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John

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

John

Introduction to the Gospel of John

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Gospel of John

Introduction about who Jesus is (1:1–18)

John the Baptizer baptizes Jesus, and Jesus chooses 12 disciples (1:19–51)

Jesus preaches, teaches, and heals people (2–11)

The seven days before Jesus' death (12–19)

Mary anoints the feet of Jesus (12:1–11)

Jesus rides a donkey into Jerusalem (12:12–19)

Some Greek men want to see Jesus (12:20–36)

The Jewish leaders reject Jesus (12:37–50)

Jesus teaches his disciples (13–16)

Jesus prays for himself and his disciples (17)

Jesus is arrested and undergoes trial (18:1–19:15)

Jesus is crucified and buried (19:16–42)

Jesus rises from the dead (20:1–29)

John says why he wrote his Gospel (20:30–31)

Jesus meets with the disciples (21)

More detailed outlines are in the General Notes for each chapter.

What is the Gospel of John about?

The Gospel of John is one of four books in the New Testament that describe some of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. These books are called “Gospels,” which means “good news.” Their authors wrote about different aspects of who Jesus was and what he did. John said that he wrote his Gospel “so that people might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God” (20:31). John’s Gospel repeatedly emphasizes that Jesus is God in human form.

John’s Gospel is very different from the other three Gospels. John does not include some of the teachings and events that the other writers included in their Gospels. Also, John wrote about some teachings and events that are not in the other Gospels.

John wrote much about the miraculous signs Jesus did to prove that what Jesus said about himself was true. (See: **sign, proof, reminder (p.1142)**)

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, “The Gospel of John” or “The Gospel According to John.” Or they may choose a title that may be clearer, such as, “The Good News About Jesus That John Wrote.” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

Who wrote the Gospel of John?

This book does not give the name of the author. However, since early Christian times, most Christians have thought that the apostle John was the author. Further evidence that the apostle John wrote this Gospel is the fact that his name does not occur once within the book. Instead, this Gospel contains the phrases “the disciple whom Jesus loved” or “the other disciple” in places where the other Gospels indicate that John was present (13:23–25; 19:26–27;

20:2-8; 21:7, 20-24). The apostle John most likely referred to himself in this manner because he wanted to humbly say that he had a very close relationship with Jesus. He was part of Jesus' inner circle of disciples who became the "pillars" of the early church (Galatians 2:9).

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Why does John write so much about the final week of Jesus' life?

John wrote much about Jesus' final week. He wanted his readers to think deeply about Jesus' final week and his death on the cross. He wanted people to understand that Jesus willingly died on the cross so that God could forgive them for sinning against him. (See: **sin, sinful, sinner, sinning** (p.1144))

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

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

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

Jews of Jesus' time did not use "Son of Man" as a title for anyone. But Jesus used it for himself to help them understand who he truly was. (See: **Son of Man, son of man** (p.1146))

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

What does the word "sign" mean in the Gospel of John?

While other New Testament writers use terms like "mighty works" or "wonders" to refer to the miracles that Jesus did, John prefers to use the term "sign." The miracles John calls "signs" were significant displays of divine power. John called them signs to emphasize that an important purpose of Jesus' miracles was to prove that Jesus was God and that what Jesus said about himself was true. John said that in his Gospel he only wrote about some of the signs that Jesus did. John said, "these have been written so that you would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and so that believing, you would have life in his name" (20:30-31).

What do the words "remain," "reside," and "abide" mean in the Gospel of John?

John often used the words "remain," "reside," and "abide" as metaphors. John spoke of a believer becoming more faithful to Jesus and knowing Jesus better as if Jesus' word "remained" in the believer. John also spoke of someone being spiritually joined to someone else as if the person "remained" in the other person. Christians are said to "remain" in Christ and in God. The Father is said to "remain" in the Son, and the Son is said to "remain" in the Father. The Son is said to "remain" in believers. The Holy Spirit is also said to "remain" in the believers.

Many translators will find it impossible to represent these ideas in their languages in exactly the same way. For example, Jesus intended to express the idea of the Christian being spiritually together with him when he said, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him" (6:56). The UST uses the idea of "will be united with me, and I will be united with them," but translators may have to find other ways of expressing the idea.

In the passage, "my words remain in you" (15:7), the UST expresses this idea as "obey what I have taught you." Translators may find it possible to use this translation as a model.

What is double meaning in the Gospel of John?

John occasionally used words or phrases that could have two meanings (double entendre) in the language in which he originally wrote this Gospel. For example, the phrase translated “born again” in the ULT could also mean “born from above” (3:3, 7). In such cases, you may want to choose one meaning and put the other meaning in a footnote.

What are the major issues in the text of the Gospel of John?

The following verses are found in older versions of the Bible but are not included in most modern versions. Translators are advised not to translate these verses. However, if there are older versions of the Bible in the translators’ region that include these verses, then the translators can include them. If they are translated, they should be put inside square brackets (\[\]) to indicate that they were probably not originally in John’s Gospel.

- “waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel of the Lord went down into the pool and stirred up the water at certain times, and whoever then first stepped in after the water was stirred was healed from whatever disease he suffered from.” (5:3–4)
- “going through the midst of them, and so passed by” (8:59)

The following passage is included in most older and modern versions of the Bible. But it is not in the earliest copies of the Bible. Translators are advised to translate this passage. It should be put inside of square brackets (\[\]) to indicate that it may not have been original to John’s Gospel.

- The story of the adulterous woman (7:53–8:11) (See: **Textual Variants (p.1095)**)

John 1

John 1 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus is God (1:1–5)

John the Baptist was Jesus' witness (1:6–8)

Summary of Jesus' ministry on earth (1:9–13)

Jesus is God in the flesh (1:14–18)

John the Baptist prepares the way for Jesus (1:19–34)

Jesus meets Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel (1:35–51)

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in [1:23](#), which are words from the Old Testament.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

“The Word”

John uses the phrase “the Word” to refer to Jesus ([1:1](#), [14](#)). This title does not refer to a word that is spoken by someone. By using this title for Jesus, John is saying that Jesus is God's most important message to all people. Jesus is the one who reveals who God is. As John explains, Jesus is a person who has always existed, who is God, who was active in creation, and who became a man with a physical body. In your translation of this title, try to make it clear that this is the title of a person whose role it is to communicate a message. Something like “The Message” or “The Revealer” might be appropriate, or you might prefer to use the title that is used in an accepted translation in your area. (See: **word of God, word of Yahweh, word of the Lord, word of truth, scripture (p.1148)**)

Light and Darkness

In [1:4–9](#), John uses an extended metaphor in which light represents what is true and good and darkness represents what is false and evil. John applies that light metaphor to Jesus in order to show that Jesus is God's truth and goodness displayed in a human body. (See: **righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness (p.1135)**)

“Children of God”

People are sometimes described as “children of God” because God created them. However, John uses this expression in a different sense in this chapter. He uses it to describe people who have entered into a father-child relationship with God by putting their faith and trust in Jesus. God indeed created all people, but people can only become children of God in this sense by believing in Jesus. “Children” in this usage does not refer to those who are young, but only to the relationship that people have to their father at any age. (See: **believe, believer, belief, unbeliever, unbelief (p.1109)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Metaphors

John uses the metaphors of light and darkness and of “the Word” to tell the reader that he will be writing more about good and evil and about what God wants to tell people through Jesus. (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“In the beginning”

Some languages and cultures speak of the world as if it has always existed, as if it had no beginning. But “very long ago” is different from “in the beginning,” and you need to be sure that your translation communicates correctly.

