezra 3:11

### Then they sang in response

The word **then** indicates that the sentence it introduces it will describe something that took place after the event the story has just related. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “once all the musicians were in place, they sang back and forth” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### Then they sang in response

Here, **they** refers to the Levite singers. **In response** probably means that first one group of them sang something, and then a second group of them sang something in reply, possibly playing instruments as well. The groups likely did this repeatedly over the course of a given song. Alternate translations: “Then the Levites sang responsively” or “Then the Levites sang antiphonally”

### For he is good, for his covenant faithfulness to Israel is to eternity

This is at least part of the song that the Levites sang on this occasion. Based on their other occurrences in the Bible, these may be the words to a refrain that the second group sang in response to verses that the first group sang. Or this may be a song that was sung for this celebration. Either way, it may be helpful to your readers to indicate that these are the words of the singers by setting off them with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### for his covenant faithfulness to Israel is to eternity

The abstract noun **faithfulness** describes the quality of a person who will dependably keep his word and fulfill his responsibilities. **Covenant faithfulness** refers specifically to Yahweh keeping all of the promises that he has made to the people of Israel. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with an expression such as “keep promises.” Alternate translation: “because Yahweh always keeps the promises he made to Israel” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### to Israel

Here, the name **Israel** stands for the Israelite people. Alternate translation: “to the people of Israel” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### because the foundation of the house of Yahweh had been laid

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translations: “because the builders had laid the foundation of Yahweh’s temple” or “because the builders had set the temple floor in stone” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### because the foundation of the house of Yahweh had been laid

As in 2:10, here there are the same two possibilities for the meaning of **the foundation ... had been laid**. See how you translated it there. (1) This means that the workers had finished the foundation. Alternate translation: “because the builders had completed the floor of the temple of Yahweh” or (2) It means that they had started to lay the foundation, which was the first step in building the temple. Alternate translation: “because the builders had started to lay the foundation of the temple of Yahweh” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 3:12

### But many

The word **But** indicates that the sentence it introduces will draw a contrast with what came just before it. That contrast is specifically between the joyful way that most of the Israelites were responding on this occasion and the sorrowful way that some of them responded. You could use a word such as “however” to indicate this contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.368)**)

### and the heads of the fathers

As in 1:5, this is an abbreviated way of saying “the heads of the father’s houses.” Review the explanatory note to this phrase in 1:5 if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: “and the clan leaders” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### the old men who had seen the & house

This phrase provides background information to identify these specific priests, Levites, and clan leaders further. Alternate translation: “who were old enough that they had seen the first temple” (See: **Background Information (p.357)**)

### were weeping with a loud voice

The book does not say specifically why these older leaders who had seen the first temple were weeping. There are two possibilities. (1) They felt grief and loss because they remembered the first temple in all of its glory and they could not imagine that this replacement would ever be as splendid. Alternate translation: “wept loudly because they thought this new temple could never be as glorious as the first one” or (2) Seeing the community begin to restore its temple brought back memories of the terrible days in which the original temple had been destroyed and the people had had to leave their homes and go into exile. Alternate translation: “wept loudly because they remembered how the first temple had been destroyed” or just “wept loudly, remembering the past” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### at the founding of this house in their eyes

As in 3:6, **founding** means to do the first step of constructing a building. See how you translated it there. Since it is a reference to the first step, laying a foundation, it may simply refer to starting the project generally. It could mean that the workers had begun to lay the foundation or that they had finished the foundation. Alternate translation: “when they saw the foundation that the builders laid for this temple”

### at the founding of this house in their eyes

Here, **eyes** represent sight. So this phrase means “when construction began on the temple in their sight.” Alternate translation: “when they saw the foundation that the builders laid for this temple” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### the first house, & this house

As often in this book, **house** is a metaphor for **temple**. Alternate translation: “the first temple ... this temple” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Yet many

The word **yet** indicates a contrast between what the people just described were doing and what the people who will be described next were doing. Alternate translation: “But many others” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.368)**)

## Yet many with a shout, with joy, were lifting up a voice

To be **lifting up a voice** is an idiom that means to be speaking, shouting, or singing loudly. Alternate translation: “But many others were giving loud, happy shouts.” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## Yet many with a shout, with joy, were lifting up a voice

The idea behind the abstract noun **joy** can be expressed with an adjective such as happy. Alternate translation: “But many others were giving loud, happy shouts” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

## Ezra 3:13

### So the people could not differentiate

The word **So** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: "As a result the people could not differentiate" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p.375))

### So the people could not differentiate the sound of the shout of joy from the sound of the weeping of the people. For the people were shouting a great shout

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the action that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Because the people who were happy were shouting so loudly, no one could distinguish their cries from the sounds of weeping of the other people" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p.375))

### So the people could not differentiate the sound of the shout of joy from the sound of the weeping of the people. For the people were shouting a great shout

In its first occurrence here, the phrase **the people** means all the Israelites who had gathered for this ceremony. In its second occurrence, the phrase refers to one group of them, the older leaders who had seen the first temple and were weeping. In its third occurrence, it refers to another group of them, the younger Israelites who were shouting for joy. Alternate translation: "Because the people who were happy were shouting so loudly, no one at the ceremony could distinguish their cries from the sounds of the people who were weeping" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

### and the sound was heard as far as from a remote place

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "the combined sound was so loud that those who lived far away from Jerusalem could hear it" (See: **Active or Passive** (p.349))

## Ezra 4

### Ezra 4 General Notes

### Structure and Formatting

The story of the building of the temple and re-establishment of the temple worship continues in this chapter. (See: **temple, house, house of God (p.486)**)

### Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

#### Helping to build the temple

The people of the surrounding nations offered to help to build the temple. It is unknown why the Jews refused their help, although it seems likely that the Jews considered these people to not truly belong to the people of God. These other people became their enemies and tried to hinder the work. They even persuaded the king of Persia to stop the Jews from building.

## Ezra 4:1

### Now & heard

The word **Now** indicates that the sentence it introduces will provide background information that will be needed to understand what the book describes next. You can translate it with the word or phrase in your language that is most similar in meaning and significance. (See: **Background Information (p.357)**)

### Judah and Benjamin

Here the book is referring to the people who came from the tribe of Judah as if they were a single person, their ancestor Judah. It is referring similarly to the people of the tribe of Benjamin as if they were a single person, their ancestor Benjamin. Alternate translation: “the people of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin” or see the next note for a further possibility. (See: **Personification (p.444)**)

### Judah and Benjamin

Here the book may be expressing a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. Together the two words may be a way of referring to all of the Israelites, since at this point the community consisted essentially of people from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Alternate translation: “the Israelites” (See: **Hendiadys (p.408)**)

### Now & heard that the sons of the exile were building a temple

**Heard** means that these enemies learned by some means that the Jews were doing this. The book is using hearing, one means of discovering things, to describe the enemies learning this. Alternate translation: “Now ... learned that the Jews who had returned from exile were building a temple” (See: **Synecdoche (p.464)**)

### the sons of the exile

As indicated in [2:1](#) and [8:35](#), the phrase **the sons of the exile** refers specifically to the group of Jewish people who returned to the land of Judah from Babylon. Babylon was the country where King Nebuchadnezzar had taken many Jews as captives after he conquered Jerusalem. Alternate translations: “the Jews who had returned from exile” or “the Jews who had returned to their homeland” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### for Yahweh, the God of Israel

This phrase provides further background information about Yahweh and it likely expresses the perspective of the enemies on the situation. Alternate translations: “Yahweh, the God they worshiped” or “Yahweh, the God whom the people of Israel worship” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

## Ezra 4:2

### So they came

The word **So** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “As a result, they went” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### So they came

Use the motion verb that is most natural in your language. Alternate translation: “So they went” (See: **Go and Come (p.403)**)

### Zerubbabel

**Zerubbabel** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in [2:2](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### the heads of the fathers

As in [1:5](#) and elsewhere in the book, this is an abbreviated way of saying “**the heads of** father’s houses.” Alternate translation: “the clan leaders” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### and they said to them, “Let us build with you

Since the book says in the previous verse that these people were enemies of the Jews, the implication is that they were not sincere when they claimed that they wanted to help build the temple. Instead, they were probably looking for a way to hinder the building project from within. The Jewish leaders refused their offer, and that suggests that they themselves suspected that these people were insincere. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say something like that explicitly. Alternate translation: “and attempting to deceive the Jews, they said to them, ‘We would like to help you build the temple’” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### we seek your God

Here, **seek** is an idiom that means to worship and pray to God or a god. Alternate translation: “we worship your God” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### since the days of Esarhaddon

The term **days** is used here to refer a particular period of time. Alternate translation: “since the time of Esarhaddon” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### Esarhaddon, the king of Assyria

**Esarhaddon** is the name of a man, and **Assyria** is the name of his kingdom. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### the one who caused us to come up here

These men say that Esarhaddon brought them **up** to this land because it is mountainous and, as [4:9](#) indicates, their ancestors formerly lived in lowland areas. Alternate translation: “the one who brought us here” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## Ezra 4:3

### But & said

The word **But** indicates that the sentence it introduces draws a contrast between what the men asked and what the Jewish leaders answered. You could begin the sentence with a word like “however” or “nevertheless” to indicate this contrast, or use another method that is natural in your language. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.368)**)

### Zerubbabel, and Jeshua

These are the names of two men. See how you translated them in 2:2. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### the heads of the fathers

This is an abbreviated way of saying “**the heads of** father’s houses.” See how you translated this expression in 1:5. Review the note there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: “the clan leaders” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### It is not for you and for us

This expression is an idiom that means “it is for us alone.” Alternate translation: “You may not help us” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### a house for our God

Alternate translation: “a temple for our God” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### for our God

Here, **our** is exclusive, excluding the non-Jewish hearers. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.396)**)

### for our God

The Israelites could say that Yahweh is **our God** not in the sense that they possess or control him, but in the sense that they worship him exclusively. Alternate translation: “for the God whom we worship” (See: **Possession (p.446)**)

### but

The word **but** indicates that the clause it introduces draws a contrast between what the men asked and what the Jewish leaders were prepared to allow. To indicate this contrast, you could begin the sentence with a word or phrase such as “no,” “rather,” or “on the contrary.” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.368)**)

### we ourselves together will build for Yahweh, the God of Israel

**We ourselves** here does not include the addressees. If your language marks that distinction, be sure that this is clear in your translation. **Together** does not mean the Jewish people and these foreign peoples together. It means the whole Jewish community together. Alternate translation: “it is all of us Israelites who will build a temple for Yahweh, the God of Israel” (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.396)**)



## the God of Israel

See the note to [4:1](#) about the significance of this phrase. (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding** (p. 388))

## just as the king Cyrus, the king of Persia, has commanded us

It is implicit in the story that the Jewish leaders know that they cannot trust these foreign leaders, whom the story describes as their enemies. The Jewish leaders suggest indirectly that they do not accept their claim that they worship Yahweh. They say, "It is not for you ... to build a house for our God," and they describe Yahweh as the God of Israel exclusively. But apparently they cannot contradict the claim directly, perhaps for reasons of etiquette and diplomacy. Instead, it seems that they find convenient grounds to exclude foreigners from the temple project in the literal wording of the proclamation that Cyrus issued: "Whoever among you is from all his people ... may he build the house of Yahweh, the God of Israel" ([1:3](#)). It may be possible in your translation to translate this phrase in such a way that your readers will implicitly recognize it as the convenient excuse that it apparently is. Alternate translation: "for that is what King Cyrus of Persia commanded" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

## Ezra 4:4

### And it happened that

The phrase **and it happened that** introduces a new series of events in the story. Use a natural way in your language for introducing something new or different. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.423)**)

### the people of the land

This expression refers to the non-Israelite people groups, listed in 4:9, whom the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal had brought to live in the area just north of Judah in the century before the Jews were taken away into exile themselves. When the Jews returned to their homeland, those foreign groups were still living nearby. Alternate translation: “the foreign people groups living nearby” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### And it happened that & were making the hands of the people of Judah weak, and making them afraid to build

These two phrases mean similar things. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “making the people of Judah so intimidated that they stopped working on the temple” However, there is a slight distinction between the phrases. The first one describes how the people felt inwardly, and the second one explains what effect this had on their outward actions. So you could also translate the phrases separately. Alternate translation: “were intimidating the people of Judah so that they were afraid to keep working on the temple” (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

### And it happened that & were making the hands of the people of Judah weak

Here, **hands** represents power and action, so **making the hands weak** means to make someone so discouraged or intimidated that they do not use their power to act. Alternate translation: “were intimidating the people of Judah” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### the people of Judah

In this context, this expression does not refer to all of the inhabitants of the province of Judah, whatever their nationality, but rather it specifically refers to the Jews who returned from exile and settled there. In this book, **the people of Judah** and “the people of Israel” both refer to the Jewish people and mean the same thing. Alternate translation: “the Jews who had returned from exile and settled in the province of Judah”

## Ezra 4:5

### and hiring counselors against them

Here, **counselors** means royal advisors in the Persian court. The enemies of the Jews were bribing the counselors to try to get them to influence the king against the Jews. Alternate translation: “and bribing royal advisors to work against the Jews in the Persian court” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

### to frustrate their plans

Alternate translation: “to keep them from successfully rebuilding the temple”

### all the days of Cyrus, the king of Persia

**Days** is used here to refer to a particular period of time. In this context, it would mean specifically the nine years from 538 BC, when Cyrus conquered Babylon and became ruler of the Jews, to 529 BC, when he died. Alternate translation: “throughout the rest of the reign of Cyrus as king of Persia” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### and until the reign of Darius, the king of Persia

Darius did not succeed Cyrus directly, and so this means that the enemy opposition continued throughout the reigns of the successors of Cyrus until Darius became king. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “and throughout the reign of his successors until Darius became king of Persia” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Darius

**Darius** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 4:6

### Now in the reign of

The word **Now** indicates that the sentence it introduces will provide some background information. You can translate it with the word or phrase in your language that is most similar in meaning and significance. (See: **Background Information (p.357)**)

### Now in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign

Ahasuerus ruled the Persian Empire after Darius, who was his father. So here the book is presenting some events out of chronological order. That is, it is telling about some things that happened later, before finishing the story of what happened at this time. In 4:24 the book will bring readers back to where it left off in 4:5, and then, in 5:1, it will describe how work on rebuilding the temple did resume under the reign of Darius. But first it gives accounts here of how the enemies of the Jews continued to oppose them under two later kings, Ahasuerus (described in this verse) and Artaxerxes (described in verses 7-23). The purpose may be to show that the Jews were wise to refuse the help that leaders from other nations offered, as described in 4:1-3. Since those leaders were actually enemies of the Jews, as they demonstrated by opposing them under one king after another, their offer was not sincere and they could not be trusted. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "In fact, they continued to oppose them under later kings. As soon as Ahasuerus succeeded his father Darius as king" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### Ahasuerus

**Ahasuerus** is the name of a man. He is better known as Xerxes, so you could use that name for him in your translation, if it would be helpful in your language. Use the same name here that you use in the book of Esther. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### they wrote an accusation against those who dwelled in Judah and Jerusalem

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly what the enemies of the Jews accused them of doing. (The book provides the text of their letter in 4:11-16, but it might be helpful to provide a summary in advance.) Alternate translation: "they wrote a letter in which they accused the Jews who had returned to Judah and Jerusalem of plotting to rebel against the king" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### they wrote an accusation

The abstract noun **accusation** refers to what the enemies of the Jews said about them in the letter that they sent to the king. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with a verb such as "accuse" or "complain." Alternate translation: "they wrote a letter to complain" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### they wrote an accusation against

The noun **accusation** might be referring to the actual letter itself by substituting a description of the content of the letter. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a concrete term that explains the meaning of the figurative expression. Alternate translation: "they wrote a letter, accusing" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

## **those who dwelled in Judah and Jerusalem**

In this context, this expression does not mean all the inhabitants of the province of Judah and the city of Jerusalem, whatever their nationality, but rather the Jews who returned from exile and settled in those places. Alternate translation: "the Jews who had returned from exile and settled in Judah and Jerusalem"

## Ezra 4:7

### And in the days of

Here the word **And** introduces another event in the sequence of actions by the enemies of the Jews. Use the form in your language that is most natural for marking events in a sequence. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship** (p.378))

### And in the days of Artaxerxes

The term **days** is used here to refer to a particular period of time. In this context, it means during the reign of the next Persian king, Artaxerxes, the son of Ahasuerus (Xerxes). Alternate translation: “during the reign of Artaxerxes” (See: **Idiom** (p.419))

### And in the days of Artaxerxes

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain that Artaxerxes was the next king of Persia. Alternate translation: “during the reign of the next Persian king, Artaxerxes” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

### Artaxerxes

**Artaxerxes** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

### Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

### and the rest of his companions

The term **companions** here describes people who hold a similar position. Alternate translation: “and his other associates”

### and the script of the letter was written in Aramaic and was interpreted in Aramaic

This is background information that helps readers understand how these officials went about writing to the king. Aramaic was the official language for government correspondence within the Persian empire. These officials apparently spoke Samaritan, a language similar to Hebrew. So they had someone express their message for them in the Aramaic language. The term **interpreted** does not necessarily indicate that the officials first wrote out their letter in Samaritan, and then someone translated it into Aramaic for them. Instead, they may have told someone what they wanted to say, and that person composed the letter in Aramaic. Since Aramaic also used differently shaped letters from the ones that Hebrew and Samaritan used, that person wrote the letter using those characters. Alternate translation: “these officials arranged for someone to write their letter for them in the Aramaic script and language” (See: **Background Information** (p.357))

## **and the script of the letter was written in Aramaic and was interpreted in Aramaic**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “and these officials hired a scribe who wrote the letter in Aramaic” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

## **and the script of the letter was written in Aramaic and was interpreted in Aramaic**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could simply say that the letter was written in Aramaic, rather than mentioning both the script and the language. Alternate translation: “and these officials hired a scribe who wrote the letter in Aramaic”

## **and was interpreted in Aramaic**

We might expect that, logically, this phrase would come before the previous one, written in the **Aramaic** script, since the letter had to be composed before it was written down. But in its present position at the end of this sentence, this phrase actually serves a larger purpose within the book. It signals readers that what follows, through [6:18](#), is itself written in Aramaic. Presumably the original readers, who were clearly expected to understand both languages, would have been alert to such a signal. (A long Aramaic section in the book of Daniel is introduced similarly: “Then the wise men spoke to the king in Aramaic,” Daniel 2:4.) Alternate translation: “and was translated into Aramaic such as the following:” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 4:8

### Rehum

**Rehum** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### a lord of decree

This was Rehum's official title. The expression likely means that he had the authority in that area to issue decrees on behalf of the king. The king actually tells him to do this in [4:21](#). Use the title for a government official with authority over a local area. Alternate translation: "the royal deputy" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### and Shimshai

**Shimshai** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### the scribe

This was Shimshai's official title. It does not mean that he merely handled correspondence and record-keeping for Rehum. Rather, historical sources suggest that a **scribe** such as Shimshai had important administrative responsibilities and authority of his own. Alternate translation: "the state secretary" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 468)**)

### one letter against Jerusalem

Here the book uses the term **Jerusalem** to refer figuratively, by association, to the Jews who lived in that city and, by extension, to their fellow Jews in the rest of the province of Judah. Alternate translation: "a letter against the Jews who had returned from exile" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### as follows

The phrase **as follows** would ordinarily indicate that a copy of the text of the letter comes next in the book. If that is the case, then [4:9](#) and [4:10](#) are a preamble to the letter that lists the names of the senders. Alternate translation: "and here is what they wrote to the king" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)



## Ezra 4:9

### Then

The term translated as **Then** often introduces a new episode in a story. But the book is not continuing the story here. Instead, the book is quoting a document that begins with a list of names. So it seems that here the term **Then** is introducing the document that follows. Use the term in your language that would customarily introduce a list of the senders of a letter or other document. Alternate translation: "From"

### Then

The word **then** here appears to be introducing a quotation from a document. If this is not how you would introduce a quotation in your language, then use quotation marks or whatever other punctuation or convention your language commonly uses for that purpose. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### Rehum, a lord of decree

**Rehum** is the name of a man and **a lord of decree** is his title. See how you translated them in 4:8. Alternate translation: "Rehum, the royal deputy" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and Shimshai the scribe

**Shimshai** is the name of a man and **the scribe** is his title. See how you translated them in 4:8. Alternate translation: "Shimshai the state secretary" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and the rest of their companions, the judges and the rulers, the officials

As in 4:7, the term **companions** here indicates people who hold a similar position. The other three terms describe the various positions that the other people held who joined in sending this letter. Alternate translation: "and their associates, who were judges, rulers, and officials" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### and the rest of their companions, the judges and the rulers, the officials

Rehum and Shimshai speak of themselves here in the third person by saying **their companions**. This was normal in their culture. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the first person. Alternate translation: "and our colleagues, who are judges, rulers, and officials" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### and the rulers, the officials

The difference between these two terms is uncertain. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine them, as in the UST.

### the Persians, the Erechites, the Babylonians, the Susaites (that is, the Elamites

These are the names of four people groups and an alternate name by which the last group was known. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **the Persians, the Erechites, the Babylonians, the Susaites (that is, the Elamites**

These are apparently the people groups that the officials who wrote the letter belonged to. The writers seem to feel that they can speak on behalf of their entire people groups because they would agree with the concerns that they are expressing about the Jews. You could say this explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “on behalf of the Persians, Erechites, Babylonians, and Susaites (that is, Elamites)” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 4:10

**and the rest of the nations whom Ashurbanipal the great and the noble caused to be exiled and caused them to dwell in the cities of Samaria, and the rest of Beyond-the-River**

This could mean one of two things. (1) It could be referring to two different sets of people groups: (a) **the rest of the nations**, which would be some further groups that, like the four listed in 4:9, Ashurbanipal exiled to the region of Samaria, and (b) **the rest of Beyond-the-River**, which would be all the other groups that were then living in the province of Beyond-the-River, however they came to live there. This is the reading of ULT. or (2) It could be referring to one set of people groups made up of all the other groups that, like the four listed in 4:9, Ashurbanipal moved to this area and resettled in the cities of Samaria and in other parts of the province. This is the reading of UST. Either way, the officials writing this letter feel that they can speak on behalf of those other groups in addition to the groups that they belong to personally.

## Ashurbanipal

**Ashurbanipal** is the name of a man. His name in Aramaic was Osnappar. He was king of Assyria from 668 to 627 B.C. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Beyond-the-River

**Beyond-the-River** is the name of the province of the Persian Empire that contained the lands of Israel and Judah. It occurs many times throughout the book, and it will be helpful to your readers if you translate it consistently each time. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## And now

The phrase translated **And now** is an Aramaic expression that was used in the letters of this time to introduce the main business of the letter. In 4:11, 4:17, and 7:12, it comes at the beginning of a letter, right after opening conventions such as the names of the sender and recipient and greetings. In 5:17, it comes near the end of a letter to introduce a request that the writers finally make in light of extensive background information that they provide up to that point. But here it introduces the letter itself after a long preamble that lists the names of the senders and the groups on whose behalf they feel they can speak. If your language has a comparable expression that it uses for this same purpose, you can use that in your translation. If your language would not put such an expression here, then you could leave it out. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.382)**)

## Ezra 4:11

### This is a copy of the letter that they sent to him

**They** means the men listed in 4:9. The book is interrupting its quotation after the preamble to make sure that readers know that the text of the letter itself will now follow. (See: **Aside (p.352)**)

### This is a copy of the letter that they sent to him

If you used quotation marks or some other punctuation or convention to indicate the beginning of the quotation at the start of 4:9, you should use the same means to indicate that there is a break in the quotation at the end of 4:10, and then show that the quotation resumes after this sentence. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

## Artaxerxes

**Artaxerxes** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in 4:7. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### your servants, men of Beyond-the-River

Here the officials identify themselves as the senders of this letter, and they refer to themselves in the third person as **your servants** in order to address the king as their superior with humility and respect. Alternate translation: "from your officials in the province of Beyond-the-River" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### your servants, men of Beyond-the-River

In this context, **men** means people, so this phrase means people who live in Beyond-the-River province. But together with the preceding phrase, **your servants**, it means specifically those who work for the king there, that is, his royal officials. Alternate translation: "from your officials in the province of Beyond-the-River" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## and now

As in 4:10, the phrase translated **and now** is an Aramaic expression that introduces the main business of a letter. If your language has a comparable expression that it uses for this same purpose, you can use that in your translation. Otherwise, you do not need to represent this expression. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.382)**)

## Ezra 4:12

### let it be known to the king

These officials address the king in the third person as a sign of respect. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this respect by using an expression such as “O king.” Alternate translation: “we would like you to know, O king” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### let it be known to the king

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who is doing the action. Alternate translation: “we would like you to know, O king” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### the Jews who went up from near you

Here, as in several instances earlier in the book, **went up** means “traveled from Babylon to Judah,” since that involves going from a river valley up into the mountains. The officials describe Babylon to the king as **near you** because it was relatively much closer to the Persian royal court and more distant from Samaria. Alternate translation: “the Jews who returned to Judah from Babylon” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### went up

If it is more natural in your language, you could say “came” rather than **went**. (See: **Go and Come (p.403)**)

### have come to us at Jerusalem

Alternate translation: “have settled near us in Jerusalem”

### the rebellious and evil city

Here the officials are describing the inhabitants of Jerusalem by reference to something associated with them, the **city** where they live. The officials are not saying that the walls and buildings would be rebellious if they were rebuilt. Rather, they are saying that the people who have lived in this city have continually revolted against their foreign rulers. Alternate translation: “that city whose people are constantly rebelling” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### rebellious and evil

**Rebellious and evil** mean similar things. The officials use them together to emphasize their certainty that, because the people of Jerusalem are so evil or wicked (in this context meaning rebellious against authority), they would revolt against Artaxerxes if they were able to rebuild and fortify their city. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these words into a single expression. Alternate translation: “constantly rebelling” (See: **Doublet (p.391)**)

### they are completing the walls and repairing the foundations

Here, **completing** is a way of saying “building.” Several times in this section of Ezra, the text uses the two words **repairing** and **completing** together to mean “building,” or it uses them as poetic parallels. (For example, “which a great king of Israel built and completed,” [5:11](#), and “to build this house and to complete this structure,” [5:3](#).) The term **completing** by itself here seems similarly to have the meaning of “building.” **Repairing** here could also mean “digging out.” Either way, this is a reference to preparing foundations so that buildings can be set up on them. So

the officials are describing the project of restoring the city by referring to the work on two parallel parts of it, its walls and its buildings. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this without using a similar figure of speech. Alternate translations: "they are working throughout the city to restore it" or "they are rebuilding the walls and preparing foundations for buildings" (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

## Ezra 4:13

### Now

The word **now** is similar to the expression “and now” in 4:10 and 4:11. Here, **now** introduces an important point within the letter. If your language has a comparable expression that it uses for this same purpose, you can use that in your translation.

### let it be known to the king

As in 4:12, the officials address the king here in the third person as a sign of respect. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this respect by using an expression such as “O king.” Alternate translation: “we would like you to know, O king” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### let it be known to the king

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who is doing the action. Alternate translation: “we would like you to know, O king” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### if that city is built and the walls are completed

These two phrases mean similar things. (As noted in 4:12, **completed** is another way of saying **built** when the terms are paired like this.) Likely for emphasis, the officials say essentially the same thing twice to create an ominous sense of threat. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that might be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: “if they are able to rebuild that city” However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could also choose to bring that out in your translation. The second phrase is actually stronger and more threatening, because the city walls could prevent Artaxerxes from reasserting his sovereignty by force. Alternate translation: “if they rebuild the city, and especially if they restore its protective walls” (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

### if that city is built and the walls are completed

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “if the Jews are able to rebuild the city and restore its walls” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### they will not give tax, tribute, or custom

**Tax**, **tribute**, and **custom** mean similar things. The officials use the three terms together to emphasize that the king could lose all of his income from the Jews living in Jerusalem and the province of Judah. However, there is a slight difference between the three terms. While their exact meaning is uncertain, they may refer to these three kinds of taxes: taxes based on a percentage of income, tribute money that subjects would pay on a per-person basis, and duty that they would pay on articles purchased for use or transported for sale. Alternate translation: “they will no longer pay taxes, tribute, or duty” But if you do not have three different words for different kinds of taxes in your language, you could just use one word, as in the UST. (A doublet can involve the use of more than two words.) (See: **Doublet (p.391)**)

**and the revenue of the kings will suffer harm**

The officials are writing to a king who is the sole ruler of his empire, but they may be using the plural **kings** here because previous kings had accumulated much of the royal treasures. The officials may also be suggesting implicitly that not only Artaxerxes, but also his successors, will get no further revenue from the Jews if Jerusalem is rebuilt and fortified. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “and this will reduce the income of kings” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)



## Ezra 4:14

### Now

As in 4:13, the word **now** is similar to the expression “and now” found in 4:10 and 4:11. Here it introduces another important point within the letter. If your language has a comparable expression that it uses for this same purpose, you can use that in your translation. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.382)**)

### we have eaten the salt of the palace

This expression means that these officials are paid from the royal treasury. Alternate translation: “we are paid from the royal treasury” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### because we have eaten the salt of the palace

The implication is that, because these officials are paid from the royal treasury, they feel a loyalty and a sense of obligation to the king. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “because we owe our own livelihoods to you” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### and it is not appropriate for us to see the nakedness of the king

The phrase **to see the nakedness of the king** is an idiom that means “to allow the king to be dishonored.” If your language has a similar idiom you can use that, or translate the plain meaning, as in the UST. (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### on account of this we have sent and made known to the king

The officials continue to address the king in the third person as a sign of respect. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this respect by using an expression such as “O king.” Alternate translation: “and that is why we have written to you, O king, to let you know about this” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

## Ezra 4:15

### so that he may search

Here again the officials are addressing the king in the third person as a sign of respect. They are also making their suggestion very diplomatically so that they do not appear to be telling the king what to do. Alternate translation: “and may we suggest that you search” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### in the book of the records of your fathers

Although **book** is singular, this expression actually refers to the collection of documents that Artaxerxes possessed that recorded events and decrees from the reigns of earlier kings. He responds in 4:19 that he had his court officials search in this collection. Verses 6:1–2 describe how Darius earlier made a similar search. Alternate translation: “in the royal chronicles” or “in the archives of the previous kings” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### in the book of the records of your fathers

Here, **fathers** means “predecessors.” This would include some who were direct ancestors of Artaxerxes, including his father Ahasuerus (Xerxes) and grandfather Darius. But it also seems to include the Assyrian and Babylonian kings to whose empires the Persian kings were now the heirs. The revolts of Jerusalem that this search discovered, as reported in 4:19, were against the Babylonians. Indeed, Artaxerxes says that his officials investigated the matter back to ancient days, presumably back to the times of earlier empires. Alternate translation: “the chronicles of previous kings” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### And you will discover in the book of the records and learn

The words **discover** and **learn** mean similar things. The officials use the two words together to emphasize how certain it is that the chronicles will show that Jerusalem has always been rebellious. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use only one word instead of two. Alternate translation: “The chronicles will certainly confirm for you” (See: **Doublet (p.391)**)

### that that city is a rebellious city and one that has caused harm to kings and provinces, and they have made revolt in its midst since the ancient days

These two phrases mean similar things. The officials say essentially the same thing twice for emphasis. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that might be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: “that the people living in Jerusalem have constantly rebelled against their kings and governors and refused to pay tribute” However, there is a slight difference in meaning. The second phrase intensifies the first phrase, and you could also choose to bring that out in your translation. Alternate translation: “that the people of Jerusalem have rebelled against emperors and governors and refused to pay tribute, long being a center of revolt” (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

### and one that has caused harm to

In light of the similar expression in 4:13, “and the revenue of the kings will suffer harm,” this likely means that the people of Jerusalem have refused to pay tribute to foreign emperors. Alternate translation: “and refused to pay tribute to” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## and provinces

Here, **provinces** refers to the rulers of provinces, that is, governors. The officials are describing them by reference to something associated with them, the jurisdictions that they rule. Alternate translation: "and governors" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

## On account of this, that city was destroyed

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "Because the people of Jerusalem kept rebelling against them, the Babylonians finally came and destroyed that city" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

## Ezra 4:16

### We are making known to the king

These officials address the king in the third person as a sign of respect. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this respect by using an expression such as “O king.” Alternate translation: “We would like you to know, O king” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### if that city is built and the walls are completed

See how you translated this expression in [4:13](#). (It may be helpful to review the two notes there that discuss the parallelism and the passive form.)

### because of this there will be no share for you in Beyond-the-River

The implication is that if Jerusalem became a stronghold, not only would its people rebel against Artaxerxes, they would lead all of the surrounding peoples to do the same, and the Persian Empire would lose all of its territories west of the Euphrates. The expression **no share for you** likely also has the implication that the king would receive no further tribute or other revenue from the entire province. Alternate translation: “then those people will lead the entire province of Beyond-the-River to revolt against you and to stop paying tribute.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 4:17

### Rehum, a lord of decree

**Rehum** is the name of a man and **a lord of decree** is his title. See how you translated them in 4:8. Alternate translation: “Rehum, the royal deputy” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and Shimshai the scribe

**Shimshai** is the name of a man and **scribe** is his title. See how you translated them in 4:8. Alternate translation: “Shimshai the state secretary” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and the rest of their companions who dwell in Samaria, and the rest of Beyond the River

As in 4:10, this could mean one of two things. (1) It could be referring to two groups: (a) the fellow officials of Rehum and Shimshai in the region of Samaria, and (b) the people groups living in the rest of the province of Beyond-the-River, however they came to live there. This is the reading of ULT. Alternate translation: “and the rest of their fellow officials, and the people groups living in Beyond-the-River” or (2) It could be referring to one group, the fellow officials of Rehum and Shimshai who live in the region of Samaria and in other parts of the province. This is the reading of UST. Alternate translation: “the rest of their fellow officials in Samaria and in the rest of Beyond-the-River” It would probably be clearest for your readers if you followed the same reading here as you did in 4:10, whether that of ULT or UST. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and the rest of their companions

As in 4:7 and 4:9, the term **companions** here indicates people who hold similar positions. Alternate translation: “and the rest of their associates” or “and the rest of their fellow officials” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### Peace

**Peace** was a conventional greeting or good wish that senders often included at the beginning of a letter at this time. (It is the Aramaic term that corresponds to the Hebrew expression “Shalom.”) If your language has a similar expression that it uses for the same purpose, you can use it here. Alternate translations: “greetings” or “I hope all is well with you”

### And now

As in 4:10 and 4:11, this phrase translates an Aramaic expression that introduces the main business of a letter. If your language has a comparable expression, then use it here. If it would not use such an expression here, then you do not need to represent it in your translation. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.382)**)

## Ezra 4:18

### The letter that you sent to us

The implication of the plural **us** is that the king and his royal officials have received this letter. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the letter that you sent to the king and his royal officials” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### has been carefully read aloud before me

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “my officials have carefully read aloud in my presence” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### has been carefully read aloud before me

The implication is not that the king was unable to read or unable to see, and so he needed someone to read things to him. Rather, in ancient times, writing was considered a way of conveying speech at a distance. In effect, the court officials who read this letter aloud to the king were doing so on behalf of the Samaritan officials who had sent the letter, as if they had been present themselves. So be sure that your translation does not convey or suggest the idea that the king was unable to read. Alternate translation: “my officials have carefully read out loud in my presence” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 4:19

### So from me

The word **so** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “As a result, from me” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### So from me was set a decree, and they searched

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “So I commanded my officials, and they searched” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### So from me was set a decree, and they searched

The implication is that the king ordered his officials to search in the royal chronicles to investigate the charges that Rehum, Shimshai, and the others had made against Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “I commanded my officials to search in the royal chronicles, and they investigated your claims” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### that that city & has risen up against kings and rebellion and revolt have been made in it

These two phrases mean similar things. Artaxerxes says the same thing twice, in similar ways, for emphasis. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that might be confusing for your readers. Instead, If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “Jerusalem has continually been at the center of revolts against rulers” However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could also choose to bring that out in your translation. The second phrase intensifies the first by portraying Jerusalem not just as a city that has rebelled, but as a place where rebellions have repeatedly originated. Alternate translation: “Jerusalem ... has rebelled against the emperors that ruled it and, in fact, that city has repeatedly been a base for revolts” (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

### that city & has risen up against kings

**That city** means Jerusalem. In this context, the expression **risen up against** means to reject an authority and claim authority for oneself. Alternate translation: “the people of Jerusalem ... have rebelled against the emperors who ruled them” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### that city & has risen up against kings

Here, Artaxerxes speaks of the people of Jerusalem by reference to something associated with them, the city where they live. Alternate translation: “the people of Jerusalem ... have rebelled against the emperors who ruled them” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### and rebellion and revolt have been made in it

**Rebellion** and **revolt** mean similar things. Artaxerxes uses the two terms together for emphasis, perhaps to acknowledge that the records have indeed confirmed what the officials alleged. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these terms. Alternate translation: “and the city has repeatedly been a base for revolts” (See: **Doublet (p.391)**)

## **and rebellion and revolt have been made in it**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “and the people there have repeatedly rebelled against their rulers” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)



## Ezra 4:20

### And mighty kings were over Jerusalem

These kings are described here in a spatial metaphor as being higher than or above Jerusalem to indicate that this was the place in which and from which they ruled. Alternate translation: "And powerful kings ruled from Jerusalem" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### even rulers

This word **even** introduces further information. Alternate translation: "in fact, they ruled" (See: **Background Information (p.357)**)

### even rulers over all of Beyond the River

Alternate translation: "in fact, they ruled over the whole area that is Beyond-the-River province"

### and tax, tribute, and custom were paid to them

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "these kings conquered other nations and made them pay tribute" or "these kings conquered other nations and made them pay taxes, tribute, and duty" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### and tax, tribute, and custom

See how you translated this phrase in [4:13](#). (A doublet can involve the use of more than two words.) (See: **Doublet (p.391)**)

## Ezra 4:21

### Now

The word **Now** is similar to the expression “and now” in 4:10, 4:11, and 4:17. As in 4:13 and 4:14, it introduces an important point within a letter. If your language has a comparable expression that it uses for this same purpose, you can use that in your translation. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases** (p.382))

### set a decree to stop these men

**These men** means the Jews. This is a reference back to the letter from the Samaritan officials in which they speak of “the Jews who went up from near you” and who “have come to us at Jerusalem” (4:12). The implication is that the Jews are to stop rebuilding the walls and buildings in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “issue a decree to make those Jews who returned to Jerusalem from exile stop rebuilding the walls and buildings in Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p. 354))

### so that city may not be rebuilt until the decree is set from me

The phrase **so that** indicates that the clause that follows describes the purpose for which Artaxerxes wants the officials to issue a decree. It is to make the Jews stop working on the walls and houses. He does not want there to be any rebuilding in Jerusalem unless he authorizes it personally. Alternate translation: “because I want this decree to prevent all rebuilding unless I issue a decree permitting it” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship** (p. 372))