“Son of Man”

Jesus refers to himself as the “Son of Man” in this chapter (1:51). Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking about someone else. See the discussion of this concept in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sonofman\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#))

John 1:1

In the beginning was

This phrase refers to the very earliest time before God created the heavens and the earth. It does not refer to time in the distant past. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Before the beginning of the universe there was” or “Before the universe began there was” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Word

Here, **the Word** refers to Jesus. It does not refer to a spoken word. The ULT capitalizes **Word** to indicate that this is a title for Jesus. Use whatever convention your language uses to indicate that this is a title. If “word” is feminine in your language, it could be translated as “the one who is called the Word.” See the discussion in the chapter introduction for more information. Alternate translation: “Jesus, who is the Word” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 1:2

He

He here refers to Jesus, whom John has called “the Word” in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Jesus” or “the Word” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

in the beginning

Here this phrase refers to the very earliest time before God created the heavens and the earth. See how you translated this phrase in verse [1](#). Alternate translation: “before the beginning of the universe” or “before the universe began”

John 1:3

All things came into being through him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, John implies that God did it. Alternate translation: "God made all things through him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

him

Here, **him** refers to Jesus, the one who is called "the Word." If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus" or "the Word" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

without him came into being not one thing that has come into being

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "with him came into being everything that came into being" (See: **Double Negatives (p.984)**)

without him came into being not one thing that has come into being

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, John implies that God did it. Alternate translation: "God did not make one thing without him" or "with him, God made everything that God has made" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 1:4

life

Here it is best to use a general term for **life**. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/life\]\]](#)) *If you must use a more specific word, consider that life* here could refer to:* (1) eternal life, which is the meaning John uses for this term throughout this Gospel. Alternate translation: “the means of receiving eternal life” (2) physical life, which would mean that this verse continues the discussion about the creation of the universe in the previous verses. Alternate translation: “the life of all living things” (3) both physical life and eternal life. Alternate translation: “the life of all living things and the source of eternal life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

and the life

Here, **the life** refers to the same life stated in the previous phrase. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “and that life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the light of men

Here John uses **light** to refer to God’s truth and goodness. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the true and good things God has for men” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the light of men

John uses **of** to indicate to whom the **light** is given. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “the light given to men” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

of men

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “of people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

John 1:5

the light shines

John uses **the light shines** to refer to God's truth and goodness being revealed as if it were a light shining. This truth and goodness was revealed to the world by Jesus. He is the embodiment of God's truth and goodness. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly or with a simile. Alternate translation: "God reveals his truth and goodness" or "God's truth and goodness is like a light that shines" (See: **Metaphor (p. 1041)**)

in the darkness, and the darkness

Here John uses **darkness** to refer to what is false and evil. It is the spiritual **darkness** of the people in the world who do not love Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly or with a simile. Alternate translation: "in the false and evil world, and that evil world" or "in the evil world that is like a dark place, and that dark place" (See: **Metaphor (p. 1041)**)

did not overcome it

Here the word translated **overcome** could also be translated as "understand." It could mean: (1) the evil forces in the world did not conquer God's truth and goodness. Alternate translation: "did not conquer it" (2) the people in the world who don't know God do not understand his truth and goodness. Alternate translation: "did not comprehend it" (3) the evil forces of this world neither conquered nor understood God's truth and goodness. Alternate translation: "did not conquer or comprehend it"

did not overcome it

Here, **it** refers to the light mentioned earlier in the verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "did not overcome the light" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1068)**)

John 1:6

having been sent from God

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation, as in the UST: “whom God has sent” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

was} John

Here, **John** refers to Jesus’ cousin, often referred to as “John the Baptist.” (See: **John (the Baptist) (p.1125)**) It does not refer to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “John the Baptist” or “John the Immerser” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 1:7

He

He here refers to John the Baptist, who was introduced in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “John the Baptist” or “John the Immerser” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

about the light

Here John uses **light** to refer to the revelation of God’s truth and goodness in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “about Jesus, who revealed the true and good things of God” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

through him

Here, **through him** indicates the means by which everyone might believe in the light. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “by means of him”

John 1:8

That one

That one here refers to John the Baptist. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “John the Baptist” or “John the Immerser” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

the light, & the light

See how you translated **light** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “Jesus, who revealed the true and good things of God ... Jesus” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 1:9

The true light, which

Here John uses **light** to refer to Jesus as the one who both reveals the truth about God and is himself that truth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Jesus, who truly embodied God’s truth, who” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

which gives light to all men

Here, John uses **light** to refer to God’s truth and goodness. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “which reveals the true and good things of God to all men” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

men

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

John 1:10

He was & through him, & him

He and **him** in this verse refer to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Jesus was ... through Jesus ... Jesus” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

in the world

Here, **world** refers to the earth on which people live. It does not refer only to the people in the world or to the entire universe. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “on the earth” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the world

Here, **world** refers to the universe God created. It does not refer only to the people in the world or only to the earth. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the whole universe” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

and the world did not know him

Here, **and** introduces a contrast between what was expected, that the world would recognize its Creator, and what happened, that the world did not do that. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “but the world did not know him” or “yet the world did not know him” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.961)**)

the world

Here, **world** refers to the people who lived in it. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the people in the world” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

did not know

Alternate translation: “did not acknowledge”

John 1:11

his own, & his own

Here, **his own** could refer to: (1) his own people, the nation of Israel. Alternate translation: “his fellow Jews ... his fellow Jews” (2) his own creation. Alternate translation: “the people he created ... the people he created” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

and

Here, **and** introduces a contrast between what was expected, that his own people would know their Messiah, and what happened, that his own people did not do that. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “but” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.961)**)

did not receive him

Here, **receive** means to accept a person into one’s presence with friendliness. Alternate translation: “did not accept him” or “did not welcome him”

John 1:12

But as many as received him, he gave to them the authority to become children of God, to the ones believing in his name