## Ezra 4:22

### And be careful of negligence of action concerning this

This means “Be sure to act concerning this.” This is a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using two negative expressions: **be careful of**, that is, “avoid,” together with an expression that is the opposite of what is desired: **negligence of action**. Artaxerxes wants the officials to take action. Alternate translation: “Be sure to take action in response to this situation” (See: **Litotes (p.429)**)

### Why should the damage increase to the harm of the kings

The implication is that if the Jews were able to rebuild and fortify Jerusalem and they revolted, then the interests of the king would be damaged because he would lose honor, as the officials suggest in their letter (4:14), and he would also lose revenue (4:13). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Why should I and other kings suffer dishonor or lose tribute money” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### Why should the damage increase to the harm of the kings

Artaxerxes is making a statement, not asking a question. He does not expect the Samaritan officials to tell him why he should experience greater damage. Instead, he is using the question form to emphasize how important it is for the officials to get the Jews to stop rebuilding Jerusalem. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words as a statement. Alternate translation: “I should not suffer dishonor or lose tribute money.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.458)**)

### Why should the damage increase to the harm of the kings

As in 4:13, the plural **kings** here may envision that not just Artaxerxes but also his successors would lose revenue if Jerusalem leads a revolt that spreads throughout Beyond-the-River, as the Samaritan officials suggest it would. But Artaxerxes is speaking primarily of himself, in the third person, as kings sometimes did, just as their subjects addressed them in the third person to show humility and respect. (Compare, for example, the way Cyrus speaks of himself in the third person in 6:4, and Darius speaks of himself that way in 6:8 and 6:10). Alternate translation: “Why should kings suffer dishonor or lose tribute money” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

## Ezra 4:23

### Then

The word **Then** indicates that the events the story will now relate came after the events it has just described. In your translation, you can use the expression in your language that would best indicate this relationship. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### from when the copy of the letter of Artaxerxes the king was read aloud before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions

The implication is that a messenger brought a copy of the letter from King Artaxerxes to these officials and read it aloud to them. (See the note to [4:18](#) for background to the practice of reading correspondence out loud.) If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “as soon as messengers from King Artaxerxes brought a copy of his letter to Rehum, Shimshai the state secretary, and their associates, and read it aloud to them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### the copy of the letter of Artaxerxes the king was read aloud

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “messengers from King Artaxerxes read a copy of his letter aloud” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### Artaxerxes

**Artaxerxes** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in [4:7](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### Rehum

Rehum is the name of a man. See how you translated it in [4:8](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and Shimshai the scribe

**Shimshai** is the name of a man and **scribe** is his title. See how you translated them in [4:8](#). Alternate translation: “Shimshai the state secretary” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and their companions

As in [4:7](#), [4:9](#) and [4:17](#), the term **companions** here indicates people who hold similar positions. Alternate translation: “and their associates,” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### they went in a hurry to Jerusalem against the Jews

Alternate translation: “they hurried to Jerusalem to confront the Jews”

### and they stopped them by an arm and strength

The phrase **an arm and strength** expresses a single idea by using two words connected with “and.” The word **strength** tells what kind of **arm** or influence these officials used: a strong arm, that is, a forcibly coercive one. If it

would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning of the two words in a single phrase. Alternate translation: “and they compelled them to stop” (See: **Hendiadys (p.408)**)

### **and they stopped them by an arm and strength**

Here, **arm** is a figurative way of referring to a person’s power, influence, and capacity for action. Alternate translation: “and they compelled them to stop” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### **and they stopped them by an arm and strength**

The implication is that these officials made the Jews stop rebuilding the walls and houses in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “and they compelled them to stop rebuilding the walls and houses in Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 4:24

### At that time the work of the house of God which is in Jerusalem stopped

The book now returns to the point in the story where it left off at the end of 4:5. (If it would be helpful, review the note to 4:6. That note explains how the book tells of later events in 4:6–23 to show that the Jews were wise not to trust the Samaritans when they offered to help rebuild the temple during the reign of Cyrus, since they demonstrated by their repeated future opposition that they really were the enemies of the Jews.) It might be useful to include a heading before this verse to alert the reader that there is a change of timeframe at this point, such as, “Building the Temple in the Time of Darius.” Also, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could say something explicitly here that would show how the book is returning to the time of Cyrus and his immediate successors. Alternate translation: “This is how the enemies of the Jews tried, under later kings, to stop them from rebuilding Jerusalem. They attempted the same thing under King Cyrus and his successors and they were able to stop the work on the temple for a time” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### and it was stopped

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “and the Jews did not start rebuilding again” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

## Darius

**Darius** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in 4:5. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 5

### Ezra 5 General Notes

### Structure and Formatting

The story of the building of the temple and re-establishment of the temple worship continues in this chapter from where it left off in [4:5](#). (See: **temple, house, house of God (p.486)**)

### Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

#### Rebuilding the temple

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the Jews to begin again to build the temple. This was very important to life in Judah. (See: **prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess (p.484)**)

## Ezra 5:1

### Then & prophesied

Here, the word **Then** introduces a new event in the story. Use a natural method in your language to introduce a new event here. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.423)**)

### Then & prophesied

The word **Then** indicates that the event the story will now relate took place at the time just named in [4:24](#), that is, in the second year of the reign of Darius as king of Persia. Alternate translation: “At that time ... prophesied” (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.380)**)

### and Zechariah, the son of Iddo

**Zechariah** is the name of a man, and **Iddo** is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### Haggai

**Haggai** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### Then & prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and in Jerusalem

The implication, based on how the Jewish leaders respond in the next verse, is that Haggai and Zechariah said specifically that the Jews should resume work on rebuilding the temple. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “told the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem that they should start rebuilding the temple again” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### in the name of the God of Israel

This expression means that Haggai and Zechariah made clear that they were speaking to the Jews on behalf of God, as if God were speaking through them. Alternate translation: “as messengers of the God of Israel” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the God of Israel

As in [4:1](#), this phrase provides further background information about Yahweh. Alternate translation: “the God whom the people of Israel worshiped” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

### who was over them

God is described here in a spatial metaphor as being higher than or above the Jews to indicate that they acknowledged his authority and they served and obeyed him. Alternate translation: “whom they obeyed” or “who was their king” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)



## Ezra 5:2

### Then

Here, **Then** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “As a result” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel

**Zerubbabel** is the name of a man, and **Shealtiel** is the name of his father. See how you translated these names in [3:2](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and Jeshua, the son of Jozadak

**Jeshua** is the name of a man, and **Jozadak** is the name of his father. See how you translated these names in [3:2](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### arose

In this context, the word **arose** means that they took action to get a project under way. It does not indicate that these leaders had been sitting or lying down and that they stood up. Alternate translation: “took action” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### and began to build the house of God

Alternate translation: “and resumed work on rebuilding the temple” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 5:3

### At that time

The phrase **at that time** indicates that this event took place at the same time as the event that the story has just related. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship in this case by using a phrase such as “when they did this” (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.380)**)

### Tattenai

**Tattenai** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### Beyond-the-River

**Beyond-the-River** is the name of the province of the Persian Empire that included Judah and Jerusalem. See how you translated it in [4:10](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and Shethar-Bozenai

**Shethar-Bozenai** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and their companions

As often in the book, the term **companions** here indicates people who hold similar positions. Alternate translation: “and their associates” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### came

Use the motion verb that is most natural in your language. Alternate translation: “went” or “traveled” (See: **Go and Come (p.403)**)

### Who set for you a decree

See how you translated this word for **decree** in [4:19](#) and [4:21](#). Alternate translation: “Who gave you permission” or “Who authorized you”

### to build this house and to complete this structure

These two phrases mean essentially the same thing. As noted in [4:12](#), **complete** is another way of saying **build** when the terms are paired like this. The officials say essentially the same thing twice for emphasis. If that would be confusing for your readers, you could say it once and provide emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: “to build a large temple such as this” (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

### this house

“this temple” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 5:4

### Then

Here, the word **Then** is indicating that the enemies asked the question in this verse right after the question they asked in the previous verse. (The word is not indicating that the two questions were asked on separate occasions.) Alternate translation: "In addition" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### we said to them, "What are the names of the men

Here, the Aramaic text reads **we said**. The pronoun does not seem to fit the context here, because of the sudden, unexplained shift from third person "they" in verse 3 to first person "we" here. In [5:10](#), in their letter to Darius, Tattenai and his associates use "we" when they report that they were the ones who asked this question. So the word "we" could have been mistakenly copied into this verse from that one. Other ancient versions say "they," and it will likely be clearest for your readers if you translate the phrase in that way. Alternate translation: "they said to them, 'What are the men's names'" or "they said to them, 'Who are the men'" It is also possible that the verse is not reporting a question in direct speech, but is simply describing what was said as a statement. In that case, **we** would refer to the Jews. Alternate translation: "we told them who the men were" or "we told them the names of the men [who were building this building.]" (See: **Textual Variants (p.466)**)

### we said to them, "What are the names of the men who are building this building

If it would be more natural in your language, you could present this sentence as an indirect quotation, as in the UST. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.386)**)

## Ezra 5:5

### But the eye of

Here, the word **But** indicates that the sentence it introduces draws a contrast between what Tattenai and his associates were trying to accomplish, which was an immediate end to the rebuilding of the temple, and what actually happened. You could begin the sentence with a word such as “however” to indicate this contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.368)**)

### But the eye of God was on the elders of the Jews

Here, **eye** stands for seeing, and in this context, seeing means giving care, protection, and favor. Alternate translation: “God was making sure that the Jewish leaders would be alright” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### and & not

Here the word **and** indicates that the clause it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “as a result ... not” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### and they did not stop them until the report came to Darius

Here the word **they** refers to Tattenai and his associates. The implication is that they did not make the Jewish leaders stop rebuilding the temple right away. Rather, they chose to wait until they could send a report about the rebuilding to Darius, to see what he would say about it. Alternate translation: “and Tattenai and his associates did not make the Jews stop rebuilding the temple right away, but they decided instead to report the matter to King Darius” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### and then

This phrase indicates that this event would take place after the event the story has just described. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### they returned the letter concerning this matter

Here the word **they** primarily refers to Darius. As in 4:18, the plural may be used to indicate the king and his officials, who would consider the matter openly in the royal court. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the singular. Alternate translation: “he sent back a letter to tell them what to do about this”

## **Ezra 5:6**

### **Tattenai, & and Shethar-Bozenai**

These are the names of two men. See how you translated them in [5:3](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### **and his companions**

Alternate translation: “and their colleagues”

## Ezra 5:7

### To Darius the king: All peace

Here the book begins to quote the letter that Tattenai and his associates sent to King Darius. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### To Darius

**Darius** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in [4:5](#).

### All peace

As in [4:17](#), this is a conventional greeting or good wish that senders at this time often included at the beginning of a letter. If your language has a similar expression that it uses for the same purpose, you can use it here. Alternate translation: "Greetings" or "We hope all is well with you"

## Ezra 5:8

### Let it be known to the king

These officials address the king in the third person as a sign of respect. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this respect by using an expression such as “O king.” Alternate translation: “We would like you to know, O king” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### Let it be known to the king

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who is doing the action. Alternate translation: “We would like you to know, O king” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### we went to Judah, the province

Alternate translation: “we went to the province of Judah”

### to the house of the great God

Here, **the house** refers to the temple. The officials speak of it as if it were a place in which God would live. (They likely say **the great God** because the Jews told them, as they report in [5:11](#), that it would be a temple for the God who made heaven and earth.) Alternate translation: “to the temple of the mighty God” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### and it is being built of large stones, and timber is being placed in the walls

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say these things with active forms, and you could say who was doing these actions. Alternate translation: “the Jews are building the temple out of large stones and setting timber beams in the walls” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### And this work is being done diligently and is succeeding in their hand

You could say this with an active form, and you could say who was doing the action. The term **diligently**, used here and several more times in the book, means carefully, exactly, and efficiently. Alternate translation: “And they are doing the work carefully and efficiently and successfully” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### and is succeeding in their hand

Here, **hand** represents control and action. Alternate translation: “and it is succeeding at their initiative” or “and they have been able to advance the work successfully” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 5:9

### Who set a decree for you to build this house and to complete this structure

This is a quotation within a quotation. That is, the book is quoting from the letter that Tattenai and his associates sent to King Darius, and within that letter, they are quoting what they asked the Jewish elders. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off these words within secondary quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### Who set a decree for you to build this house and to complete this structure

See how you translated this question in [5:3](#). The phrases **build this house** and **complete this structure** refer to the same action, not different actions. The officials say essentially the same thing twice for emphasis. If that would be confusing for your readers, you could say it once and provide emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: “Who said that you could build a large temple such as this” (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)



**Ezra 5:10**

**And also we asked of them their names, to let you know, so that we could write down the names of the men who were at their head**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put the reason before the result. (We do not know if Tattenai and his associates succeeded in writing down the list of names.) Alternate translation: "We wanted to write down the names of their leaders and to be prepared to let you know who they were, so we also asked them their names" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

**the men who were at their head**

Here, **head** is a figurative way of referring to a leader. Alternate translation: "the men who were their leaders" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 5:11

### We are servants of him who is the God of heaven and earth

Starting here, and through [5:16](#), there is another quotation within a quotation. The book is quoting from the letter that Tattenai and his associates sent to King Darius, and within that letter, they are quoting what the Jewish elders told them in response to their question. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening secondary quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation within a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### We are servants of him who is the God of heaven and earth

The Jewish leaders describe themselves as **servants** of God because they are speaking of a superior with humility and respect. However, in this context, the expression is also an idiom that indicates that this is the God whom they worship. Alternate translation: "We worship the God who created heaven and earth" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### is the God of heaven and earth

The implications of this phrase are that God created heaven and earth and therefore rightfully rules over them. Alternate translation: "is the God who created heaven and earth and rules over them." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### and we are building the house

**House** means the temple. This seems to be an abbreviated way of saying the "house of God," a figurative description of the temple as the place where God lived. Alternate translation: "and we are rebuilding the temple" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### and a great king of Israel built it and completed it

In this section of the book, **completed** is another way of saying **built** when the two words are used together. (Review the note about this at [4:12](#) if that would be helpful.) So the Jewish elders are expressing a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning with a single word. Alternate translation: "which a great king of Israel constructed" (See: **Hendiadys (p.408)**)

## Ezra 5:12

### However

The word **However** indicates that there will be a contrast between the sentence that it introduces and the previous one. This sentence expresses the opposite of what someone would hope and expect to happen after a great king built a temple for God, so you could begin the sentence with a word such as “unfortunately” to indicate this contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.368)**)

### because of this, that our fathers caused the God of heaven to be angry

Here, **fathers** means ancestors. Alternate translation: “because our ancestors angered the God who rules in heaven” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar

Here, **hand** represents power and control. Alternate translation: “God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to conquer them” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar

Nebuchadnezzar alone did not conquer the kingdom of Judah. Rather, the elders are describing his armies by reference to something associated with them, the emperor who commanded them. Alternate translation: “God allowed them to be conquered by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon

**Nebuchadnezzar** is the name of a man, and **Babylon** is the name of the empire that he ruled. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### the Chaldean

Here the elders provide some further background information about who Nebuchadnezzar was. Even though he was the ruler of the Babylonian Empire, he was not from the Babylonian people group himself, but rather from the Chaldean people group. Alternate translation: “who was from the Chaldean people group” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

### the Chaldean

**Chaldean** is the name of a people group. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and he destroyed this house

As in 5:11, **house** seems to be an abbreviated way of saying “house of God” or “temple.” Alternate translation: “and Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the original temple” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 5:13

### But

Here, the word **But** indicates that the sentence it introduces draws a contrast between the way Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple and the way Cyrus commanded it to be rebuilt. Use a natural way in your language to indicate this contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.368)**)

### in year one of Cyrus

The original text uses a cardinal number here, **one**, but there is not a significant difference in meaning between that and the way it uses an ordinal number, “first,” in similar contexts elsewhere. If your language customarily uses ordinals for the numbers of years, you can do that here in your translation. Alternate translation: “in the first year of Cyrus” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

### of Cyrus

**Cyrus** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in [1:1](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### the king of Babylon

Cyrus was the king of the Persian Empire, but since under his leadership the Persians had conquered the Babylonians, he also had the right to use the title **king of Babylon**. The implication may be that as the heir and successor to the throne of Babylon, Cyrus had the same power over the temple as Nebuchadnezzar, and so he could order it to be rebuilt. Alternate translation: “who conquered Babylon.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 5:14

**And also the vessels of the house of God, of gold and silver, that Nebuchadnezzar had taken out from the temple that was in Jerusalem and had brought them to the temple of Babylon—Cyrus the king took them out from the temple of Babylon and they were given to & Sheshbazzar**

This sentence may be hard for readers to follow because, in it, the direct object (that is, the thing that receives the action) comes first, and it consists of a very long phrase. If it would be helpful in your language, you could break this sentence into two sentences. Alternate translation: “Nebuchadnezzar had taken the gold and silver objects that were used in worship out of the temple in Jerusalem and brought them to the temple in Babylon. King Cyrus took them out of the temple in Babylon and gave them to ... Sheshbazzar” See also the UST.

### **the vessels of the house of God**

This means specifically the bowls, basins, and other objects listed in [1:9–10](#). These **vessels** were used during worship in the temple. Alternate translation: “the objects that were used in worship in the temple” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

### **and had brought**

If it is more natural in your language, rather than **had brought**, you could say “had taken” (See: **Go and Come (p.403)**)

### **and they were given**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “and Cyrus presented them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### **to & Sheshbazzar**

**Sheshbazzar** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in [1:8](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 5:15

### Then he said

Here, **then** indicates that the event that the elders will now describe came after the events that they have just described. In your translation, you can use the expression in your language that would best indicate this relationship. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### Then he said to him

This means “Then Cyrus said to Sheshbazzar.” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.450)**)

### Take away these vessels. Go deposit them in the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be built on its place

This is a quotation within a quotation within a quotation. The book is quoting from the letter that Tattenai and his associates sent to King Darius. Within that letter, they are quoting what the Jewish elders told them in response to their question. And within that response, the elders are quoting what King Cyrus told Sheshbazzar to do. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off this part of the verse within tertiary quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. Another option would be to present this as an indirect quotation, as in the UST. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.455)**)

### and let the house of God be built on its place

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “I authorize you to rebuild the temple on its original site” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 349)**)

## Ezra 5:16

### Then

The elders use the word **then** to indicate that the event they will now describe came after the events they have just described. In your translation, you can use the expression in your language that would best indicate this relationship. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### that Sheshbazzar came

The implication is that he came here, that is, from the perspective of the elders who are speaking, he came to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “that man named Sheshbazzar came here”

### he laid the foundation

Sheshbazzar did not do the work himself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer to others who did the work, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### And from then even until now it is being built, but it is not complete

In several places the book uses the terms **built and complete** together to mean “constructed.” (Review the note about this at [5:11](#) if that would be helpful.) But this expression means something different here. Because there is a **not** before the second verb, here the expression means that the temple was only partially rebuilt, and then the work was interrupted. Be sure that your translation shows this difference. Alternate translation: “And ever since then, we have been trying to rebuild the temple, but we still have much work to do on it”

### it is being built, but it is not complete

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “we have been trying to rebuild the temple, but we still have much work to do on it” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### but it is not complete

Here the letter ends its quotation of what the Jewish elders told Tattenai and his associates. If you decided in [5:11](#) to mark their words as a secondary quotation, you should indicate that ending here with a closing secondary quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation within a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

## Ezra 5:17

### And now

As in 4:10 and 4:11, **and now** translates an Aramaic expression that introduces the main business of a letter. In this case, it comes near the end of the letter. If your language has a comparable expression that it uses for this same purpose, you can use that in your translation. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.382)**)

### if it is good to the king

This is an idiom that means “if the king thinks that this is a good idea” or “if this advice is acceptable to the king.” Alternate translation: “if it seems good to you, O king” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### if it is good to the king

Tattenai and his associates address the king in third person as a form of respect. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the second person and indicate respect in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “if it seems good to you, O king” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### let a search be made

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who would do the action. Alternate translation: “have your officials search” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### in the house of the treasures of the king

As 6:1 explains more specifically, this was the house of the books that told where the treasures had been deposited. That is, it is the building where valuable documents such as royal chronicles were stored and kept safe. It is called a house metaphorically as if these documents lived there. Alternate translation: “in the building where the royal archives are kept” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### if it is that a decree was set by Cyrus the king to build this house of God in Jerusalem

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “whether King Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### And let him send to us the will of the king concerning this

Tattenai and his associates continue to address the king in third person as a form of respect. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the second person and indicate respect in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “Please tell us, O king, what you would like us to do about this” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### And let him send to us the will of the king concerning this

Here the book ends its quotation of the letter that Tattenai and his associates sent to King Darius. If you decided in 5:7 to mark their words as a quotation, you should indicate that by ending the quotation here with a closing



quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

## Ezra 6

### Ezra 6 General Notes

### Structure and Formatting

The completion of the story of the building of the temple and re-establishment of the temple worship occurs in this chapter. (See: **temple, house, house of God (p.486)**)

### Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

#### Temple taxes

The king said that the Jews were right and ordered money from his taxes to be used to help them with their sacrifices.

### Translation Issues in This Chapter

#### Darius

In this chapter, Darius is called the king of Assyria. In reality, besides ruling over the former Assyrian Empire, Darius was also king of Persia. Persia had conquered Babylon, which had previously conquered Assyria. This made the king of Persia to be the king of Assyria as well. It was unusual to refer to Darius as the king or ruler of Assyria. Ezra may have referred to him in this way to contrast Darius' actions with those of the former rulers of Assyria, who had treated the Jews very cruelly. Those earlier Assyrian rulers were the ones who had conquered the northern tribes of Israel and deported them to other lands. It was for this reason that the northern tribes lost their identity and were no longer a distinct people group.

## Ezra 6:1

### Then

Here, **Then** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentences described. Alternate translation: “As a result” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### Darius the king set a decree and they searched

The implication is that King Darius ordered his officials to search in the royal archives to investigate the claims that the Jewish elders had made in response to the questions that Tattenai and his associates asked them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “King Darius commanded his officials to investigate whether King Cyrus had issued a decree to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem by searching” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### Darius

**Darius** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in 4:5. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### in the house of the books where the treasures had been deposited

This means the building or buildings where valuable documents such as royal chronicles were stored and kept safe. This is called a house as if those documents lived there. Alternate translation: “in the places where the kings stored their chronicles and other valuable items” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### in the house of the books where the treasures had been deposited

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “in the places where the kings stored their chronicles and other valuable items” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### there in Babylon

This cannot mean that the search was limited to the archives in the city of Babylon or even to the region of Babylon that had become a province in the Persian Empire because a scroll describing the decree of Cyrus was finally found in the neighboring province of Media. Rather, **Babylon** must be a general description for the whole area that was the center of power for the Babylonian and Persian empires. Alternate translation: “there in Babylonia” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## Ezra 6:2

### And one scroll was found

Here, **And** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “As a result they found one scroll” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### And one scroll was found

It is implied that the officials searched before they found the scroll. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “After searching in the archives, they found one scroll” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### And one scroll was found

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “As a result, the officials found one scroll” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### at Ecbatana that is in the province of Media

**Ecbatana** is the name of a city, and **Media** is the name of the province in which it was located. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and the record was written within it thusly

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “and the writing in the scroll said this” or “and the message in the scroll was” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

## Ezra 6:3

### In year one of Cyrus the king

Here the book begins to quote what was said on the scroll that the officials found in Ecbatana. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### In year one of Cyrus the king

The Hebrew uses a cardinal number here, **one**, but there is not a significant difference in meaning between that and the way the Hebrew uses an ordinal number, “first,” in similar contexts elsewhere. If your language customarily uses ordinals for the numbers of years, you can do that here in your translation. Alternate translation: “In the first year of the reign of Cyrus as king” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

### of Cyrus

**Cyrus** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in [1:1](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### Let the house be built

Starting here, and through [6:5](#), there is a quotation within a quotation. The book is quoting from the scroll that the officials found in Ecbatana, and within that scroll, the royal chronicles quote the decree of Cyrus. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening secondary quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation within a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### Let the house be built, & and let its foundations be raised

The words **built** and **raised** mean similar things. They are a poetic parallel, as in Isaiah 58:12, “Your ancient ruins will be built; you will raise up the foundations of many generations.” Cyrus says basically the same thing twice for emphasis and clarity. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: “I authorize the Jews to raise up a new temple.” However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could also choose to bring that out in your translation. The second phrase is more specific in that it implicitly indicates that the new temple is to be built on the site of the former one. Alternate translation: “I authorize the Jews to rebuild the temple ... on the site of the former temple” (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

### Let the house be built, & and let its foundations be raised

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who would do the action. Alternate translation: “I authorize the Jews to rebuild the temple ... on the site of the former temple” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### the house

Alternate translation: “the temple” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

**Its height will be 60 cubits. Its width will be 60 cubits**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could convert these measures into modern units. Alternate translation:  
“The temple is to be 90 feet high and 90 feet wide” (See: **Biblical Distance (p.360)**)

## Ezra 6:4

### with three layers of large stone and a layer of new timber

It is no longer clear exactly what these building instructions mean. They could mean that the walls of the temple should be three layers of stone thick, with a facing of wood on the inside. They could also mean that the walls should be built with one layer of wood on top of every three layers of stone, or that the temple was to have four stories, the lower three of stone and the top one of wood. Whatever the specifics, the implication is that the temple is to be rebuilt in the same way that Solomon originally built it, since 1 Kings 6:36 says that he built its inner court, at least, “with three courses of hewn stone, and a course of cedar beams.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “and it is to be built of wood and stone just like the original one” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### And let the cost be given from the house of the king

Here, **house** is a metaphor for property, meaning everything that a person keeps in his house, and by extension, everything that he owns. So **house** in this context represents the wealth and income of the king. Alternate translation: “I will pay the expenses from the royal revenue” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### And let the cost be given from the house of the king

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who will do the action. Alternate translation: “I will pay the expenses from the royal revenue” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### And let the cost be given from the house of the king

Cyrus speaks of himself here in the third person. If this is not clear in your language, you can use the first person. Alternate translation: “I will pay the expenses from the royal revenue” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

## Ezra 6:5

**the vessels of the house of God, of gold and silver, that Nebuchadnezzar had taken out from the temple that was in Jerusalem and had brought to Babylon, must be returned**

See how you translated the very similar sentence in [5:14](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could put the verb first in this sentence. Alternate translation: "I hereby return to the Jews the gold and silver objects which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon"

**the vessels of & must be returned**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, as an imperative. Alternate translation: "return to the Jews the objects of" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

**the vessels of the house of God, of gold and silver**

**Vessels** specifically means the bowls, basins, and other objects listed in [1:9-10](#). These were used during worship in the temple. Alternate translation: "the gold and silver objects that were used in worship in the temple" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

**And let each go to the temple that is in Jerusalem, to its place. So you must put them in the house of God**

These two phrases mean similar things. Cyrus is saying basically the same thing twice to emphasize how important it is for his officials to carry out this command. If it is confusing for your readers to repeat both phrases, you can combine them and show the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: "Make sure that you put these objects back in the temple, right where they belong in the house of God in Jerusalem" (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

**So you must put them in the house of God**

It may be that the sudden change to second person singular **you** here is because the document is quoting Cyrus's words, which may have been spoken to Sheshbazzar (See [5:14](#)). If this is confusing in your language, you can use the third person. Alternate translation: "So these things must be returned to the house of God" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

**So you must put them in the house of God**

Here the scroll ends its quotation from the decree of Cyrus. If you decided in the middle of [6:3](#) to mark these words as a quotation within a quotation, you should indicate that ending here with a closing secondary quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation within a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

**So you must put them in the house of God**

Here, the text also ends its quotation from the scroll. If you decided at the start of [6:3](#) to mark its words as a quotation, you should indicate that ending here with a closing primary quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)



## Ezra 6:6

### Now Tattenai

Here the book leaves out some of the material that a story would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Rather than repeating the same information from the scroll, but now as a letter to the officials, it jumps right from its quotation from the scroll that was discovered at Ecbatana and into the letter that King Darius wrote to Tattenai and his associates in response to what the scroll said. You could say this explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “When King Darius learned from the scroll that Cyrus had ordered the temple to be rebuilt, he sent Tattenai and his associates a letter in answer to their inquiry. He told them what he had learned from the scroll and then warned them, ‘Now Tattenai’” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### Now

Since the book here begins to quote the letter that King Darius sent in reply to Tattenai and his associates, it may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### Now

As in [4:13](#), [4:14](#), and [4:21](#), **now** introduces an important point within a letter. (It is similar to the expression “and now” in [4:10](#), [4:11](#), [4:17](#), and [5:17](#).) If your language has a comparable expression that it uses for this same purpose, you can use that in your translation. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.382)**)

### Tattenai, the governor of Beyond-the-River, Shethar-Bozenai, and their companions, the officials who are in Beyond-the-River: be far away from there

Since Darius addresses these men directly at the end of the sentence, instead of **their companions**, in the third person, we would expect him to say “your companions,” in the second person. So it seems that the book is compressing the letter as it quotes it. Based on the other letters that the book quotes in [4:11–16](#), [4:17–22](#), and [5:7–17](#), the full letter probably said something like “To Tattenai, the governor of Beyond-the-River, Shethar-Bozenai, and their companions, the officials who are in Beyond-the-River. Peace. And now,” followed by an explanation that the court officials had discovered a scroll that recorded the decree of Cyrus. Then would follow instructions to these men, beginning “Be far away from there!” But since the quotation from this letter in the book jumps from the list of the recipients’ names right to these instructions, If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the second person throughout. Alternate translation: “Tattenai, the governor of Beyond-the-River, Shethar-Bozenai, and your associates, you officials who are in Beyond-the-River: Be far away from there” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### Tattenai, & Shethar-Bozenai

These are the names of two men. See how you translated them in [5:3](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and their companions

Alternate translation: “and their associates” or “and your associates”

**be far away from there**

King Darius uses a spatial metaphor to indicate that he wants Tattenai and his associates not to interfere with what the Jews are doing in Jerusalem. The meaning is not simply that they are to stay away physically from that area, since they could still plot against the Jews from a distance (for example, by bribing officials in the royal court, as [4:5](#) describes). Alternate translation: “do not interfere with what is happening in Jerusalem” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 6:7

### Leave alone the work of that house of God

This sentence means basically the same thing as the last sentence in [6:6](#). Darius says essentially the same thing twice for emphasis. If that would be confusing for your readers, you could combine the two sentences and express the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation for both sentences: “do not interfere with the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem in any way” However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could also choose to bring that out in your translation. The second phrase is more specific. It says precisely what Darius wants these Samaritan officials to leave alone. Alternate translation: “Do not interfere with what is happening in Jerusalem. Do not disturb the work on the temple there!” (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

### Let & build that house of God on its place

As in [5:15](#), this expression means “Let ... rebuild the temple on its original site.” You could say that as an alternate translation.

## Ezra 6:8

**And from me is set a decree for what it is that you shall do with these elders of the Jews to build that house of God**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "This is what I am commanding you to do to help the elders of the Jews rebuild that temple" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

**And from the treasures of the king (that is, the tribute of Beyond-the-River) let the expense be given to those men diligently**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who would do the action. Alternate translation: "I want you officials to carefully pay the full costs of the rebuilding from the royal treasury from the tribute that you receive in Beyond-the-River province" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

**And from the treasures of the king**

Darius speaks of himself here in the third person. If that is confusing in your language, you can use the first person. Alternate translation: "And from my royal revenue" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

**so that it does not stop**

Here, **it** means the work of rebuilding the temple. Darius is using a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word, **not**, together with a word, **stop**, that is the opposite of the intended meaning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this plainly. Alternate translation: "in order to make sure that the rebuilding is completed successfully" (See: **Litotes (p.429)**)

**so that it does not stop**

However, since the book uses the term **stop** when describing the opposition to the temple rebuilding in [4:21](#), [4:23](#), [4:24](#), and [5:5](#), you could also choose to use that term to show the connection. Alternate translation: "because I do not want anything to stop the Jews from rebuilding that temple"

## Ezra 6:9

**And whatever is needed (whether sons of bulls, or rams, or lambs for burnt up offerings to the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, or oil, according to the command of the priests who are in Jerusalem), let it be given to them day by day (that is, without neglect**

This sentence, like the one in [5:14](#), may be hard for readers to follow because the thing that receives the action comes first, and it consists of a very long phrase. This sentence continues into the next verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could break it up into four sentences, three in this verse and the last one in verse [10](#). You could also use active forms instead of the two passive forms and say who would do the action in each case.

Alternate translation: "The priests who are in Jerusalem will tell you what they need. This may include young bulls, rams, and lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine, and oil. I want you to give them everything that they need every single day" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### **whether sons of bulls**

This expression refers to young bulls. (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### **for burnt up offerings**

See how you translated this in [3:2](#). Review the note there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "whole burnt offerings"

### **to the God of heaven**

See how you translated this expression in [5:11](#). Alternate translation: "the God who rules in heaven"

### **day by day**

**Day by day** is an idiom that means every day or every single day. Alternate translation: "every single day" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### **that is, without neglect**

Here the king 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. Alternate translation: "make sure that you do this" (See: **Litotes (p.429)**)

## Ezra 6:10

### so that they may be offering sweet-smelling sacrifices to the God of heaven and praying for the life of the king and his sons

In this phrase, Darius explains the purpose for which he is commanding the actions described in the previous part of this sentence, in [6:9](#). If you decided to break that verse into three sentences, you can make this verse a fourth sentence of its own. If it would be natural in your language, introduce this sentence with a term to indicate that Darius is explaining his purpose here. Alternate translation: “that way, the priests can continually offer sweet-smelling sacrifices to the God who rules in heaven and pray that God will preserve my life and the life of my sons.” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.372)**)

### sweet-smelling sacrifices

The primary idea is that these sacrifices will be pleasing to God, regardless of how they actually smell. Alternate translation: “pleasing sacrifices” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### to the God of heaven

See how you translated this expression in [5:11](#). Alternate translation: “the God who rules in heaven”

### for the life of the king and his sons

Darius speaks of himself here in the third person. If that would be confusing in your language, you could use the first person. Alternate translation: “that God will preserve my life and the life of my sons” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### for the life of the king and his sons

The king is speaking of the quality of his life and that of his sons, not just that they will live. Alternate translation: “that all will be well for me and my sons” (See: **Synecdoche (p.464)**)

### and his sons

Here, **sons** could mean one of two things. (1) It could be literal and mean the biological sons of King Darius. (2) It could be figurative and mean descendants, specifically those whom Darius hoped would succeed him on the throne. As the note to [4:15](#) explains, the Persian kings spoke of predecessor kings as their “fathers,” so they may also have spoken of successor kings as their “sons.” Alternate translation: “his successors” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 6:11

### And from me is set a decree that

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “and I am commanding that” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### for any man who changes this edict

The phrase **any man who changes this edict** could mean giving different instructions from what the king had commanded, but it could also mean doing something against what his edict commands. 6:12 suggests that changing the edict means destroying the temple rather than ensuring that it was rebuilt and maintained. Alternate translation: “if anyone disobeys this edict” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### a beam shall be pulled from his house, and, being erect, he shall be impaled on it

This is an implicit reference to one form of capital punishment that the Persians used. Darius assumes that the officials know what he means. Anyone who violates his order is to be lifted up and impaled on a beam of wood from his own house. That is, one end of the beam is to be sharpened so that it will pass through the body of the offender, the other end is to be planted in the ground, and he is to be impaled on the beam. Alternate translation: “pull a beam out of his house, sharpen one end, and lift him up and impale him on it” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### And his house shall be made a rubbish heap on account of this

The expression **rubbish heap** means that the house would be so thoroughly destroyed that it would look like a garbage dump. The former site of the house would not necessarily be used as an actual dump. Alternate translation: “and as a further punishment for violating my order, I command you to demolish his house” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### a beam shall be pulled from his house

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who would do the action. Alternate translation: “you must pull a beam out of his house” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### and, being erect, he shall be impaled

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who would do the action. Alternate translation: “then you must set the beam upright and impale him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### And his house shall be made a rubbish heap

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who would do the action. Alternate translation: “And you must turn his house into a rubbish heap” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

## Ezra 6:12

### And may the God who has caused his name to dwell there overthrow

This is a curse formula. In addition to the threat of severe punishment in the previous verse, here Darius adds a curse from God to anyone who would disobey his order. Use a curse formula that is natural in your language.

### And may the God who has caused his name to dwell there overthrow

Darius speaks of God's **name** here as if it were capable of living in a place. The phrase echoes Jewish usage, which Darius may be following deliberately to show his respect for the God whose temple he wants to be rebuilt. The phrase indicates that Jerusalem is the place from which God chose to start making himself known throughout the world. Alternate translation: "And may the God who began to make himself known from Jerusalem destroy" (See: **Personification (p.444)**)

### And may the God who has caused his name to dwell there overthrow

Here, **name** is a figurative way of referring to the fame or reputation of a person. In this figure, a person's fame is described by something associated with it, which is how well known their name is and how people react to hearing it. Alternate translation: "And may the God who began to make himself known from Jerusalem destroy" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### may & overthrow

This is an idiom that means "destroy." Alternate translation: "may ... destroy" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### any king or people who stretches out his hand

Here the expression "who stretches out his hand" means to seek to do harm. Alternate translation: "any king or people who, with harmful intent, attempts" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### to change, to destroy that house of God

This could mean one of two things. (1) It could mean that no one is to try to **change** the decree of Darius, in the sense of disobeying or defying, as in the previous verse, so that they can **destroy** the temple rather than ensure that it is rebuilt. In that case, this letter would be leaving out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Alternate translation: "to disobey my decree and destroy that temple" or (2) It could mean that no one is to alter or destroy the temple. Alternate translation: "to alter the design of that temple or destroy it" (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### which is in Jerusalem

Here Darius repeats some background information in order to be very explicit about what temple this decree applies to. Alternate translation: "in Jerusalem" (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

### I, Darius, have set a decree. Let it be done diligently

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who is to do the action. Alternate translation: "I, King Darius, am issuing this decree. I command you to carry it out exactly and efficiently" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)



## Darius

**Darius** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in [4:5](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Let it be done diligently

Here the text ends its quotation from the letter that King Darius sent in reply to Tattenai and his associates. If you decided in [6:6](#) to mark his words as a quotation, you should indicate that ending here with a closing primary quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

## Ezra 6:13

### Then

Here the word **Then** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the result of what the previous sentences described. Alternate translation: “In response,” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### Tattenai, & Shethar-Bozenai

These are the names of two men. See how you translated them in [5:3](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and their companions

Alternate translation: “and their colleagues”

### did thus diligently, according to what Darius the king had sent

The implication is that these men received the king’s response to their letter, and once they knew what he had commanded, they carried out his orders. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “received the response of King Darius to their letter and immediately carried out exactly what he had ordered” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 6:14

### And the elders of

Here the word **And** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the result of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “As a result ... the leaders” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p. 375))

### And the elders of the Jews were building and prospering

The phrase **building and prospering** expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **building** tells what the elders prospered or succeeded in. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “And the Jewish leaders were rebuilding the temple successfully” (See: **Hendiadys** (p.408))

### by the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo

As in [5:1](#), the implication is that these two men, as God’s messengers, encouraged the Jewish leaders to persevere in the project of rebuilding the temple. Alternate translation: “thanks to the encouragement that Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo gave them in messages from God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

### Haggai

**Haggai** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in [5:1](#). (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

### and Zechariah the son of Iddo

**Zechariah** is the name of a man, and **Iddo** is the name of his father. See how you translated their names in [5:1](#). (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

### And they built and completed

As in [5:11](#), the words **built** and **completed** connected with **and** express a single idea. In this section of the book, when the two words are used together, “completed” is another way of saying “built.” (Review the note about this at [4:12](#) if that would be helpful.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning with a single word. Alternate translation: “And they were able to construct the temple” (See: **Hendiadys** (p.408))

### And they built and completed

The implication is that what the Jewish leaders **built and completed**, that is, constructed, was the temple. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “And they were able to construct the temple” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

### by the decree of the God of Israel

Here the book speaks of the messages that God had sent through the prophets Haggai and Zechariah as a **decree** or command that God had issued to the Jewish leaders to rebuild the temple, much like the decrees that the Persian kings had issued. If it would be helpful in your language, you could describe these messages plainly.

Alternate translation: “just as the God of Israel had commanded them to do through the prophets” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## and by the decree of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes, the king of Persia

Here, the book assumes some knowledge on the part of readers, because by this point in time, only King Cyrus (1:2-4) and King Darius (6:6-12) had issued decrees for the Jerusalem temple to be rebuilt. Artaxerxes was the grandson of Darius, and he would not become king for another 50 years. Moreover, while the book anticipated the reign of Artaxerxes in 4:7-23, there it recounted how he ordered the temple rebuilding to stop. But the book is assuming that readers will know that Artaxerxes eventually did reverse himself and issue a decree for the maintenance of the Jerusalem temple. The book describes this in 7:12-26. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “and just as King Cyrus and King Darius of Persia had decreed they should do. King Artaxerxes of Persia also later decreed that they should finish the temple” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes, the king of Persia

Here the book repeats some background information to remind readers who these men were. The phrase **the king of Persia** applies to each of them. Alternate translation: “King Cyrus and King Darius of Persia and King Artaxerxes of Persia” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

## Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes

These are the names of men. See how you translated them in 1:1, 4:5, and 4:7. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 6:15

### And & was done

Here the word **And** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “As a result ... they finished building” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p.375))

### And this house was done

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “The Jewish leaders finished rebuilding the temple” (See: **Active or Passive** (p.349))

### this house

As in 5:3, **house** here is a figurative way of saying temple. Alternate translation: “this temple” (See: **Metaphor** (p.431))

### by day three of the month of Adar

The Hebrew uses a cardinal number here, **three**, but there is not a significant difference in meaning between that and the way the Hebrew uses an ordinal number, **third**, in similar contexts elsewhere. If your language customarily uses ordinals for the numbers of days, you can do that here in your translation. Alternate translation: “by the third day of the month of Adar” (See: **Ordinal Numbers** (p.439))

### by day three of the month of Adar

You could convert the Hebrew day and month into an approximate date on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the date will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to give the number of the day and the name of the month on the Hebrew calendar. Alternate translation: “by the third day of the month of Adar” (See: **Hebrew Months** (p.405))

### year six of the reign of Darius the king

The Hebrew uses a cardinal number here, **six**, but there is not a significant difference in meaning between that and the way the Hebrew uses an ordinal number, **sixth**, in similar contexts elsewhere. If your language customarily uses ordinals for the numbers of years, you can do that here in your translation. Alternate translation: “in the sixth year of the reign of Darius as king of Persia” (See: **Ordinal Numbers** (p.439))

### year six of the reign of Darius the king

If it would be helpful in your language, you could include the name of Darius's kingdom. Alternate translation: “in the sixth year of the reign of Darius as king of Persia” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

## Ezra 6:16

### And & performed

Here, the word **And** indicates that the event the story will now relate came after the events it has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a word such as “Then.” (See:

**Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### the sons of Israel

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Here the book envisions all of the Israelites as descendants of the patriarch Jacob, who was also known as Israel. The expression comprises the three groups that are listed next, the priests, Levites, and other Jews. Alternate translation: “the Israelites” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### and the rest of the sons of the exile

As indicated in [2:1](#) and [8:35](#), the phrase **the sons of the exile** refers specifically to the group of Jewish people who returned to the land of Judah from Babylon after King Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Jerusalem and had taken many Jews as captives to Babylon. Alternate translation: “and the Jews who had returned from exile” or “and the Jews who had returned to their homeland” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### And & performed the dedication of this house of God with joy

The abstract noun **dedication** refers to a special ceremony the Israelites conducted to set the temple apart as a place for the worship of Yahweh. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with a verb such as “consecrate.” Alternate translation: “joyfully consecrated this temple for the worship of Yahweh” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### And & performed the dedication of this house of God with joy

If your language does not use abstract nouns such as **joy**, you can translate the idea behind it with an adverb such as “joyfully.” Alternate translation: “joyfully dedicated this temple to God” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

## Ezra 6:17

### And they offered for the dedication of this house of God

As in the previous sentence, the abstract noun **dedication** refers to a special ceremony that the Israelites conducted. Once again you could translate the idea behind this word with a verb such as “dedicate” or “consecrate”  
Alternate translation: “As they dedicated this temple, they offered” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### And they offered & 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs, and 12 bucks of goats for a sin offering

The implication, as 6:9 indicates explicitly, is that the bulls, rams, and lambs were used for whole burnt offerings. If it would be helpful, review the note to 3:2 about what whole burnt offerings were and why they were offered.  
Alternate translation: “they offered 100 bulls, 200 rams, and 400 lambs as whole burnt offerings and 12 male goats as a sin offering” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### and & bucks of goats

A male goat is called a buck. So this expression, **bucks of goats**, means the same thing as male goats in 8:35 (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### and 12 bucks of goats & according to the number of the tribes of Israel

The book assumes that readers will know that there were twelve tribes in Israel, so the twelve goats could symbolically represent the entire nation. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly.  
Alternate translation: “12 male goats ... one for each of the 12 tribes of Israel” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 6:18

### And they caused & to stand

Here the word **And** indicates that the event the story will now relate came after the event it has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a word such as “Then.” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### And they caused the priests to stand & and the Levites

Here, **stand** is a figurative way of saying that a person has assumed the duties of their office. So to cause someone to stand is to appoint them to those duties and install them in that office. Alternate translation: “And they appointed the priests ... and the Levites” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### And they caused the priests to stand

Here, **they** refers to the leaders of the Jews. Alternate translation: “And the leaders of the Jews appointed the priests” or “Then the Jewish elders established the priests” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.450)**)

### the priests & in their divisions, and the Levites in their sections

The book assumes that readers will know that these **divisions** and **sections** were groups of priests and Levites, respectively, that served in the temple for a week at a time. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “They appointed the priests and the Levites to groups that would serve in the temple for a week at a time” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### for the service of the God who is in Jerusalem

Here the book describes God in a spatial metaphor as if he lived in the city of Jerusalem. This is a figurative reference to the way God’s presence was in the temple in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “to lead the worship of God in the temple in Jerusalem” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### according to the writing of the book of Moses

Alternate translation: “as it is written in the book of Moses” or “as God commanded in the law of Moses”



## Ezra 6:19

### So the sons of the exile performed the Passover

The phrase at the beginning of this sentence indicates that it explains the results of what the previous sentence described. (As 6:20 explains, because the priests and Levites had been assigned to their duties, festivals like this could be observed again.) Alternate translation: “As a result, the Jews who had returned from exile were able to celebrate Passover” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### So & performed

The word **and** introduces a new event in the story. You do not need to represent it in your translation unless your language has a similar expression that it characteristically uses. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.423)**)

### the sons of the exile

See how you translated this expression in 6:16. Alternate translation: “the Jews who had returned to their homeland” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the Passover

**Passover** is the name of a religious festival that the law of Moses commanded the Jews to celebrate every year to remember how God had rescued their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

### on day 14 of the first month

The Hebrew uses a cardinal number here, **14**, but there is not a significant difference in meaning between that and the way the Hebrew uses an ordinal number, fourteenth, in similar contexts elsewhere. If your language customarily uses ordinals for the numbers of days, you can do that here in your translation. Alternate translation: “on the fourteenth day of the first month” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

### on day 14 of the first month

You could convert the Hebrew day and month into an approximate date on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the date will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to use the numbers of the Hebrew day and month. Alternate translation: “on the fourteenth day of the first month” (See: **Hebrew Months (p.405)**)

### on day 14 of the first month

This means the first month of the following year. Since Adar is the last month in the Jewish calendar, this was only a few weeks after the temple was finished. The implication is that the Jewish leaders had been able to complete that work and install the priests and Levites in time to celebrate this festival. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “only a few weeks later, on the fourteenth day of the first month” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 6:20

### For

The word **for** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the reason why the action described in the previous sentence was possible. Alternate translation: “They were able to do this because” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p.375))

### the priests and the Levites had purified themselves as one, all of them were pure

As in 3:9, **as one** is an idiom that means that these priests and Levites all behaved as if they were a single person, that is, they all did the same thing. Alternate translation: “Every single one of the priests and Levites had purified himself” (See: **Idiom** (p.419))

### had purified themselves as one, all of them were pure

These two phrases mean the same thing. The book uses the repetition for emphasis and clarity. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that might be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: “every single one had purified himself” (See: **Parallelism** (p.441))

### had purified themselves

Being pure represents being acceptable to God. Alternate translation: “performed a ceremony to show that they wanted to be acceptable to God” (See: **Metaphor** (p.431))

### And they slaughtered the Passover

The book assumes that readers will know that the **Passover** celebration included a special meal of lamb. Following God's instructions, the Israelites had slaughtered lambs to eat on the night before they left Egypt, and they had put the blood of the lambs on their doorframes so that God would pass over their houses and everyone inside would be safe. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “And they slaughtered lambs for the special Passover meal” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

### the Passover

See how you translated the name of this festival in 6:19. (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

### the sons of the exile

See how you translated this expression in 6:16. Alternate translation: “the Jews who had returned to their homeland” (See: **Idiom** (p.419))

### and for their brothers, the priests

Here, **brothers** is a figurative way of saying fellow priests, although it is possible that this group included some of the biological brothers of the priests who slaughtered the lambs. Alternate translation: “and for their fellow priests” (See: **Metaphor** (p.431))

## Ezra 6:21

### And the sons of Israel ate

**Sons** here means descendants. The book is envisioning all of the Israelites as descendants of the patriarch Jacob, who was also known as Israel. Alternate translation: "And the Israelites ate" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### And the sons of Israel ate

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Alternate translation: "And the Israelites ate the Passover meal" (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### and every one who separated himself to them from the uncleanness of the nations of the land in order to seek Yahweh

This could mean one of two possibilities. (1) It could be referring to people from other nations who had converted and become Jews. Alternate translation: "and anyone from another nation who had abandoned their former practices and become a Jew and would now worship and obey Yahweh" or (2) It could be referring to Israelites who had not been taken into exile but who had adopted the customs and practices of the other people groups that had come to live in the former Jewish homeland. Alternate translation: "as well as Israelites who had not gone into exile, who had adopted foreign practices, but who would now join the returned exiles in worshiping and obeying Yahweh" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### and every one who separated himself & from the uncleanness of the nations of the land

Being **separated** from uncleanness represents refusing to do things that make people unclean. Alternate translation: "and everyone who refused to do the things that made them unclean that the other people groups living in the land did" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### from the uncleanness of the nations of the land

Here, **uncleanness** represents being unacceptable to God. Alternate translation: "from the things that made the nations around them unacceptable to God" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### the nations of the land

Like **the people of the land** in 4:4, this expression refers to the non-Israelite people groups who were living in this area. (Review the note at 4:4 if that would be helpful.) Alternate translation: "the foreign people groups living nearby" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### in order to seek Yahweh

To **seek** Yahweh means to choose to know, worship, and obey him. Alternate translation: "to worship and obey Yahweh" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## the God of Israel

As in [4:1](#), this phrase provides further background information about who Yahweh is. In context, it helps distinguish Yahweh from the gods of the nations of the land. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, the God whom the people of Israel worshiped” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

## Ezra 6:22

### Then they performed

This phrase indicates that the event the story will now relate came after the event it has just described. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a phrase such as “After that.” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### Then they performed the Festival of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy

**Festival of Unleavened Bread** is the name of another religious festival that the law of Moses commanded the Jews to celebrate every year to remember how God had rescued their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. The term **Unleavened Bread** refers to bread that is made without yeast or other leavening. When God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, he told them to flee quickly without waiting for their bread to rise. Unleavened bread is served in the yearly Passover meal in remembrance of that time. Then for the next week after Passover, the Jews are still not to eat any leavened bread. The beginning and end of that week are marked by special ceremonies. Alternate translation: “For the next seven days, they joyfully celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### Then they performed the Festival of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, because Yahweh had caused them to be joyful, and had caused the heart of the king of Assyria to turn toward them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel

This sentence has three main parts, each one giving the reason for what comes before it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could break the sentence into three sentences, and put the earlier part about the festival at the end. In that way, each sentence gives the result of the sentence before it. Alternate translation: “Yahweh had made the king of Assyria to feel favorable toward the Jews so that he supported the rebuilding of the temple. This had made the people very happy. As a result, they performed the Festival of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### and had caused the heart of the king of Assyria to turn toward them

Here, **the heart** represents the thoughts and the will. Turning the king’s heart towards the Jews means that Yahweh made him think and feel differently about the Jews. Alternate translation: “and made King Darius of Persia favorable toward the Jews” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### the king of Assyria

This phrase actually refers to Darius, the king of Persia. But since the Persian Empire was the heir to the Assyrian Empire, Darius could be addressed by this title as well. (See the note to [4:15](#) that explains that the Persian kings considered their “fathers” or predecessor kings to include the Assyrian and Babylonian kings whose empires they had absorbed.) Alternate translation: “King Darius of Persia”

### the God of Israel

As in [4:1](#), this phrase provides further background information about who Yahweh is. In context, it helps distinguish Yahweh from the gods of the nations of the land. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, the God whom the people of Israel worshiped” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

## Ezra 7

### Ezra 7 General Notes

### Structure and Formatting

#### Possible title: Ezra begins his religious reforms

#### Ezra's genealogy

Ezra's genealogy in 7:1–5 traces Ezra back to Aaron in a list of 16 ancestors. As is common in ancient genealogies, this list almost certainly does not include all of the generations between Aaron and Ezra. Aaron (7:5) was the first high priest under the law of Moses and the first to serve in the tabernacle. Azariah (7:3) was the first high priest to serve in the temple that Solomon built, which this book describes in 5:11. Seraiah was the last high priest to serve in that temple. The Babylonians executed him when they conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. The names in the list are arranged so that there will be seven generations between Aaron and Azariah, and seven generations between Azariah and Ezra, with Seraiah listed as the last generation before Ezra. If you have the freedom to use formatting creatively in your translation, you could make the implicit information about Aaron, Azariah, and Seraiah explicit and format this genealogy in a way that will highlight its purpose and design. Alternate translation and formatting for verse 1 through the first 2 words of verse 6:

Ezra—

the descendant of Seraiah, the last high priest in Solomon's temple, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the descendant of Ahitub, the descendant of Amariah,

the son of Azariah, the first high priest in Solomon's temple,

the descendant of Meraioth, the son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar,

the son of Aaron, the first high priest in the tabernacle

—this Ezra

### Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

#### God's Law

The people no longer know the law of Moses. Therefore, the king allows Ezra to return to Judea to teach the people about God's law. Many people go with him. (See: **law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God (p.480)**)

## Ezra 7:1

### Now after these things

This phrase, common in Hebrew storytelling, indicates that the book will now relate events that occurred some time after the events that it had been describing. The book had been describing the time when the Jews finished rebuilding the temple, [6:15](#), which was the sixth year of the reign of Darius. Now it will describe events beginning during the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, who was the grandson of Darius. So nearly sixty years went by between the end of chapter 6 and the beginning of chapter 7. If your language has a similar phrase that can indicate the passage of time like this, you can use that in your translation. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p. 423)**)

### Artaxerxes

**Artaxerxes** is the name of a man. See how you translated it in [4:7](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### Ezra

Here the book introduces a new, important person. Use a natural way in your language to do this. Also, since the sentence that begins here extends through verse 6, it may be helpful to your readers to make this first part of verse 1 into a complete sentence and begin another sentence with the list of Ezra's ancestors, as in the UST. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.426)**)

### the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah

In general, in the list in [7:1-5](#), **son** means descendant. However, in many cases a man actually is the biological son of the next man on the list. So for your translation, you will need to decide whether to use the figurative expression **son**, which can also be literally true in many cases, or the plain expression “descendant,” which is true in every case, or to say “son” for actual sons and “descendant” for descendants who are not actual sons. Choosing that last option would help to show that the men on the list have been selected to make a certain number and arrangement, as explained in the chapter introduction. Alternative translations will illustrate this last option for each verse. Here, Alternate translation: “the descendant of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Seraiah, & Azariah, & Hilkiah

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 7:2**

**the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub**

Alternate translation: "the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the descendant of Ahitub"

**Shallum, & Zadok, & Ahitub**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)



## **Ezra 7:3**

**the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth**

Alternate translation: "the descendant of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the descendant of Meraioth"

**Amariah, & Azariah, & Meraioth**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 7:4**

### **the son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki**

Even if you have decided to use plain terminology, unless you have chosen to use the term “descendant” throughout this list, you can say “son” in each case here because each of these men was the actual father of the man whose name precedes his. Alternate translation: “the son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki”

### **Zerahiah, & Uzzi, & Bukki**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 7:5

### the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron

Here again, unless you have chosen to use the term “descendant” throughout this list, you can say “son” in each case here because each of these men was the actual father of the man whose name precedes his. Alternate translation: “the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron”

### Abishua, & Phinehas, & Eleazar, & Aaron

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### the head priest

Here the book provides some background information to remind readers of who Aaron was. Alternate translation: “the high priest” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

### the head priest

Here, **head** is a figurative way of saying “leader.” Specifically, it means that Aaron was the leader of the priests, or the high priest. Alternate translation: “the high priest” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### the head priest

The book assumes that readers will know that Aaron was the first high priest to serve in the tabernacle when God gave the law to Moses, his brother. Alternate translation: “the first high priest” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 7:6

### this Ezra went up from Babylon

The book says that Ezra **went up** because he needed to travel from a river valley up into the mountains in order to go from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “this Ezra went from Babylon to Jerusalem” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### this Ezra went up from Babylon

If it is more natural in your language, you can say “came” instead of **went**. Alternate translation: “this Ezra came from Babylon to Jerusalem” (See: **Go and Come (p.403)**)

### and he was a skilled scribe in the law of Moses that Yahweh, the God of Israel, had given

This is background information that helps identify Ezra further. Alternate translation: “and he had carefully studied the law that Yahweh, the God of Israel, had given through Moses” (See: **Background Information (p.357)**)

### And the king granted to him all his request according to the hand of Yahweh his God upon him

Here, **hand** represents action, and in this context the expression **the hand of Yahweh his God upon him** indicates that Ezra enjoyed Yahweh’s care, protection, and favor. (The expression has a similar sense to the one in [5:5](#), **the eye of God was on the elders of the Jews**.) Alternate translations: “And King Artaxerxes gave Ezra everything he asked for because Yahweh, his God, was helping him” or “And King Artaxerxes gave Ezra everything he asked for because Yahweh, his God, was showing him favor” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 7:7

### And & went up

Here, **And** indicates that the event this sentence describes took place at the same time as the event the story has just related. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship in this case by using a phrase such as “At the same time ... went up” (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.380)**)

### some from the sons of Israel

Here, **sons** means descendants. Here the book envisions all of the Israelites as descendants of the patriarch Jacob, who was also known as Israel. Alternate translation: “from among the Israelites” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### and the Levites

See how you translated this term in [2:40](#). Review the explanation in the note there if that would be helpful. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and the ones who sang

This is the same occupational group as in [2:41](#). Review the explanation in the note there if that would be helpful.

### and the gatekeepers

This is the same occupational group as in [2:42](#). Review the explanation in the note there if that would be helpful.

### and the temple servants

See how you translated this term in [2:43](#). Review the explanation in the note there if that would be helpful. These men would not have worked in the temple themselves, but would be descendants of men who had worked in the temple. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “and descendants of the temple servants” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### And & went up to Jerusalem

The book says **went up** because these people had to travel from a river valley up into the mountains in order to return from their places of exile to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “traveled to Jerusalem” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### And & went up to Jerusalem

If it is more natural in your language, you can say “came” instead of **went**. Alternate translation: “came to Jerusalem” (See: **Go and Come (p.403)**)

### in year seven of Artaxerxes the king

The Hebrew uses a cardinal number here, **seven**, but there is not a significant difference in meaning between that and the way the Hebrew uses an ordinal number, **seventh**, in similar contexts elsewhere. If your language customarily uses ordinals for the numbers of years, you can do that here in your translation. Alternate translation: “in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes as king of Persia” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

## Ezra 7:8

### And he came to Jerusalem

Here, **he** refers to Ezra, but the statement also applies to all the others described in [7:7](#) who were traveling with him. Alternate translation: "And they all arrived in Jerusalem" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.450)**)

### And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month

The **fifth month** means the fifth month in the Jewish calendar. You could convert the Hebrew month into an equivalent on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the equivalency will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to use the name or number of the Hebrew month. Alternate translation: "And they all arrived in Jerusalem during the fifth month of the year" (See: **Hebrew Months (p.405)**)

### in the fifth month

Alternate translation: "in month five" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

### which was in the seventh year of the king

Alternate translation: "in year seven of the reign of Artaxerxes" or since the year was mentioned at the end of the previous verse, "of that year" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

## Ezra 7:9

### For

The word **for** indicates that the sentence it introduces will provide background information that will help readers appreciate what the book describes next. You can translate it with the word or phrase in your language that is most similar in meaning and significance. Alternate translation: “Now” (See: **Background Information** (p.357))

### on the first of the first month was the beginning of the ascent from Babylon

The book says **ascent** to characterize the journey once again as involving a significant climb in elevation. Alternate translation: “the group began its uphill trip from Babylon on the first day of the first month” (See: **Idiom** (p.419))

### on the first of the first month

The **first month** means the first month in the Jewish calendar. You could convert the Hebrew month into an equivalent on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the equivalency will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to use the name or number of the Hebrew month. Alternate translation: “on the first day of the first month of that year” (See: **Hebrew Months** (p.405))

### on the first of the first month

Alternate translation: “on day one of month one” (See: **Ordinal Numbers** (p.439))

### And on the first

This word **and** might indicate that the sentence it introduces draws a contrast between how long this journey would be expected to take and how quickly Ezra and his companions reached Jerusalem. You could begin the sentence with a word such as “but” to indicate this contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship** (p.368))

### And on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him

The implication is that the journey was accomplished quickly and safely, and that this was further evidence of God's favor towards Ezra. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “It only took them four months to reach Jerusalem because God was helping them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

### And on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the results that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “Because God was helping them, it only took them four months to reach Jerusalem” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p.375))

## according to the good hand of his God upon him

As in 7:6, **hand** represents action, and the expression **the good hand of his God upon him** indicates that God acted with care, protection, and favor toward Ezra throughout this journey. Alternate translation: “because God was helping them” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)



## Ezra 7:10

### For

The word **For** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the reasons for what the previous sentence described. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: "The reason why God blessed them was that" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### Ezra had made his heart firm

Here, the **heart** represents the thoughts and the will of a person. Alternate translation: "Ezra had firmly determined" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### to seek the law of Yahweh, and to do it

Just as in 6:21 to **seek** Yahweh means choosing to know, worship, and obey him, so here **to seek the law of Yahweh and to do it** means choosing to learn his law thoroughly in order to obey it, as a way of being loyal and obedient to Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: "to learn the law of Yahweh thoroughly and to obey it" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### and to teach statute and ordinance in Israel

Here, the book expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The words **statute** and **ordinance** both refer to commandments in the law of Moses. The book uses the two words together to refer comprehensively to everything in the law. Alternate translation: "and to teach the people of Israel everything that the law commanded" (See: **Doublet (p.391)**)

### in Israel

Here, the story refers to all of the Israelites by reference to their homeland, the country of Israel. Alternate translation: "to the people of Israel" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

## Ezra 7:11

### Now this is

The word **Now** introduces a new event in the story. Use an expression in your language that would be natural for introducing a new event or a change to something different. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.423)**)

### the king Artaxerxes

Artaxerxes is the name of a man. It also occurs in [7:12](#) and [7:21](#) in this chapter. See how you translated it in [4:7](#). Alternate translation: “King Artaxerxes of Persia” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### to Ezra the priest, the scribe, a scribe of the words of the commandments of Yahweh and his statutes for Israel

Here, the book repeats some background information to remind readers who Ezra was. Alternate translation: “to Ezra, who was a priest and a scribe, and who had carefully studied everything that Yahweh, in the law, had commanded the people of Israel to do” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

### the commandments of Yahweh and his statutes for Israel

These two phrases mean similar things. The book uses them together to refer comprehensively to everything in the law. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine the phrases in your translation. Alternate translation: “everything that Yahweh, in the law, had commanded the people of Israel to do” (See: **Doublet (p.391)**)

### Israel

The story refers here to all of the Israelites as if they were a single person, their ancestor, Israel. Alternate translation: “the people of Israel” (See: **Personification (p.444)**)

## Ezra 7:12

### Artaxerxes, the king of kings, to Ezra the priest

Here, the book begins to quote a letter of introduction and authorization that Artaxerxes gave to Ezra. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### Artaxerxes, the king of kings

Following the conventions of letter writing at the time, Artaxerxes gives his name first, as the sender. **The king of kings** was a title, meaning that he was the greatest of kings, the king that other kings obeyed. Alternate translation: "From the Great King Artaxerxes" or "From Artaxerxes, the greatest king" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven

As was also conventional, Artaxerxes gives Ezra's name next, as the recipient. He also includes some background information that helps identify Ezra further. Alternate translation: "Ezra, a priest of the God who rules in heaven, who has studied his law carefully" (See: **Background Information (p.357)**)

### the God of heaven

See how you translated this expression in [5:11](#). Alternate translation: "the God who rules in heaven"

### Peace

As in [4:17](#) and [5:7](#), this is a conventional greeting or good wish that senders at this time often included at the beginning of a letter. If your language has a similar expression that it uses for the same purpose, you can use it here. Alternate translation: "Greetings" or "We hope all is well with you"

### And now

**And now** is an Aramaic expression that was used in the letters of this time to introduce the main business of the letter. If it would be helpful, review the note about this expression at [4:10](#). If your language has a comparable expression that it uses for this same purpose, you could use that in your translation. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.382)**)

## Ezra 7:13

### from me is set a decree that

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "I am issuing a decree that" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### with you

The king is addressing Ezra, so **you** is singular and refers to Ezra here, and **you** and **your** similarly refer to him in all of their other occurrences through [7:20](#). If your language distinguishes between forms of you, the form for a superior addressing a respected individual would be appropriate. (See: **Forms of You (p.400)**)

### from the people 'Israel

Here Artaxerxes specifies that **Israel** is the name of Ezra's people group, perhaps because he does not expect everyone who sees this letter to be familiar with them already. Alternate translation: "from the people known as 'Israel'" or "from your people who are called 'Israel'"

## Ezra 7:14

**Because it was sent from before the king and his seven counselors to inquire about Judah and about Jerusalem by the law of your God which is in your hand**

### Connecting Statement:

Verses 7:14–17 are one long sentence in Aramaic. The first part (7:14–16) provides the reasons for the second part (in 7:17). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could break up that sentence into several smaller sentences. To begin with, you could make this verse a sentence of its own. To do that, you could leave off the word **Because** and express the meaning later in verse 17 with a word such as “so” or “therefore.” Alternate translation: “The king and his seven counselors are sending you to inquire about Judah and about Jerusalem by the law of your God which is in your hand.” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### Because

### Connecting Statement:

The word **Because** indicates that in the long sentence that follows, the next several phrases (7:14–16) will provide the reasons for what the final two phrases say (in 7:17). If you have decided to keep the long sentence, you can translate this first word with the word or phrase in your language that introduces a reason. However, if it would be helpful in your language, also consider breaking up this long sentence. Alternate translation: “Since” or “In view of the fact that” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### it was sent from before the king and his seven counselors

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “I and my seven counselors are sending you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### it was sent from before the king and his seven counselors

Artaxerxes speaks of himself here in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the first person. Alternate translation: “I and my seven counselors are sending you” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### it was sent from before the king and his seven counselors

This could mean literally that Ezra has been in the king’s presence, that is, in his court, and that the king is sending him out from there. This phrase would show anyone who read the letter that Ezra was an important figure in the royal court. The phrase could also be a spatial metaphor indicating that Ezra is going out on the king’s behalf and with his authority. Alternate translation: “I and my seven counselors are sending you from my court” or “I and my seven counselors are sending you with my authority” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## and his seven counselors

As in 4:5, **counselors** means royal advisors in the Persian court. The seven mentioned here appear to have been the king's closest and most important advisors. Alternate translation: "and his seven chief royal advisors" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

## to inquire about Judah and about Jerusalem by the law of your God

Artaxerxes is describing the Jews who are in the province of Judah, and especially its capital city of Jerusalem, figuratively, by reference to things that are associated with them, the province and city where they live. Alternate translation: "to see how carefully the Jews living in the province of Judah and the city of Jerusalem are following the law of your God" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

## to inquire about Judah and about Jerusalem by the law of your God

The implication, particularly in light of the powers that the king gives Ezra at the end of the letter (7:25-26), is that **inquire** means more than just to find out about. It also implies to do something about. Alternate translation: "to make sure that the Jews living in the province of Judah and the city of Jerusalem follow the law of your God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## which is in your hand

Most likely, the word **hand** here means possession, indicating that Ezra was going to bring a written copy of the law of God with him. The phrase **in your hand** could mean that Ezra literally carried a scroll of the law in his hands or that he personally owned a written copy of the law. However, the phrase **in your hand** could also imply that Ezra will use the law as he performs his responsibilities in Judah and Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "that you carry with you" or "that you have with you" or "that you will use" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 7:15

### and to bring silver and gold that the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel whose dwelling is in Jerusalem

Verses 7:14–17 are one long sentence in Aramaic. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could break up that sentence into several parts. You could make 7:14 a sentence of its own, and you could divide this verse into two sentences, with the reason first and the result second. Alternate translation: “My counselors and I have freely given silver and gold for the God of Israel who lives in Jerusalem. So I am also sending you to deliver those gifts to his temple there.” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### the king and his counselors

As in 7:14, Artaxerxes speaks of himself here in the third person. Alternate translation: “I and my counselors” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### whose dwelling is in Jerusalem

Artaxerxes speaks of the God of Israel as if he actually lived in Jerusalem. Like Darius in 6:12, he seems to be echoing Jewish usage, likely to show his respect for the God of Israel. The phrase indicates that Jerusalem is the place from which God chose to start making himself known throughout the world. In this context it seems to refer specifically to the temple since, in the next verse, Artaxerxes associates the silver and gold that he and his counselors have given with further gifts that others may give for the house of God that is in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “whose temple is in Jerusalem” (See: **Personification (p.444)**)

## Ezra 7:16

### with all the silver and the gold that you find in all the province of Babylon

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could also divide this verse into two sentences. This phrase could be the first sentence. Here, **find** is an idiom that in this context means “can obtain.” Artaxerxes is giving Ezra permission to invite everyone in the province of Babylon to contribute. Alternate translation: “I also give you permission to ask everyone living in the province of Babylon to contribute silver and gold.” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### with all the silver and the gold that you find in all the province of Babylon

The implication is that these would be contributions towards the expenses of the worship of Yahweh in the temple in Jerusalem, just like the gifts described in the rest of the verse. The further implication is that, just as the king and his counselors were sympathetic to the Jews in Jerusalem and eager to please the “God of heaven” (7:23), others in the province might be eager to do so as well. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “I also authorize you to ask everyone living in the province of Babylon to contribute silver and gold towards the expenses of the worship of Yahweh in the temple in Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### in all the province of Babylon

Artaxerxes is describing the people who live in the province of Babylon figuratively, by reference to something associated with them, the province where they live. Alternate translation: “among everyone living in the province of Babylon” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

## Babylon

**Babylon** (also called “Babylonia”) is the name of one of the provinces in the Persian Empire. See how you translated it in 1:11. Review the note there if that would be helpful. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### along with the freewill offering of the people and the priests who freely give for the house of God, which is in Jerusalem

If you have chosen to divide this verse into two sentences, this can be the second sentence. Here, **the people** means the people of Israel, as in 7:13. Alternate translation: “I also authorize you to collect any offerings that the people of Israel and their priests want to give freely for the temple in Jerusalem.”

### which is in Jerusalem

Like Darius in 6:12, here Artaxerxes repeats some background information in order to be very explicit about which temple his command applies to. Alternate translation: “in Jerusalem” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)



**Ezra 7:17****therefore****Connecting Statement:**

The word **therefore** introduces the final part of the long sentence in 7:14–17. It indicates the results of the reasons that the sentence has given so far. You can translate it with the word or phrase in your language that introduces the result of a list of reasons. However, if you have followed the suggestion to break up this long sentence into several shorter sentences, you may not need to represent that meaning here. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p.375))

**with this money****Connecting Statement:**

The implication is that this means not just the gifts from the priests and Israelites, but also the gifts from the king, his counselors, and the people of the province of Babylon. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this more explicitly. Alternate translation: “with all of this money” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

**diligently you shall buy & bulls, rams, lambs, and their grain offerings and their drink offerings**

The implication, as 6:9 indicates explicitly, is that the bulls, rams, and lambs were to be used for whole burnt offerings. If it would be helpful, review the note to 3:2 about what whole burnt offerings were and why they were offered. The book also expects readers to know that the law of Moses said that two further things should be offered together with the animals that were sacrificed in whole burnt offerings. One was a certain amount of flour mixed with oil, considered a **grain offering**. The other was a certain amount of wine, considered a **drink offering**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “be sure to buy bulls, rams, and lambs to sacrifice as whole burnt offerings, and grain, oil, and wine for the grain offerings and drink offerings that the law says must accompany them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

**diligently**

In their decrees, as several examples in this book show, the Persian kings used this term **diligently** to mean carefully, exactly, and efficiently. Review the note to 5:8 about this term if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: “be sure that”

**you shall buy with this money**

The word **you** here is singular, referring to Ezra. However, Ezra may not have made these purchases himself. Alternate translation: “make sure that your people use this money to buy” (See: **Forms of You** (p.400))

## **and you shall offer**

The word **you** here is singular, referring to Ezra. However, Ezra probably did not offer these sacrifices himself.  
Alternate translation: “and make sure that the priests offer” (See: **Forms of You (p.400)**)

## **your God**

The word **your** here is plural, referring to all of the Jews. (See: **Forms of You (p.400)**)

## Ezra 7:18

**And you may do whatever seems good to you and to your brothers to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, according to the will of your God**

Here, **brother** is a figurative way of saying “fellow Israelites,” and in context it likely refers to the other Jewish leaders who would decide with Ezra what to do with the extra money. Alternate translation: “You and your fellow Jewish leaders can decide what you think your God would like you to do with any silver and gold that is left over.” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

**you may do**

The word **you** here is plural, referring to Ezra and the other Jewish leaders. (See: **Forms of You (p.400)**)

**to you and to your brothers**

The words **you** and **your** here are singular, referring to Ezra. (See: **Forms of You (p.400)**)

**your God**

The word **your** here is plural, referring to all of the Jews. (See: **Forms of You (p.400)**)

## Ezra 7:19

### And the vessels

## Connecting Statement:

This sentence may be introducing a contrast between what Ezra and the other Jewish leaders could do with gold and silver that people contributed in the form of money and what they had to do with gold and silver that people contributed in the form of bowls and other objects that could be used in the temple. You could begin the sentence with a word such as “however” to indicate this contrast. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.382)**)

### And the vessels that were given to you for the service of the house of your God, deliver in full before the God of Jerusalem

As in 1:7, **vessels** refers to bowls, basins, and other objects that could be used in worship in the temple. The ones that people contributed on this occasion are described in more detail in 8:26–27. The implication in what the king says here is that Ezra and the Jewish leaders are not to sell or melt down these objects and use the proceeds to pay for temple expenses. Rather, they must use these objects only for temple worship. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “Do not use objects that people contribute for use in the temple of your God to pay for the temple expenses. Make sure that you deliver every one of them to Jerusalem, where they can be used in God’s presence” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### to you & your God

Here, **you** and **your** are singular, referring to Ezra. (See: **Forms of You (p.400)**)

### for the service of the house of your God

The idea behind the abstract noun **service** can be expressed with a verb such as “use.” Alternate translation: “to use in the temple of your God” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### deliver in full

The Aramaic expression translated here as **deliver in full** means to “make complete.” It is the same one that the Jewish leaders use in 5:16 when they say that the temple is not “finished” yet. In context it means that Ezra must be sure to deliver every single one of the contributed objects to the temple, so that the complete set that was donated will be reassembled there. (We see him doing this carefully in 8:26–27). Alternate translation: “make sure that you deliver every one of them” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### before the God of Jerusalem

Using a spatial metaphor, Artaxerxes says that Ezra must place the objects **before** God, meaning in God’s presence. Alternate translation: “to Jerusalem, where they can be used in God’s presence” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## before the God of Jerusalem

As in [6:18](#), in another spatial metaphor, Artaxerxes describes God as if he lived in the city of Jerusalem. This is a figurative reference to the way God's presence was in the temple in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "to Jerusalem, where they can be used in God's presence" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 7:20

### And the rest of what is needed for the house of your God that falls to you to give

The phrase **that falls to you to give** is an idiom that means “that you have responsibility to give,” in other words, “that you have to provide.” Alternate translation: “And anything else that you need to provide for the temple of your God” (See: **Idiom** (p.419))

### what is needed for

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “whatever you might need for” (See: **Active or Passive** (p.349))

### your God & to you & you may give

All of the forms of **you** in this verse are singular, referring to Ezra. (See: **Forms of You** (p.400))

### you may give from the house of the treasures of the king

This does not mean, as in [5:17](#), the place where valuable royal documents were stored. Here, **house** likely represents all of the wealth of the king figuratively. It is a metaphor for “property,” meaning everything that a person keeps in his house, and by extension everything that he owns. So it is not necessarily a physical building, but it refers in general to all the financial resources that belong to the king, as with the shorter expression **the treasures of the king** in [6:8](#). Alternate translation: “you may pay for from my royal treasury” (See: **Synecdoche** (p.464))