If it would be natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. You will also need to adjust some words to fit the new order. Alternate translation: "But as many as received him and believed in his name, he gave to them the authority to become children of God" (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

received him

Here, **received** means to accept a person into one's presence with friendliness. See how you translated this word in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "accepted him" or "welcomed him"

he gave to them the authority

Here, the word translated **authority** means either the right or ability to do something. Alternate translation: "he gave to them the right" or "he made it possible for them"

children of God

Here John uses **children** to refer to people who love and obey God. The relationship between God and those who love him is like the relationship between a father and his children. Because this is an important concept in the Bible, you should not state the meaning plainly here, but you may use a simile. Alternate translation: "like children who have God as their father" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

believing in his name

Here John uses **name** to refer to Jesus' identity and everything about him. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "who believed in him" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 1:13

the ones

Here **the ones** here refers to the children of God mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be misunderstood for your readers, you could state this explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 935)**)

the ones not born from bloods

John uses **born** to describe God changing a person from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive when they believe in Jesus. John recorded Jesus referring to this change as being “born again” in [3:3](#). (See: **born again, born of God, new birth (p.1112)**) If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an expression that indicates spiritual rebirth rather than physical birth. Alternate translation: “These were born spiritually, not from blood” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

not born from bloods

Here, **bloods** refers to the bloodlines or genetic contributions of both parents of a child. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “were not born from human bloodlines” or “were not born from human decent” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

from

Here, **from** could refer to any of the following: (1) the means by which God’s children are born. Alternate translation, as in the UST: “by” (2) the source from which God’s children are born. Alternate translation: “of” (3) the cause of the birth of God’s children. Alternate translation: “as a result of”

nor from the will of the flesh

John is leaving out some of the words that this phrase would need in many languages in order to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: “nor were they born from the will of the flesh” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

from

Here, **from** could refer to any of the following: (1) the means by which God’s children are born. Alternate translation, as in the UST: “by” (2) the source from which God’s children are born. Alternate translation: “of” (3) the cause of the birth of God’s children. Alternate translation: “as a result of”

from the will of the flesh

Here John is using the term **flesh** to refer to a human being, which is made of flesh. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “from the human will” (See: **Metonymy (p. 1047)**)

nor from the will of a man

John is leaving out some of the words that this phrase would need in many languages in order to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: "nor were they born from the will of man" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

from

Here, **from** could refer to any of the following: (1) the means by which God's children are born. Alternate translation, as in the UST: "by" (2) the source from which God's children are born. Alternate translation: "of" (3) the cause of the birth of God's children. Alternate translation: "as a result of"

from the will of a man

The term **a man** used here refers specifically to an adult male person and may also be translated "husband." In this verse it refers to a father's desire to have a child like himself. Alternate translation: "from the will of a husband"

but from God

John is leaving out some of the words that this phrase would need in many languages in order to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: "but they were born from God" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

from

Here, **from** could refer to any of the following: (1) the means by which God's children are born. Alternate translation, as in the UST: "by" (2) the source from which God's children are born. Alternate translation: "of" (3) the cause of the birth of God's children. Alternate translation: "as a result of"

John 1:14

the Word

Here, **the Word** refers to Jesus. It does not refer to a spoken word. ULT indicates this by capitalizing **Word** to indicate that this is a title for Jesus. Use whatever convention your language uses to indicate that this is a name. If “word” is feminine in your language, it could be translated as “the one who is called the Word.” See how you translated this phrase in [John 1:1](#). Alternate translation: “Jesus, the Word” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

became flesh

Here, **flesh** represents “a person” or “a human being.” If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “became human” or “became a human being” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

us, and we beheld

Here the pronouns **us** and **we** are exclusive since John is speaking on behalf of himself and the other eyewitnesses to the earthly life of Jesus, but the people to whom he is writing did not see Jesus. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.998)**)

his glory, glory

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “his glorious character, the glorious character” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

of the One and Only from the Father

The phrase **the One and Only** refers to Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “of the One and Only from the Father, Jesus,” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

of the One and Only

Here and throughout John’s Gospel, the phrase **the One and Only** is a title for Jesus that could refer to: (1) Jesus being unique as the only member of his kind. Alternate translation: “the Unique One” (2) Jesus being the only child of his Father. Alternate translation: “the Only Begotten One”

from the Father

The phrase **from the Father** means that Jesus came from the presence of God the Father to the world. Alternate translation, as in the UST: “who came from the Father”

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

full of grace and truth

Here, John uses **full of** to describe Jesus fully possessing a quality, as if grace and truth were objects that could fill a person. If this might confuse you readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “fully possessing grace and truth” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

full of grace and truth

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **grace** and **truth**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. Alternate translation: “full of God’s gracious and faithful character” or “full of kind acts and true teachings” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

John 1:15

John testifies about him

To call attention to a development in the story, John uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you can use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: "John testified about him" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

and has cried out, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: "and has cried out, and he said" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

This was the one of whom I said, 'The one coming after me has become greater than me, for he was before me

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: "This was the one I said would come after me, and who would be greater than me for he was before me" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

The one coming after me

Here, John is speaking about Jesus. The phrase **coming after me** means that John's ministry has already started, and Jesus' ministry will start later. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "He who starts his ministry after I have done so"

has become greater than me

Here, **greater** refers to being more important or having a superior position. Alternate translation: "is more important than I am" or "is superior to me"

for he was before me

Here, **before me** means that Jesus existed earlier in time than John. This does not mean that Jesus is more important because he is older than John in human years. Jesus is greater and more important than John because he is God the Son, who has always existed. Alternate translation: "for he existed before I was born"

John 1:16

For

For here introduces the reason why John said that Jesus is “full of grace and truth” in verse 14. Alternate translation: “We can say that Jesus is full of grace and truth because” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p.968))

his

Here, **his** refers to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Jesus” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them** (p.1068))

his fullness

Here, **fullness** refers to the grace and truth which John said Jesus was full of in verse 14. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **fullness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “what he is full of” or “his full amount of grace and truth” (See: **Abstract Nouns** (p.930))

we have all received

Here, **we** refers to John and all believers. Your language may require you to mark this form. Alternate translation: “all of we believers have received” (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’** (p.998))

have all received even grace

Here, **even** indicates that “grace after grace” explains what “his fullness” means. Alternate translation: “have all received, that is, grace” or “have all received, namely, grace”

grace after grace

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **grace**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “kind act after kind act” (See: **Abstract Nouns** (p.930))

grace after grace

Here, **after** could mean: (1) the second “grace” replaces the first “grace,” which is the most common use for this word. This meaning could indicate that the first “grace” refers to “the law” and the second “grace” refers to “Grace and truth” in the next verse. Alternate translation: “grace in place of grace” or “grace instead of grace” (2) the second “grace” is in addition to the first “grace.” Alternate translation: “grace in addition to” or “grace upon grace”

John 1:17

the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came about through Jesus Christ

John placed the two sentences in this verse next to each other without any connecting word in order to show a contrast between the law of Moses and the grace and truth of Jesus. This does not mean that the law of Moses did not have grace and truth. Rather, John is indicating that the grace and truth revealed by Jesus is more complete than that revealed in the law of Moses. Although God revealed himself and his will through the law of Moses, he did so much more clearly through Jesus, who is God in human form. Alternate translation: “the law was given through Moses. In contrast, grace and truth came about through Jesus Christ” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.961)**)

the law was given through Moses

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, John implies that God did it. Alternate translation: “God gave the law through Moses” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the law was given

The word **law** is a singular noun that refers to the many laws and instructions that God gave to the Israelites. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: “the group of laws was given” or “God’s laws were given” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