### the house of the treasures of the king

Artaxerxes speaks of himself here in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the first person. Alternate translation: “my royal treasury” (See: **First, Second or Third Person** (p.398))

## Ezra 7:21

### And from me

## Connecting Statement:

This phrase indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Specifically, Artaxerxes has just said that Ezra may pay for additional expenses out of the royal treasury. Consequently, regarding providing funds to Ezra, he will now give instructions to the officials responsible for administering the royal revenue in the province where Jerusalem is located. Alternate translation: “Consequently, from me” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### And from me myself, Artaxerxes the king, is set a decree

## Connecting Statement:

Up to this point in the letter, Artaxerxes has been addressing Ezra, and he has spoken of himself mostly in the third person. But now as he turns to address a new audience, the royal treasurers, he speaks of himself in the first person, and he uses the emphatic form **me myself** and repeats his name and title, as in 7:12. If you have been translating the king’s use of the third person for himself in this letter with the first person in your language, it may be helpful to your readers if you use some emphatic form or extended phrase here to show this transition. Alternate translation: “And I, King Artaxerxes, am personally commanding” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p. 398)**)

### And from me myself, Artaxerxes the king, is set a decree for all & that all that Ezra (& may ask of you, let it be done diligently

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “And I, King Artaxerxes, am personally commanding all of you who are ... to give Ezra ... anything that he asks from you, and to do it exactly and promptly” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### may ask of you

The king is now addressing the treasurers, so **you** is plural and refers to the treasurers here and in 7:24. If your language distinguishes between forms of you, the form for a superior addressing a group of people would be appropriate. (See: **Forms of You (p.400)**)

### the treasurers

These were royal officials responsible for administering the funds of the empire in their province. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

### are in Beyond-the-River

**Beyond-the-River** is the name of one of the provinces of the Persian Empire. See how you translated it in 4:10. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra (the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven**

Here, the king provides some background information to remind or inform the treasurers who Ezra was. Alternate translation: "Ezra, who is a priest of the God who rules in heaven, and who has carefully studied his law" (See:

**Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388))**



## Ezra 7:22

**as much as 100 silver kikkars, and as much as 100 cors of wheat, and as much as 100 baths of wine, and as much as 100 baths of oil, and salt which is not written**

Here, the king is speaking in an abbreviated, official way, and the connection to the previous verse may not be entirely clear for all readers. He is describing how much he is authorizing Ezra to ask for from the treasury in money and supplies. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly, and you could also make this verse a sentence of its own. Alternate translation: "I am authorizing Ezra to ask you treasurers for up to 100 kikkars of silver, 100 cors of wheat, 100 baths of wine, 100 baths of oil, and an unlimited amount of salt." (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### 100 silver kikkars

You could try to express the modern value of this amount of silver. But since prices vary over time, that could cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate. So you could express the amount instead using the ancient measurement, the kikkar, and explain in a note that this was equivalent to about 30 kilograms. Alternatively, you could specify the weight of the silver in the text, as UST does. (See: **Biblical Money (p.363)**)

### 100 cors of wheat

A cor was equivalent to about 220 liters. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the quantity in modern measurements, as UST does, "500 bushels of wheat." Alternatively, to help your readers recognize that the biblical writings come from a long time ago when people used different measures, you could express the amount using the ancient measurement, the cor, and explain the equivalent in modern measurements in a footnote. (See: **Biblical Volume (p.365)**)

### and as much as 100 baths of wine, and as much as 100 baths of oil

According to ancient measurements, **baths** were equivalent to about 22 liters. Once again, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the quantity in modern measurements, or you could express the amount using the ancient measurement and explain its modern equivalent in a footnote. Alternate translation: "and as much as 2,200 liters of wine, and as much as 2,200 liters of oil" or "and as much as 600 gallons of wine, and as much as 600 gallons of oil" (See: **Biblical Volume (p.365)**)

### and salt which is not written

This expression means that the king is not specifying in writing a maximum amount of salt that Ezra can request, as he did for the silver, wheat, wine, and oil. Alternate translation: "and an unlimited amount of salt" (See: **Idiom (p. 419)**)

## Ezra 7:23

### Everything that is from the decree of the God of heaven shall be done exactly for the house of the God of heaven

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who would do the action. Alternate translation: "I want you to make sure that the Jewish leaders have the funds they need to do everything that the God who rules in heaven has commanded regarding worship in his temple" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### Everything that is from the decree of the God of heaven

Here, by **decree**, Artaxerxes is likely referring to what he calls the law of the God of heaven in 7:12. He means the law of Moses, and specifically the commandments in the law for how community worship was to be conducted. Artaxerxes speaks of the law as if it were a royal decree that God had issued. Alternate translation: "Everything that the God who rules in heaven has commanded" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### for the house of the God of heaven

See how you translated the expressions **the house of God** in 1:4 and **the God of heaven** in 5:11. Alternate translation: "for the temple of the God who rules in heaven" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### For why should there be wrath against the kingdom of the king and his sons

The king is making a statement, not asking a real question. He does not expect the treasurers to explain to him why there should be wrath against the kingdom. Instead, he is using the question form to emphasize how important it is for the treasurers to ensure that sufficient funds are provided so that worship in the temple can be conducted just as God has commanded, so that God will not be angry. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words as a statement. Alternate translation: "Because I do not want God to be angry with me or with any of my descendants who rule after me" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.458)**)

### For why should there be wrath against the kingdom of the king and his sons

The implication is that Artaxerxes wants to have God's favor, and he is concerned that God will be displeased with him instead if he does not provide for God's temple in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I do not want God to be angry with me or with any of my descendants who rule after me because I neglected his temple." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### For why should there be wrath against the kingdom of the king and his sons

God's wrath represents God's punishment. Alternate translation: "I do not want God to punish me or any of my descendants who rule after me because I neglected his temple" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### the kingdom of the king and his sons

God would not actually be angry with the realm over which Artaxerxes has authority. Rather, he uses the term **kingdom** to describe himself and his descendants by reference to something associated with them. Alternate translation: "me or any of my descendants who rule after me" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

## the kingdom of the king and his sons

Artaxerxes speaks of himself here in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the first person. Alternate translation: “my kingdom and that of my descendants who rule after me” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

## and his sons

This could possibly mean the biological sons of King Artaxerxes, but since he speaks of the kingdom as belonging to them, it is more likely that this is a figurative reference to his descendants, and specifically the line of direct descendants who would rule Persia as his successors (his son, his grandson, etc.). (If it would be helpful, also review the notes to [4:15](#) and [6:10](#) about how Persian kings considered their predecessors their “fathers” and their successors their **sons**.) Alternate translation: “and my descendants who rule after me” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 7:24

### And to you is made known

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who is doing the action. Alternate translation: "I am also declaring to you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### there is no authority to set tax, tribute, or custom upon all the priests, and the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, the temple servants, and the servants of that house of God

The last phrase, **the servants of that house of God**, describes what the people in the five groups listed all have in common. They all work in the temple of God. In this way, the phrase gives the reason why the treasurers may not impose taxes on anyone in any of these groups. Likely as a further way of supporting the temple, and perhaps also as a gesture of respect for God, Artaxerxes is providing an exemption from taxes for all temple personnel. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this reason before the results that the rest of the sentence describes. Alternate translation: "because the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and temple servants all work in the temple of this God, you have no authority to set any tax, tribute, or custom upon them" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### tax, tribute, or custom

See how you translated this phrase in [4:13](#).

### and the Levites

See how you translated this term in [2:40](#). Review the explanation in the note there if that would be helpful. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### the singers

This is the same occupational group as in [2:41](#). Review the explanation in the note there if that would be helpful.

### the gatekeepers

This is the same occupational group as in [2:42](#). Review the explanation in the note there if that would be helpful.

### the temple servants

See how you translated this term in [2:43](#). Review the explanation in the note there if that would be helpful. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 7:25

### And as for you, Ezra

## Connecting Statement:

The king now returns to address Ezra personally, so **you** refers to him here, and is singular. The three instances of **your** in this verse are also singular, as is the verb **appoint**. Only the phrase **you shall teach** is plural, referring to Ezra and to those whom he will appoint. If your language distinguishes between levels of social status, the form for a superior addressing a respected individual would be appropriate. (See: **Forms of You (p.400)**)

### according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand

If your language does not use abstract nouns such as **wisdom**, you can express that idea in a different way. Alternate translation: "because the law of your God has made you wise" or "guided by the wise teachings of your God that you know so well" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### that is in your hand

Most likely, the phrase **that is in your hand** here means the same thing as in 7:14, where the law of God is described as being in Ezra's hand. Review the note there if that would be helpful. As there, the phrase **in your hand** here could mean: (1) that Ezra knows it and uses it with great ability. Alternate translation: "that you know and use well" or (2) that Ezra personally owns a scroll of God's wisdom. Alternate translation: "that you have with you" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### appoint magistrates and judges who may judge

The terms **magistrates** and **judges** mean very similar things. There are two possibilities here. (1) Artaxerxes could be using these two terms to refer to people in slightly different roles. The first term may refer to officials who decide disputes between people, and the second term may refer to officials who interpret the law and apply it to specific situations. Alternate translation: "appoint officials who can decide disputes between people and officials who can interpret and apply the law" or (2) Artaxerxes may be using the two words together to emphasize the authority that Ezra has to ensure that the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem follow God's commandments. If you have only one term for these functions, you can just use that one term here. Alternate translation: "appoint judges so that they can judge" (See: **Doublet (p.391)**)

### all the people who are in Beyond-the-River, all who know the laws of your God

The second phrase clarifies the meaning of the first phrase, showing that Artaxerxes is referring specifically to the Jews who live in this province. He is allowing the Jews there to have their own legal system, based on the law of Moses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "all the Jews living in Beyond-the-River province, who know the laws of your God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### And you shall teach those who do not know

The word **you** here is plural. If your language distinguishes between forms of you, the form for a superior addressing a group of people would be appropriate. (See: **Forms of You (p.400)**)

## And you shall teach those who do not know

The implication, in light of the plural **you**, is that Ezra and the judges he appoints are to teach the law of God to any Jews living in the province who are not familiar with it, so that they can follow it. Alternate translation: "And I want you and the judges to teach the law of God to those Jews in the province who do not know it." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 7:26

### **And everyone who will not do the law of your God and the law of the king, judgment shall be exacted from him diligently**

The implication is that the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem will still be governed by Persian law in addition to the law of Moses, but Artaxerxes is giving Ezra the authority to appoint judges who will administer and enforce both sets of laws. In this way, members of the Jewish community will have Jewish judges. Alternate translation: "The judges you appoint are diligently to punish anyone who refuses to obey the law of your God or my decrees" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### **And everyone who will not do the law of your God and the law of the king, judgment shall be exacted from him diligently**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who is to do the action. Alternate translation: "The judges you appoint are diligently to punish anyone who refuses to obey the law of your God or my decrees." (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### **and the law of the king**

Artaxerxes speaks of himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the first person. Alternate translation: "or obey my decrees" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### **whether for death, whether for banishment, whether for confiscation of goods, or for imprisonment**

The abstract nouns **death**, **banishment**, **confiscation**, and **imprisonment** can be translated with verbs. Alternate translation: "as your judges see fit, they may execute offenders, or make them leave the community, or seize the things that they own, or put them in prison" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### **or for imprisonment**

Here, the book ends its quotation of the letter of introduction and authorization that King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra. If you decided in [7:12](#) to mark his words as a quotation, you should indicate that ending here with a closing primary quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

**Ezra 7:27****Blessed be Yahweh, the God of our fathers****Connecting Statement:**

Previously in the book, Ezra has been a character in a story that someone else has been telling. Here he becomes the person telling the story, and he continues to tell it through to the end of chapter 9. In effect, the letter of introduction that King Artaxerxes wrote for him has been his introduction to us as well. The book does not say specifically that Ezra will now be the narrator, although one indication is that when Ezra is telling the story, he refers to himself as “I” and to the Jewish community as “us,” and another indication is that the book is now written in Hebrew again. But if it would be helpful to your readers, you could add a phrase to indicate this. Alternate translation: “When I, Ezra, received this letter from the king, I prayed, ‘Thank you, Yahweh, the God of our ancestors’” (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.426)**)

**Blessed be Yahweh, the God of our fathers****Connecting Statement:**

The first thing that Ezra does when he begins to tell his own story is pray to God, rather than address the audience that will hear his story. If you decided to add a phrase to introduce him as the new narrator, you could use that same phrase to introduce this prayer as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: “When I, Ezra, received this letter from the king, I prayed, ‘Thank you, Yahweh, the God of our ancestors’” Otherwise, you could show that this prayer is distinct from the story by setting it off with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. The quotation should end in the middle of [7:28](#), after “the mighty officials of the king.” (See: **Aside (p.352)**)

**Blessed be Yahweh****Connecting Statement:**

Although Ezra speaks of Yahweh in the third person here, he is actually praying a prayer of thanksgiving to Yahweh. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words in the second person. Alternate translation: “Thank you, Yahweh” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

**Blessed be Yahweh****Connecting Statement:**

If it is not natural or not possible in your language to speak of a human blessing God, then you can express the idea here in a different way. Alternate translation: “I praise Yahweh” or “I thank Yahweh”



## the God of our fathers

### Connecting Statement:

**Fathers** here means “ancestors.” Alternate translation: “the God of our ancestors” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## **gave according to this in the heart of the king, to glorify the house of Yahweh, which is in Jerusalem**

Giving something in the king’s heart, that is, putting something in it, means leading him to have certain thoughts and desires. Alternate translation: “led the king to want to glorify the temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## **to glorify the house of Yahweh**

This expression means to make something bright, glorious, or beautiful. Artaxerxes was not doing this literally, the way that Cyrus and Darius did by supporting the physical rebuilding of the temple. Rather, Artaxerxes was making sure that the temple would always have everything it needed to keep operating. In that way he was making sure that the temple would not languish and be disrespected, but rather, always be a vibrant place that was held in honor. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to honor the temple of Yahweh” or “to make sure that the temple of Yahweh would always be a glorious place” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 7:28

**and caused covenant faithfulness to extend to me before the face of the king, and his counselors, and before all the mighty officials of the king**

Here, the abstract noun **faithfulness** refers to a person wanting to do everything that they can to help another person. As in 3:11, **covenant faithfulness** refers specifically to Yahweh doing that for the people of Israel in order to keep the promises that he had made to them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with a verb such as **help**. Alternate translation: “and helped me get everything I needed from the king, as I was in his presence and in the presence of his counselors and mighty officials” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

**and caused covenant faithfulness to extend to me before the face of the king, and his counselors, and before all the mighty officials of the king**

Here, **face** represents the presence of a person. The expression means that, as Ezra stood before the king and his counselors and officials, Yahweh helped him get everything he needed from them. Alternate translation: “and helped me get everything I needed from the king, as I was in his presence and in the presence of his counselors and mighty officials” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

**and caused covenant faithfulness to extend to me**

Ezra uses a spatial metaphor to depict help stretching out to him from Yahweh. Alternate translation: “and helped me” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

**the mighty officials of the king**

This is the end of the prayer that Ezra prays as he begins to tell his own story. If you indicated the beginning of this prayer in 7:27 with an opening quotation mark or with the corresponding punctuation or convention in your language, you should use the same means to indicate the end of a quotation here. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

**I gained strength according to the hand of Yahweh my God upon me**

As in 7:6, **hand** represents power and control, and the expression **the hand of Yahweh my God upon me** indicates that Ezra enjoyed Yahweh's care, protection, and favor. Alternate translation: “I was encouraged because I recognized that Yahweh my God was helping me” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

**from Israel heads**

As 8:1 shows, **heads** here is an abbreviated way of saying **heads of father's houses**. Alternate translation: “some Israelite clan leaders” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

**to go up with me**

Ezra says **go up** because he and the group he was leading would have to travel from a river valley up into the mountains in order to return from their places of exile to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “to return to Jerusalem with me” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## Ezra 8

### Ezra 8 General Notes

### Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

#### The people's return to Judah

Many people went back to Judah with Ezra. They trusted God to protect them and the precious items that they carried with them, which had been given for the temple. (See: **trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness (p. 488)**)

## Ezra 8:1

### Now these are

The word **Now** introduces a new event in the story. Use a natural method in your language to introduce a new event here. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.423)**)

### Now these are the heads of their fathers and their enrollment by genealogy, the ones who went up with me

As in [4:3](#), **heads of their fathers** is an abbreviated way of saying “heads of their father’s houses.” Review the note there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: “These are the names of the clan leaders, along with the names of their clans, of those who traveled with me” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### the ones who went up with me from Babylon

As in [7:28](#), Ezra says **go up** because the trip from Babylon to Jerusalem would involve a significant climb in elevation. Alternate translation: “who returned from Babylon with me” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### in the reign of Artaxerxes the king

As [7:8-9](#) indicates, this was specifically in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “during the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes as king of Persia.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### in the reign of Artaxerxes the king

If you choose to make explicit the information of which year this is of the king's reign, but your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can say “during year seven of the reign of Artaxerxes as king of Persia.” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

## Ezra 8:2

### From the sons of Phinehas: Gershom

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Phinehas, Gershom” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Phinehas: Gershom

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### From the sons of Ithamar: Daniel

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Ithamar, Daniel” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Ithamar: Daniel

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### From the sons of David: Hattush

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of David, Hattush” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### David: Hattush

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 8:3

### from the sons of Shecaniah. From the sons of Parosh: Zechariah

This could mean one of two things. (1) The phrase **from the sons of Shecaniah** probably applies to the end of the previous verse. 1 Chronicles 3:19–22 shows that Hattush was the grandson of Shecaniah, and that Shecaniah was either the grandson or a more distant descendant of Zerubbabel, who was a descendant of King David. (As several of the following verses show, further information like this may be provided about the clan leaders on this list.) So the end of 8:2 and the beginning of 8:3 could read: “From the descendants of King David, Hattush, one of the descendants of Shecaniah” or (2) It could mean that Zechariah was the clan leader of the descendants of Shecaniah, and that they were all descendants of a more remote ancestor named Parosh. Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Shecaniah, who were descendants of Parosh, Zechariah” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### from the sons of Shecaniah. From the sons of Parosh: Zechariah

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: (1) “one of the descendants of Shecaniah. From the descendants of Parosh, Zechariah” or, if you have decided that **from the sons of Shecaniah** applies to **Zechariah**, (2) “From the descendants of Shecaniah, who were descendants of Parosh, Zechariah” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Shecaniah. & Parosh: Zechariah

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and with him were 150 males enrolled by genealogy

The implication is that these 150 males belonged to the same clan as Zechariah. Alternate translation: “along with 150 other men from his clan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

**Ezra 8:4****From the sons of Pahath-Moab: Eliehoenai, the son of Zerahiah**

Here, **sons** means “descendants,” but **son** most likely means a biological son. Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Pahath-Moab, Eliehoenai the son of Zerahiah” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

**Pahath-Moab: Eliehoenai, & Zerahiah**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

**and with him were 200 males**

See the note to [8:3](#) about this expression. Alternate translation: “along with 200 men from his clan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 8:5

### From the sons of ... Shecaniah the son of Jahaziel

Here, **sons** means “descendants,” but **son** most likely means a biological son. Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Shecaniah, the son of Jahaziel” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### From the sons of ... Shecaniah the son of Jahaziel

Since this list has been providing the name of each clan leader, it would be unusual for it to omit the leader’s name here and state only the name of his father. Most scholars believe that the name of the clan leader was accidentally left out at one point in the copying process. Other ancient versions of the Old Testament read, “from the sons of Zattu, Shecaniah the son of Jahaziel.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could follow those versions and include the following footnote: “The name Zattu appears in the ancient Greek and other ancient versions.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Zattu, Shecaniah the son of Jahaziel” If you want to translate only what is in the Hebrew, you could follow the ULT or translate, “From the descendants of Shecaniah, the son of Jahaziel” (See: **Textual Variants (p.466)**)

### Shecaniah & Jahaziel

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and with him were 300 males

See the note to [8:3](#) about this expression. Alternate translation: “along with 300 men from his clan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)



**Ezra 8:6****And from the sons of Adin: Ebed, the son of Jonathan**

Here, **sons** means “descendants,” but **son** most likely means a biological son. Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

**Adin: Ebed, & Jonathan**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

**and with him were 50 males**

See the note to [8:3](#) about this expression. Alternate translation: “along with 50 men from his clan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

**Ezra 8:7****And from the sons of Elam: Jeshaiah, the son of Athaliah**

Here, **sons** means “descendants,” but **son** most likely means a biological son. Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Elam, Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

**Elam: Jeshaiah, & Athaliah**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

**and with him were 70 males**

See the note to [8:3](#) about this expression. Alternate translation: “along with 70 men from his clan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 8:8

### And from the sons of Shephatiah: Zebadiah, the son of Michael

Here, **sons** means “descendants,” but **son** most likely means a biological son. Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Shephatiah: Zebadiah, & Michael

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and with him were 80 males

See the note to [8:3](#) about this expression. Alternate translation: “along with 80 men from his clan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 8:9

### From the sons of Joab: Obadiah, the son of Jehiel

Here, **sons** means “descendants,” but **son** most likely means a biological son. Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Joab, Obadiah the son of Jehiel” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Joab: Obadiah, & Jehiel

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and with him were 218 males

See the note to [8:3](#) about this expression. Alternate translation: “along with 218 men from his clan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 8:10

### And from the sons of ... Shelomith, the son of Josiphiah

Here, **sons** means “descendants”, but **son** most likely means a biological son. Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Shelomith, the son of Josiphiah” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### And from the sons of ... Shelomith, the son of Josiphiah

As in 8:5, it appears that the name of the clan was accidentally left out at one point in the copying process for this verse. Since this list has been providing the name of each clan leader, it would be unusual for it to omit the leader's name here and state only the name of his father. Other ancient versions of the Old Testament in Greek say here, “from the descendants of Bani, Shelomith the son of Josiphiah.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could follow those versions and include the following footnote: “The name Bani appears in ancient Greek versions.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Bani, Shelomith the son of Josiphiah” If you want to translate only what is in the Hebrew, you could follow the ULT or translate, “And from the descendants of Shelomith, the son of Josiphiah” (See: **Textual Variants (p.466)**)

### Shelomith, & Josiphiah

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and with him were 160 males

See the note to 8:3 about this expression. Alternate translation: “along with 160 men from his clan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 8:11

### And from the sons of Bebai: Zechariah, the son of Bebai

Here, **sons** means “descendants,” but **son** most likely means a biological son. Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Bebai: Zechariah, & Bebai

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and with him were 28 males

See the note to [8:3](#) about this expression. Alternate translation: “along with 28 men from his clan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 8:12

### And from the sons of Azgad: Johanan, the son of Hakkatan

Here, **sons** means “descendants,” but **son** most likely means a biological son. Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Azgad, Johanan the son of Hakkatan” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Azgad: Johanan, & Hakkatan

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and with him were 110 males

See the note to [8:3](#) about this expression. Alternate translation: “along with 110 men from his clan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 8:13

### And from the last sons of Adonikam, and these were their names: Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah

The implication is that some descendants of Adonikam had still remained in Babylon even after a large number of his descendants returned to Judah with Zerubbabel some time before this, as [2:13](#) describes. The term **last** here indicates that these who had remained in Babylon now came with Ezra. Alternate translation: “And from the descendants of Adonikam who had remained in Babylon, the family leaders Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### Adonikam, & Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and with them were 60 males

See the note to [8:3](#) about this expression. Alternate translation: “along with 60 men from their clan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)



**Ezra 8:14****And from the sons of Bigvai: Uthai and Zaccur**

**Sons** here means "descendants." Alternate translation: "From the descendants of Bigvai, Uthai and Zaccur" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

**and with him were 70 males**

See the note to [8:3](#) about this expression. Here, **him** actually refers to both Uthai and Zaccur, so you can use a plural pronoun in your translation, if it would be helpful in your language. Alternate translation: "along with 70 men from their clan" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 8:15

### And I gathered them to the river, the one that goes to Ahava, and we encamped there three days

**Them** means everyone listed in 8:2-14, everyone who would be traveling with Ezra. The implication is that they all packed for the trip and set out from their homes, but then assembled at a location outside of the city of Babylon where Ezra could make sure the group was ready for the trip. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "I had everyone who was going to be traveling with me assemble on the banks of the river that flows from Babylon to Ahava. We camped there for three days so that I could make sure that we had enough temple personnel with us and that we could transport the gold and silver safely" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

### the river, the one that goes to Ahava

The exact location of this river on whose banks the group assembled can no longer be identified. In 8:21 and 8:31, Ezra calls it the Ahava River, and you could use that same name here if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "the Ahava River" (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

### and we encamped

As Ezra tells his story, he uses **we** in the exclusive sense, that is, it excludes the reader. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.396))

### And I examined

The word **And** at the beginning of this phrase indicates that this event took place at the same time as the event the story has just related. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship in this case by using a phrase such as "while we were there." (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship** (p.380))

### And I examined the people and the priests, but I did not find there any from the sons of Levi

Here, we learn that one purpose of this preliminary encampment was for Ezra to see whether he had all the temple personnel that he needed. The implication behind this statement is that Ezra looked over the whole group to make sure of this. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. (We learn in 8:25 that a further purpose of the encampment was to make arrangements for the safe transportation of the money and objects that had been donated for the temple.) Alternate translation: "I looked over the whole group and discovered that it consisted of lay people and priests, but there were no Levites in our group" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

### but & any from the sons of Levi

Here, **sons** means "descendants." The Levites were descendants of Levi. Alternate translation: "Levites" (See: **Metaphor** (p.431))

## Ezra 8:16

### Then I sent

Here the word **then** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains what Ezra did as a result of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “As a result” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### Then I sent for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan and for Nathan, and for Zechariah, and for Meshullam

Here, Ezra lists the names of nine men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### the heads

Unlike in 7:28, here this expression does not mean heads of father’s houses, that is, clan leaders. Rather, **heads** here has a more general meaning and is simply a figurative way of saying “leaders.” None of these nine men, with the possible exception of Zechariah, are among the clan leaders listed in 8:2–14. (And considering that three of the men whom Ezra summoned were named Elnathan, which shows that several individuals could share the same name, it is quite possible that this is a different Zechariah from either the one named in 8:3 or the one named in 8:11.) Alternate translation: “who were all leaders” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### and for Joiarib, and for Elnathan

Here Ezra lists the names of two more men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### men of understanding

This phrase suggests that while Joiarib and Elnathan were not community leaders like the other nine men, Ezra sent them anyway to help recruit more temple personnel because they were wise and reasonable and could be persuasive. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “because, even though they were not leaders, they were discerning” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 8:17

### them to go to Iddo, the head at the place Kasiphia

The implication, since Ezra is trying to recruit Levites, is that Iddo was the leader of the Levites in that place. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “them to speak to a man named Iddo, who was the leader of the Levites at a place called Kasiphia” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

### Iddo

**Iddo** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

### at & Kasiphia

**Kasiphia** is the name of a place. Its exact location can no longer be identified. (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

### And I put in their mouth words to speak to Iddo

Putting words in someone’s mouth means telling them what to say. Alternate translation: “And I told them what to say to Iddo” (See: **Metaphor** (p.431))

### Iddo and his brothers, the temple servants in the place Kasiphia

Here, **brothers** is a figurative way of referring to people who belonged to groups that could serve in the temple, as Iddo did. (It is possible that some of his biological brothers are also included in this term.) In context, Iddo is a Levite leader, while the **brothers** are said to include **temple servants**, so the term indicates both groups. Alternate translation: “Iddo and his fellow Levites and the temple servants who were also living in Kasiphia” (See: **Metaphor** (p.431))

### to bring to us those who minister for the house of our God

This is the purpose for which Ezra sent the messengers to Iddo. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate that in your translation, or you could present this as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: “so that he would send us more people who could serve in the temple of our God” or, as a direct quotation, “to say, ‘Please send us some people who can serve in the temple of our God’” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations** (p.386))

### to us

As Ezra tells his story, he uses **us** in the exclusive sense, that is, it excludes the reader. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’** (p.396))

## Ezra 8:18

### And & they brought

This word indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “As a result ... they brought” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### according to the good hand of our God upon us

As in the expression **according to the good hand of his God upon him** in 7:6, **hand** represents action, and the expression indicates that God showed Ezra favor and helped him on this occasion. Alternate translation: “because our God was helping us” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### upon us, & to us

As Ezra tells his story, he uses **us** in the exclusive sense, that is, it excludes the reader. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.396)**)

### a man of insight

Here, **insight**, that is, the ability to “see into” things, means to have good judgment. Alternate translation: “a very prudent man” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### from the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel, even Sherebiah

**Sons** means “descendants” in reference to Mahli, since he was a distant ancestor of the group that Sherebiah belonged to. The word **son** means “descendant” when applied to Levi, since Mahli was actually his grandson. But Levi actually was the biological son of Israel. Alternate translation: “named Sherebiah, one of the descendants of Mahli, the grandson of Levi, the son of Israel” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### the & Mahli, & Levi, & Israel, even Sherebiah

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and his sons and his brothers were 18

Since this was a small group of related people, it is quite possible that it consisted largely, if not entirely, of Sherebiah's actual sons and brothers. So you could, in your translation, decide to treat the terms as literal. On the other hand, they could also be figurative, with **sons** meaning “descendants” and **brothers** meaning “relatives.” Alternate translation: “along with 18 of his sons and brothers” or “along with 18 of his descendants and relatives” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

**Ezra 8:19****and Hashabiah, and with him, Jeshaiah, from the sons of Merari**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “and they also sent us Hashabiah and Jeshaiah, from the descendants of Merari” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

**Hashabiah, & Jeshaiah, & Merari**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

**whose brothers and their sons**

This most likely means the brothers of Jeshaiah and the sons of Jeshaiah and of his brothers. Since, as in [8:18](#), this is a small group of related people, you could decide to treat the terms **brothers** and **sons** here as either literal or figurative. Alternate translation: “along with his brothers and their sons” or “along with his relatives and their descendants” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

**Ezra 8:20****and 220 temple servants from the temple servants whom David with the officials had given for the service of the Levites**

Here Ezra provides some background information to help identify who these **temple servants** were. Alternate translation: "and they also brought 220 men who were from the families that David and his officials had assigned to help the Levites long ago" (See: **Background Information (p.357)**)

**All of them were designated by names**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "I recorded the name of each one of them." (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

## Ezra 8:21

### Then I proclaimed

The word **then** indicates that the event the story will now relate came after the event it has just described. In your translation, you can use the expression in your language that would best indicate this relationship. (See: **Connect** — **Sequential Time Relationship** (p.378))

### a fast & to afflict ourselves

The travelers would be afflicting themselves, that is, making themselves suffer, by denying themselves food. This was a gesture of humility and an expression that seeking God's help was more important to them even than eating. Alternate translation: "a time of going without eating ... to humble ourselves" (See: **Symbolic Action** (p.462))

### the river Ahava

See how you translated this name in 8:15. Alternate translation: "the Ahava River" (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

### to afflict ourselves

Here Ezra is using **ourselves** in the exclusive sense, that is, it excludes the reader. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.396))

### before the face of our God

Here, **face** represents the presence of a person. Alternate translation: "in the presence of our God" (See: **Metonymy** (p.437))

### our God

In this case, Ezra is using **our** in the inclusive sense, that is, it includes the reader, since he is reporting his trip to fellow believers in God. Alternate translation: "The God to whom we all belong" (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.396))

### for us, and for our children, and for all our property

As Ezra tells his story, he uses **us** and **our** in the exclusive sense, that is, it excludes the reader. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.396))

### to seek from him a straight way for us, and for our children, and for all our property

The word **seek** represents asking God to do something for them. A **straight way** represents safety during travel. Alternate translation: "and to ask God to protect us while we traveled and also protect our children and all of our belongings" (See: **Metaphor** (p.431))



## Ezra 8:22

### For

Here the word **For** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the reasons for what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: "I did this because" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### **I was ashamed to ask from the king an army and horsemen to help us from an enemy on the way**

**An enemy** means "any enemy," and **on the way** means "during our journey." Alternate translation: "I would have been embarrassed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from anyone who might try to harm or rob us during our journey"

### **to help us & we had spoken**

As Ezra tells his story, he uses **us** and **we** in the exclusive sense, that is, it excludes the reader. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.396)**)

### For

Here the word **For** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the reasons for what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: "Because" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### **we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God is for good upon all those who seek him, but his might and his nose are against all those who forsake him**

This sentence gives the reason for the results that the previous sentence in the verse describes. If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this sentence first in the verse, before the other sentence. Then you could show the connection between the sentences by using a phrase such as "and so" after this sentence. Alternate translation: "We had told the king, 'Our God protects everyone who obeys him, but he punishes everyone who refuses to serve him.' And so" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### **The hand of our God is for good upon all those who seek him, but his might and his nose are against all those who forsake him**

This is a direct quotation. Ezra is quoting what he and his fellow travelers had told King Artaxerxes. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off these words within quotation marks or by following whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### **The hand of our God is for good upon all those who seek him, but his might and his nose are against all those who forsake him**

This is a direct quotation. If it would be more natural in your language, you could make this an indirect quotation, as in the UST. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.386)**)

## The hand of our God is for good

This expression has the same meaning as **the good hand of God** in 7:6. Here, the word **hand** represents action, and the phrase **the hand of our God is for good** means the care, protection, and favor of God. Alternate translation: “The favor of our God is” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## our God

In this case, Ezra is using **our** in the inclusive sense, that is, it includes the reader, since he is reporting his trip to fellow believers in God. Alternate translation: “the God to whom we all belong” (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.396)**)

## all those who seek him

To **seek him** is a metaphor for worshiping, serving, and obeying him. Alternate translation: “everyone who loves and obeys him” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## but his might and his nose are against

God’s power and anger being on people is a metonym for him punishing them. Alternate translation: “but he punishes” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

## but his might and his nose

Here, the **nose** represents anger. Alternate translation: “his power and his wrath” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## but his might and his nose

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **nose**, a figure for anger, tells how God punishes. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “he wrathfully punishes” (See: **Hendiadys (p.408)**)

## all those who forsake him

Forsaking or abandoning God is a metaphor for refusing to serve him. Alternate translation: “all who refuse to serve him” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 8:23

### So we fasted

The word **So** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Because Ezra was embarrassed to ask the king for protection, he and his fellow travelers earnestly prayed and fasted for God's protection. Alternate translation: "For this reason, we fasted" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p.375))

### So we fasted and sought from our God concerning this, and he was entreated by us

If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an active form for the last phrase. Alternate translation: "For this reason, we fasted and prayed to God about this, and he answered our prayer" (See: **Active or Passive** (p.349))

### So we fasted & by us

As Ezra tells his story, he uses **we** and **us** in the exclusive sense, that is, it excludes the reader. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.396))

### from our God

In this case, Ezra is using **our** in the inclusive sense, that is, it includes the reader, since he is reporting his trip to fellow believers in God. Alternate translation: "from the God to whom we all belong" (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.396))

### and he was entreated by us

As is clear from the way this expression is used elsewhere in the Bible, it means that God answered a prayer. For example, Genesis 25:21 says, "Isaac entreated Yahweh for his wife because she could not have children, and Yahweh was entreated by him, and Rebekah his wife conceived." However, since Ezra does not describe until [8:32](#) how the group arrived safely in Jerusalem, the prayer had not yet been answered at this point in the story. So an alternative meaning in context would be that the group received assurance that God would answer their prayer. Alternate translation: "and he answered our prayer" or "and we felt assured that he would answer our prayer" (See: **Idiom** (p.419))

## Ezra 8:24

### Then I separated

The word **Then** indicates that the event the story will now relate came after the event it has just described. In your translation, you can use the expression in your language that would best indicate this relationship. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### Then I separated 12 from the leaders of the priests to Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and with them ten from their brothers

The Hebrew text is difficult here. One way to read it is: “Then I separated 12 from the leaders of the priests: Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and with them ten from their brothers.” But since 8:18 and 19 specifically identify Sherebiah and Hashabiah as Levites, they could not have been leaders of the priests. An ancient Greek version of the book of Ezra says “and” before Sherebiah, so that this is a list of 24 men in total. Another way to read the Hebrew is as in the ULT, which also results in a list of 24 men. Both of these translations agree with 8:30, which says that “the priests and the Levites” received the silver and gold and objects that Ezra weighed out to them. It will likely be clearest for your readers if you translate the verse in one of the latter two ways. Alternate translation: “Then I selected 12 leaders of the priests, along with Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their fellow Levites.” (See: **Textual Variants (p.466)**)

### Then I separated

This expression means to set someone or something apart for a special purpose or assignment. Alternate translation: “Then I selected” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### to Sherebiah, Hashabiah

These are the names of two men. See how you translated them in 8:18 and 8:19. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### from their brothers

Here, **brothers** is a figurative way of saying “fellow Levites,” although it is possible that some of the biological brothers of Sherebiah and Hashabiah were included in this group. Alternate translation: “of their fellow Levites” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 8:25

### And I weighed out to them the silver and the gold and the vessels

Ezra says he **weighed out** the money to the priests and Levites because ancient units of money such as the kikkar and the daric were actually units of the weight of precious metals. The value of the gold and silver objects would similarly have depended on their weight. Alternate translation: "I divided up the silver and gold and objects into 24 portions of equal value and gave one to each of the priests and Levites whom I had selected to transport them." (See: **Biblical Money (p.363)**)

### And I weighed out to them the silver and the gold and the vessels

The implication is that Ezra divided up the money and the objects into 24 portions of roughly equal value and assigned one portion to each priest and Levite to transport. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "I divided up the silver and gold and objects into 24 portions of equal value and gave one to each of the priests and Levites I had selected to transport them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### the offering of the house of our God

Alternate translation: "the gifts for the temple of our God" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### our God

In this case, Ezra is using **our** in the inclusive sense, that is, it includes the reader, since he is reporting his trip to fellow believers in God. Alternate translation: "from the God to whom we all belong" (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.396)**)

### and all Israel (the ones who were found

The implication is that this refers to all of the Israelites who were living specifically in the province of Babylon, since Artaxerxes had authorized Ezra to invite contributions from people living throughout that province. Alternate translation: "and all the Israelites whom we could find in the province of Babylon" or "and all the Israelites who were living in the province of Babylon" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### and all Israel (the ones who were found

In this context, **were found** is an idiom that means "could be found" or "were there." Alternate translation: "and all the Israelites whom we could find in the province of Babylon" or "and all the Israelites who were living in the province of Babylon" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### and all Israel

Here the story refers to all of the Israelites as if they were a single person, their ancestor, Israel. Alternate translation: "and all the Israelites" (See: **Personification (p.444)**)

## Ezra 8:26

### And I weighed out to their hand

While Ezra likely did literally place the money and the objects in the hands of the priests and Levites, **hand** here represents control and action. Alternate translation: "I entrusted to them for safe delivery" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### And I weighed out to their hand

The implication is that the list that follows is the total amount of money and objects that Ezra entrusted to the priests and Levites. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Here are the totals of the silver, gold, and objects that I entrusted to these priests and Levites for safe delivery:" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### 650 kikkars of silver, and vessels of silver of 100 kikkars, 100 kikkars of gold

Since prices of precious metals vary over time, if you tried to express the value here in modern money, that could cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate. Instead you could express the amount using the ancient measurement, the kikkar, and explain in a note that a kikkar was equivalent to about 30 kilograms of weight. Alternatively, you could specify the weight of the silver in the text, as UST does. Alternate translation: "650 kikkars of silver, silver objects weighing 100 kikkars, and 100 kikkars of gold" (See: **Biblical Money (p.363)**)

**Ezra 8:27****and 20 bowls of gold of 1000 darics**

1,000 darics was the total value of the 20 bowls, not the value of each one. Here again you could express the amount using the ancient measurement, the daric, and explain in a note that it was equivalent to about 8 or 8.5 grams, or about a quarter of an ounce. Alternatively, you could specify the weight of the gold in the text, as UST does. Alternate translation: "20 golden bowls worth a total of 1,000 darics" (See: **Biblical Money (p.363)**)

## Ezra 8:28

### And I said

This phrase indicates that the event the story will now relate came after the event it has just described. Ezra first weighed out the silver and gold and objects to the Levites, then he spoke the following words to them. In your translation, you can use the expression in your language that would best indicate this time sequence. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### And I said to them

**Them** refers to the selected priests and Levites. In the rest of this verse and in [8:29](#), Ezra is quoting what he told them on this occasion. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off the words that follow with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### You are holy to Yahweh, and the vessels are holy

Here, **holy** means “set apart for a special purpose.” Alternate translation: “I have selected you for a special mission. People also donated these objects for a special purpose. They are only to be used in the temple.” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the God of your fathers

Here, **fathers** means “ancestors.” Alternate translation: “the God of your ancestors” or “the God whom your ancestors worshiped” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)



## Ezra 8:29

### Watch and keep

Here Ezra leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. He is describing what the priests and Levites must do with the objects, the silver, and the gold that were devoted to Yahweh. You could indicate that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "Take good care of those things" (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### Watch and keep

These two words work together to give one idea. Ezra uses them together to emphasize how carefully the priests and Levites need to guard the silver and gold and objects. Alternate translation: "Guard diligently" (See: **Hendiadys (p.408)**)

### until you weigh them out

The implication is that when the priests and Levites arrived in Jerusalem, they would weigh out the silver, gold, and bronze to show the authorities there that they had not lost or taken any of it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "until you could weigh them out to prove that all of it is there" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### before the face of

Here, **face** represents the presence of a person. Alternate translation: "in the presence of" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### and the leaders of the fathers of Israel

The phrase **the leaders of the fathers** seems to be another version of the expression "the heads of the fathers," which is an abbreviated way of saying "the heads of father's houses." Review the note to [1:5](#) if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "and the clan leaders of Israel" (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### in the chambers of the house of Yahweh

The book assumes that readers will know that these **chambers** or rooms are specifically the storerooms in the temple, where money and objects for the temple worship were safely kept. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "in the storerooms of the temple of Yahweh" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### the house of Yahweh

This is the end of Ezra's quotation of what he told the selected priests and Levites. If you decided in [8:28](#) to mark his words to them as a direct quotation, you should indicate the end of it here with a closing primary quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

## Ezra 8:30

### So the priests and the Levites received

The word **So** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: "In keeping with what Ezra told them, the priests and the Levites took" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p.375))

### the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels

Here Ezra is describing the money and the objects by reference to something associated with them, their weight, which was what determined their value. Alternate translation: "the silver and the gold and the objects" (See: **Metonymy** (p.437))

### So the priests and the Levites received the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels

The phrase **received the weight** means that these men, after observing the silver and gold and objects that Ezra weighed out to them (8:26–27), accepted responsibility for the full amount of it according to the charge that Ezra had just given them. Alternate translation: "So the priests and the Levites accepted full responsibility for all of the silver and the gold and the objects" (See: **Idiom** (p.419))

### our God

In this case, Ezra is using **our** in the inclusive sense, that is, it includes the reader, since he is reporting his trip to fellow believers in God. Alternate translation: "the God to whom we all belong" (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.396))

## Ezra 8:31

### Then we set out

As Ezra tells his story, he uses **we** and **us** in the exclusive sense, that is, it excludes the reader. Alternate translation: "Then we started traveling" (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.396))

### from the river Ahava

See how you translated this name in 8:15. Alternate translation: "from the Ahava River" (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

### on day 12 of the first month

The **first month** means the first month in the Jewish calendar. You could convert the Hebrew month into an equivalent on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the equivalency will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to use the number of the Hebrew month. Alternate translation: "on the twelfth day of the first month of that year" (See: **Hebrew Months** (p.405))

### on day 12 of the first month

The Hebrew uses a cardinal number here, **12**, but there is not a significant difference in meaning between that and the way the Hebrew uses an ordinal number, "twelfth," in similar contexts elsewhere. If your language customarily uses ordinals for the numbers of days, you can do that here in your translation. Alternate translation: "on the twelfth day of the first month" (See: **Ordinal Numbers** (p.439))

### And the hand of our God was upon us

As in the expression **hand of our God upon us** in 8:18, **hand** here represents power and control. The expression indicates that God protected Ezra and the rest of the travelers on their journey. Alternate translation: "God protected us" (See: **Metaphor** (p.431))

### our God

In this case, Ezra is using **our** in the inclusive sense, that is, it includes the reader, since he is reporting his trip to fellow believers in God. Alternate translation: "the God to whom we all belong" (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.396))

### and he delivered us from the palm of the enemy and ambush on the way

These two phrases mean similar things. Ezra essentially says the same thing twice to emphasize how carefully God protected this group that was transporting so much treasure. If saying nearly the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: "and God protected us from any robbers along the way" However, you could also choose to bring out the slight difference in meaning. The first phrase is more general, and the second phrase describes more specifically how someone might have robbed the group. Alternate translation: "and God protected us and prevented any bandits who were hiding along the roadways from robbing us" (See: **Parallelism** (p.441))

## from the palm of the enemy

**Palm** here is another way of saying “hand,” which represents strength and power. Alternate translation: “from hostile attacks” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## and ambush on the way

The abstract noun **ambush** refers to the way bandits will lie in wait along a roadside to rob travelers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “and from bandits who lie in wait along the roadside” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

## Ezra 8:32

### So we came

The word **so** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. The group reached Jerusalem safely because God protected them. Alternate translation: "As a result, we came" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### So we came & and we stayed

As Ezra tells his story, he uses **we** in the exclusive sense, that is, it excludes the reader. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.396)**)

### So we came to Jerusalem, and we stayed there three days

Ezra does not say specifically why the group waited for three days before delivering the silver and gold and objects to the temple. But the implication is that this gave them a chance to rest after their journey and arrange for the delivery. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "We reached Jerusalem safely, and after we got there, we rested for three days" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 8:33

### the silver and the gold and the vessels were weighed out

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “each of the priests and Levites weighed out the silver and gold and objects that they had transported” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### our God

In this case, Ezra is using **our** in the inclusive sense, that is, it includes the reader, since he is reporting his trip to fellow believers in God. Alternate translation: “the God to whom we all belong” (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.396)**)

### into the hand of

As in 8:26, while the priests and Levites likely did place the money and the objects in the hands of the temple leaders, **hand** here represents control and responsibility. Alternate translation: “into the custody of” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Meremoth, the son of Uriah

**Meremoth** is the name of a man, and **Uriah** is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### Eleazar, the son of Phinehas

**Eleazar** is the name of a man, and **Phinehas** is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### Jozabad, the son of Jeshua

**Jozabad** is the name of a man, and **Jeshua** is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and Noadiah, the son of Binnui

**Noadiah** is the name of a man, and **Binnui** is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 8:34

### by number and weight of everything

This means that the objects and the bars or coins of silver and gold were both counted and weighed. The implication is that this was a double confirmation of the honesty of the priests and Levites who had transported these donations. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “everything was both counted and weighed as proof that the men who had carried it had not lost or stolen anything” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### And all the weight was written

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “The priests and Levites in the temple wrote down the weight of all of the silver and gold and of the objects” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

## Ezra 8:35

### The ones who had come from the captivity, the sons of the exile

These two phrases mean the same thing. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: “The Jews who had returned from exile” (See: **Parallelism** (p.441))

### The ones who had come from the captivity, the sons of the exile

As indicated in 2:1 and 8:35, the phrase **the sons of the exile** refers specifically to the group of Jewish people who returned to the land of Judah from Babylon after King Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Jerusalem and had taken many Jews as captives to Babylon. Alternate translation: “The Jews who had returned from exile” or “The Jews who had returned to their homeland” (See: **Idiom** (p.419))

### The ones who had come from the captivity, the sons of the exile

Here the story shifts from Ezra's first-person account to a third-person account. If that is confusing in your language, you can continue the story in first person. Alternate translation: “We who had gone into exile in Babylonia but had now returned from captivity” (See: **First, Second or Third Person** (p.398))

### offered burnt up offerings to the God of Israel: 12 bulls for all Israel, 96 rams, 77 lambs, 12 male goats of a sin offering. The whole was a burnt up offering to Yahweh

The book assumes that readers will recognize that there are two types of offerings here. The bulls, rams, and lambs are offerings of the first type. They were offered in order to express a desire to be in good standing with God by creating an aroma, the smell of roasting meat, that was considered to be pleasing to God. These were completely burned up. The goats are the second type of offering. As in 6:17, the goats were a **sin offering**. These were offered as a request for forgiveness from God. As explained in Leviticus 4:22–26 and 6:24–30, only the fat of these goats was burned up. The meat of these goats was for the priests to eat. The phrase **The whole was a burnt up offering** is a summary that includes the two types of offerings, one that was completely burned up and the other that was partially burned up. Therefore the final sentence means, “All of this was properly subjected to fire on the altar as sacrifices to Yahweh.” The book assumes that readers know this. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “offered as burnt offerings to the God of Israel 12 bulls for all Israel, 96 rams, and 77 lambs, and as a sin offering 12 male goats. All of these sacrifices were offered to Yahweh through fire on the altar” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.354))

### offered burnt up offerings to the God of Israel: 12 bulls for all Israel, 96 rams, 77 lambs, 12 male goats of a sin offering

The numbers of animals offered are symbolic, as the book explains in the case of the bulls. There were 12 bulls **for all Israel** because there were twelve tribes of Israel. There were 12 goats for the same reason. The same symbolism seems to lie behind the 96 rams, since that number is eight times 12, although the significance of the number eight is no longer apparent. The number 77 is an intensive form of the number seven, which symbolizes completeness. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “offered 12 bulls, one for each of the tribes of Israel, 96 rams, eight for each of the tribes of Israel, and 77 lambs, expressing completeness, as burnt offerings to the God of Israel, and 12 male goats as a sin offering, one for each of the tribes of Israel” (See: **Symbolic Action** (p.462))



## Ezra 8:36

### And they gave the laws of the king to the satraps of the king and the governors of Beyond-the-River

Here, **the laws of the king** seem to mean the decrees that Artaxerxes issued in the letter he gave to Ezra, and specifically the provisions that allowed Ezra to ask for support for the temple, exempted temple personnel from taxation, and allowed Ezra to appoint judges. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Ezra and the Jewish leaders informed the royal officials and governors in Beyond-the-River province of the decrees that Artaxerxes had issued in his letter to Ezra" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### And they gave

Here the story uses a third-person account rather than Ezra's first-person account. If that is confusing in your language, you can continue the story in first person. Alternate translation: "We also gave" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### to the satraps of the king and the governors of

The word **satraps** refers to rulers appointed by the king to rule over his provinces, such as the province of Beyond-the-River in which Judah was located. The **governors** were lower officials who worked in the province under the direction of the satrap. Use the words that communicate this best in your language. Alternate translation: "to those who rule over the king's provinces and to the authorities in the province of" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

### And they lifted the people and the house of God

Here, **lifted** is a metaphor that means supported and sustained. Alternate translation: "The group that had returned with Ezra supported the people of Judah and Jerusalem and the temple of God." (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 9

### Ezra 9 General Notes

### Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

#### Intermarriage

When Ezra found out that many Jews who had returned from exile had married Gentile wives, he prayed to God and confessed this sin of his people. He acknowledged that God had been good to them much more than they deserved by letting these few people return from captivity and then they sinned by marrying Gentile wives. The Jewish people had done this before and God had punished them for it. God forbade this type of marriage because it caused the people to worship other gods. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/falsegod\]\]](#))

#### Exclusive forms

Ezra uses many first person plural pronouns as he prays to God. Since Ezra is speaking to God, these forms of “we,” “us,” and “our” would all be the exclusive forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.396)**)

## Ezra 9:1

### Now as soon as these things were finished

This phrase indicates that the events the story will now relate came right after the events it has just described. In your translation, you can use the expression in your language that would best indicate this relationship. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### Now as soon as & were finished

The word **now** introduces a new event in the story. If your language has a word or expression for introducing a new event, use that here. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.423)**)

### the leaders

These appear to be the same **leaders** as in 8:29, that is, clan leaders. But this is not a reference to all of them, since the ones who come to Ezra say that some of their fellow leaders have married foreign women. Alternate translation: “some of the clan leaders” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### came to me, saying

After this phrase Ezra begins to quote what these clan leaders told him. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands

Separation here is a spatial metaphor for behavior. As in 6:21, it means to refuse to do the same things as another group. Alternate translation: “have not refused to do the things that the other people groups living in the land do” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### from the peoples of the lands according to their abominations

While the similar phrase in 6:21 spoke of “uncleanness,” that is, things that God does not accept, the phrase here speaks of **abominations**, that is, things that are very displeasing to God. Alternate translation: “from the things that are very displeasing to God that the other people groups living in the land do” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### from the peoples of the lands

See how you translated this expression in 3:3. It refers to members of other people groups who were living in and around the province of Judah. Alternate translation: “from the other people groups living in the land” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, the Ammonite, the Moabite, the Egyptian, and the Amorite

These are the names of eight people groups. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 9:2

### For

Here, **For** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the reasons for the statement that the leaders make in the previous sentence. Alternate translation: "You see," (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### they have lifted from their daughters for themselves and for their sons

The phrase **lifted from their daughters** is an idiom that means "married some of their women." Alternate translation: "Israelite men have married women from these other groups, and they have also gotten wives for their sons from those groups." (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### so they have mixed the seed of holiness with the peoples of the lands

Here, **mixed** is a metaphor for blending one thing into another. Alternate translation: "so they are blending the Jewish people right in with the other people groups living in the land" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### so they have mixed the seed of holiness with the peoples of the lands

The implication is that as a result of these marriages, not only was a distinct Jewish lineage being lost, the Jewish people were also beginning to follow the practices of these other groups rather than the commandments of God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "so they are blending the Jewish people right in with the other people groups living in the land, and they are starting to follow their practices rather than the law of God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### the seed of holiness

As in 8:28, **holiness** means "that which is set apart for a special purpose." Here, the word refers specifically to the fact that God had set apart the Israelites to be a model community of God's followers. Alternate translation: "the Jewish people, who belong to God," (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the seed of holiness

Here, **seed** means "descendants." The reference here is specifically to the descendants of Jacob, who was also known as Israel, and specifically to his descendants who were living in Judah and Jerusalem, that is, the Jews who had returned from exile. Alternate translation: "the Jewish people, who belong to God," (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### with the peoples of the lands

As in 9:1, this expression refers to members of other people groups who were living in and around the province of Judah. Alternate translation: "with the other people groups living in this land" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### And the hand of the leaders and the rulers has been first in this unfaithfulness

Here, **hand** represents control and action. Alternate translation: "And our clan leaders and provincial officials were actually the first ones to disobey in this way" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## in this unfaithfulness

Here, **unfaithfulness** means disobedience to God. Alternate translation: “to disobey God in this way” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## the leaders and the rulers

These terms mean similar things, but it seems that **leaders** may refer to the heads of the clans and that **rulers** may refer to official leaders of government. If your language uses one word for both of those, you can combine them and use that word here. Alternate translation: “our chiefs” (See: **Doublet (p.391)**)

## in this unfaithfulness

This is the end of Ezra’s quotation of what the clan leaders told him. If you decided in [9:1](#) to mark their words as a direct quotation, you should indicate that here with a closing primary quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

**Ezra 9:3**

**I tore my garment and my robe. And I pulled out some from the hair of my head and my beard, and I sat down appalled**

By performing these actions, Ezra was demonstrating symbolically how serious a wrong the Israelites had committed. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “to show how wrong it was for the Israelites to have married foreign women, I tore my tunic and my cloak, I pulled out some hair from my head and my beard, and I sat down stunned” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.462)**)

**appalled**

The sense of this word is that Ezra was so overwhelmed with shock and horror that he did not move or speak. In your translation, you can use the expression in your language that would best indicate this. Alternate translation: “stunned” or “devastated”

## Ezra 9:4

### And all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel on account of the unfaithfulness of the exiles were gathered to me

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “Everyone came and joined me who was just as distressed as I was about the way the Jews who had returned from exile had disobeyed the commandments of the God of Israel” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

#### all who trembled

Often in the Old Testament, **trembled** is a metaphor meaning to regard someone or something with respect and reverential fear. That is likely included in the meaning here, but in this context, the expression also seems to indicate an actual physical response to the situation, just as Ezra did not move or speak. Alternate translation: “everyone who was distressed” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

#### at the words of the God of Israel

This phrase does not refer to something that God said on this occasion. Rather, it refers to the commandment that God had given to the Israelites earlier not to intermarry with foreign groups, which Ezra cites in his prayer in [9:10](#) and [9:11](#). Alternate translation: “at the commandments of the God of Israel” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

#### on account of the unfaithfulness of the exiles

The abstract noun **exiles** refers in this context to the Jews who had returned to their homeland from Babylon. Here, **the exiles** seems to be equivalent to the longer phrase **the sons of the exile** in several other places in the book. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this term with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “because of the way the Jews who had returned to their homeland had disobeyed” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

#### on account of the unfaithfulness of the exiles

As in [9:2](#), **unfaithfulness** means “disobedience.” Alternate translation: “because of the disobedience of the Jews who had returned to their homeland” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### And I was sitting appalled until the offering of the evening

The **offering of the evening** was a sacrifice that the priests would offer around the time that the sun was going down. Alternate translation: “I continued to sit without moving or speaking until the time of the evening sacrifice” or “I continued to sit without moving or speaking for the rest of that day” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

## Ezra 9:5

### **I arose from my humiliation, and when I tore my garment and my robe**

Even though Ezra had been sitting down and he now got up, in this context the word **arise** means more than that. As in [1:5](#), [3:2](#), and [5:2](#), it means to take action to get an enterprise under way. Ezra had been sitting motionless to show how ashamed and upset he was. Now he began to take action to address the situation that the clan leaders had told him about. Alternate translation: "I stopped sitting motionless in my torn clothes and began to do something about the situation" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### **and when I tore my garment and my robe**

As the note to [9:3](#) explains, Ezra had torn his clothes to show how wrong it was for the Israelites to have married foreign women. By not changing out of his torn clothes, Ezra was continuing to show that symbolically. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "but I kept wearing my torn clothes to show how wrong it was for the Israelites to have married foreign women" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.462)**)

### **And I knelt down on my knees, and spread out my palms to Yahweh my God**

These two physical gestures showed publicly that Ezra was going to pray. Alternate translation: "I knelt down and spread out my hands in a gesture of prayer to Yahweh my God." (See: **Symbolic Action (p.462)**)



## Ezra 9:6

### And I said

After this phrase Ezra begins to quote what he said out loud in prayer on this occasion. The quotation continues through 9:15. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings** (p.452))

### My God, & my God

Here, **My God** means that Ezra belongs to God, not that God belongs to Ezra. If that is not clear in your language, then use a different phrase. Alternate translation: "O God, to whom I belong" or "God, whom I worship" (See: **Possession** (p.446))

### I am ashamed and humiliated

**Ashamed** and **humiliated** mean very similar things. Ezra uses them together to emphasize how disgraced he feels by what the Israelites have done. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these terms into a single expression. Alternate translation: "I am deeply disgraced" (See: **Doublet** (p.391))

### to raise my face to you

This means "to look at you directly" or "to look at you face to face," and since Ezra could not do that literally with God, it is a figurative way of saying "to address you." Alternate translation: "even to speak to you." (See: **Metaphor** (p.431))

### For our iniquities have multiplied to above the head, and our guilt has grown up as far as to the heavens

These two phrases mean similar things. Ezra uses the repetition to emphasize how guilty the people of Israel are. If repeating the same thing twice would be confusing for your readers, you could combine the phrases into one and show the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "We have committed such great sins that our guilt because of them is completely overwhelming us" However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could also choose to bring that out in your translation. The first phrase speaks of the effects of these sins on the Israelites, while the second phrase speaks of their effects on their standing with God. Alternate translation: "We have committed such great sins that they are overwhelming us, and we know that they are making us guilty before you" (See: **Parallelism** (p.441))

### For our iniquities have multiplied to above the head, and our guilt has grown up as far as to the heavens

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this sentence first in the prayer (after **My God**), since it gives the reason for the result of Ezra feeling ashamed. You could show the connection by using a word like "so" after this phrase. Alternate translation: "we have committed such great sins that we are completely guilty, and we know that we are very guilty before you. And so" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p.375))

## our iniquities have multiplied to above the head

Here, **multiplied** means to become much greater in number. Ezra uses that expression to describe how serious the sins of the Israelites are. Alternate translation: “we have committed so many sins that it is like they have piled up higher than our heads” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## our iniquities have multiplied

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **iniquities** with a phrase such as “sins that we have committed.” Alternate translation: “the great sins that we have committed” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

## to above the head

Ezra uses a spatial metaphor to describe the degree to which the sins have become greater in number. Alternate translation: “to the point that they are obvious to everyone” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## and our guilt has grown up

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **guilt** with a phrase such as “make guilty.” Alternate translation: “and our sins are making us guilty” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

## and our guilt has grown up as far as to the heavens

Here, Ezra speaks of God by reference to something associated with him, **the heavens**, which was considered to be the place where God lived. The expression **and our guilt has grown up as far as to the heavens** means that the sins have become so numerous that the pile of them has reached to God in heaven. In other words, their sin is against God himself. Alternate translation: “and our many sins have made us very guilty before you” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

## Ezra 9:7

### From the days of our fathers

The term **days** is used here to refer a particular period of time. Alternate translation: “From the time when our ancestors lived” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### our fathers

**Fathers** here, means “ancestors.” Alternate translation: “our ancestors” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### until this day

In this context, **day** does not refer to one specific day, but rather, to a more general time. Alternate translation: “until this time” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### we are in great guilt

Here, Ezra speaks of the disobedience of the Israelites by reference to something associated with it, the guilt that it has caused. Alternate translation: “we have consistently disobeyed you” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### we

By **we** here, Ezra is referring to all of the Jewish people. See the UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### are in great guilt

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **guilt** with a verb such as “disobey.” Alternate translation: “consistently disobeyed you” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### we ourselves, our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “you put us, our kings, and our priests into the hands of foreign rulers” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### we ourselves, our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands

Here, **hand** represents power and control. Alternate translation: “you allowed foreign rulers to conquer us, our kings, and our priests” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### the kings of the lands

The **kings of the lands** would be the rulers of the “people of the lands” whom Ezra mentions in [9:1](#) and [9:2](#), and of similar foreign people groups. Alternate translation: “foreign rulers” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## by sword, by captivity, and by plunder, and by shame of face

Other than **by sword**, these are not the means by which the foreign rulers conquered the Israelites. Rather, they are primarily things that happened to the Israelites after they were conquered. It may be helpful to make this a separate sentence. Alternate translation: “They killed some of us, they took others of us away from our homeland, they stole the things that belonged to us, and all of this has made us greatly ashamed” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### by sword

The sword represents killing, by reference to one kind of weapon that can kill a person. Alternate translation: “who killed some of us” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### by captivity

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **captivity** with a verb such as “take away.” Alternate translation: “who took others away from our homeland” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### and by plunder

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **plunder** with a verb such as “steal.” Alternate translation: “who stole the things that belonged to us” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### and by shame of face

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **shame** with a word such as “ashamed.” Alternate translation: “and all of this has made us greatly ashamed” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### and by shame of face

Here, Ezra uses the **face** to describe the whole person figuratively, by reference to one part of a person, their face, which would show their shame by its expression. Alternate translation: “and made us greatly ashamed” (See: **Synecdoche (p.464)**)

### as this day

In this context, **day** does not refer to one specific day, but rather to a more general time that includes the day that Ezra is praying to God. Alternate translation: “and that is still our situation now” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## Ezra 9:8

### But now

The phrase **But now** indicates that the sentence that it introduces draws a contrast between what the Israelites had been experiencing in the past and what God was now doing. Use a natural way in your language to indicate this contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.368)**)

### according to a little moment

Alternate translation: “for just a short time” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### favor has come from with Yahweh our God

The abstract noun **favor** refers to one person helping another person even if that person does not deserve it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this word with a phrase such as “be merciful.” Alternate translation: “Yahweh our God has been merciful to us” or “Yahweh our God has been gracious to us” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### favor has come from with Yahweh our God

Ezra speaks here of **favor** or mercy as if it could travel from Yahweh to the Jews. Alternate translation: “Yahweh our God has been merciful to us” (See: **Personification (p.444)**)

### favor has come from with Yahweh our God

Ezra is speaking to Yahweh in prayer, and accordingly, he addresses him in the second person in 9:6 and in 9:10–15. But here he speaks of God in the third person to show humility and respect, as people of this time did when speaking to superiors. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words in the second person. Alternate translation: “you, Yahweh our God, have been merciful to us” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### and to give to us a peg

Ezra speaks of the Jews’ current situation of safety and security in their homeland as if it were a **peg** or “stake,” such as one would pound securely into the ground in order to fasten the cords of a tent to it, or such as one would fasten to a wall in order to hang utensils on it safely and securely. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this with a different metaphor that conveys this sense of stability and security, or express this plainly. Alternate translation: “and to bring us into a safe situation” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### in his holy place

Here the word **holy** means “set apart for a special purpose.” The temple was God’s **holy place** because it was set apart for his worship. Alternate translation: “in his temple” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### in his holy place

Here again Ezra speaks of God in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words in the second person. Alternate translation: “in your temple.” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

## in his holy place

Ezra speaks of the **peg** as if it were in God's temple, likely because God was considered to be present there. Alternate translation: "in your presence"

## in his holy place

Ezra may be speaking of the presence of God by association to mean the protection of God. Alternate translation: "under your protection" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

## to leave for us survivors

This phrase starts with **to**, which indicates here that the phrase that follows is a result of the phrase that came before. In fact, there are four results in this verse of receiving favor from God. Each result begins with the word **to**. Use a natural way in your language to indicate that these are results of receiving favor from God. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

## for our God to brighten

Here again Ezra speaks of God in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words in the second person. Alternate translation: "for you, our God, to bring light to" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

## for our God to brighten our eyes and to give us a little reviving in our slavery

These two phrases mean similar things. Ezra uses the repetition to emphasize how merciful God has been to the community of returned exiles. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "and for our God to enable our community to thrive a little even under foreign domination" However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could also choose to bring that out in your translation. The second phrase says more specifically how God has accomplished what the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "for our God to give us new vitality by giving us greater freedom even though we are under foreign domination" (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

## for our God to brighten our eyes

To **brighten** the **eyes** of a person means to give them new life and vitality in the sense of restoring someone's happiness or well-being. Alternate translation: "for our God to give us new vitality" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## and to give us a little reviving in our slavery

Since Ezra says that God has made the community more alive **in our slavery**, he seems to be referring implicitly to the greater measure of freedom that King Artaxerxes has allowed them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "by giving us greater freedom even though we are under foreign domination" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 9:9

### For we are slaves

Ezra describes the Jewish people as **slaves**, which is an exaggeration that he uses to express humility before God. It is true that their ancestors were taken as captives to Babylon where they were forced to serve the king, and that even now they must do as the king commands, but those who have returned to Judah are allowed to manage their own daily affairs. Alternate translation: "The Babylonians made our people to be slaves" (See: **Hyperbole (p.415)**)

### our God has not forsaken us

Ezra continues to speak of God in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words in the second person. Alternate translation: "you, our God, have not forsaken us" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### But he has extended

This word **But** indicates that the sentence it introduces draws a contrast between what the Israelites might have expected God to do, since they were being punished for their disobedience, and what God actually did. You could begin the sentence with a phrase such as "on the contrary" or other method in your language to indicate this contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.368)**)

### But he has extended to us covenant faithfulness

As in [7:28](#), Ezra uses a spatial metaphor to depict help stretching out to him from Yahweh. Alternate translation: "On the contrary, he has helped us, as he promised" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### But he has extended to us covenant faithfulness before the face of the kings of Persia

Here, the abstract noun **faithfulness** refers to a person wanting to do everything that they can to help another person. As in [3:11](#) and [7:28](#), **covenant faithfulness** refers specifically to Yahweh doing that for the people of Israel because of his covenant with them, which contained the promises that he had made to them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this phrase with verbs such as "help" and "promise." Alternate translation: "But he has helped us, as he promised, by leading the king of Persia to regard us favorably" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### before the face of the kings of Persia

Here, **face** refers to the way that a person regards things, by association with the way that they use the eyes in their face to see things and the way that their facial expression shows what they think of those things. Alternate translation: "by leading the kings of Persia to regard us favorably" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### the kings of Persia

Ezra probably uses the plural **kings** to acknowledge implicitly that not just Artaxerxes, but also Cyrus and Darius before him, treated the Jews favorably by allowing them to rebuild the temple and by supporting the worship there. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could name these kings explicitly. Alternate translation: "King Cyrus, King Darius, and King Artaxerxes of Persia" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## to give to us reviving

As in 9:8, **reviving** or renewed life in this context seems to be a figurative expression for greater freedom. Alternate translation: “so that they gave us greater freedom” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## to raise up the house of our God and to cause its ruins to stand

These two phrases mean similar things. Ezra says essentially the same thing twice, probably to emphasize how remarkable this was after all the opposition that there had been to it. If repeating both phrases in your translation might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases. Alternate translation: “and allowed us to rebuild the temple of our God” However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could also choose to bring that out in your translation. The second phrase is stronger because it indicates that the temple had previously been destroyed but now it was being restored. Alternate translation: “and allowed us to rebuild the temple of our God by repairing its ruins” (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

## to raise up

**To raise up** is a figurative expression for building it. Alternate translation: “to rebuild” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## and to cause its ruins to stand

Like **raise up, cause ... to stand** is a figurative expression for building. Alternate translation: “by repairing its ruins” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## and to give to us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem

Ezra is not referring to a literal wall. (The walls of Jerusalem were still broken down at this time. They would not be repaired until Nehemiah came to the city over a dozen years later.) Rather, he means that the Persian kings authorized the returned exiles to re-establish their community in Judah and Jerusalem, and so the king would protect their right to live there. It is as if the Jews are already protected by this as though by a wall. Alternate translation: “and has given us a safe place to live in Judah and Jerusalem.” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)



## Ezra 9:10

### So now, our God, what can we say after this

Ezra is making a statement, not really asking a question. He does not expect God to tell him what excuses he can give for the disobedience of the Israelites. Instead, he is using the question form to emphasize that the Israelites really have no excuses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words as a statement. Alternate translation: "So now, our God, we really have no excuses, after all of this." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 458)**)

### after this

If it would be helpful in your language, you could explain what **this** refers to. There are two possibilities. (1) It probably refers to all of the sinning that the Jews did by disobeying God. Alternate translation: "after we have continued to sin against you" or (2) It could refer to the good things that God did for the Jews even though they continually disobeyed him. Alternate translation: "after you have been much more kind to us than we deserved" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### we have forsaken your commandments

As in [8:22](#), forsaking or abandoning God is a metaphor for disobeying him or refusing to serve him. Alternate translation: "we have disobeyed your commandments" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 9:11

### which you commanded by the hand of your servants, the prophets

Here, **hand** represents control and action. This expression means that God gave these commandments by having the prophets speak them to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “which you told your servants, the prophets, to speak to us” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### saying

After this phrase Ezra begins to quote what the prophets commanded the people on Yahweh's behalf. So this is a quotation within a quotation. That is, Ezra is quoting the prayer that he prayed on this occasion, and within that prayer, he is quoting what the prophets said. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off these words within secondary quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### is a land of impurity by the impurity of the peoples of the lands

The prophets speak of the land of Canaan as if it were itself impure, because it was a place where the people did things that were very displeasing to God. Alternate translation: “is a land whose inhabitants do things that are displeasing to God” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### by the impurity of

The prophets speak of these displeasing things as if they were contaminated. Alternate translation: “because of the detestable actions of” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### the peoples of the lands

See how you translated this expression in 3:3. Here it refers to members of other people groups who were living in the land of Canaan. Alternate translation: “the inhabitants” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### by their abominations that have filled it from mouth to mouth with their uncleanness

The term **abominations**, like the term **impurity**, refers to things that people do that are very displeasing to God. As in 9:1, the term indicates that God must judge these actions as wrong, that is, as not in accordance with his own character. The prophets speak of these things as if they were accumulating physically and filling up the land. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “Throughout the land, from one end to the other, they have been doing things that are very displeasing to God” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### from mouth to mouth

Here, **mouth** is a figurative way of saying “edge,” “end,” or “extremity,” probably by analogy to the way that the mouth of an animal is typically at one end of the animal. Alternate translation: “from one end to the other” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## with their uncleanness

The prophets also speak of these displeasing things as if they were dirty. See how you translated **uncleanness** in verse [6:21](#). Alternate translation: “through the things they do that are displeasing to God” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 9:12

### So now

In this verse, Ezra continues quoting the prophets. The phrase **So now** introduces the results of what the previous sentence described. Use a connector in your language that can introduce a resulting action. Alternate translation: “Therefore” or “As a result” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### neither give your daughters to their sons

This expression specifically refers to giving daughters in marriage. Alternate translation: “do not arrange marriages between your daughters and their sons” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### nor lift their daughters for your sons

As in 9:2, to **lift their daughters for your sons** is an idiom that means “to get wives for your sons from among their daughters.” Alternate translation: “and do not get wives for your sons from their daughters” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### nor shall you seek their peace or their good until eternity

**Until eternity** is a Hebrew expression that means **for as long as anyone can anticipate into the future**. Alternate translation: “and never do anything that contributes to their welfare or prosperity” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### nor shall you seek their peace or their good

The terms **peace** and **good** mean similar things. The prophets use them together to emphasize the importance of this commandment. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these terms into a single expression, as in the UST. (See: **Doublet (p.391)**)

### so that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land & it

These two phrases mean similar things. The prophets say essentially the same thing twice, to emphasize the blessings that the Israelites would enjoy if they obeyed these commandments. If repeating both phrases might be confusing for your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “so that you will become a prosperous nation in that place” However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could also choose to bring that out in your translation. The second phrase says more specifically how the nation would become strong, as the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “so that you will become a strong nation by growing and enjoying abundant harvests” (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

### so that you may be strong

The forms of **you** and **your** in this verse are plural, referring to all the Jewish people. Therefore **you may be strong** does not refer to a person's physical strength or health, but rather to the strength of the Jewish nation. Alternate translation: “so that your nation will be strong” (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.401)**)

### and cause your sons to inherit & until eternity

As earlier in the sentence, **until eternity** means “for as long as anyone can anticipate into the future.” Alternate translation: “so that your descendants will always be able to live there” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

**your sons**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “your descendants” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

**until eternity**

After this phrase Ezra ends his quotation of what Yahweh commanded through the prophets. If you decided in [9:11](#) to mark their words as a secondary quotation, you should indicate that ending here with a closing secondary quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation within a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

## Ezra 9:13

### **all that has come upon us**

The phrase **all that has come upon us** refers to the punishments that Ezra mentioned in [9:7](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that information explicit. Alternate translation: “all of the things with which you punished us” or “everything that you allowed to happen to us” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### **because of our evil deeds and because of our great guilt**

These two phrases mean similar things. Ezra uses the repetition for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: “since we are so guilty because of the wrong things that we have done” However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could also choose to bring that out in your translation. Alternate translation: “since we have committed such great sins, and since we are so guilty as a result” (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

### **you have restrained it to lower than our iniquities**

This is a Hebrew idiom. Alternate translation: “have not punished us as fully as our sins deserve” (See: **Idiom (p. 419)**)

### **and you have given to us a survival such as this**

Ezra is referring implicitly to himself and to the other Jews who have returned from exile. Alternate translation: “and you have allowed some of us to return to our homeland” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 354)**)

## Ezra 9:14

### should we return to breaking your commandments and to intermarrying with the peoples of these abominations

Ezra is making a statement, not really asking a question. He does not expect God to tell him whether the people should once again disobey. Instead, he is using the question form to emphasize how important it is for them to stop intermarrying with the other people groups. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: “we certainly should not break your commandments again by intermarrying with peoples who do things that you cannot stand!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.458)**)

### with the peoples of these abominations

As in 9:1 and 9:11, the term **abominations** refers to things that God cannot allow to have in his presence. Alternate translation: “with the people groups who do these things that God detests” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### Would you not be angry with us as far as completion, so that there is neither remnant nor survivors

Once again Ezra is making a statement, not really asking a question. He does not expect God to tell him whether he would be angry with the Jews. Instead, he is using the question form to emphasize how angry God would become. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: “If we did that, you would be totally angry with us, and you would not leave any of us alive.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.458)**)

### Would you not be angry with us as far as completion

This is a Hebrew idiom. Alternate translation: “Would you not be totally angry with us” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### so that there is neither remnant nor survivors

In this specific context, the terms **remnant** and **escape** mean the same thing. Ezra uses the terms together for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these terms. Alternate translation: “you would not leave any of us alive.” (See: **Doublet (p.391)**)

## Ezra 9:15

### Yahweh, the God of Israel, you are righteous, for we are left as survivors, as this day

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases since the second phrase gives the reason for what the first phrase says. Alternate translation: "But you have ensured that a group of us would survive, just as we are right now, so we acknowledge that you, Yahweh, the God of Israel, are righteous" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### as this day

In this context, **day** does not refer to one specific day, but rather to a more general time. Alternate translation: "as we are now" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### Behold us, before your face in our guilt, for there is none to stand before your face on account of this

These two phrases mean similar things. Ezra uses the repetition for emphasis as he makes this confession of guilt on behalf of the people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "We have come into your presence to admit that we are guilty." However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could also choose to bring that out in your translation. The second phrase is more intensive. Alternate translation: "We have come into your presence to admit that we are guilty, and none of us have any excuse for what we have done" (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

### before your face

Here, **face** represents the presence of a person. Alternate translation: "standing in your presence" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### there is none to stand before your face

To **stand** is a Hebrew idiom meaning to be acquitted. (For example, in Psalm 130:3, "If you, Yahweh, would mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?" and Psalm 1:5, "The wicked will not stand in the judgment.") Alternate translation: "none of us can plead any grounds for acquittal" or "none of us have any excuse for what we have done" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### on account of this

This is the end of Ezra's quotation of the prayer that he prayed on this occasion. If you decided in 9:6 to mark his words as a direct quotation, you should indicate that ending here with a closing primary quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)



## **Ezra 10**

### **Ezra 10 General Notes**

### **Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter**

#### **Intermarriages**

In this chapter, Jewish men agree to divorce their Gentile wives. Divorce should not have been a common practice for the Jews, but they did it at this time because marriage between Jewish men and non-Jewish women was not allowed.