Grace and truth

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **grace** and **truth**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. Alternate translation: “God’s gracious and faithful character” or “Kind acts and true teachings” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

John 1:18

The One and Only God

Here and throughout John's Gospel, the phrase **the One and Only** is a title for Jesus that could refer to: (1) Jesus being unique as the only member of his kind. Alternate translation: "the Unique God" (2) Jesus being the only child of his Father. Alternate translation: "the Only Begotten God"

The One and Only God

Here, **God** indicates that Jesus, who is called **the One and Only**, is God. If it would be misunderstood to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the One and Only, who is God"

the one being in the bosom of the Father

Here, **in the bosom of** is an idiom that refers to having a close and intimate relationship with someone. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "who has a close relationship with the Father" (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

of the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

that one

Here, **that one** refers to Jesus in an emphatic way. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus himself" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

has made {him} known

Here, **him** is not in the original text, but is necessary for English. It refers to God the Father. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "has made the Father known" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

has made {him} known

Here, the word translated **has made him known** refers to making people know something by explaining or revealing it clearly. Alternate translation: "has explained him" or "has fully revealed him"

John 1:19

of John

Here, John refers to Jesus' cousin, often referred to as "John the Baptist." (See: **John (the Baptist) (p.1125)**) It does not refer to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "of John the Baptist" or "of John the Immerser" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Jews sent

Here, **the Jews** refers to the "Jewish leaders." If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders sent" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 1:20

he confessed—and he did not deny, but confessed

The phrase “he confessed” expresses in positive terms the same thing that **he did not deny** expresses in negative terms. This emphasizes that John was telling the truth and was strongly stating that he was not the Christ. Your language may have a different way of doing this. Alternate translation: “he strongly confessed” or “he solemnly testified”

John 1:21

they asked

Here, **they** refers to “the Jews,” mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state it explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Jews asked” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

What then

Alternate translation: “If you are not the Messiah, then who are you?”

Elijah

Elijah was a prophet whom the Jews expected to return to earth shortly before the arrival of the Messiah.

he says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

the Prophet

Here, **the Prophet** refers to a prophet the Jews were waiting for, based on God’s promise to send a prophet like Moses, which is recorded in Deuteronomy 18:15. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the prophet whom God promised to send to us” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 1:22

they said to him

Here, the pronouns **they** and **him** refer to the priests and Levites and John the Baptist, respectively. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the priests and Levites said to John the Baptist” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

Who are you, so that we might give an answer to the ones having sent us? What

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. This may require you to change the punctuation of the sentences. Alternate translation: “Who are you? Tell us so that we might give an answer to those who sent us. What” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

we might give & us

Here, **we** and **us** refer to the priests and Levites, not to John. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.998)**)

so that we might give an answer

Alternate translation: “so that we might tell your answer”

to the ones having sent us

This phrase refers to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “to those leaders in Jerusalem who sent us” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 1:23

a voice, crying out in the wilderness: Make the way of the Lord straight

In these phrases, John quotes from the Old Testament book of Isaiah (Isaiah 40:3). It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off all of this material with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1073)**)

I am a voice, crying out in the wilderness

Here, **voice** refers to the person who is crying out in the wilderness. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I am the one calling out in the wilderness" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

I am a voice, crying out in the wilderness: Make the way of the Lord straight

This clause is a quotation within a quotation. John is quoting from the book of Isaiah, and Isaiah is quoting the words of the person calling out in the wilderness. It would be best to indicate that by punctuating this material as a second-level quotation, since Luke is quoting from Scripture. However, if your language does not put one direct quotation within another, you could translate this material as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "I am a voice crying out in the wilderness to make the way of the Lord straight" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

Make the way of the Lord straight

Here John the Baptist quotes Isaiah, using this clause to refer to telling people to get ready to listen to the Lord's message when it comes. They are to do this by repenting of their sins. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Repent of your sins so that you will be ready to listen to the Lord's message when it comes" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

Isaiah the prophet

Isaiah wrote the book of **Isaiah**, in the Bible.

John 1:24

This verse is background information about the people who questioned John. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

the ones that had been sent

Here, **the ones** refers to the priests and Levites, as introduced in verse 19. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the priests and Levites who had been sent” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the ones that had been sent were

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the ones whom the Jewish leaders sent” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

were from the Pharisees

This phrase could refer to: (1) the priests and Levites who had been sent. Alternate translation: “belonged to the Pharisees” (2) the leaders in Jerusalem who sent the priests and Levites. Alternate translation: “were sent from the Pharisees” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 1:25

they asked

Here, **they** refers to the priests and Levites who had been sent from Jerusalem, as introduced in verse 19. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the priests and Levites from Jerusalem asked” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

the Prophet

Here, **the Prophet** refers to a prophet the Jews were waiting for, based on God's promise to send a prophet like Moses, which is recorded in Deuteronomy 18:15. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the prophet whom God promised to send to us” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 1:26

John

Here, **John** refers to Jesus' cousin, often referred to as "John the Baptist." (See: **John (the Baptist) (p.1125)**) It does not refer to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "John the Baptist" or "John the Immerser" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John answered them, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: "John answered them, and he said" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

John 1:27

the one coming after me

Here, John is speaking about Jesus. The phrase **coming after me** means that John's ministry has already started and Jesus' ministry will start later. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "the one who starts his ministry after I have done so" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

me, of whom I am not worthy that I might untie the strap of his sandal

Untying sandals was the work of a slave or servant. John the Baptist uses this expression figurative to refer to the most unpleasant work of a servant. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "me. I am not even worthy to untie the strap of his sandal" or "me, whom I am not worthy to serve in even the most unpleasant way" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 1:28

General Information:

This verse provides background information about the setting of the story that is recorded in [1:19–27](#). Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

These things

Here, **these things** refers to the events that were described in [1:19–27](#). If it would be misunderstood to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “This conversation between John and the priests and Levites from Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

beyond the Jordan

Here, **beyond the Jordan** refers to the region of Judea that is on the east side of the Jordan River, which is the side opposite from Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “on the side of the Jordan River opposite from Jerusalem” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

John

Here, **John** refers to Jesus’ cousin, often referred to as “John the Baptist.” (See: **John (the Baptist) (p.1125)**) It does not refer to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “John the Baptist” or “John the Immerser” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 1:29

The next day

The next day here indicates that the events the story will now relate came after the event it has just described in [1:19–28](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: “The day after John spoke with the priests and Levites from Jerusalem” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.971)**)

he sees & says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Behold

John the Baptist uses the term **Behold** to call his audience’s attention to what he is about to say. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use here. (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

Behold, the Lamb of God

The phrase **Lamb of God** refers to Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Behold, Jesus, the Lamb of God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Lamb of God

John the Baptist uses a metaphor here to refer to Jesus as God’s perfect sacrifice. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/lamb\]\]](#)) *Since Lamb of God** is an important title for Jesus, you should translate the words directly and not provide a plain explanation in the text of your translation. (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the one taking away

Here John the Baptist speaks of forgiving sin as if sin were an object that Jesus is **taking away**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation, as in the UST: “who is forgiving” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

of the world

John the Baptist uses **world** to refer to all the people in the world. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “of those who live in the world” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 1:30

After me comes a man who has become greater than me, for he was before me

See how you translated this in verse [15](#).