## Ezra 10:1

### And when Ezra prayed

Previously in the book, Ezra was a character in a story that someone else was telling. Then starting from 7:27 he is the person telling the story, and he continues to tell it through to the end of chapter 9. Now from here to the end of the book, the story changes back to someone else talking about Ezra as a character in the story. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could continue to translate this chapter as though Ezra were telling it. Alternate translation: “And when I prayed” (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.426)**)

### And when Ezra prayed, and when he confessed

These two phrases mean similar things. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “While Ezra was praying this prayer of confession” (See: **Parallelism (p.441)**)

### and casting himself down before the face of the house of God

By **casting himself down** onto the ground in front of the temple, Ezra was symbolically pleading with God, who was considered to be present in the temple, the way a suppliant in this culture would get down with his face on the ground to plead with a powerful person. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “and pleading with God by falling down onto the ground in front of the temple” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.462)**)

### before the face of the house of God

Here, **face** means the front of a place. Alternate translation: “in front of the temple” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### the people wept an abundant weeping

This is an idiom that means that the people wept a lot. This could refer to either loudness or length, or both. Alternate translation: “the people cried very bitterly” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the people wept an abundant weeping

The implication is that the people were weeping because they realized what a wrong thing they had done and how guilty they were because of it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the people began to weep very bitterly because they realized that they had sinned and were guilty” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 10:2

### Then & answered

The word **then** indicates that the events the story will now relate came after the events it has just described. In your translation, you can use the expression in your language that would best indicate this relationship. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.378)**)

### Shekaniah, the son of Jehiel

**Shekaniah** is the name of a man, and **Jehiel** is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### from the sons of Elam

**Sons** here means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “one of the descendants of Elam” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Elam

**Elam** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### Then & answered and said

Here the book expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. Together the two words mean that Shekaniah responded to the situation that the Jews were facing. Alternate translation: “responded” (See: **Hendiadys (p.408)**)

### and said to Ezra

After this phrase, the book begins to quote what Shekaniah said to Ezra. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### We ourselves have acted unfaithfully against our God

As in 9:2 and 9:4, **acted unfaithfully** means “acted in disobedience.” Alternate translation: “We ourselves have disobeyed our God” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### and have caused foreign women from the peoples of the land to dwell

To **cause to dwell** is an idiom that means “to marry.” Alternate translation: “and have married foreign women from the other people groups living in the land” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### from the peoples of the land

This expression refers to the other people groups who were living in and around the province of Judah. Alternate translation: “the other people groups living in the land” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## But now

The words **But now** indicate that the sentence it introduces draws a contrast between it and the previous sentence. The situation in the previous sentence appeared to be hopeless, but Shekariah wants to say that the Jews can still do something about it. Indicate this contrast in a natural way in your language. Alternate translation: “nevertheless” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.368)**)

## But now, there is hope for Israel concerning this

Here Shekariah refers to the nation of Israel as if it were a person, their ancestor, Israel. Alternate translation: “but there is still hope for the Israelites in this matter” (See: **Personification (p.444)**)

## But now, there is hope for Israel concerning this

Though Shekariah speaks of Israel, meaning the Israelites, in the third person, the term includes himself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this phrase in the first person. Alternate translation: “But there is still hope for us in this matter” or “But there is still something that we can do about this” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

## But now, there is hope for Israel concerning this

Since Shekariah is speaking to Ezra and the term **Israel** applies to Ezra as well, if you choose to translate this phrase in the first person, the term “us” or “we” should include the addressee, if your language makes that distinction. Alternate translation: “But there is still hope for us in this matter” or “But there is still something that we can do about this” (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.396)**)

## Ezra 10:3

### let us cut a covenant

This is a Hebrew idiom that means “to make or enter into a covenant,” which is a solemn agreement between two parties. Alternate translation: “let us make a solemn agreement” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### to cause all the women to go out, and the ones who were born from them

**To cause to go out** is a Hebrew idiom that means “to divorce and send away.” Alternate translation: “to divorce and send away all of these foreign wives and their children” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### and the ones who were born from them

If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a noun to represent this phrase that uses a passive verb form. Alternate translation: “and their children” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### by the counsel of my lord

Shekariah addresses Ezra in the third person as a sign of respect. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this with the second person. Alternate translation: “doing it in the way that you, my lord, advise” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.398)**)

### and the ones who tremble at the commandment of our God

As in 9:4, **tremble** here is a metaphor meaning to regard someone or something with respect and reverential fear. Alternate translation: “and in the way that seems right to everyone who respects the commandment of our God” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### And let it be done according to the law

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who would do the action. Alternate translation: “And let us make sure that we are following what the law commands” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### And let it be done according to the law

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this more general statement before the specific one about cutting a covenant, as in the UST. (See: **Information Structure (p.421)**)

## Ezra 10:4

### Arise

Here, as in several other places in the book, **arise** means to take action to get an enterprise under way. It could also mean to physically arise, since Ezra was lying prostrate on the ground. Alternate translation: “Get up and do something about this situation” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### for the matter is on you

This is a Hebrew idiom. Alternate translation: “because this is your responsibility” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### for the matter is on you

The implication is that this was Ezra’s responsibility because King Artaxerxes had given him the mandate to teach the Jews to follow the commandments of Yahweh and he also gave him the authority to ensure that they did follow those commandments. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “because this is your responsibility, since the king told you to teach us Yahweh’s commandments and to make sure that we follow them” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### and we are with you

Alternate translation: “and we will support you”

### Be strong and do

Here, Shekariah leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Alternate translation: “Be strong and take action to address this matter” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### Be strong and do

After this phrase, the book ends its quotation of what Shekariah said to Ezra on this occasion. If you decided in [10:2](#) to mark his words as a quotation, you should indicate their ending here with a closing quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

## Ezra 10:5

### And & arose

Here the word **And** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentences described. Alternate translation: “As a result” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### And Ezra arose

Here also, **arose** means “took action to get an enterprise under way.” It could also mean to physically arise, since Ezra had been lying prostrate on the ground. Alternate translation: “So Ezra got up, took initiative,” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### and all Israel

Here the book refers to the Israelites by the name of their nation. Alternate translation: “all of the Israelites” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### and all Israel

Here, **all Israel** is an exaggeration that is meant to express the idea that Ezra made every Israelite who was there swear an oath. If this is not clear in your language, you can state it without the exaggeration. Alternate translation: “and every Israelite who was there” (See: **Hyperbole (p.415)**)

### to do according to this word

The implication in context is that **this word** refers to Shekariah’s recommendation that the Jews send away all the foreign wives and their children. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “to do what Shekariah had recommended and make the Israelites send away all the foreign wives and their children” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

## Ezra 10:6

### from before the face of the house of God

As in 10:1, **face** here means the front of a place. Alternate translation: “from in front of the temple” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### and he went to the chamber of Jehohanan, the son of Eliashib

As in 8:29, **chamber** means a room, and in context here it seems to refer similarly to one of the rooms in the temple. Eliashib was the high priest, and so it is probable that one of his family members would have had a room there. The book does not say why Ezra went to one of the rooms in the temple, but the implication is that he did so in order to meet further with the community leaders and make plans for the assembly that the following verses describe. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “and he went to one of the rooms in the temple, the one that belonged to Jehohanan the grandson of Eliashib, to meet further with the leaders to make plans to call an assembly of all the returned exiles” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### Jehohanan, the son of Eliashib

Jehohanan was actually the grandson of Eliashib, so **son** means “descendant.” Alternate translation: “Jehohanan, the grandson of Eliashib” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Jehohanan, & Eliashib

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### And he went there. He did not eat bread and he did not drink water

Here the book leaves out some of the words that would ordinarily be needed in order to express a complete meaning. Alternate translation: “And when he went there, he did not eat bread or drink water” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### He did not eat bread and he did not drink water, but was mourning on account of the unfaithfulness of the exiles

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the action that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “Because he was still grieving over the way the Jews who had returned to their homeland had disobeyed, he did not eat bread or drink water.” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### He did not eat bread and he did not drink water, but was mourning on account of the unfaithfulness of the exiles

Not eating or drinking was a symbolic action whose purpose was to show that Ezra was grieving over the disobedience of the exiles. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “To show that he was still grieving over the way that the Jews who had returned to their homeland had disobeyed, he did not eat or drink anything” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.462)**)



## He did not eat bread and he did not drink water

The book is using **bread**, one kind of food, to represent all food, and it is using **water**, one kind of drink, to represent all drink. Alternate translation: “He did not eat or drink anything” (See: **Synecdoche (p.464)**)

## the unfaithfulness of the exiles

Here, **unfaithfulness** means disobedience. Alternate translation: “the way that the Jews who had returned to their homeland had disobeyed God” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## the unfaithfulness of the exiles

The abstract noun **exiles** describes the Jews who had returned to their homeland from Babylon. (The term seems to be equivalent to the longer phrase “the sons of the exile” that is used in several places in the book, including in the next verse.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this term with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “the way the Jews who had returned to their homeland had disobeyed God” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

## Ezra 10:7

### And they caused a sound to pass throughout Judah and Jerusalem

As in [1:1](#), this **sound** is the voice of messengers who speak a message, and it represents the message that the messengers speak. Refer to whichever is natural in your language: the message, the messenger, or the messenger's voice. Alternate translation: "They sent messengers throughout Judah and Jerusalem" (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### the sons of the exile

As indicated in [2:1](#) and [8:35](#), the phrase **the sons of the exile** refers specifically to the group of Jewish people who returned to the land of Judah from Babylon where King Nebuchadnezzar had taken them (or their ancestors) as captives many years earlier when he conquered Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the Jews who had returned from exile" or "the Jews who had returned to their homeland" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the sons of the exile

The abstract noun **exile** refers to the way the Babylonians had taken the Jews as captives and transported them away from their homeland. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this term with a verb such as "return," which would describe the present situation of some of these Jews and their descendants. Alternate translation: "the Jews who had returned to their homeland" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

## Ezra 10:8

### according to the counsel of the leaders and the elders

Alternate translation: “as the leaders and elders had specified that they must”

### all his property would be devoted to the ban

**Devoted to the ban** is an idiom that refers to the complete loss of property. While in earlier times this would have meant that the property would be totally destroyed, in this context it likely meant that it would be confiscated and sold and that the proceeds would be put in the temple treasury. Alternate translation: “all of his property would be confiscated” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### all his property would be devoted to the ban

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who would do the action. Alternate translation: “the leaders would take away all of his property” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### And he himself would be separated from the assembly of the exiles

**Separated from the assembly** is a Hebrew idiom that means to be expelled from the community and no longer considered a Jew. Alternate translation: “He himself would be expelled from the Jewish community” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### And he himself would be separated from the assembly of the exiles

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who would do the action. Alternate translation: “the leaders would remove him from belonging to the Jewish community” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### from the assembly of the exiles

As often in the book, the abstract noun **exiles** here refers to the group of Jews who had been transported away from their homeland but had since returned. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the idea behind this term with a verb such as “return.” Alternate translation: “from the community of Jews who had returned to their homeland” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

## Ezra 10:9

### So & gathered

The word **so** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “As a result ... gathered” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### all the men of Judah and Benjamin

Since the assembly included Israelites from other tribes (for example, the priests and the Levites, who were both from the tribe of Levi), the book is using the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (or their territory), to represent all of the Israelite tribes. Alternate translation: “all of the Israelite men” (See: **Synecdoche (p.464)**)

### all the men of Judah and Benjamin

The book may be describing all of the Israelites by reference to the area in which all of them were now living, which had previously been the territory of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Alternate translation: “all the Israelite men” (See: **Metonymy (p.437)**)

### It was the ninth month, on 20 in the month

You could convert the Hebrew day and month into an approximate date on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the date will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. You may just want to use the numbers of the Hebrew day and month. Alternate translation: “It was the twentieth day of the ninth month” (See: **Hebrew Months (p.405)**)

### It was the ninth month, on 20 in the month

Since the story does not say otherwise, the implication is that this was still the same year in which Ezra returned to Jerusalem, that is, the seventh year of Artaxerxes. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “It was the twentieth day of the ninth month in the seventh year of Artaxerxes as king of Persia” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### on 20 in the month

The Hebrew uses a cardinal number here, **20**, but there is not a significant difference in meaning between that and the way the Hebrew uses an ordinal number, “twentieth” in similar contexts elsewhere. If your language customarily uses ordinals for the numbers of days, you can do that here in your translation. Alternate translation: “on the twentieth day of month” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

### in the open place of the house of God

The phrase **open place** means a “plaza” or a “square” in the city where there were no buildings and so where large gatherings like this could be held. Alternate translation: “in the temple square” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.468)**)

### trembling on account of the matter and because of the rains

As elsewhere in the book, **trembling** here may be a metaphor for regarding someone or something with respect and reverential fear. However, the people were likely trembling literally because of the rain, that is, shaking with cold. So the book is either mixing figurative and literal uses of the same term, or the people were literally shaking

because they were all being called to account for a serious disobedience. Alternate translation: “deeply fearful about the issue of disobedience and shaking with cold from the rain” or “shaking with fear because they were being called to account for disobedience and shaking with cold because of the rain” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 10:10

### And Ezra the priest rose up and said to them

By standing up in front of the assembly, Ezra was indicating that the meeting was starting and that he was leading it. Alternate translation: "Then Ezra stood up in front of the assembly as its leader and said to the people" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.462)**)

### Ezra the priest

Here the book repeats some background information to remind readers who Ezra was. Alternate translation: "Ezra, who was a priest," (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

### and said to them

After this phrase, the book begins to quote what Ezra said to the assembly. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### You & have acted unfaithfully and have caused foreign wives to dwell

The phrase **acted unfaithfully** means "committed disobedience." Alternate translation: "disobeyed by marrying foreign women" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### You & have acted unfaithfully and have caused foreign wives to dwell

The implication is that this was disobedience to the commandment of Yahweh. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "disobeyed the commandment of Yahweh by marrying foreign women" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### and have caused foreign wives to dwell

See how you translated this expression in [10:2](#). Alternate translation: "and have married foreign women" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## Ezra 10:11

### But now, give praise to Yahweh, the God of your fathers

In this context, **give praise** is an idiom that means “make confession.” The two ideas are closely related because, as one praises God for his holiness, at the same time one acknowledges one's own lack of holiness. Alternate translation: “confess to Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, that you have sinned” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the God of your fathers

**Fathers** here means “ancestors.” Alternate translation: “the God of your ancestors” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### and do his will, and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the foreign women

With regard to the other people groups, the word **separate** means ending the alliances that had been formed with them by marriage. With regard to the foreign wives, it is a figurative term for divorce. Alternate translation: “and obey him by divorcing and sending away your foreign wives, and thereby breaking the alliances you have formed with the other people groups living in the land” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### from the peoples of the land

This expression refers to the other people groups who were living in and around the province of Judah. Alternate translation: “from the other people groups that are living in the land” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the foreign women

After this phrase, the book ends its quotation of what Ezra said to the assembly on this occasion. If you decided in [10:10](#) to mark his words as a quotation, you should indicate their ending here with a closing quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

## Ezra 10:12

### Then & answered and said

See how you translated this expression in [10:2](#). Alternate translation: “Then ... responded” (See: **Hendiadys (p.408)**)

### in a loud voice

After this phrase the book begins to quote what the assembly replied to Ezra. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

### Thus, according to your word, it is on us to do

Like the similar expression “the matter is on you” in [10:4](#), this is a Hebrew idiom. Alternate translation: “We agree that it is our responsibility to do what you have said” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)



## Ezra 10:13

### However

The people were all shouting their agreement with Ezra in verse 12, but now in verses 13 and 14 it seems that one person speaks on behalf of the group, rather than all of them shouting this together. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this change of speaker, as in the UST. If you do this, you may need to add a mark that indicates a closing quotation at the end of verse 12 and another mark that indicates an opening quotation before this word. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### However

Here, **However** indicates a contrast between the previous verse and this verse. In the previous verse, the people agree that they need to fix this problem, but here they object that they cannot do it immediately. Use whatever form is most natural in your language to show this contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.368)**)

### the people are many

The implication is that there are too many people potentially involved with the problem to deal with all at once. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “there are too many people to deal with all at once” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### and the time is rain showers and there is no strength to stand in the outdoors

To say that there is **no strength** for something is an idiom in Hebrew meaning that it is too difficult. Alternate translation: “it is too much of a hardship to make everyone stand outside during the rainy season” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### And the work is neither for one day nor for two, for we have done much to rebel in this matter

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the action that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “Because so many of us have disobeyed Yahweh and married foreign women, it will take a long time to resolve this problem” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### neither for one day nor for two

The phrase **neither for one day nor for two** is a figurative way of saying “not a matter of a short time.” Alternate translation: “something that will take a long time” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

## Ezra 10:14

### Let our leaders stand for all the assembly

Here, **stand for** is an idiom that means “represent.” (In [10:16](#) it explains specifically how the community arranged for its leaders to be its representatives.) Alternate translation: “Let our leaders represent all of us” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the ones who have caused foreign women to dwell

See how you translated this expression in [10:2](#). Alternate translation: “those who have married foreign women” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### at appointed times

If your language does not use passive verbal forms, you can use an active form to express this same idea. Alternate translation: “at times that you set for each one” or “when you have arranged for them to come” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### and with them the elders of city by city and its magistrates

The phrase **city by city** is an idiom that means “each city.” Alternate translation: “with the elders and magistrates of each city” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### the burning of the nose of our God

The idiom **burning of the nose** refers to being angry. Alternate translation: “our God's anger” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### until the burning of the nose of our God is turned back from us as far as it concerns this matter

When someone's anger is **turned back**, that means that the person is no longer angry. Alternate translation: “until our God is no longer angry with us for disobeying in this way” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### it concerns this matter

After this phrase, the book ends its quotation of what the assembly replied to Ezra on this occasion. If you decided in [10:12](#) to mark their words as a quotation, you should indicate their ending here with a closing quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.452)**)

## Ezra 10:15

### Only

The word **only** indicates that the sentence it introduces makes an exception from the larger group that was mentioned before. In 10:12 it appeared that the whole group was in agreement, but now we find out that there were four men who did not agree. Use a natural way to indicate this contrast that makes it clear that there were two men who opposed the idea, then two more joined them in opposing the idea. Alternate translation: “But a few, namely,” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.370)**)

### Jonathan, & and Jahzeiah, & stood against this. And Meshullam and Shabbethai & supported them

The implication is that while these four men spoke up in the assembly against investigating who among the Israelites had married foreign wives, their protests were unsuccessful. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “Jonathan ... and Jahzeiah ... did not want the community to investigate who had married foreign women. And Meshullam and Shabbethai ... supported them, but they were not able to convince the assembly” Alternatively, you could express this idea at the beginning of verse 16. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### Jonathan, the son of Asahel

**Jonathan** is the name of a man, and **Asahel** is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### and Jahzeiah, the son of Tikvah

**Jahzeiah** is the name of a man, and **Tikvah** is the name of his father. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### stood against this

Here, **stood against** something means to have opposed it. Alternate translation: “did not want the community to investigate who had married foreign women” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### And Meshullam and Shabbethai

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 10:16

### So the sons of the exile did thus

See how you translated the expression **the sons of the exile** in 10:7. Alternate translation: “So the Jews who had returned to their homeland did what their assembly had decided” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.347)**)

### So the sons of the exile did thus

Since only a few were opposed to the plan, the larger group of Israelites agreed to do it. If it would be helpful in your language, you might want to express this implied information here. Alternate translation: “But since only these few opposed the plan, the group of Israelites who had returned from exile decided to do it” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### and men (the heads of the fathers by the house of their fathers, and all of them by names) were separated to Ezra the priest

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “Ezra the priest summoned the leaders of each clan by name” (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### the heads of the fathers by the house of their fathers

As in 1:5 and many other places in the book, **the heads of the fathers** is an abbreviated way of saying “the heads of father’s houses,” and the **house of the father** or “father’s house” means a clan. Alternate translation: “the leaders of each clan” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### to Ezra the priest

Here the book repeats some background information to remind readers who Ezra was. Alternate translation: “Ezra, who was a priest” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.388)**)

### And they sat down

While it is likely that these leaders conducted their inquiry while sitting down, **sat down** here is a figurative way of saying “convened” or “met to do business.” Alternate translation: “They came back together” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### on day one of the tenth month

You could convert the Hebrew day and month into an approximate date on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the date will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to use the numbers of the Hebrew day and month. Alternate translation: “on the first day of the tenth month” (See: **Hebrew Months (p.405)**)

### on day one of the tenth month

The Hebrew uses a cardinal number here, **one**, but there is not a significant difference in meaning between that and the way the Hebrew uses an ordinal number, “first,” in similar contexts elsewhere. If your language customarily

uses ordinals for the numbers of days, you can do that here in your translation. Alternate translation: “on the first day of the tenth month” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

## **to seek out the matter**

Here, **seek out** means to “investigate.” Alternate translation: “to make a list of who had married foreign women” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

## Ezra 10:17

### And they finished with all the men

**Finished with** is an idiom here. Alternate translation: “they succeeded in identifying all the men” (See: **Idiom (p. 419)**)

### the ones who had caused foreign women to dwell

See how you translated this expression in [10:2](#). Alternate translation: “who had married foreign women” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### by day one of the first month

You could convert the Hebrew day and month into an approximate date on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the date will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to use the numbers of the Hebrew day and month. Alternate translation: “by the first day of the first month” (See: **Hebrew Months (p.405)**)

### by day one of the first month

The Hebrew uses a cardinal number here, **one**, but there is not a significant difference in meaning between that and the way the Hebrew uses an ordinal number, “first,” in similar contexts elsewhere. If your language customarily uses ordinals for the numbers of days, you can do that here in your translation. Alternate translation: “on the first day of the tenth month” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.439)**)

### by day one of the first month

If it is more natural in your language, you can put this time phrase first in the verse, as in the UST. (See: **Information Structure (p.421)**)

## Ezra 10:18

### And some were found from the sons of

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. "The clan leaders identified some men from among" Alternate translation: (See: **Active or Passive (p.349)**)

### some & from the sons of the priests

Here, **sons of** is a figurative expression that means "descendants of." These men are all descendants of men who had been priests in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "among the descendants of the priests" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### who had caused foreign women to dwell

See how you translated this expression in [10:2](#). Alternate translation: "who had married foreign women" (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### from the sons of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and his brothers

Here, **the sons of Jeshua** means "the descendants of Jeshua," since Jeshua lived many years before this time, but **son of Jozadak** is literal because Jeshua was the biological son of Jozadak. **Brothers** could mean biological brothers, but it is more likely that it refers to relatives. Alternate translation: "from the descendants of Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his relatives" (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 10:19

### So they gave

Here the word **So** indicates that the sentence it introduces explains the results of what the previous sentence described. Alternate translation: “As a result, they gave” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.375)**)

### So they gave their hand

This means that the men shook hands with the clan leaders to signify that they were making a promise. Alternate translation: “So they shook hands in pledge” or “So they grasped hands with their leaders as a sign of promise” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.462)**)

### to cause their wives to go out

As in 10:3, **to cause to go out** is a Hebrew idiom that means to divorce and send away. Alternate translation: “that they would divorce their wives and send them away” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### and, being guilty ones, a ram of the flock for their guilt

Here the book leaves out some of the words that a sentence would ordinarily need in order to be complete. Alternate translation: “and that they would sacrifice a ram from their flocks as a guilt offering, since the clan leaders had found them guilty” (See: **Ellipsis (p.393)**)

### a ram of the flock

A **flock** is a group of small animals such as sheep or goats. If it is unnecessary or unnatural to say that the **ram** was from a flock, then you can just say that it was a ram, as in the UST. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.473)**)



## **Ezra 10:20**

### **And from the sons of Immer**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Immer” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### **Hanani and Zebadiah**

These are the names of two men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:21**

### **And from the sons of Harim**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “And from the descendants of Harim” (See: **Metaphor (p. 431)**)

### **Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uzziah**

These are the names of five men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:22**

### **And from the sons of Pashhur**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “And from the descendants of Pashhur” (See: **Metaphor** (p. 431))

### **Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah**

These are the names of six men. (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

## **Ezra 10:23**

### **the Levites**

See how you translated **Levites** in [2:40](#). Review the explanation in the note there if that would be helpful. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### **Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah (that is, Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer**

These are the names of six men and an alternate name for one of them. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 10:24

### the singers

The term **singers** refers to the same occupational group as in [2:41](#). Review the explanation in the note there if that would be helpful.

### Eliashib

**Eliashib** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### the gatekeepers

The term **gatekeepers** refers to the same occupational group as in [2:42](#). Review the explanation in the note there if that would be helpful.

### Shallum, and Telem, and Uri

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## Ezra 10:25

### And these were from Israel

All of the men in the lists in this chapter were Israelites. So the phrase **from Israel** refers to the other Israelite men who did not belong to the clans or groups mentioned in the previous lists. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could make this clear in your translation. Alternate translation: “These were from the rest of the Israelites” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### From the sons of Parosh

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Parosh” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### Ramiah, and Izziah, and Malkijah, and Mijamin, and Eleazar, and Malkijah, and Benaiah

These are the names of seven men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:26**

### **And from the sons of Elam**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Elam” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### **Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Elijah**

These are the names of six men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:27**

### **And from the sons of Zattu**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Zattu” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### **Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza**

These are the names of six men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)



## **Ezra 10:28**

### **And from the sons of Bebai**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “from the descendants of Bebai” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### **Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai**

These are the names of four men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:29**

### **And from the sons of Bani**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Bani” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### **Meshullam, Malluk, and Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal, Jeremoth**

These are the names of six men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:30**

### **And from the sons of Pahath-Moab**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Pahath-Moab” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### **Adna, and Kelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, and Binnui, and Manasseh**

These are the names of eight men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:31**

### **And from the sons of Harim**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Harim” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### **Eliezer, Ishijah, Malkijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon**

These are the names of five men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:32**

### **Benjamin, Malluk, Shemariah**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:33**

### **From the sons of Hashum**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Hashum” (See: **Metaphor** (p. 431))

### **Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei**

These are the names of eight men. (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.411))

## **Ezra 10:34**

### **From the sons of Bani**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Bani” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### **Maadai, Amram, and Uel**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:35**

### **Benaiah, Bedeiah, Keluhi**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)



## **Ezra 10:36**

### **Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:37**

### **Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasu**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:38**

### **and Bani, and Binnui, Shimei**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

### **and Bani, and Binnui, Shimei**

The ULT represents the reading of the Hebrew text, but many scholars believe that the correct reading of this verse is found in ancient Greek translations. This is represented in the UST. You may choose to follow the reading of the preferred Bible translation used in your area, and include the other reading in a footnote. (See: **Textual Variants (p.466)**)

## **Ezra 10:39**

### **and Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:40**

### **Maknadebai, Shashai, Sharai**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:41**

### **Azarel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:42**

### **Shallum, Amariah, Joseph**

These are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)

## **Ezra 10:43**

### **From the sons of Nebo**

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” Alternate translation: “From the descendants of Nebo” (See: **Metaphor (p.431)**)

### **Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, and Joel, Benaiah**

These are the names of seven men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.411)**)



## Ezra 10:44

### All of these had lifted foreign women

As in 9:2, **lifted** is an idiom that means “married.” Alternate translation: “All of these men had married foreign women” (See: **Idiom (p.419)**)

### And there were women among them, and they bore sons

The implication is that if a foreign wife had borne children, the Israelite husband would send both the wife and her children away, as 10:3 describes. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “Some of the foreign wives had borne children, and the men who had married them divorced them and sent away both them and their children.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.354)**)

### sons

The term **sons** here means “children” and includes both boys and girls. Alternate translation: “children” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.471)**)



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Academy**

**Version 85**

# 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:** [Ezra 1:11](#); [Ezra 2:1](#); [Ezra 2:62](#); [Ezra 3:7](#); [Ezra 3:8](#); [Ezra 3:11](#); [Ezra 3:12](#); [Ezra 4:6](#); [Ezra 6:16](#); [Ezra 6:17](#); [Ezra 7:19](#); [Ezra 7:25](#); [Ezra 7:26](#); [Ezra 7:28](#); [Ezra 8:31](#); [Ezra 9:4](#); [Ezra 9:6](#); [Ezra 9:7](#); [Ezra 9:8](#); [Ezra 9:9](#); [Ezra 10:6](#); [Ezra 10:7](#); [Ezra 10:8](#); [Ezra 10:16](#)

## 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* ([UTA PDF](#))  
*Word Order* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 2:62](#); [Ezra 3:1](#); [Ezra 3:2](#); [Ezra 3:4](#); [Ezra 3:6](#); [Ezra 3:7](#); [Ezra 3:10](#); [Ezra 3:11](#); [Ezra 3:13](#); [Ezra 4:7](#); [Ezra 4:12](#); [Ezra 4:13](#); [Ezra 4:15](#); [Ezra 4:18](#); [Ezra 4:19](#); [Ezra 4:20](#); [Ezra 4:23](#); [Ezra 4:24](#); [Ezra 5:8](#); [Ezra 5:14](#); [Ezra 5:15](#); [Ezra 5:16](#); [Ezra 5:17](#); [Ezra 6:1](#); [Ezra 6:2](#); [Ezra 6:3](#); [Ezra 6:4](#); [Ezra 6:5](#); [Ezra 6:8](#); [Ezra 6:9](#); [Ezra 6:11](#); [Ezra 6:12](#); [Ezra 6:15](#); [Ezra 7:13](#); [Ezra 7:14](#); [Ezra 7:20](#); [Ezra 7:21](#); [Ezra 7:23](#); [Ezra 7:24](#); [Ezra 7:26](#); [Ezra 8:20](#); [Ezra 8:23](#); [Ezra 8:33](#); [Ezra 8:34](#); [Ezra 9:4](#); [Ezra 9:7](#); [Ezra 10:3](#); [Ezra 10:8](#); [Ezra 10:14](#); [Ezra 10:16](#); [Ezra 10:18](#)

## Aside

### Description

An aside is a figure of speech in which someone who is speaking to a person or group pauses to speak confidentially to himself or someone else about those to whom he had been speaking. The speaker does this to indicate in a strong way his thoughts or feelings about that person or group.

This page answers the question: *What is the figure of speech called an "aside"?*

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

*Figures of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use asides, and readers could be confused by them. They may wonder why the speaker suddenly starts talking to himself or someone else about the people he is speaking with.

### Examples From the Bible

All the men of your covenant are sending you away as far as the border. The men of your peace are deceiving you and are prevailing against you. They of your bread will set a trap under you. **There is no understanding in him.** (Obadiah 1:7 ULT)

In the first three lines, Yahweh is telling the people of Edom what will happen to them because they did not help the people of Judah. In the fourth line, Yahweh says something about Edom to himself.

And I purified them from everything foreign. And I caused the service watches to stand: for the priests and for the Levites, a man in his work; and for the offering of pieces of wood at the appointed times; and for the firstfruits. **Remember me, my God, for good.** (Nehemiah 13:30-31 ULT)

Nehemiah is speaking to the readers of his account and describing some of the many things he did to restore true worship in Judah after the people returned from exile. But he suddenly turns aside and addresses God, asking God to bless him for what he, Nehemiah, has done for those people.

### Translation Strategies

- (1) If an aside would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. But if this way of speaking would be confusing, let the speaker continue speaking to the people who are listening to him, but make clear that he is now expressing his thoughts and feelings about them.
- (2) If a person speaks a prayer to God as an aside, you can put the prayer in quotation marks to indicate that.

### Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1)

All the men of your covenant are sending you away as far as the border. The men of your peace are deceiving you and are prevailing against you. They of your bread will set a trap under you. **There is no understanding in him.** (Obadiah 1:7 ULT)

All the men of your covenant are sending you away as far as the border. The men of your peace are deceiving you and are prevailing against you. They of your bread will set a trap under you. **You do not understand any of this.**

(2)



And I purified them from everything foreign. And I caused the service watches to stand: for the priests and for the Levites, a man in his work; 31 and for the offering of pieces of wood at the appointed times; and for the firstfruits. **Remember me, my God, for good.** (Nehemiah 13:30-31 ULT)

And I cleansed them from everything foreign, and I made assignments for the priests and for the Levites, a man to his own work. And the wood offering at the stated time, and the firstfruits. **"Remember me, my God, for good."**

"

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 4:11](#); [Ezra 7:27](#)

## Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Assumed knowledge is whatever a speaker assumes his audience knows before he speaks and gives them some kind of information. The speaker does not give the audience this information because he believes that they already know it.

This page answers the question: *How can I be sure that my translation communicates the assumed knowledge and implicit information along with the explicit information of the original message?*

When the speaker does give the audience information, he can do so in two ways. The speaker gives explicit information in what he states directly. Implicit Information is what the speaker does not state directly because he expects his audience to be able to learn it from other things he says.

### Description

When someone speaks or writes, he has something specific that he wants people to know or do or think about. He normally states this directly. This is explicit information.

The speaker assumes that his audience already knows certain things that they will need to think about in order to understand this information. Normally he does not tell people these things, because they already know them. This is called assumed knowledge.

The speaker does not always directly state everything that he expects his audience to learn from what he says. Implicit information is information that he expects people to learn from what he says even though he does not state it directly.

Often, the audience understands this implicit information by combining what they already know (assumed knowledge) with the explicit information that the speaker tells them directly.

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

All three kinds of information are part of the speaker's message. If one of these kinds of information is missing, then the audience will not understand the message. Because the target translation is in a language that is very different from the biblical languages and is made for an audience that lives in a very different time and place than the people in the Bible, many times the assumed knowledge or the implicit information is missing from the message. In other words, modern readers do not know everything that the original speakers and hearers in the Bible knew. When these things are important for understanding the message, it is helpful if you include this information in the text or in a footnote.

### Examples From the Bible

Then a scribe came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him, "Foxes **have holes**, and the birds of the sky **have nests**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:19-20 ULT)

Jesus did not say what foxes and birds use holes and nests for, because he assumed that the scribe would have known that foxes sleep in holes in the ground and birds sleep in their nests. This is **assumed knowledge**.

Jesus did not directly say here "I am the Son of Man" but, if the scribe did not already know it, then that fact would be **implicit information** that he could learn because Jesus referred to himself that way. Also, Jesus did not state explicitly that he travelled a lot and did not have a house that he slept in every night. That is **implicit information** that the scribe could learn when Jesus said that he had nowhere to lay his head.

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the mighty deeds had been done in **Tyre and Sidon** which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But

I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the **day of judgment** than for you.  
(Matthew 11:21-22 ULT)

Jesus assumed that the people he was speaking to knew that Tyre and Sidon were very wicked, and that the day of judgment is a time when God will judge every person. Jesus also knew that the people he was talking to believed that they were good and did not need to repent. Jesus did not need to tell them these things. This is all **assumed knowledge**.

An important piece of **implicit information** here is that the people he was speaking to would be judged more severely than the people of Tyre and Sidon would be judged **because** they did not repent.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not wash their hands when they eat bread**. (Matthew 15:2 ULT)

One of the traditions of the elders was a ceremony in which people would wash their hands in order to be ritually clean before eating. People thought that in order to be righteous, they had to follow all the traditions of the elders. This was **assumed knowledge** that the Pharisees who were speaking to Jesus expected him to know. By saying this, they were accusing his disciples of not following the traditions, and thus not being righteous. This is **implicit information** that they wanted him to understand from what they said.

## Translation Strategies

If readers have enough assumed knowledge to be able to understand the message, along with any important implicit information that goes with the explicit information, then it is good to leave that knowledge unstated and leave the implicit information implicit. If the readers do not understand the message because one of these is missing for them, then follow these strategies:

- (1) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.
- (2) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.

Jesus said to him, "Foxes **have holes**, and the birds of the sky **have nests**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:20 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that the foxes slept in their holes and birds slept in their nests.

Jesus said to him, "Foxes **have holes to live in**, and the birds of the sky **have nests to live in**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head and sleep."

It will be more tolerable for **Tyre and Sidon** at the day of judgment than for you (Matthew 11:22 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that the people of Tyre and Sidon were very, very wicked. This can be stated explicitly.

At the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable for **those cities of Tyre and Sidon, whose people were very wicked**, than it will be for you. or At the day of judgment, It will be more tolerable for those **wicked cities, Tyre and Sidon**, than for you.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not wash their hands** when they eat bread. (Matthew 15:2 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that one of the traditions of the elders was a ceremony in which people would wash their hands in order to be ritually clean before eating, which they must do to be righteous. It was not to remove germs from their hands to avoid sickness, as a modern reader might think.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not go through the ceremonial handwashing ritual of righteousness** when they eat bread.

(2) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.

Then a scribe came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:19-20 ULT)

The implicit information is that Jesus himself is the Son of Man. Other implicit information is that if the scribe wanted to follow Jesus, then, like Jesus, he would have to live without a house.

Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but **I, the Son of Man, have no home to rest in. If you want to follow me, you will live as I live.**"

It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you (Matthew 11:22 ULT)

The implicit information is that God would not only judge the people; he would punish them. This can be made explicit.

At the day of judgment, God will **punish Tyre and Sidon**, cities whose people were very wicked, **less severely than he will punish you.** or: At the day of judgment, God will **punish you more severely** than Tyre and Sidon, cities whose people were very wicked.

Modern readers may not know some of the things that the people in the Bible and the people who first read it knew. This can make it hard for them to understand what a speaker or writer says, and to learn things that the speaker left implicit. Translators may need to state some things explicitly in the translation that the original speaker or writer left unstated or implicit.