John 1:31

And I did not know him

Here, **him** refers to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “And I did not know Jesus” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

And I did not know him

Here John means that he did not know previously that Jesus was the Messiah. It does not mean that he didn’t know who Jesus was, because Jesus was his cousin. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “And I did not know that he was the Messiah” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

so that he might be revealed to Israel, because of this

Here John uses the redundant words **so that** and **because of this** to emphasize the reason why he was baptizing people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases and indicate the emphasis. Alternate translation: “for the exact purpose that he might be revealed to Israel” (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

to Israel

Here John uses the name of the nation, **Israel**, to represent the people who belong to that nation. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to the Israelites” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

because of this

Here, **this** refers to the revealing of the Messiah to Israel that is mentioned in the previous clause. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “because he might be revealed” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 1:32

John testified, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: "John testified, and he said" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

like a dove

This phrase is a simile. As Luke 3:22 indicates, the Holy Spirit came down with an appearance that resembled a **dove**. Alternate translation: "resembling a dove" (See: **Simile (p.1086)**)

upon him

Here, **him** refers to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "upon Jesus" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

John 1:33

And I did not recognize him

Here John means that he did not know previously that Jesus was the Messiah. It does not mean that he didn't recognize who Jesus was when he saw him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "And I did not recognize that he was the Messiah" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the one having sent me to baptize in water, that one

Here, the phrases **the one who sent me** and **that one** both refer to God. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "God, who sent me to baptize in water," (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he is the one baptizing in the Holy Spirit

Here John the Baptist is using literal baptism, which puts a person under water, to refer to spiritual baptism, which puts people under the influence of the **Holy Spirit**, who purifies them. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "he is the one who will put you under the influence of the Holy Spirit, who will purify you" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 1:34

the Son of God

Although most copies of this text say **Son of God**, some say “chosen one of God” or “chosen Son of God.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the phrase it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to follow the example of the ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.1095)**)

Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 1:35

The next day, & again

The next day here indicates that the events the story will now relate came after the event it has just described in [1:29–34](#). John saw Jesus two days after his conversation with the priests and Levites that is described in verses [19–28](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: “Two days after John spoke with the priests and Levites from Jerusalem” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship** (p.971))

John 1:36

he says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Behold, the Lamb of God

The phrase **Lamb of God** refers to Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Behold, Jesus, the Lamb of God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Behold

John records John the Baptist using the term **Behold** to call his audience’s attention to what he is about to say. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use here. (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

Lamb of God

See how you translated this same phrase in [John 1:29](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 1:37

his two disciples heard {him

Here, **his** and **him** refer to John the Baptist. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly.
Alternate translation: "John's two disciples heard him" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

John 1:38

having seen them

Here, **them** refers to the two disciples of John the Baptist who were mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “having seen John’s two disciples” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

having seen them following

Here John is leaving out a word that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply this word from the context. Alternate translation: “having seen them following him” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

where are you staying

Alternate translation: “where are you spending the night”

where are you staying

This question is the answer to the question Jesus just asked in the previous sentence. It is a way for the two men to imply that they would like to have a private conversation with Jesus at the place where he was staying. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “where are you staying? We would like to speak with you privately.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 1:39

He says to them, “& he is staying

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

he is staying

See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse.

that day

Here, **that day** refers to the day the two disciples left John the Baptist to follow Jesus, as indicated in verse [35](#). If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the same day that they left John” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the tenth hour

In this culture, people began counting the hours each day beginning around daybreak at six o'clock in the morning. Here, **the tenth hour** indicates a time in the late afternoon, before dark, at which it would be too late to start traveling to another town. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this in the way the people of your culture reckon time. Alternate translation, as in the UST: “about 4:00 PM”

John 1:40

General Information:

Verses [40–42] give background information about Andrew and how he brought his brother Peter to Jesus.

John

Here, **John** refers to Jesus' cousin, often referred to as "John the Baptist." (See: **John (the Baptist) (p.1125)**) It does not refer to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "John the Baptist" or "John the Immerser" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

of Simon Peter

Simon was also called **Peter** by Jesus, as recorded in verse [42](#). Alternate translation: "Simon, who is also called Peter"

John 1:41

This one

This one here refers to Andrew, who was mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Andrew” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

finds & says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

which is translated “Christ

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “which means Christ” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

which is translated “Christ

John assumes that his readers will know that he is saying what the title “Messiah” means when translated from the Aramaic language into Greek. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: “which is ‘Christ’ in Greek” or “which is the Aramaic word for ‘Christ’” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 1:42

He brought him

He here refers to Andrew and **him** refers to Simon. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Andrew brought Simon" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

Jesus, having looked at him, said

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: "Jesus looked at him, and he said" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

son of John

This is neither John the Baptist nor John the apostle.

You will be called Cephas

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "People will call you Cephas" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

Cephas

Cephas is a word in the Aramaic language that means "rock." Here, Jesus uses the word as a name for Simon. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Cephas, which means 'rock' in Aramaic" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

which is translated "Peter"

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "which means 'Peter'" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

which is translated "Peter"

John assumes that his readers will know that he is saying what the name Cephas means when translated from the Aramaic language into Greek. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "which is 'Peter' in Greek" or "which is the Aramaic word for Peter" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 1:43

The next day

The next day here indicates that the events the story will now relate came after the event it has just described in the previous. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: “The day after Andrew brought Simon to Jesus,” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.971)**)

and he finds Philip and says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Follow me

In this context, to **follow** someone means to become that person’s disciple. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “Become my disciple” or “Come, follow me as your teacher” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 1:44

This verse provides background information about **Philip**. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

John 1:45

Philip & Nathaniel & Moses & Jesus & of Joseph

These are the names of five men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

Philip finds Nathaniel and says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

the prophets

Here, John is leaving out a word that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply this word from the context. Alternate translation: “the prophets wrote about” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 1:46

Nathaniel said to him

Here, **him** refers to Philip. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Nathaniel said to Philip" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

Is any good thing able to be from Nazareth

Nathaniel is using the question form for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "No good thing can come out of Nazareth!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 1:47

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Behold

John records Jesus using the term **Behold** to call his audience's attention to what he is about to say. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use here. (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

in whom is no deceit

Jesus is using a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that means the opposite of the intended meaning. If this is confusing in your language, you can express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: "a completely truthful man" (See: **Litotes (p.1039)**)

John 1:48

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Before Philip called you, being under the fig tree, I saw you

Nathaniel's reaction to this statement in the next verse indicates that this is a display of supernatural knowledge. It appears that Jesus knew something about Nathaniel that no one else could have known. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Before Philip called you, being completely alone under the fig tree, I saw you." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

being under the fig tree

The subject of this clause is Philip, not Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "while you were under the fig tree" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 1:49

Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 1:50

Because I said to you that I saw you underneath the fig tree, do you believe

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the result for the reason that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Do you believe because I said to you that I saw you underneath the fig tree" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

Because I said to you that I saw you underneath the fig tree, do you believe

John records Jesus using the question form for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You believe because I said, 'I saw you underneath the fig tree!'" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

do you believe

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that this phrase would need in many languages in order to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "do you believe that I am the Messiah" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

greater things than these

Jesus uses the plural pronoun **these** to refer to a general category of something, in this case the miraculous display of supernatural knowledge that took place in [1:48](#). Alternate translation: "greater things than this type of thing" or "greater things than this kind of miracle" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 1:51

he says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus repeats **Truly** in order to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you could combine these phrases, forming a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "What I am about to tell you is very true." (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

I say to you

Jesus is using the plural form of **you** to indicate that he is speaking to all those who are with him at that moment. He is not only speaking to Nathaniel. If it would be misunderstood to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I say to all of you here" (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

you will see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending

Here, Jesus refers to an event described in the book of Genesis. While fleeing from his brother, Jacob had a dream in which he saw angels descending from and ascending to heaven. If it would be helpful to your readers who may not be familiar with the story, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "just as Jacob saw in his vision, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Son of Man

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

the Son of Man

The title **Son of Man** is equivalent to "Messiah." Jesus uses it to claim that role subtly and implicitly. You may want to translate this title directly into your language. On the other hand, if you think it would be helpful to your readers, you could state what it means. See the discussion of this phrase in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: "the Messiah" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 2

John 2 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus' first sign: he turns water into wine (2:1–12)

Jesus causes controversy in the Temple (2:13–22)

Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem at Passover (2:23–25)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Wine

The Jews drank wine at many meals and especially when they were celebrating special events. They did not believe that it was a sin to drink wine.

Driving out the money changers

Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple to show that he had authority over the temple and over all of Israel. As the Son of God, it was his Father's temple that was being used inappropriately for making money. Therefore, he had the authority to drive out those who were misusing the temple.

“He knew what was in man”

Jesus knew what other people were thinking only because he is the Son of Man and the Son of God. Because he is the Son of God, he has supernatural insight into what other people were thinking and could correctly judge their intentions.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“His disciples remembered”

John used this phrase to stop telling the main historical narrative and to tell about something that happened much later. The Jewish authorities spoke to Jesus right after he scolded the sellers in the temple in (2:16). Jesus' disciples remembered what the prophet had written long ago and that Jesus was talking about the temple of his body after Jesus became alive again (2:17 and 2:22).

John 2:1

Jesus and his disciples were invited to a wedding. This verse gives background information about the setting of the story. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

on the third day

This phrase introduces a new event. The **third day** could refer to: (1) the third day from when Jesus called Philip and Nathaniel to follow him in [1:43](#). According to the Jewish way of counting days, the first day would have been the day in [1:43](#), making **the third day** occur two days afterward. Alternate translation: “two days after Jesus called Philip and Nathaniel” (2) the day after Jesus called Philip and Nathaniel to follow him in [1:43](#). In this case, the first day would have occurred in [1:35](#) and the second day in [1:43](#). Alternate translation: “on the day after Jesus called Philip and Nathaniel” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

John 2:2

Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the wedding

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “they also invited Jesus and his disciples to the wedding” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 2:3

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

They do not have wine

Jesus' mother is using a declarative statement to give an indirect request. If this is confusing in your language, you can use a more natural form for a request. Alternate translation: "They ran out of wine. Could you do something to solve this problem?" (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1089)**)

wine

Regarding the drinking of **wine** in Jewish culture, see the discussion in the General Notes to this chapter.

John 2:4

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Woman

Woman here refers to Mary. If it is impolite for a son to call his mother “woman” in your language, you can use another word that is polite, or leave it out.

Woman, what to me and to you

Jesus is using the question form for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “Woman, this has nothing to do with me or you” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

My hour is not yet come

The word **hour** refers to the right occasion for Jesus to show that he is the Messiah by working miracles. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “It is not yet the right time for me to perform a mighty act” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 2:5

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 2:6

two or three metretes

A **metretes** was equivalent to about 40 liters. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the quantity in modern measurements. Alternatively, to help your readers recognize that the biblical writings come from long ago when people used different measurements, you could express the amount using the ancient measurement, the metrete, and explain the equivalent in modern measurements in a footnote. Alternate translation: “80 to 120 liters” (See: **Biblical Volume (p.950)**)

John 2:7

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

to them

Here, **them** refers to the servants at the wedding. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “to the servants” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

up to the brim

The **brim** is the top edge of the water pot. Alternate translation: “to the very top”

John 2:8

he says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

to them, "& And they carried {it

Here, **them** and **they** refer to the servants at the wedding. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "to the servants ... And the servants carried it" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

to the head waiter

The term **head waiter** refers to the person in charge of the servants who served the food and drink at meals and feasts.

John 2:9

the head waiter & the head waiter

See how you translated this term in the previous verse.

John provides this background information about who knew where the wine came from in order to emphasize the veracity of this miracle. The head waiter did not know that the wine was originally water from the water pots. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

calls

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 2:10

Every man

Every man here is an exaggeration that refers to something being a common practice. If this might confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “A man usually” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1016)**)

Every man

Although the term **man** is masculine, the head waiter is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “Every person” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

and the cheaper wine when they have become drunk

This means that guests were given the cheaper wine, which is of lower quality and inferior flavor, after their senses had been dulled by drinking too much alcohol and were thus unable to tell that it was inferior wine. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “and the cheaper wine when they have become drunk and unable to discern the quality of the wine” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 2:11

In this verse John provides background information about the events described in [2:1–10](#). Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

beginning of the signs

John wrote much about the miraculous **signs** Jesus did. Turning water into wine at the wedding is the first of those **signs**. See the discussion of **signs** in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: “significant miracles” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he revealed his glory

Here, **glory** refers to the mighty power of Jesus that enabled him to do miracles. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “revealed his glorious power” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

John 2:12

After this

After this introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "Some time afterward" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

After this

Here, **this** refers to the what took place in Cana that was described in [2:1-11](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "After Jesus' first sign in Cana" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

went down

This indicates that they went from a higher place to a lower place. Capernaum is at a lower elevation than Cana.

John 2:13

went up to Jerusalem

This indicates that Jesus went from a lower place to a higher place. Jerusalem is built on a hill.