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 1:1](#); [Ezra 1:2](#); [Ezra 1:3](#); [Ezra 1:4](#); [Ezra 1:7](#); [Ezra 1:8](#); [Ezra 3:1](#); [Ezra 3:2](#); [Ezra 3:3](#); [Ezra 3:4](#); [Ezra 3:7](#); [Ezra 3:8](#); [Ezra 3:9](#); [Ezra 3:10](#); [Ezra 3:11](#); [Ezra 3:12](#); [Ezra 3:13](#); [Ezra 4:2](#); [Ezra 4:3](#); [Ezra 4:5](#); [Ezra 4:6](#); [Ezra 4:7](#); [Ezra 4:9](#); [Ezra 4:13](#); [Ezra 4:14](#); [Ezra 4:16](#); [Ezra 4:18](#); [Ezra 4:19](#); [Ezra 4:21](#); [Ezra 4:22](#); [Ezra 4:23](#); [Ezra 4:24](#); [Ezra 5:1](#); [Ezra 5:5](#); [Ezra 5:11](#); [Ezra 5:13](#); [Ezra 5:16](#); [Ezra 6:1](#); [Ezra 6:2](#); [Ezra 6:4](#); [Ezra 6:11](#); [Ezra 6:13](#); [Ezra 6:14](#); [Ezra 6:15](#); [Ezra 6:17](#); [Ezra 6:18](#); [Ezra 6:19](#); [Ezra 6:20](#); [Ezra 6:21](#); [Ezra 7:5](#); [Ezra 7:7](#); [Ezra 7:9](#); [Ezra 7:12](#); [Ezra 7:14](#); [Ezra 7:16](#); [Ezra 7:17](#); [Ezra 7:19](#); [Ezra 7:23](#); [Ezra 7:25](#); [Ezra 7:26](#); [Ezra 8:1](#); [Ezra 8:3](#); [Ezra 8:4](#); [Ezra 8:5](#); [Ezra 8:6](#); [Ezra 8:7](#); [Ezra 8:8](#); [Ezra 8:9](#); [Ezra 8:10](#); [Ezra 8:11](#); [Ezra 8:12](#); [Ezra 8:13](#); [Ezra 8:14](#); [Ezra 8:15](#); [Ezra 8:16](#); [Ezra 8:17](#); [Ezra 8:25](#); [Ezra 8:26](#); [Ezra 8:29](#); [Ezra 8:32](#); [Ezra 8:34](#); [Ezra 8:35](#); [Ezra 8:36](#); [Ezra 9:1](#); [Ezra 9:2](#); [Ezra 9:8](#); [Ezra 9:9](#); [Ezra 9:10](#); [Ezra 9:13](#); [Ezra 10:1](#); [Ezra 10:5](#); [Ezra 10:6](#); [Ezra 10:9](#); [Ezra 10:10](#); [Ezra 10:13](#); [Ezra 10:15](#); [Ezra 10:16](#); [Ezra 10:25](#); [Ezra 10:44](#)

## 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 a section of background information about Jesus' age and ancestors (Luke 3:23-38). 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. A set of parentheses is also a way to mark background information. Here, "as it was assumed" gives background information to the phrase, "He was the son." People assumed that Joseph was Jesus' father, although his true father was God.

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The bolded phrase happened before John rebuked Herod. In English, the helping verb "had" in "had done" shows that Herod did those things before John rebuked him.

(2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first.

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.  
**Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.** (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

**"When Abram was 86 years old,** Hagar gave birth to his son, and Abram named his son Ishmael."

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The translation below reorders John's rebuke and Herod's actions.

"Now Herod the tetrarch married his brother's wife, Herodias, and **he did many other evil things**, so John rebuked him. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison."

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Connecting Words and Phrases* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Introduction of a New Event* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 3:12](#); [Ezra 4:1](#); [Ezra 4:6](#); [Ezra 4:7](#); [Ezra 4:20](#); [Ezra 7:6](#); [Ezra 7:9](#); [Ezra 7:12](#); [Ezra 8:20](#)

# Biblical Distance

## Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man's hand.
- The **span** or handspan was the width of a man's hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man's forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **"long" cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as "furlong," which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

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

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

## Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as ".46 meters" or even as "46 centimeters," readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say "half a meter," "45 centimeters," or "50 centimeters."

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word "about" to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as "about ten kilometers" from Jerusalem.

When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use "about" in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

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**; <sup>1</sup> its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; <sup>2</sup> and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

The footnotes would look like:

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; <sup>1</sup> its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; <sup>2</sup> and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

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

”

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 6:3](#)

# 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**,<sup>1</sup> and the other, **50.**" (Luke 7:41 ULT)

[1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Translate Unknowns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 2:69](#); [Ezra 7:22](#); [Ezra 8:25](#); [Ezra 8:26](#); [Ezra 8:27](#)

# Biblical Volume

## Description

The following terms are the most common units of volume used in the Bible to state how much a certain container could hold. The containers and measurements are given for both liquids (such as wine) and dry solids (such as grain). The metric values are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the measures of volume that are in the Bible?*

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

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal\]\]](#)

Type	Original Measure	Liters
Dry	omer	2 liters
Dry	ephah	22 liters
Dry	homer	220 liters
Dry	cor	220 liters
Dry	seah	7.7 liters
Dry	lethek	114.8 liters
Liquid	metrete	40 liters
Liquid	bath	22 liters
Liquid	hin	3.7 liters
Liquid	kab	1.23 liters
Liquid	log	0.31 liters

## Translation Principles

- The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
- Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
- Whatever measures you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kinds of measures in the text or a footnote.
- If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one hin as “3.7 liters,” readers might think that the measurement is exactly 3.7 liters, not 3.6 or 3.8. It would be better to use a more approximate measure such as “three and a half liters” or “four liters.”
- When God tells people how much of something to use, and when people use those amounts in obedience to him, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much they used.

## When the unit of measure is stated

### Translation Strategies

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

### Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Isaiah 5:10 below.

For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one bath, and one homer of seed will yield only an ephah. (Isaiah 5:10 ULT)

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

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one **bat**, and one **homer** of seed will yield only an **efa**."

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

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22 liters** and **220 liters** of seed will yield only **22 liters**."

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22**, and **ten baskets** of seed will yield only **one basket**."

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **six gallons**, and **six and a half bushels** of seed will yield only **20 quarts**."

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

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **one bath (six gallons)**, and **one homer (six and a half bushels)** of seed will yield only **an ephah (20 quarts)**."

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

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only 22 liters<sup>1</sup>, and 220 liters<sup>2</sup> of seed will yield only 22 liters<sup>3</sup>."

The footnotes would look like:

[1] one bath [2] one homer [3] one ephah

## When the unit of measure is implied

Sometimes the Hebrew does not specify a particular unit of volume but only uses a number. In these cases, many English versions, including the ULT and UST, add the word “measure.”

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 measures** of wine, there were only 20. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

## Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.
- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”
- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.
- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

## Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Haggai 2:16 below.

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty measures** of wine, there were only **20**. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.

When you came to a heap of **20** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”

When you came to a heap of **20 amounts** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty amounts** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.

When you came to a heap of **20 baskets** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 jars** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

When you came to a heap for **20 liters** of grain, there were only **ten liters**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 liters** of wine, there were only **20 liters**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Fractions* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit* ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Ezra 7:22](#)

## 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:** [Ezra 3:6](#); [Ezra 3:12](#); [Ezra 4:3](#); [Ezra 5:5](#); [Ezra 5:12](#); [Ezra 5:13](#); [Ezra 7:9](#); [Ezra 9:8](#); [Ezra 9:9](#); [Ezra 10:2](#); [Ezra 10:13](#)

## 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.

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Referenced in: [Ezra 10:15](#)

## 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:** [Ezra 3:7](#); [Ezra 4:21](#); [Ezra 6:10](#)

## 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.

"

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 1:1](#); [Ezra 1:5](#); [Ezra 3:3](#); [Ezra 3:7](#); [Ezra 3:9](#); [Ezra 3:10](#); [Ezra 3:13](#); [Ezra 4:2](#); [Ezra 4:19](#); [Ezra 5:2](#); [Ezra 5:5](#); [Ezra 5:10](#); [Ezra 6:1](#); [Ezra 6:2](#); [Ezra 6:13](#); [Ezra 6:14](#); [Ezra 6:15](#); [Ezra 6:19](#); [Ezra 6:20](#); [Ezra 6:22](#); [Ezra 7:9](#); [Ezra 7:10](#);



Ezra 7:14; Ezra 7:15; Ezra 7:17; Ezra 7:21; Ezra 7:24; Ezra 8:16; Ezra 8:18; Ezra 8:22; Ezra 8:23; Ezra 8:30; Ezra 8:32;  
Ezra 9:2; Ezra 9:6; Ezra 9:8; Ezra 9:12; Ezra 9:15; Ezra 10:5; Ezra 10:6; Ezra 10:9; Ezra 10:13; Ezra 10:19

## 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](#).

"

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 3:1](#); [Ezra 3:2](#); [Ezra 3:3](#); [Ezra 3:4](#); [Ezra 3:5](#); [Ezra 3:8](#); [Ezra 3:10](#); [Ezra 3:11](#); [Ezra 4:7](#); [Ezra 4:23](#); [Ezra 5:4](#); [Ezra 5:5](#); [Ezra 5:15](#); [Ezra 5:16](#); [Ezra 6:16](#); [Ezra 6:18](#); [Ezra 6:22](#); [Ezra 8:21](#); [Ezra 8:24](#); [Ezra 8:28](#); [Ezra 9:1](#); [Ezra 10:2](#)

## 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:** [Ezra 5:1](#); [Ezra 5:3](#); [Ezra 7:7](#); [Ezra 8:15](#)

## 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:** [Ezra 4:10](#); [Ezra 4:11](#); [Ezra 4:14](#); [Ezra 4:17](#); [Ezra 4:21](#); [Ezra 5:17](#); [Ezra 6:6](#); [Ezra 7:12](#); [Ezra 7:19](#)

## 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.

This page answers the question: *What are direct and indirect quotations?*

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

*Pronouns* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Verbs* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Quotations and Quote Margins* ([UTA PDF](#))

### 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!**'

## Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it. If the kind of quote used in that context is not natural for your language, follow these strategies.

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, **“Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”** (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him to tell no one, but **to go and show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for his cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.**

- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

And he commanded him **to tell no one**, but, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him, **“Tell no one.** But go and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”

You may also want to watch the video at [https://ufw.io/figs\\_quotations](https://ufw.io/figs_quotations).

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Quotes within Quotes* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 5:4](#); [Ezra 8:17](#); [Ezra 8:22](#)

## Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

### Description

In some languages, phrases that modify a noun can be used with the noun for two different purposes. They can either (1) distinguish the noun from other similar items, or (2) they can give more information about the noun. That information could be new to the reader, or a reminder about something the reader might already know. Other languages use modifying phrases with a noun only for distinguishing the noun from other similar things. When people who speak these languages hear a modifying phrase along with a noun, they assume that its function is to distinguish one item from another similar item.

This page answers the question: *When a phrase is used with a noun, what is the difference between phrases that distinguish the noun from others and phrases that simply inform or remind?*

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

*Parts of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Sentence Structure* ([UTA PDF](#))

When the phrase that modifies a noun is a relative clause (a phrase that starts with a word such as “who” or “which”), some languages use a comma to mark the difference between (1) making a distinction between similar items and (2) giving more information about an item. Without the comma, the sentence below communicates that the added phrase is making a distinction:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister who was very thankful**.
  - If her sister was usually thankful, the phrase “who was thankful” could distinguish this sister of Mary’s from another sister who was not usually thankful.

With the comma, the phrase is giving more information:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister, who was very thankful**.
  - This same phrase can be used to give us more information about Mary’s sister. It tells us about how Mary’s sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish one sister from another sister.

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Many source languages of the Bible use phrases that modify a noun both for distinguishing the noun from another similar item and also for giving more information about the noun. You (the translator) must be careful to understand which meaning the author intended in each case.
- Some languages use phrases that modify a noun only for distinguishing the noun from another similar item. When translating a phrase that is used for giving more information, translators who speak these languages will need to separate the phrase from the noun. Otherwise, people who read it or hear it will think that the phrase is meant to distinguish the noun from other similar items.

### Examples From the Bible

#### Examples of words and phrases that are used to distinguish one item from other possible items:

(These usually do not cause any problem in translation.)

■ The curtain is to separate **the holy place** from **the most holy place**. (Exodus 26:33b ULT)

The words “holy” and “most holy” distinguish two different places from each other and from any other place.

■ A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to **the woman who bore him**. (Proverbs 17:25 ULT)

The phrase “who bore him” distinguishes which woman the son is bitterness to. He is not bitterness to all women, but to his mother.

## Examples of words and phrases that are used to give added information or a reminder about an item:

(These are a translation issue for languages that do not use these.)

... for **your righteous judgments** are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

The word “righteous” simply reminds us that God’s judgments are righteous. It does not distinguish his righteous judgments from his unrighteous judgments, because all of his judgments are righteous.

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

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

How can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is a reminder of Sarah’s age. It tells why Abraham was asking the question. He did not expect that a woman who was that old could bear a child. He was not distinguishing one woman named Sarah from another woman named Sarah who was a different age.

I will wipe away mankind **whom I have created** from the surface of the earth. (Genesis 6:7 ULT)

The phrase “whom I have created” is a reminder of the relationship between God and mankind. It is the reason God had the right to wipe away mankind. There is not another mankind that God did not create.

I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

By saying “worthless idols,” David was commenting about all idols and giving his reason for hating those who serve them. He was not distinguishing worthless idols from valuable idols.

## Translation Strategies

If readers would understand the purpose of a phrase with a noun, then consider keeping the phrase and the noun together. For languages that use words or phrases with a noun only to distinguish one item from another, here are some strategies for translating phrases that are used to inform or remind.

(1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose. (2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information. It may be by adding a small word, or by changing the way the voice sounds. Sometimes changes in the voice can be shown with punctuation marks, such as parentheses or commas.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.

I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

**Because idols are worthless**, I hate those who serve them.

... for your **righteous** judgments are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

... for your judgments are good **because they are righteous**.

Can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

Can Sarah bear a son **even when she is 90 years old**?

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

You must surely open your hand to any of **your needy and poor brothers** in your land.

(2) Use one of your language's ways for expressing that this is just added information.

You are my Son, **whom I love**. I am pleased with you. (Luke 3:22 ULT)

You are my Son. **I love you** and I am pleased with you.

**Receiving my love**, you are my Son. I am pleased with you.

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

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Double Negatives* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 1:2](#); [Ezra 1:3](#); [Ezra 3:1](#); [Ezra 3:2](#); [Ezra 3:10](#); [Ezra 4:1](#); [Ezra 4:3](#); [Ezra 5:1](#); [Ezra 5:12](#); [Ezra 6:12](#); [Ezra 6:14](#); [Ezra 6:21](#); [Ezra 6:22](#); [Ezra 7:5](#); [Ezra 7:11](#); [Ezra 7:16](#); [Ezra 7:21](#); [Ezra 10:10](#); [Ezra 10:16](#)

# 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:** [Ezra 4:12](#); [Ezra 4:13](#); [Ezra 4:15](#); [Ezra 4:19](#); [Ezra 4:20](#); [Ezra 7:10](#); [Ezra 7:11](#); [Ezra 7:25](#); [Ezra 9:2](#); [Ezra 9:6](#); [Ezra 9:12](#); [Ezra 9:14](#)



# Ellipsis

## Description

An ellipsis<sup>[^1]</sup> occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, **nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.**  
(Psalm 1:5 ULT)

There is ellipsis in the second part because “nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **will** sinners **stand** in the assembly of the righteous.

[^1]: 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.

## 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:

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](#))

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**not as unwise but as wise**. (Ephesians 5:15b ULT)

The information that the reader must understand in the second parts of these sentences can be filled in from the first parts:

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**walk** not as unwise but **walk** as wise,

## Absolute Ellipsis

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

It seems that the man answered in an incomplete sentence because he wanted to be polite and not directly ask Jesus for healing. He knew that Jesus would understand that the only way he could receive his sight would be for Jesus to heal him. The complete sentence would be:

“Lord, **I want you to heal me so** that I might receive my sight.”

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (Titus 1:4 ULT)

The writer assumes that the reader will recognize this common form of a blessing or wish, so he does not need to include the full sentence, which would be:

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. **May you receive** grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

## Translation Strategies

If ellipsis would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **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.

"

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 1:1](#); [Ezra 1:5](#); [Ezra 2:68](#); [Ezra 3:5](#); [Ezra 3:8](#); [Ezra 3:12](#); [Ezra 4:2](#); [Ezra 4:3](#); [Ezra 6:6](#); [Ezra 6:12](#); [Ezra 6:21](#); [Ezra 7:22](#); [Ezra 7:28](#); [Ezra 8:1](#); [Ezra 8:29](#); [Ezra 10:4](#); [Ezra 10:6](#); [Ezra 10:16](#); [Ezra 10:19](#)

# Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

## Description

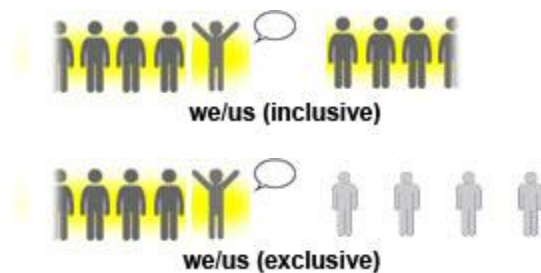
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also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

This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

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



## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

## Examples From the Bible

### Exclusive

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

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

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

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

### Inclusive

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

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

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

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

*When Masculine Words Include Women* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 4:3](#); [Ezra 8:15](#); [Ezra 8:17](#); [Ezra 8:18](#); [Ezra 8:21](#); [Ezra 8:22](#); [Ezra 8:23](#); [Ezra 8:25](#); [Ezra 8:30](#); [Ezra 8:31](#); [Ezra 8:32](#); [Ezra 8:33](#); [Ezra 9 General Notes](#); [Ezra 10:2](#)

## 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:** [Ezra 4:9](#); [Ezra 4:11](#); [Ezra 4:12](#); [Ezra 4:13](#); [Ezra 4:14](#); [Ezra 4:15](#); [Ezra 4:16](#); [Ezra 4:22](#); [Ezra 5:8](#); [Ezra 5:17](#); [Ezra 6:4](#); [Ezra 6:5](#); [Ezra 6:6](#); [Ezra 6:8](#); [Ezra 6:10](#); [Ezra 7:14](#); [Ezra 7:15](#); [Ezra 7:20](#); [Ezra 7:21](#); [Ezra 7:23](#); [Ezra 7:26](#); [Ezra 7:27](#); [Ezra 8:35](#); [Ezra 8:36](#); [Ezra 9:8](#); [Ezra 9:9](#); [Ezra 10:2](#); [Ezra 10:3](#)

## 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](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](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:** [Ezra 7:13](#); [Ezra 7:17](#); [Ezra 7:18](#); [Ezra 7:19](#); [Ezra 7:20](#); [Ezra 7:21](#); [Ezra 7:25](#)



# 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](https://ufw.io/figs_younum).

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 9:12](#)

## 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:** [Ezra 4:2](#); [Ezra 4:12](#); [Ezra 5:3](#); [Ezra 5:14](#); [Ezra 7:6](#); [Ezra 7:7](#)

# Hebrew Months

## Description

This page answers the question: *What are the Hebrew months?*

The Hebrew calendar used in the Bible has twelve months. Unlike the western calendar, its first month begins in the spring of the northern hemisphere. Sometimes a month is called by its name (Aviv, Ziv, Sivan), and sometimes it is called by its order in the Hebrew calendar year (first month, second month, third month).

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may be surprised to read of months that they have never heard of, and they may wonder how those months correspond to the months that they use.
- Readers may not realize that phrases such as “the first month” or “the second month” refer to the first or second month of the Hebrew calendar, not some other calendar.
- Readers may not know when the first month of the Hebrew calendar begins.
- The Bible may tell about something happening in a certain month, but readers will not be able to fully understand what is said about it if they do not know what season of the year that was.

## List of Hebrew Months

This is a list of the Hebrew months with information about them that may be helpful in the translation.

**Aviv** — (This month was called **Nisan** after the Babylonian exile.) This is the first month of the Hebrew calendar. It marks when God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. It is at the beginning of the spring season when the late rains come and people begin to harvest their crops. It is during the last part of March and the first part of April on western calendars. The Passover celebration started on Aviv 10; the Festival of Unleavened Bread was right after that, and the Festival of Harvest was a few weeks after that.

**Ziv** — This is the second month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the harvest season. It is during the last part of April and the first part of May on Western calendars.

**Sivan** — This is the third month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the harvest season and the beginning of the dry season. It is during the last part of May and the first part of June on Western calendars. The Feast of Weeks is celebrated on Sivan 6.

**Tammuz** — This is the fourth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of June and the first part of July on Western calendars.

**Ab** — This is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of July and the first part of August on Western calendars.

**Elul** — This is the sixth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the dry season and the beginning of the rainy season. It is during the last part of August and the first part of September on Western calendars.

**Ethanim** — This is the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the early rain season which would soften the land for sowing. It is during the last part of September and the first part of October on Western calendars. The Feast of Ingathering and the Day of Atonement are celebrated in this month.

**Bul** — This is the eighth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the rainy season when people plough their fields and sow seed. It is during the last part of October and the first part of November on Western calendars.

**Kislev** — This is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. This is at the end of the sowing season and the beginning of the cold season. It is during the last part of November and the first part of December on Western calendars.

**Tebeth** — This is the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the cold season when there may be rain and snow. It is during the last part of December and the first part of January on Western calendars.

**Shebat** — This is the eleventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is the coldest month of the year, and it has heavy rainfall. It is during the last part of January and the first part of February on Western calendars.

**Adar** — This is the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the cold season. It is during the last part of February and the first part of March on western calendars. The feast called Purim is celebrated in Adar.

## Examples From the Bible

Today you are going out, in **the month of Aviv**. (Exodus 13:4 ULT)

You must eat unleavened bread from evening of the fourteenth day **in the first month of the year**, until evening of the twenty-first day of the month. (Exodus 12:18 ULT)

## Translation Strategies

You may need to make some information about the months explicit. (See [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#).)

- (1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.
- (2) Use the names for months that people know.
- (3) State clearly what season the month occurred in.
- (4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the Hebrew name of the month. (If possible, use a footnote to show the Hebrew month and day.)

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The examples below use these two verses.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of Aviv**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt. (Exodus 23:15b ULT)

It will always be a statute for you that in **the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month**, you must humble yourselves and do no work. (Leviticus 16:29a ULT)

- (1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the first month of the year**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.

- (2) Use the months that people know.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of March**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.

It will always be a statute for you that **on the day I choose in late September** you must humble yourselves and do no work.

- (3) State clearly what season the month occurs in.

It will always be a statute for you that **in the autumn, on the tenth day of the seventh month**, you must humble yourselves and do no work.

(4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the month.

It will always be a statute for you that in **the day I choose in early autumn**<sup>1</sup> you must humble yourselves and do no work.

The footnote would look like:

<sup>[1]</sup> The Hebrew says, "the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month."

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Ordinal Numbers* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 3:1](#); [Ezra 6:15](#); [Ezra 6:19](#); [Ezra 7:8](#); [Ezra 7:9](#); [Ezra 8:31](#); [Ezra 10:9](#); [Ezra 10:16](#); [Ezra 10:17](#)

# Hendiadys

## Description

In a hendiadys, a speaker uses two words that mean different things and that are connected with “and.” These two words work together to express a single idea. Usually one of the words is the primary idea and the other word further describes the primary one.

... his own **kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

Though “kingdom” and “glory” are both nouns, “glory” actually tells what kind of kingdom it is: it is a **kingdom of glory** or **a glorious kingdom**.

Two phrases connected by “and” can also be a hendiadys when they refer to a single person, thing, or event.

while we look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

Titus 2:13 contains two hendiadyses. “The blessed hope” and “appearing of the glory” refer to the same thing and serve to strengthen the idea that the return of Jesus Christ is greatly anticipated and wonderful. Also, “our great God” and “Savior Jesus Christ” refer to one person, not two.

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Often a hendiadys contains an abstract noun. Some languages may not have a noun with the same meaning.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that the second word is further describing the first one.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that only one person or thing is meant, not two.

## Examples From the Bible

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

“A mouth” and “wisdom” are nouns, but in this figure of speech “wisdom” describes what comes from the mouth.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

“Willing” and “obedient” are adjectives, but “willing” describes “obedient.”

## Translation Strategies

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

- (1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.
- (2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.
- (3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.
- (4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the

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](#))



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* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 4:1](#); [Ezra 4:23](#); [Ezra 5:11](#); [Ezra 6:14](#); [Ezra 8:22](#); [Ezra 8:29](#); [Ezra 10:2](#); [Ezra 10:12](#)

## How to Translate Names

### Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

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

*Translate Unknowns* ([UTA PDF](#))

### Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see [Borrow Words](#).
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

### Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

**Saul** was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

## Translation Strategies

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.
- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
- (3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
- (4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
- (5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like ‘drawn out’)**, and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.”

- (3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?" Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?"  
Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called "Saul" before Acts 13 and "Paul" after Acts 13. You could translate his name as "Paul" all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

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

... a young man named **Paul** <sup>1</sup>

The footnote would look like:

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

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

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

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

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

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

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

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

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

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

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

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

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

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**<sup>1</sup> and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

Copy or Borrow Words ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** Ezra 1:1; Ezra 1:2; Ezra 1:5; Ezra 1:7; Ezra 1:8; Ezra 1:11; Ezra 2:2; Ezra 2:3; Ezra 2:4; Ezra 2:5; Ezra 2:6; Ezra 2:7; Ezra 2:8; Ezra 2:9; Ezra 2:10; Ezra 2:11; Ezra 2:12; Ezra 2:13; Ezra 2:14; Ezra 2:15; Ezra 2:16; Ezra 2:17; Ezra 2:18; Ezra 2:19; Ezra 2:20; Ezra 2:21; Ezra 2:22; Ezra 2:23; Ezra 2:24; Ezra 2:25; Ezra 2:26; Ezra 2:27; Ezra 2:28; Ezra 2:29; Ezra 2:30; Ezra 2:31; Ezra 2:32; Ezra 2:33; Ezra 2:35; Ezra 2:36; Ezra 2:37; Ezra 2:38; Ezra 2:39; Ezra 2:40; Ezra 2:41; Ezra 2:42; Ezra 2:43; Ezra 2:46; Ezra 2:55; Ezra 2:59; Ezra 2:60; Ezra 2:61; Ezra 3:2; Ezra 3:7; Ezra 3:8; Ezra 3:9; Ezra 3:10; Ezra 4:2; Ezra 4:3; Ezra 4:5; Ezra 4:6; Ezra 4:7; Ezra 4:8; Ezra 4:9; Ezra 4:10; Ezra 4:11; Ezra 4:17; Ezra 4:23; Ezra 4:24; Ezra 5:1; Ezra 5:2; Ezra 5:3; Ezra 5:6; Ezra 5:12; Ezra 5:13; Ezra 5:14; Ezra 6:1; Ezra 6:2; Ezra 6:3; Ezra 6:6; Ezra 6:12; Ezra 6:13; Ezra 6:14; Ezra 6:20; Ezra 6:22; Ezra 7:1; Ezra 7:2; Ezra 7:3; Ezra 7:4; Ezra 7:5; Ezra 7:7; Ezra 7:11; Ezra 7:16; Ezra 7:21; Ezra 7:24; Ezra 8:2; Ezra 8:3; Ezra 8:4; Ezra 8:5; Ezra 8:6; Ezra 8:7; Ezra 8:8; Ezra 8:9; Ezra 8:10; Ezra 8:11; Ezra 8:12; Ezra 8:13; Ezra 8:15; Ezra 8:16; Ezra 8:17; Ezra 8:18; Ezra 8:19; Ezra 8:21; Ezra 8:24; Ezra 8:31; Ezra 8:33; Ezra 9:1; Ezra 10:2; Ezra 10:6; Ezra 10:15; Ezra 10:18; Ezra 10:20; Ezra 10:21; Ezra 10:22; Ezra 10:23; Ezra 10:24; Ezra 10:25; Ezra 10:26; Ezra 10:27; Ezra 10:28; Ezra 10:29; Ezra 10:30; Ezra 10:31; Ezra 10:32; Ezra 10:33; Ezra 10:34; Ezra 10:35; Ezra 10:36; Ezra 10:37; Ezra 10:38; Ezra 10:39; Ezra 10:40; Ezra 10:41; Ezra 10:42; Ezra 10:43

# 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:** [Ezra 1:2](#); [Ezra 1:6](#); [Ezra 9:9](#); [Ezra 10:5](#)

## Idiom

An idiom is a figure of speech made up of a group of words that, as a whole, has a meaning that is different from what one would understand from the meanings of the individual words. Someone from outside of the culture usually cannot understand an idiom without someone inside the culture explaining its true meaning. Every language uses idioms. Some English examples are:

- You are pulling my leg. (This means, “You are teasing me by telling me something that is not true.”)
- Do not push the envelope. (This means, “Do not take a matter to its extreme.”)
- This house is under water. (This means, “The debt owed for this house is greater than its actual value.”)
- We are painting the town red. (This means, “We are going around town tonight celebrating very intensely.”)

This page answers the question: *What are idioms and how can I translate them?*

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

*Figures of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

## Description

An idiom is a phrase that has a special meaning to the people of the language or culture who use it. Its meaning is different than what a person would understand from the meanings of the individual words that form the phrase.

He **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

The words “set his face” is an idiom that means “decided.”

Sometimes people may be able to understand an idiom from another culture, but it might sound like a strange way to express the meaning.

I am not worthy that you would **come under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

The phrase “come under my roof” is an idiom that means “enter my house.”

Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

This idiom means “Listen carefully and remember what I say.”

**Purpose:** An idiom is probably created in a culture somewhat by accident when someone describes something in an unusual way. But, when that unusual way communicates the message powerfully and people understand it clearly, other people start to use it. After a while, it becomes a normal way of talking in that language.

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People can easily misunderstand idioms in the original languages of the Bible if they do not know the cultures that produced the Bible.
- People can easily misunderstand idioms that are in the source language Bibles if they do not know the cultures that made those translations.
- It is useless to translate idioms literally (according to the meaning of each word) when the target language audience will not understand what they mean.

## Examples From the Bible

Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Look, we are your **flesh and bone**.” (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

This means, “We and you belong to the same race, the same family.”

■ The children of Israel went out **with a high hand**. (Exodus 14:8b ASV)

This means, "The Israelites went out defiantly."

■ the one who **lifts up my head** (Psalm 3:3b ULT)

This means, "the one who helps me."

## Translation Strategies

If the idiom would be clearly understood in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.
- (2) Use a different idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.

Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Look, we are your **flesh and bone**." (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

■ Look, we all **belong to the same nation**.

Then he **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

■ He started to travel to Jerusalem, **determined to reach it**.

I am not worthy that you would come **under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

■ I am not worthy that you should enter **my house**.

- (2) Use an idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

■ **Be all ears** when I say these words to you.

My **eyes grow dim** from grief. (Psalm 6:7a ULT)

■ I am crying my **eyes out**

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**Referenced in:** [Ezra 1:2](#); [Ezra 1:3](#); [Ezra 1:4](#); [Ezra 1:5](#); [Ezra 1:8](#); [Ezra 1:9](#); [Ezra 1:11](#); [Ezra 2:1](#); [Ezra 2:21](#); [Ezra 2:24](#); [Ezra 2:25](#); [Ezra 2:26](#); [Ezra 2:29](#); [Ezra 2:30](#); [Ezra 2:31](#); [Ezra 2:32](#); [Ezra 2:33](#); [Ezra 2:34](#); [Ezra 2:35](#); [Ezra 2:59](#); [Ezra 2:63](#); [Ezra 2:64](#); [Ezra 3:1](#); [Ezra 3:2](#); [Ezra 3:3](#); [Ezra 3:7](#); [Ezra 3:8](#); [Ezra 3:9](#); [Ezra 3:12](#); [Ezra 4:1](#); [Ezra 4:2](#); [Ezra 4:3](#); [Ezra 4:4](#); [Ezra 4:5](#); [Ezra 4:7](#); [Ezra 4:8](#); [Ezra 4:9](#); [Ezra 4:11](#); [Ezra 4:12](#); [Ezra 4:14](#); [Ezra 4:15](#); [Ezra 4:17](#); [Ezra 4:19](#); [Ezra 4:23](#); [Ezra 5:1](#); [Ezra 5:2](#); [Ezra 5:3](#); [Ezra 5:11](#); [Ezra 5:17](#); [Ezra 6:1](#); [Ezra 6:9](#); [Ezra 6:11](#); [Ezra 6:12](#); [Ezra 6:16](#); [Ezra 6:17](#); [Ezra 6:19](#); [Ezra 6:20](#); [Ezra 6:21](#); [Ezra 7:6](#); [Ezra 7:7](#); [Ezra 7:9](#); [Ezra 7:16](#); [Ezra 7:19](#); [Ezra 7:20](#); [Ezra 7:22](#); [Ezra 7:28](#); [Ezra 8:1](#); [Ezra 8:23](#); [Ezra 8:24](#); [Ezra 8:25](#); [Ezra 8:28](#); [Ezra 8:30](#); [Ezra 8:35](#); [Ezra 9:1](#); [Ezra 9:2](#); [Ezra 9:5](#); [Ezra 9:7](#); [Ezra 9:8](#); [Ezra 9:11](#); [Ezra 9:12](#); [Ezra 9:13](#); [Ezra 9:14](#); [Ezra 9:15](#); [Ezra 10:1](#); [Ezra 10:2](#); [Ezra 10:3](#); [Ezra 10:4](#); [Ezra 10:5](#); [Ezra 10:7](#); [Ezra 10:8](#); [Ezra 10:10](#); [Ezra 10:11](#); [Ezra 10:12](#); [Ezra 10:13](#); [Ezra 10:14](#); [Ezra 10:17](#); [Ezra 10:18](#); [Ezra 10:19](#); [Ezra 10:44](#)

## 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: [Ezra 10:3](#); [Ezra 10:17](#)

# 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* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 1:1](#); [Ezra 2:68](#); [Ezra 4:4](#); [Ezra 5:1](#); [Ezra 6:19](#); [Ezra 7:1](#); [Ezra 7:11](#); [Ezra 8:1](#); [Ezra 9:1](#)

# 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 ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 7:1](#); [Ezra 7:27](#); [Ezra 10:1](#)

# 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:** [Ezra 4:22](#); [Ezra 6:8](#); [Ezra 6:9](#)

# 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:** [Ezra 1:1](#); [Ezra 1:2](#); [Ezra 1:3](#); [Ezra 1:4](#); [Ezra 1:5](#); [Ezra 1:6](#); [Ezra 1:8](#); [Ezra 2:3](#); [Ezra 2:4](#); [Ezra 2:5](#); [Ezra 2:6](#); [Ezra 2:7](#); [Ezra 2:8](#); [Ezra 2:9](#); [Ezra 2:10](#); [Ezra 2:11](#); [Ezra 2:12](#); [Ezra 2:13](#); [Ezra 2:14](#); [Ezra 2:15](#); [Ezra 2:16](#); [Ezra 2:17](#); [Ezra 2:18](#); [Ezra 2:19](#); [Ezra 2:20](#); [Ezra 2:36](#); [Ezra 2:37](#); [Ezra 2:38](#); [Ezra 2:39](#); [Ezra 2:40](#); [Ezra 2:41](#); [Ezra 2:42](#); [Ezra 2:43](#); [Ezra 2:44](#); [Ezra 2:45](#); [Ezra 2:47](#); [Ezra 2:48](#); [Ezra 2:49](#); [Ezra 2:50](#); [Ezra 2:51](#); [Ezra 2:52](#); [Ezra 2:53](#); [Ezra 2:54](#); [Ezra 2:55](#); [Ezra 2:56](#); [Ezra 2:57](#); [Ezra 2:59](#); [Ezra 2:60](#); [Ezra 2:61](#); [Ezra 2:63](#); [Ezra 2:68](#); [Ezra 3:1](#); [Ezra 3:2](#); [Ezra 3:3](#); [Ezra 3:8](#); [Ezra 3:9](#); [Ezra 3:10](#); [Ezra 3:12](#); [Ezra 4:3](#); [Ezra 4:4](#); [Ezra 4:15](#); [Ezra 4:20](#); [Ezra 4:23](#); [Ezra 5:1](#); [Ezra 5:2](#); [Ezra 5:3](#); [Ezra 5:5](#); [Ezra 5:8](#); [Ezra 5:10](#); [Ezra 5:11](#); [Ezra 5:12](#); [Ezra 5:17](#); [Ezra 6:1](#); [Ezra 6:3](#); [Ezra 6:4](#); [Ezra 6:6](#); [Ezra 6:10](#); [Ezra 6:11](#); [Ezra 6:14](#); [Ezra 6:15](#); [Ezra 6:16](#); [Ezra 6:18](#); [Ezra 6:20](#); [Ezra 6:21](#); [Ezra 6:22](#); [Ezra 7:1](#); [Ezra 7:5](#); [Ezra 7:6](#); [Ezra 7:7](#); [Ezra 7:9](#); [Ezra 7:10](#); [Ezra 7:14](#); [Ezra 7:18](#); [Ezra 7:19](#); [Ezra 7:23](#); [Ezra 7:25](#); [Ezra 7:27](#); [Ezra 7:28](#); [Ezra 8:2](#); [Ezra 8:3](#); [Ezra 8:4](#); [Ezra 8:5](#); [Ezra 8:6](#); [Ezra 8:7](#); [Ezra 8:8](#); [Ezra 8:9](#); [Ezra 8:10](#); [Ezra 8:11](#); [Ezra 8:12](#); [Ezra 8:14](#); [Ezra 8:15](#); [Ezra 8:16](#); [Ezra 8:17](#); [Ezra 8:18](#); [Ezra 8:19](#); [Ezra 8:21](#); [Ezra 8:22](#); [Ezra 8:24](#); [Ezra 8:25](#); [Ezra 8:26](#); [Ezra 8:28](#); [Ezra 8:31](#); [Ezra 8:33](#); [Ezra 8:36](#); [Ezra 9:1](#); [Ezra 9:2](#); [Ezra 9:4](#); [Ezra 9:6](#); [Ezra 9:7](#); [Ezra 9:8](#); [Ezra 9:9](#); [Ezra 9:10](#); [Ezra 9:11](#); [Ezra 9:12](#); [Ezra 10:1](#); [Ezra 10:2](#); [Ezra 10:3](#); [Ezra 10:6](#); [Ezra 10:9](#); [Ezra 10:10](#); [Ezra 10:11](#); [Ezra 10:14](#); [Ezra 10:15](#); [Ezra 10:16](#); [Ezra 10:18](#); [Ezra 10:20](#); [Ezra 10:21](#); [Ezra 10:22](#); [Ezra 10:25](#); [Ezra 10:26](#); [Ezra 10:27](#); [Ezra 10:28](#); [Ezra 10:29](#); [Ezra 10:30](#); [Ezra 10:31](#); [Ezra 10:33](#); [Ezra 10:34](#); [Ezra 10:43](#)

# 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:** [Ezra 1:1](#); [Ezra 2:1](#); [Ezra 2:36](#); [Ezra 3:7](#); [Ezra 3:10](#); [Ezra 3:11](#); [Ezra 3:12](#); [Ezra 4:6](#); [Ezra 4:8](#); [Ezra 4:12](#); [Ezra 4:15](#); [Ezra 4:19](#); [Ezra 5:12](#); [Ezra 6:12](#); [Ezra 7:10](#); [Ezra 7:14](#); [Ezra 7:16](#); [Ezra 7:23](#); [Ezra 7:28](#); [Ezra 8:21](#); [Ezra 8:22](#); [Ezra 8:29](#); [Ezra 8:30](#); [Ezra 9:6](#); [Ezra 9:7](#); [Ezra 9:8](#); [Ezra 9:9](#); [Ezra 9:15](#); [Ezra 10:5](#); [Ezra 10:7](#); [Ezra 10:9](#)

# 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:** [Ezra 1:1](#); [Ezra 3:1](#); [Ezra 3:6](#); [Ezra 3:8](#); [Ezra 5:13](#); [Ezra 6:3](#); [Ezra 6:15](#); [Ezra 6:19](#); [Ezra 7:7](#); [Ezra 7:8](#); [Ezra 7:9](#); [Ezra 8:1](#); [Ezra 8:31](#); [Ezra 10:9](#); [Ezra 10:16](#); [Ezra 10:17](#)



# 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:** [Ezra 2:59](#); [Ezra 2:70](#); [Ezra 4:4](#); [Ezra 4:12](#); [Ezra 4:13](#); [Ezra 4:15](#); [Ezra 4:19](#); [Ezra 5:3](#); [Ezra 5:9](#); [Ezra 6:3](#); [Ezra 6:5](#); [Ezra 6:7](#); [Ezra 6:20](#); [Ezra 8:31](#); [Ezra 8:35](#); [Ezra 9:6](#); [Ezra 9:8](#); [Ezra 9:9](#); [Ezra 9:12](#); [Ezra 9:13](#); [Ezra 9:15](#); [Ezra 10:1](#)

# 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:** [Ezra 2:68](#); [Ezra 4:1](#); [Ezra 6:12](#); [Ezra 7:11](#); [Ezra 7:15](#); [Ezra 8:25](#); [Ezra 9:8](#); [Ezra 10:2](#)

# 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

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.