John 2:14

the ones selling oxen and sheep and pigeons

These animals were used for sacrifices in the temple. People were buying animals in the temple courtyard in order to sacrifice them to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “those selling oxen and sheep and pigeons for people to sacrifice to God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

money changers

Jewish authorities required people who wanted to buy animals for sacrifices in the temple to exchange their money for special money from the **money changers**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “people who exchanged money for special money approved for temple use” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

sitting there

The next verse makes it clear that these people are in the temple courtyard. That area was intended for worship and not for commerce. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “sitting in the temple courtyard that was intended for worship” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 2:15

And

Here John is telling his readers what Jesus did as a result of the commerce he saw going on in the temple. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Consequently” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

them} all

Here, **them all** refers to the people selling the animals and the money changers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “all the sellers and money changers” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

John 2:16

the house of my Father a house of commerce

Jesus uses **the house of my Father** to refer to the temple. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "the house of my Father, which is the temple, a house of commerce" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

of my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 2:17

it is written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “someone had written” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

it is written

Here John uses **it is written** to introduce a quotation from an Old Testament book (Psalm 69:9). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that John is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “it had been written in the scriptures” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

Zeal for your house will consume me

This sentence is a quotation from Psalm 69:9. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off all of this material with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1073)**)

for your house

Here, **your** refers to God and is singular. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “for God’s house” (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1003)**)

for your house

Here, **house** refers to the temple, which is often called God’s **house** in the Bible. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “for your house, the temple” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

will consume

Here, the author uses **consume** to refer to Jesus’ intense love for the temple, as if it were a fire that burned within him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: “will be intense within” or “will be like a fire that consumes” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 2:18

these things

Here, **these things** refers to Jesus' actions against the animal sellers and money changers in the temple. (See the discussion of this event in the General Notes to this chapter.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "these disruptive activities in the temple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 2:19

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up

This is an imperative, but it should be translated as introducing a hypothetical situation rather than as a command. Jesus is stating a hypothetical situation in which the event in the second clause would happen if the event in the first clause took place. In this case, Jesus would certainly **raise** the **temple** up if the Jewish authorities were to **destroy** it. Alternate translation: “If you destroy this temple, then in three days I will raise it up” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1022)**)

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up

Here, John records Jesus using the words **Destroy** and **raise** to describe his killing and resurrection, as if tearing down and rebuilding a building. However, the Jewish leaders did not understand this and Jesus does not explain the metaphor to them. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

John 2:20

you will raise it up in three days

The Jewish leaders are using the question form for emphasis. They think that Jesus wants to tear down the temple and rebuild it in three days. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "you cannot possibly rebuild it in three days!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 2:21

General Information:

[2:21-22](#) are a comment John made about the story that was described in [2:13-20](#). These verses tell about something that happened later. (See: **End of Story (p.992)**)

But that one was speaking

Here, **that one** refers to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "But Jesus was speaking" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

John 2:22

Therefore

Therefore indicates that in this verse John is giving the result of Jesus making the statement in 2:19. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Because Jesus said this about his body” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

he was raised from the dead

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, John implies that God did it. Alternate translation: “God raised him from the dead” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

his disciples remembered

Here, John is speaking about something that happened long after the event described in the previous verses. See the discussion of this in the General Notes to this chapter.

this, & the word that Jesus had spoken

Here, **this** and **the word** refer back to Jesus’ statement in 2:19. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “this statement about his body ... the word about his body that Jesus had spoken” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Scripture

John is speaking of **the Scripture** in general, not of one particular book within the Bible. Alternate translation, as in the UST: “the scriptures” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

John 2:23

Now when he was in Jerusalem

Now here introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after the previous events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Some time later in Jerusalem” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

at the Passover, at the festival

These two phrases could refer to: (1) two different parts of the festival, **the Passover** referring to the first day of **the festival**, and **the festival** referring to the Festival of Unleavened Bread that begins at Passover and was one week long. Alternate translation: “at the Passover, during the Festival of Unleavened Bread” (2) the same event. Alternate translation: “at the Passover festival”

believed in his name

Here, **name** represents the person of Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “believed in him” or “trusted in him” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

seeing his signs

Here, **seeing** indicates the reason why the people were believing in Jesus. These people were only believing in Jesus because of the miracles he performed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “because they saw his signs” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p. 968)**)

signs

See how you translated **signs** in 2:11. See also the discussion of **signs** in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: “significant miracles”

John 2:24

did not trust himself to them

Although many people were believing in him, Jesus knew that their belief was superficial and only lasted as long as he performed miracles for them. Therefore, he did not trust them the way he trusted his true disciples. Alternate translation: “did not trust them as true disciples” or “did not believe their belief in him”

he knew all {men

Although the word **men** is masculine, John is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “he knew all people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

John 2:25

about man, & what was in man

Although both instances of the word **man** are masculine, John is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “about mankind ... what was in mankind” or “about people ... what was in people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

what was in man

This refers to the inner thoughts and desires of people, which some cultures refer to as “the heart.” (See the discussion of this in the General Notes to this chapter.) If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “what people think” or “the thoughts and desires people have” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 3

John 3 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus teaches Nicodemus about being born again (3:1–21)
John the Baptist testifies about Jesus (3:22–36)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Light and Darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong, and to begin to obey God. (See: **righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness** (p.1135))

The kingdom of God

The kingdom of God is a concept that is very rich in meaning. It includes the idea of eternal life in the presence of God, but it also includes the idea of what the earth will be like in the future when Jesus returns and rules everything, and the idea of life on earth right now, when and where God's wishes are carried out fully. The unifying concept behind all of these ideas is God ruling and people embracing God's rule over their lives. (See: **kingdom of God, kingdom of heaven** (p.1126))

Born again

A major idea in this chapter is the spiritual new birth that Jesus says is necessary in order for someone to enter the kingdom of God 3:3–8. Jesus also uses the following expressions to refer to being born again: “born from water and the Spirit” (3:4) and “born from the Spirit” (3:6,8). (See: **born again, born of God, new birth** (p.1112))

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“Son of Man”

Jesus refers to himself as the “Son of Man” twice in this chapter (3:13–14). Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking about someone else. See the discussion of this concept in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sonofman\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#))

John 3:1

Now

Now here introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related in the previous chapter. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Some time later” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

there was a man from the Pharisees, Nicodemus {was} his name

Here, **there was a man** is used to introduce Nicodemus as a new character in the story. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. The phrase **from the Pharisees** identifies him as member of a strict Jewish religious sect. Alternate translation: “there was a man named Nicodemus, who was a member of a strict Jewish religious group” (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1031)**)

a ruler of the Jews

This phrase means that Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish religious leadership, specifically the Jewish council called the Sanhedrin which made decisions about Jewish law. (See: **council (p.1113)**) If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “a member of the Jewish ruling council” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 3:2

This one

This one here refers to Nicodemus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Nicodemus" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

to him

Here, **him** refers to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "to Jesus" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

we know

Here, **we** is exclusive. Nicodemus is only referring to himself and the other members of the Jewish council. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.998)**)

unless God is with him

Here, Nicodemus uses **with him** to refer to God's help. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "without God's help" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 3:3

Truly, truly I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

would be born again

The phrase **born again** is a metaphor that refers to spiritual rebirth. See the discussion of this expression in the General Notes to this chapter. Nicodemus does not understand this metaphor and Jesus does not explain it to him in this verse. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

would be born again

Here, the word translated **again** could also be translated as “from above.” It could refer to: (1) spiritual rebirth as a second birth that takes place in addition to physical birth. Alternate translation, as in the ULT: “would be born again” (2) spiritual rebirth as a birth that is caused by God, in which case “above” is a euphemism for God. Alternate translation: “would be born from above” (3) spiritual rebirth as both a second birth and a birth caused by God. See the discussion of John’s use of double meaning in Part 3 of the Introduction to this book. Alternate translation: “would be born again by God”

to see the kingdom of God

Here Jesus uses **see** to refer to experiencing an event or state. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to experience the kingdom of God” or “to participate in the kingdom of God” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the kingdom of God