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](#))

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:** [Ezra 1:3](#); [Ezra 4:3](#); [Ezra 9:6](#)

# Pronouns — When to Use Them

## Description

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

This page answers the question: *How do I decide whether or not to use a pronoun?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

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

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

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

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

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

## Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Translation Strategies

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

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

Again **Jesus** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **Jesus** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath.

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

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

This may be translated as:

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

"

Referenced in: [Ezra 5:15](#); [Ezra 6:18](#); [Ezra 7:8](#)

# 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 (UTA PDF)*

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 3:11](#); [Ezra 4:9](#); [Ezra 4:11](#); [Ezra 5:7](#); [Ezra 5:9](#); [Ezra 5:11](#); [Ezra 5:16](#); [Ezra 5:17](#); [Ezra 6:3](#); [Ezra 6:5](#); [Ezra 6:6](#); [Ezra 6:12](#); [Ezra 7:12](#); [Ezra 7:26](#); [Ezra 7:28](#); [Ezra 8:22](#); [Ezra 8:28](#); [Ezra 8:29](#); [Ezra 9:1](#); [Ezra 9:2](#); [Ezra 9:6](#); [Ezra 9:11](#); [Ezra 9:12](#); [Ezra 9:15](#); [Ezra 10:2](#); [Ezra 10:4](#); [Ezra 10:10](#); [Ezra 10:11](#); [Ezra 10:12](#); [Ezra 10:14](#)

# Quotes within Quotes

## Description

A quotation may have a quote within it, and quotes that are inside of other quotes can also have quotes within them. When a quote has quotes within it, we say there are “layers” of quotation, and each of the quotes is a layer. When there are many layers of quotes inside of quotes, it can be hard for listeners and readers to know who is saying what. Some languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes to make it easier.

This page answers the question: *What is a quote within a quote, and how can I help the readers understand who is saying what?*

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

*Direct and Indirect Quotations* ([UTA PDF](#))

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

When there is a quote within a quote, the listener needs to know who the pronouns refer to. For example: if a quote that is inside a quote has the word “I,” the listener needs to know whether “I” refers to the speaker of the inner quote or the outer quote.

Some languages make this clear by using different kinds of quotes when there are quotes within quotes.

They may use direct quotes for some and indirect quotes for others.

Some languages do not use indirect quotes.

## Examples From the Bible

### A quotation with only one layer

But Paul said, “I, however, was indeed born a citizen.” (Acts 22:28b ULT)

### Quotations with two layers

Jesus answered and said to them, “Be careful that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name. They will say, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will lead many astray.” (Matthew 24:4-5 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to his disciples. The second layer is what other people will say.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king.” (John 18:37b ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to Pilate. The second layer is what Pilate said about Jesus.

### A quotation with three layers

Abraham said, “... I said to her, ‘You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, **“He is my brother.”**” (Genesis 20:11a, 13 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Abraham responded to Abimelech. The second layer is what Abraham had told his wife. The third layer is what he wanted his wife to say. (We have bolded the third layer.)

### A quotation with four layers

They said to him, “A man came to meet us who said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Yahweh says this: **‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal- Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.’**” (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

The outermost layer is what the messengers said to the king. The second layer is what the man who had met the messengers told them. The third is what that man wanted the messengers to say to the king. The fourth is what Yahweh said. (We have bolded the fourth layer.)

## Translation Strategies

Some languages use only direct quotes. Other languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes. In those languages it might sound strange and perhaps even be confusing if there are many layers of direct quotes.

- (1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes.
- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. (See [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#).)

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes. In the example below we have bolded the indirect quotes in the ULT and the quotes that we have changed to direct quotes below it.

Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul, saying, "There is a certain man was left here as a prisoner by Felix. So I am uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked **if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there to be judged concerning these things**. But when Paul appealed **to keep him in custody for the decision of the emperor**, I ordered him **to be held in custody until when I could send him to Caesar**." (Acts 25:14b, 20-21 ULT)

Festus presented Paul's case to the king. He said, "A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner. I was uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked him, '**Will you go to Jerusalem to be judged there concerning these things?**' But when Paul said, '**I want to be kept in custody for the emperor's decision,**' I told the guard, '**Keep him in custody until when I can send him to Caesar.**'"

- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. In English the word "that" can come before indirect quotes. It is bolded in the examples below. The pronouns that changed because of the indirect quote are also bolded.

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Speak to them and say, 'During the evenings you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be satisfied with bread. And you will know that I am Yahweh your God.'" (Exodus 16:11-12 ULT)

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Tell them **that** during the evenings **they** will eat meat, and in the morning **they** will be satisfied with bread. And **they** will know that I am Yahweh **their** God."

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

They told him **that** a man had come to meet **them** who said to **them**, "Go back to the king who sent you, and tell him **that** Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"



Quote Markings [\(UTA PDF\)](#)

Next we recommend you learn about:

Quote Markings [\(UTA PDF\)](#)

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 5:15](#)

## 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:** [Ezra 4:22](#); [Ezra 7:23](#); [Ezra 9:10](#); [Ezra 9:14](#)

# Symbolic Action

## Description

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their heads up and down to mean “yes” or turn their heads from side to side to mean “no.” Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures. In the Bible, sometimes people perform symbolic actions and sometimes they only refer to the symbolic action.

This page answers the question: *What is a symbolic action and how do I translate it?*

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

*Translate Unknowns* ([UTA PDF](#))

## Examples of symbolic actions

- In some cultures people shake hands when they meet to show that they are willing to be friendly.
- In some cultures people bow when they meet to show respect to each other.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

An action may have a meaning in one culture and a different meaning or no meaning at all in another culture. For example, in some cultures raising the eyebrows means “I am surprised” or “What did you say?” In other cultures it means “yes.”

In the Bible, people did things that had certain meanings in their culture. When we read the Bible, we might not understand what someone meant if we interpret the action based on what it means in our own culture today.

You (the translator) need to understand what people in the Bible meant when they used symbolic actions. If an action does not mean the same thing in your own culture, then you need to figure out how to translate what the action meant.

## Examples From the Bible

And behold, a man came whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And **falling at the feet of Jesus**, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: He did this to show great respect to Jesus.

Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: When people wanted someone to welcome them into their home, they stood at the door and knocked on it.

## Translation Strategies

If people would correctly understand what a symbolic action meant to the people in the Bible, consider using it. If not, here are some strategies for translating it.

- (1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.
- (2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.
- (3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning. Do this only in poetry, parables, and sermons. Do not do this when there actually was a person who did a specific action.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet in order to show that he greatly respected him.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Look, I stand at the door and knock on it, asking you to let me in.

(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Jairus showed Jesus great respect.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Look, I stand at the door and ask you to let me in.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT) — Since Jairus actually did this, you should not substitute an action from your own culture.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT) — Jesus was not standing at a real door. Rather he was speaking about wanting to have a relationship with people. So in cultures where it is polite to clear one's throat when wanting to be let into a house, you could use that.

Look, I stand at the door and clear my throat.

"

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 8:21](#); [Ezra 8:35](#); [Ezra 9:3](#); [Ezra 9:5](#); [Ezra 10:1](#); [Ezra 10:6](#); [Ezra 10:10](#); [Ezra 10:19](#)

# 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](#))



Metonymy ([UTA PDF](#))

Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies ([UTA PDF](#))

Next we recommend you learn about:

Metonymy ([UTA PDF](#))

Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 1:1](#); [Ezra 3:6](#); [Ezra 3:7](#); [Ezra 4:1](#); [Ezra 6:10](#); [Ezra 7:20](#); [Ezra 9:7](#); [Ezra 10:6](#); [Ezra 10:9](#)

## Textual Variants

### Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However, people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, or some mistook one word for another that looked like it. Occasionally, they added words or even whole sentences, either by accident or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles include some of these sentences that were added. In the ULT, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

This page answers the question: *Why does the ULT have missing or added verses, and should I translate them?*

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

*Choosing a Source Text* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Original Manuscripts* ([UTA PDF](#))

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

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

### Examples From the Bible

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

<sup>10</sup> See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

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

53 [Then everyone went to his own house ... 11 She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."] <sup>[2]</sup>

<sup>[2]</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. <sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

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

<sup>14</sup> He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. <sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

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

<sup>14</sup> He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Chapter and Verse Numbers* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Original Manuscripts* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Terms to Know* ([UTA PDF](#))

*The Original and Source Languages* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 5:4](#); [Ezra 8:5](#); [Ezra 8:10](#); [Ezra 8:24](#); [Ezra 10:38](#)

## 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?”

### 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.

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](#))

They said to him, “We have nothing here except five loaves of **bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread and do not know what it is.

### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

### Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God’s commands and historical facts accurately.

### Examples From the Bible

So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals**. (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

They offered him wine mixed with **myrrh**, but he did not drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

## Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
- (4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.
- (5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but **inwardly they are very hungry and dangerous animals**.

"Ravenous wolves" is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See [Translating Metaphors](#).)

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked grain seeds** and two fish.

- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.

Your sins ... will be white like **milk**.

Your sins ... will be white like **the moon**.

- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **myrrh**. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT) — People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word "medicine."

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **a medicine called myrrh**. But he refused to drink it.

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT) —  
People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made  
of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).

We have nothing here except five loaves of **baked crushed seed bread**  
and two fish.

(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **wild dogs**

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked food** and two fish.

(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

to him who made **the sun and the moon**

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Copy or Borrow Words* ([UTA PDF](#))

*How to Translate Names* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Ezra 1:8](#); [Ezra 2:40](#); [Ezra 2:41](#); [Ezra 2:42](#); [Ezra 2:43](#); [Ezra 2:55](#); [Ezra 2:63](#); [Ezra 2:65](#); [Ezra 2:69](#); [Ezra 3:7](#);  
[Ezra 3:10](#); [Ezra 4:5](#); [Ezra 4:8](#); [Ezra 5:14](#); [Ezra 6:5](#); [Ezra 6:19](#); [Ezra 7:14](#); [Ezra 7:21](#); [Ezra 8:36](#); [Ezra 9:4](#); [Ezra 10:9](#)

## 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:** [Ezra 1:4](#); [Ezra 10:44](#)



## 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* ([UTA PDF](#))  
*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.

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**Referenced in:** [Ezra 10:19](#)



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Words**

**Version 85**

## god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry

### Definition:

A false god is something that people worship instead of the one true God. The term “goddess” refers specifically to a female false god.

- These false gods or goddesses do not exist. Yahweh is the only God.
- People sometimes make objects into idols to worship as symbols of their false gods.
- In the Bible, God’s people frequently turned away from obeying him in order to worship false gods.
- Demons often deceive people into believing that the false gods and idols they worship have power.
- Baal, Dagon, and Molech were three of the many false gods that were worshiped by people in Bible times.
- Asherah and Artemis (Diana) were two of the goddesses that ancient peoples worshiped.

An idol is an object that people make so they can worship it. Something is described as “idolatrous” if it involves giving honor to something other than the one true God.

- People make idols to represent the false gods that they worship.
- These false gods do not exist; there is no God besides Yahweh.
- Sometimes demons work through an idol to make it seem like it has power, even though it does not.
- Idols are often made of valuable materials like gold, silver, bronze, or expensive wood.
- An “idolatrous kingdom” means a “kingdom of people who worship idols” or a “kingdom of people who worship earthly things.”
- The term “idolatrous figure” is another word for a “carved image” or an “idol.”

### Translation Suggestions:

- There may already be a word for “god” or “false god” in the language or in a nearby language.
- The term “idol” could be used to refer to false gods.
- In English, a lower case “g” is used to refer to false gods, and upper case “G” is used to refer to the one true God. Other languages also do that.
- Another option would be to use a completely different word to refer to the false gods.
- Some languages may add a word to specify whether the false god is described as male or female.

(See also: [God](#), [Asherah](#), [Baal](#), [Molech](#), [demon](#), [image](#), [kingdom](#), [worship](#))

### Bible References:

- Genesis 35:2
- Exodus 32:1
- Psalms 31:6
- Psalms 81:8-10
- Isaiah 44:20
- Acts 7:41
- Acts 7:43
- Acts 15:20
- Acts 19:27
- Romans 2:22
- Galatians 4:8-9
- Galatians 5:19-21
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **10:2** Through these plagues, God showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's **gods**.
- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, "I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other **gods**."
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false **gods** and did many evil things.
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite **gods** instead of Yahweh, the true God.
- **18:13** But most of Judah's kings were evil, corrupt, and they worshiped idols. Some of the kings even sacrificed their children to false **gods**.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H0367, H0410, H0426, H0430, H0457, H1322, H1544, H1892, H2553, H3649, H4656, H4906, H5236, H5566, H6089, H6090, H6091, H6456, H6459, H6673, H6736, H6754, H7723, H8163, H8251, H8267, H8441, H8655, G14930, G14940, G14950, G14960, G14970, G22990, G27120

"

Referenced in: [Introduction to Ezra](#)

# Israel, Israelites

## Facts:

The term "Israel" is the name that God gave to Jacob. Often it refers to the nation that is descended from him.

- The name Israel probably means "He struggles with God."
- The descendants of Jacob became known as the "sons of Israel" or the "people of Israel" or the "nation of Israel" or the "Israelites."
- God formed his covenant with the people of Israel. They were his chosen people.
- The nation of Israel consisted of twelve tribes.
- Soon after King Solomon died, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the southern kingdom, called "Judah," and the northern kingdom, called "Israel."
- Often the term "Israel" can be translated as "the people of Israel" or "the nation of Israel," depending on the context.

(See also: [Jacob](#), [kingdom of Israel](#), [Judah](#), [nation](#), [twelve tribes of Israel](#))

## Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 10:1
- 1 Kings 8:2
- Acts 2:36
- Acts 7:24
- Acts 13:23
- John 1:49-51
- Luke 24:21
- Mark 12:29
- Matthew 2:6
- Matthew 27:9
- Philippians 3:4-5

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:15** The descendants of the twelve sons became the twelve tribes of **Israel**.
- **9:3** The Egyptians forced the **Israelites** to build many buildings and even whole cities.
- **9:5** A certain **Israelite** woman gave birth to a baby boy.
- **10:1** They said, "This is what the God of **Israel** says, 'Let my people go!'"
- **14:12** But despite all this, the people of \_\_Israel\_\_ complained and grumbled against God and against Moses.
- **15:9** God fought for **Israel** that day. He caused the Amorites to be confused and he sent large hailstones that killed many of the Amorites.
- **15:12** After this battle, God gave each tribe of **Israel** \_\_ its own section of the Promised Land. Then God gave \_\_Israel\_\_ peace along all its borders.
- **16:16** So God punished \_\_Israel\_\_ again for worshiping idols.
- **43:6** "Men of **Israel**, Jesus was a man who did many mighty signs and wonders by the power of God, as you have seen and already know."

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H3478, H3479, H3481, H3482, G09350, G24740, G24750

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**Referenced in:** [Introduction to Ezra](#)

## 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

"

Referenced in: [Ezra 7 General Notes](#)

## priest, priesthood

### Definition:

In the Bible, a priest was someone who was chosen to offer sacrifices to God on behalf of God's people. The "priesthood" was the name for the office or condition of being a priest.

- In the Old Testament, God chose Aaron and his descendants to be his priests for the people of Israel.
- The "priesthood" was a right and a responsibility that was passed down from father to son in the Levite clan.
- The Israelite priests had the responsibility of offering the people's sacrifices to God, along with other duties in the temple.
- Priests also offered regular prayers to God on behalf of his people and performed other religious rites.
- The priests pronounced formal blessings on people and taught them God's laws.
- In Jesus' time, there were different levels of priests, including the chief priests and the high priest.
- Jesus is our "great high priest" who intercedes for us in God's presence. He offered himself as the ultimate sacrifice for sin. This means that the sacrifices made by human priests are no longer needed.
- In the New Testament, every believer in Jesus is called a "priest" who can come directly to God in prayer to intercede for himself and other people.
- In ancient times, there were also pagan priests who presented offerings to false gods such as Baal.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term "priest" could be translated as "sacrifice person" or "God's intermediary" or "sacrificial mediator" or "person God appoints to represent him."
- The translation of "priest" should be different from the translation of "mediator."
- Some translations may prefer to always say something like "Israelite priest" or "Jewish priest" or "Yahweh's priest" or "priest of Baal" to make it clear that this does not refer to a modern-day type of priest.
- The term used to translate "priest" should be different from the terms for "chief priest" and "high priest" and "Levite" and "prophet."

(See also: [Aaron](#), [high priest](#), [mediator](#), [sacrifice](#))

### Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 6:41
- Genesis 14:17-18
- Genesis 47:22
- John 1:19-21
- Luke 10:31
- Mark 1:44
- Mark 2:25-26
- Matthew 8:4
- Matthew 12:4
- Micah 3:9-11
- Nehemiah 10:28-29
- Nehemiah 10:34-36
- Revelation 1:6

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:7** "Melchizedek, the **priest** of God Most High"

- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed God's law could bring an animal to the altar in front of the Tent of Meeting as a sacrifice to God. A **priest** would kill the animal and burn it on the altar. The blood of the animal that was sacrificed covered the person's sin and made that person clean in God's sight. God chose Moses' brother, Aaron, and Aaron's descendants to be his **priests**.
- **19:7** So the **priests** of Baal prepared a sacrifice but did not light the fire.
- **21:7** An Israelite **priest** was someone who made sacrifices to God on behalf of the people as a substitute for the punishment of their sins. **Priests** also prayed to God for the people.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H3547, H3548, H3549, H3550, G07480, G07490, G24050, G24060, G24070, G24090, G24200

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Referenced in: [Ezra 2 General Notes](#)

## prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess

### Definition:

A “prophet” is a man who speaks God’s messages to people. A woman who does this is called a “prophetess.”

- Often prophets warned people to turn away from their sins and obey God.
- A “prophecy” is the message that the prophet speaks. To “prophesy” means to speak God’s messages.
- Often the message of a prophecy was about something that would happen in the future.
- Many prophecies in the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.
- In the Bible the collection of books written by prophets are sometimes referred to as “the prophets.”
- For example the phrase, “the law and the prophets” is a way of referring to all the Hebrew scriptures, which are also known as the “Old Testament.”
- An older term for a prophet was “seer” or “someone who sees.”
- Sometimes the term “seer” refers to a false prophet or to someone who practices divination.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “prophet” could be translated as “God’s spokesman” or “man who speaks for God” or “man who speaks God’s messages.”
- A “seer” could be translated as “person who sees visions” or “man who sees the future from God.”
- The term “prophetess” could be translated as “spokeswoman for God” or “woman who speaks for God” or “woman who speaks God’s messages.”
- Ways to translate “prophecy” could include, “message from God” or “prophet message.”
- The term “prophesy” could be translated as “speak words from God” or “tell God’s message.”
- The figurative expression, “law and the prophets” could also be translated as “the books of the law and of the prophets” or “everything written about God and his people, including God’s laws and what his prophets preached.” (See: [synecdoche](#))
- When referring to a prophet (or seer) of a false god, it may be necessary to translate this as “false prophet (seer)” or “prophet (seer) of a false god” or “prophet of Baal,” for example.

(See also: [Baal](#), [divination](#), [false god](#), [false prophet](#), [fulfill](#), [law](#), [vision](#))

### Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
- Acts 3:25
- John 1:43-45
- Malachi 4:4-6
- Matthew 1:23
- Matthew 2:18
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalm 51:1

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they trusted in God and believed that Moses was a **prophet** of God.
- **17:13** God was very angry about what David had done, so he sent the **prophet** Nathan to tell David how evil his sin was.
- **19:1** Throughout the history of the Israelites, God sent them **prophets**. The **prophets** heard messages from God and then told the people God’s messages.

- **19:6** All the people of the entire kingdom of Israel, including the 450 **prophets** of Baal, came to Mount Carmel.
- **19:17** Most of the time, the people did not obey God. They often mistreated the **prophets** and sometimes even killed them.
- **21:9** The **prophet** Isaiah **prophesied** that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- **43:5** "This fulfills the **prophecy** made by the **prophet** Joel in which God said, 'In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.'"
- **43:7** "This fulfills the **prophecy** which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.'"
- **48:12** Moses was a great **prophet** who proclaimed the word of God. But Jesus is the greatest **prophet** of all. He is the Word of God.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H2372, H2374, H4853, H5012, H5013, H5016, H5017, H5029, H5030, H5031, H5197, G24950, G43940, G43950, G43960, G43970, G43980, G55780

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Referenced in: [Ezra 5 General Notes](#)

## temple, house, house of God

### Facts:

The temple was a building surrounded by walled courtyards where the Israelites came to pray and to offer sacrifices to God. It was located on Mount Moriah in the city of Jerusalem.

- Often the term “temple” referred to the whole temple complex, including the courtyards that surrounded the main building. Sometimes it referred only to the building.
- The temple building had two rooms, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.
- God referred to the temple as his dwelling place.
- King Solomon built the Temple during his reign. It was supposed to be the permanent place of worship in Jerusalem.
- In the New Testament, the term “temple of the Holy Spirit” is used to refer to believers in Jesus as a group, because the Holy Spirit lives in them.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Usually when the text says that people were “in the temple,” it is referring to the courtyards outside the building. This could be translated as “in the temple courtyards” or “in the temple complex.”
- Where it refers specifically to the building itself, some translations translate “temple” as “temple building,” to make it the reference clear.
- Ways to translate “temple” could include, “God’s holy house” or “sacred worship place.”
- Often in the Bible, the temple is referred to as “the house of Yahweh” or “the house of God.”

(See also: [sacrifice](#), [Solomon](#), [Babylon](#), [Holy Spirit](#), [tabernacle](#), [courtyard](#), [Zion](#), [house](#))

### Bible References:

- Acts 3:2
- Acts 3:8
- Ezekiel 45:18-20
- Luke 19:46
- Nehemiah 10:28
- Psalm 79:1-3

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:6** David wanted to build a **temple** where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him sacrifices.
- **18:2** In Jerusalem, Solomon built the **Temple** for which his father David had planned and gathered materials. Instead of at the Tent of Meeting, people now worshiped God and offered sacrifices to him at the **Temple**. God came and was present in the **Temple**, and he lived there with his people.
- **20:7** They (Babylonians) captured the city of Jerusalem, destroyed the **Temple**, and took away all the treasures.
- **20:13** When the people arrived in Jerusalem, they rebuilt the **Temple** and the wall around the city of the city and the **Temple**.
- **25:4** Then Satan took Jesus to the highest point on the **Temple** and said, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘God will command his angels to carry you so your foot does not hit a stone.’”
- **40:7** When he died, there was an earthquake and the large curtain that separated the people from the presence of God in the **Temple** was torn in two, from the top to the bottom.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H1004, H1964, H1965, G14930, G24110, G34850

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**Referenced in:** [Introduction to Ezra](#); [Ezra 1 General Notes](#); [Ezra 3 General Notes](#); [Ezra 4 General Notes](#); [Ezra 5 General Notes](#); [Ezra 6 General Notes](#)

## trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness

### Definition:

To “trust” something or someone is to believe that the thing or person is true or dependable. That belief is also called “trust.” A “trustworthy” person is one you can trust to do and say what is right and true, and therefore one who has the quality of “trustworthiness.”

- Trust is closely related to faith. If we trust someone, we have faith in that person to do what they promised to do.
- Having trust in someone also means depending on that person.
- To “trust in” Jesus means to believe that he is God, to believe that he died on the cross to pay for our sins, and to rely on him to save us.
- A “trustworthy saying” refers to something that is said that can be counted on to be true.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “trust” could include “believe” or “have faith” or “have confidence” or “depend on.”
- The phrase “put your trust in” is very similar in meaning to “trust in.”
- The term “trustworthy” could be translated as “dependable” or “reliable” or “can always be trusted.”

(See also: [believe](#), confidence, [faith](#), [faithful](#), true)

### Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:22-24
- 1 Timothy 4:9
- Hosea 10:12-13
- Isaiah 31:1-2
- Nehemiah 13:13
- Psalm 31:5
- Titus 3:8

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they **trusted** in God and believed that Moses was a prophet of God.
- **14:15** Joshua was a good leader because he **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **17:2** David was a humble and righteous man who **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **34:6** Then Jesus told a story about people who **trusted** in their own good deeds and despised other people.

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H0539, H0982, H1556, H2620, H2622, H3176, H4009, H4268, H7365, G16790, G38720, G39820, G40060, G41000, G42760

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Referenced in: [Ezra 8 General Notes](#)



# Contributors

## unfoldingWord® Translation Notes Contributors

Door43 World Missions Community

Aaron Fenlason

Abner Bauman

Adam Van Goor

Alan Bird

Alan Borkenhagen

Alfred Van Dellen

Alice Wright

Allen Bair

Allyson Presswood Nance

Amanda Adams

Andrew Belcher

Andrew Johnson

Andrew Rice

Angelo Palo

Anita Moreau

April Linton

Aurora Lee

Barbara Summers

Barbara White

Becky Hancock

Beryl Carpenter

Bethany Fenlason

Betty Forbes

Bianca Elliott

Bill Cleveland

Bill Pruett

Bob Britting

Bram van den Heuvel

Brian Metzger

Bruce Bridges

Bruce Collier

Bruce Smith

Caleb Worgess

Carlyle Kilmore

Carol Pace

Carol Heim

Caroline Crawford

Caroline Fleming

Caroline S Wong

Carol Lee

Carol Moyer

Carolyn Lafferty

Catherine C Newton

Charese Jackson

Charlotte Gibson

Charlotte Hobbs

Cheryl A Chojnacki  
Cheryl Stieben  
Cheryl Warren  
Christian Berry  
Christine Harrison  
Clairmene Pascal  
Connie Bryan  
Connie Goss  
Craig Balden  
Craig Lins  
Craig Scott  
Cynthia J Puckett  
Dale Hahs  
Dale Masser  
Daniel Lauk  
Daniel Summers  
Darlene M Hopkins  
Darlene Silas  
David Boerschlein  
David F Withee  
David Glover  
David J Forbes  
David Mullen  
David N Hanley  
David Sandlin  
David Shortess  
David Smith  
David Whisler  
Debbie Nispel  
Debbie Piper  
Deborah Bartow  
Deborah Bush  
Deborah Miniard  
Dennis Jackson  
Dianne Forrest  
Donna Borkenhagen  
Donna Mullis  
Douglas Hayes  
Drew Curley  
Ed Davis  
Edgar Navera  
Edward Kosky  
Edward Quigley  
Elaine VanRegenmorter  
Elizabeth Nataly Silvestre Herbas  
Ellen Lee  
Emeline Thermidor  
Emily Lee  
Esther Roman  
Esther Trew  
Esther Zirk  
Ethel Lynn Baker  
Evangeline Puen  
Evelyn Wildgust  
Fletcher Coleman

Freda Dibble  
Gail Spell  
Gary Greer  
Gary Shogren  
Gay Ellen Stulp  
Gene Gossman  
George Arlyn Briggs  
Gerald L. Naughton  
Glen Tallent  
Grace Balwit  
Grace Bird  
Greg Stoffregen  
Gretchen Stencil  
Hallie Miller  
Harry Harriss  
Heather Hicks  
Helen Morse  
Hendrik deVries  
Henry Bult  
Henry Whitney  
Hilary O'Sullivan  
Ibrahim Audu  
Ines Gipson  
Irene J Dodson  
Jackie Jones  
Jacqueline Bartley  
James Giddens  
James Pedersen  
James Pohlig  
James Roe  
Janet O'Herron  
Janice Connor  
Jaqueline Rotruck  
Jeanette Friesen  
Jeff Graf  
Jeff Kennedy  
Jeff Martin  
Jennifer Cunneen  
Jenny Thomas  
Jerry Lund  
Jessica Lauk  
Jim Frederick  
Jim Lee  
Jimmy Warren  
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Joy Anderson  
Joyce Jacobs  
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JT Crowder  
Judi Brodeen  
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Julia N Bult  
Patty Li  
Julie Susanto  
Kahar Barat  
Kannah Sellers  
Kara Anderson  
Karen Davie  
Karen Dreesen  
Karen Fabean  
Karen Riecks  
Karen Smith  
Karen Turner  
Kathleen Glover  
Kathryn Hendrix  
Kathy Mentink  
Katrina Geurink  
Kay Myers  
Kelly Strong  
Ken Haugh  
Kim Puterbaugh  
Kristin Butts Page  
Kristin Rinne  
Kwesi Opoku-debrah  
Langston Spell  
Larry Sallee  
Lawrence Lipe  
Lee Sipe  
Leonard Smith  
Lester Harper  
Lia Hadley  
Linda Buckman  
Linda Dale Barton  
Linda Havemeier  
Linda Homer  
Linda Lee Sebastien  
Linn Peterson  
Liz Dakota

Lloyd Box  
Luis Keelin  
Madeline Kilmore  
Maggie D Paul  
Marc Nelson  
Mardi Welo  
Margo Hoffman  
Marilyn Cook  
Marjean Swann  
Marjorie Francis  
Mark Albertini  
Mark Chapman  
Mark Thomas  
Marselene Norton  
Mary Jane Davis  
Mary Jean Stout  
Mary Landon  
Mary Scarborough  
Megan Kidwell  
Melissa Roe  
Merton Dibble  
Meseret Abraham-Zemedede  
Michael Bush  
Michael Connor  
Michael Francis  
Michael Geurink  
Mike Tisdell  
Mickey White  
Miel Horrilleno  
Monique Greer  
Morgan Mellette  
Morris Anderson  
Nancy C. Naughton  
Nancy Neu  
Nancy VanCott  
Neal Snook  
Nicholas Scovil  
Nick Dettman  
Nils Friberg  
Noah Crabtree  
Pamela B Johnston  
Pamela Nungesser  
Pamela Roberts  
Pam Gullifer  
Pat Ankney  
Pat Giddens  
Patricia Brougher  
Patricia Carson  
Patricia Cleveland  
Patricia Foster  
Patricia Middlebrooks  
Paul Mellema  
Paula Carlson  
Paula Oestreich  
Paul Holloway

Paul Nungesser  
Peggy Anderson  
Peggyrose Swartzentruber  
Peter Polloni  
Phillip Harms  
Phyllis Mortensen  
Priscilla Enggren  
Rachel Agheyisi  
Rachel Ropp  
Raif Turner  
Ray Puen  
Reina Y Mora  
Rene Bahrenfuss  
Renee Triplett  
Rhonda Bartels  
Richard Beatty  
Richard Moreau  
Richard Rutter  
Richard Stevens  
Rick Keaton  
Robby Little  
Robert W Johnson  
Robert Hunt, Freely-Given.org  
Rochelle Hook  
Rodney White  
Rolaine Franz  
Ronald D Hook  
Rosario Baria  
Roxann Carey  
Roxanne Pittard  
Ruben Michael Garay  
Russell Isham  
Russ Perry  
Ruth Calo  
Ruth E Withee  
Ruth Montgomery  
Ryan Blizek  
Sam Todd  
Samuel Njuguna  
Sandy Anderson  
Sandy Blanes  
Sara Giesmann  
Sara Van Cott (Barnes)  
Sharon Johnson  
Sharon Peterson  
Sharon Shortess  
Shelly Harms  
Sherie Nelson  
Sherman Sebastien  
Sherry Mosher  
Stacey Swanson  
Steve Gibbs  
Steve Mercier  
Susan Langohr  
Susan Quigley

Susan Snook  
Suzanne Richards  
Sylvia Thomas  
Sze Suze Lau  
Tabitha Price  
Tammy L Enns  
Tammy White  
Teresa Everett-Leone  
Teresa Linn  
Terri Collins  
Theresa Baker  
Thomas Jopling  
Thomas Nickell  
Thomas Warren  
Tim Coleman  
Tim Ingram  
Tim Linn  
Tim Lovestrand  
Tim Mentink  
Tom Penry  
Tom William Warren  
Toni Shuma  
Tracie Pogue  
Tricia Coffman  
Vicki Ivester  
Victoria G DeKraker  
Victor M Prieto  
Vivian Kamph  
Vivian Richardson  
Ward Pyles  
Warren Blaisdell  
Wayne Homer  
Wendy Coleman  
Wendy Colon  
Wilbur Zirk  
Wil Gipson  
William Carson  
William Cline  
William Dickerson  
William Smitherman  
William Wilder  
Yvonne Tallent

## **unfoldingWord® Literal Text Contributors**

Nicholas Alsop  
Scott Bayer  
Larry T Brooks, M.Div., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary  
Matt Carlton  
George "Drew" Curley, M.Div., PhD, Professor of Biblical Languages  
Dan Dennison  
Jamie Duguid  
Paul M Fahnestock, M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, D.Min. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary  
Michael Francis  
Laura Glassel, MA in Bible Translation

Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages  
Jesse Harris  
C. Harry Harriss, M.Div.  
Alrick G. Headley, M.Div., Th.M.  
Bram van den Heuvel, M.A.  
John Huffman  
D. Allen Hutchison, MA in Old Testament, MA in New Testament  
Jack Messarra  
Gene Mullen  
Adam W. Nagelvoort, M.Div. Academic Ministries, Columbia International University  
Timothy Neu, Ph.D. Biblical Studies  
Kristy Nickell  
Tom Nickell  
Elizabeth Oakes, BA in Religious Studies, Linguistics  
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics  
James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages  
Ward Pyles, M.Div., Western Baptist Theological Seminary  
Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics  
Dean Ropp  
Joel D. Ruark, M.A.Th., Th.M., Ph.D. in Old Testament, University of Stellenbosch  
Larry Sallee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary  
Peter Smircich, BA Philosophy  
Doug Smith, M.T.S., M.Div., Th.M., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Leonard Smith  
Suzanna Smith  
Tim Span  
Dave Statezni, BA Orig langs., M.Div. Fuller Theological Seminary  
Maria Tijerina  
David Trombold, M. Div.  
Aaron Valdizan, M.Div., Th.M. in Old Testament, The Masters Seminary  
James Vigen  
Hendrik "Henry" de Vries  
Thomas Warren, M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, D.Min, Reformed Theological Seminary  
Angela Westmoreland, M.A. in Theological Studies (Biblical Language track)  
Henry Whitney, BA Linguistics  
Benjamin Wright, MA Applied Linguistics, Dallas International University  
Grant Ailie, BA Biblical Studies, M.Div.  
Door43 World Missions Community

## **unfoldingWord® Simplified Text Contributors**

Nicholas Alsop  
Larry T Brooks, M.Div., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary  
Matt Carlton  
George "Drew" Curley, M.Div., PhD, Professor of Biblical Languages  
Paul M Fahnestock, M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, D. Min. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary  
Michael Francis  
Laura Glassel, MA in Bible Translation  
Kailey Gregory  
Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages  
C. Harry Harriss, M.Div.  
Alrick G. Headley, M.Div., Th.M.  
Bram van den Heuvel, M.A.  
John Huffman  
D. Allen Hutchison, MA in Old Testament, MA in New Testament



Robert Hunt, Freely-Given.org  
 Demsin Lachin  
 Jack Messarra  
 Gene Mullen  
 Adam W. Nagelvoort, M.Div. Academic Ministries, Columbia International University  
 Timothy Neu, Ph.D. Biblical Studies  
 Kristy Nickell  
 Tom Nickell  
 Elizabeth Oakes, BA in Religious Studies, Linguistics  
 Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics  
 James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages  
 Ward Pyles, M.Div., Western Baptist Theological Seminary  
 Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics  
 Dean Ropp  
 Joel D. Ruark, M.A.Th., Th.M., Ph.D. in Old Testament, University of Stellenbosch  
 Larry Saltee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary  
 Peter Smircich, BA Philosophy  
 Christopher Smith, M.A.T.S. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Ph.D. Boston College  
 Leonard Smith  
 Dave Statezni, BA Orig langs., M.Div. Fuller Theological Seminary  
 David Trombold, M. Div.  
 James Vigen  
 Hendrik ♦ Henry ♦ de Vries  
 Thomas Warren, M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, D.Min, Reformed Theological Seminary  
 Angela Westmoreland, M.A. in Theological Studies (Biblical Language track)  
 Henry Whitney, BA Linguistics  
 Benjamin Wright, MA Applied Linguistics, Dallas International University  
 Door43 World Missions Community

## **unfoldingWord® Translation Academy Contributors**

Jesse Griffin, BA in Biblical Studies, MA in Biblical Languages  
 Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics, MA in Theology, BA in Biblical Studies  
 Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics  
 Henry Whitney, BA in Linguistics  
 James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages  
 Ben Jore, BA Biblical Studies, M.Div.  
 Joel D. Ruark, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Theology  
 Todd L. Price, PhD in New Testament/Linguistics  
 Bev Staley  
 Carol Brinneman  
 Jody Garcia  
 Kara Anderson  
 Kim Puterbaugh  
 Lizz Carlton  
 Door43 World Missions Community

## **unfoldingWord® Translation Words Contributors**

Andrew Belcher  
 David Book  
 Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages  
 Henry Whitney, Bible translator, Papua New Guinea, 1982-2000  
 Larry Saltee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary

Lizz Carlton  
Jan Zanutto  
Matthew Latham  
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics  
Richard Joki  
Door43 World Missions Community

## **unfoldingWord® Translation Words Links Contributors**

Door43 World Missions Community  
Jesse Griffin (BA Biblical Studies, Liberty University; MA Biblical Languages, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary)  
Perry Oakes (BA Biblical Studies, Taylor University; MA Theology, Fuller Seminary; MA Linguistics, University of Texas at Arlington; PhD Old Testament, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)  
Larry Sallee (Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary)  
Joel D. Ruark (M.A.Th. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; Th.M. Stellenbosch University; Ph.D. Candidate in Old Testament Studies, Stellenbosch University)