Here this phrase refers to both the place where God currently rules in heaven and to the earth when God rules over it in the future. See the discussion of this concept in the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: “the place where God rules” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 3:4

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

How is a man able to be born, being an old man

Nicodemus uses this question to emphasize that this cannot happen. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "A man certainly cannot be born again when he is old!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

He is not able to enter a second time into the womb of his mother and to be born, is he

Nicodemus uses this question to emphasize his belief that a second birth is impossible. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "He surely cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 3:5

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [3:3](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

would be born from water and Spirit

The phrase **born from water and Spirit** could refer to: (1) spiritual birth that includes cleansing from sin and spiritual transformation by the Holy Spirit. In this case, Jesus' words would be understood as a reference to Ezekiel 36:25–27, which Nicodemus would have been familiar with. Alternate translation: “would be born again by cleansing and the Spirit.” (2) physical birth and spiritual birth. Alternate translation: “would be born physically and spiritually” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

to enter into the kingdom of God

Here Jesus uses **enter into** to refer to experiencing something. The meaning is similar to the meaning of “see” in [3:3](#). Alternate translation: “to experience the kingdom of God” or “to participate in the kingdom of God” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the kingdom of God

See how you translated this phrase in [3:3](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 3:6

What} has been born from the flesh

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "What flesh has given birth to" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the flesh is flesh

Here Jesus is describing human beings by referring to something associated with them, the **flesh** they are made of. The word **flesh** here does not refer to sinful human nature as it does in other verses in the New Testament. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "a human being is a human being" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

what} has been born from the Spirit

Here, **the Spirit** refers to the Holy Spirit, who enables people to be born again. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "what has been born again by means of the Holy Spirit" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

spirit

Here, **spirit** refers to the new spiritual nature that God gives a person when they are born again. (See: **born again, born of God, new birth (p.1112)**) If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation, as in the UST: "a new spiritual nature" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 3:7

to be born again

See how you translated this phrase in [3:3](#). (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

John 3:8

The wind blows where it wishes

The word translated **wind** can also mean spirit. Jesus here speaks of the Holy Spirit, as if he were **wind**. Just like people in Jesus' time could not understand how the **wind** blew but could observe the effects of the wind, people cannot understand how the Holy Spirit works but can witness the effects of his work. If this might confuse your readers, you could express this with a simile. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit is like the wind that blows wherever it wants" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

So is

This phrase connects this sentence with the previous sentence. In the same way that people cannot understand the wind but recognize its effects, people who are not born from the Spirit cannot understand those who are born from the Spirit but can recognize the effects of the new birth. Alternate translation: "So it is with" or "So it happens with"

everyone having been born from the Spirit

See how you translated this phrase in [3:6](#).

the Spirit

Here, **the Spirit** refers to the Holy Spirit, who enables people to be born again. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 3:9

How are these things able to happen

This question could be: (1) a genuine question that shows that Nicodemus is confused. Alternate translation: "How are these things possible" (2) a rhetorical question Nicodemus uses to add emphasis to the statement. Alternate translation: "These things cannot be!" or "These things are impossible!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

these things

Here, **these things** refers to all that Jesus had spoken in [3:3-8](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "these things you have just told me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 3:10

Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things

Jesus is using the question form for emphasis. He is not asking Nicodemus a question in order to get information. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You are a teacher of Israel, so I am surprised you do not understand these things!" or "You are a teacher of Israel, so you should understand these things!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

Are you the teacher & you do not understand

The word **you** is singular and refers to Nicodemus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Are you, Nicodemus, the teacher ... you do not understand" (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

the teacher of Israel

Here, **the teacher** indicates that Nicodemus was recognized as a master teacher and religious authority in the land of Israel. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "the renowned religious teacher in Israel" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

these things

Here, **these things** refers to all that Jesus had spoken in [3:3-8](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "these things you have just told me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 3:11

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [3:3](#). (See: **Doublet** (p.987))

we speak {what} we know, & our testimony

When Jesus says **we** and **our** in this verse, he was not including Nicodemus. Jesus used these pronouns as a contrast to Nicodemus saying **we** in [3:2](#). While Nicodemus used **we** to refer to himself and the other Jewish religious leaders, Jesus could have been referring to: (1) himself and his disciples. Alternate translation, as in the UST: "my disciples and I speak what we know ... our testimony" (2) himself and the other members of the Godhead. Alternate translation: "the Father, Spirit, and I speak what we know ... our testimony" (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.998))

you do not receive

The word **you** is plural and could refer to: (1) the Jewish people in general. Alternate translation: "you Jews" (2) Nicodemus and his fellow Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "you Jewish leaders do not welcome" (See: **Forms of You** (p.1002))

John 3:12

If I told you earthly things

John records Jesus speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what Jesus is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since I told you earthly things" (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.963)**)

you & you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you

Throughout this verse, **you** is plural and could refer to: (1) the Jewish people in general. Alternate translation: "you Jews ... you Jews do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you" (2) Nicodemus and his fellow Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "you Jewish leaders ... you Jewish leaders do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you" See how you translated this word in the previous verse. (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

earthly things

Here, **earthly things** refers to what Jesus had spoken in 3:3-8. Those things are called **earthly** because they are about things that take place on earth. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "these truths about what takes place on earth" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things

Jesus uses a question to emphasize the disbelief of Nicodemus and the Jews. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "you certainly will not believe if I tell you about heavenly things!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

heavenly things

Here, **heavenly things** refers to things that take place in heaven or are related to heaven. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "truths about what takes place in heaven" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 3:13

the one having descended from heaven

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: “me, the one who descended from heaven” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

the Son of Man

The title **Son of Man** is equivalent to “Messiah.” Jesus uses it to claim that role subtly and implicitly. You may want to translate this title directly into your language. On the other hand, if you think it would be helpful to your readers, you could state what it means. See the discussion of this phrase in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: “the Messiah” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 3:14

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness

In this verse, John records Jesus comparing his crucifixion to Moses lifting up a bronze snake. John assumes that his readers will know that Jesus is referring to a story recorded in the Old Testament book of Numbers. In that story, the Israelites complained against God, and God punished them by sending poisonous snakes to kill them. God then told Moses to make a bronze snake and raise it up on a pole so that whoever was bitten by one of the poisonous snakes and looked at the bronze snake would not die. You could indicate this explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers, particularly if they would not know the story. Alternate translation: "And just as Moses lifted up the bronze serpent on a pole when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness" (See: **Simile (p.1086)**)

it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "it is necessary for people to lift up the Son of Man" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the Son of Man to be lifted up

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: "me, the Son of Man, to be lifted up" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

the Son of Man

See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 3:15

so that

Here, **so that** indicates that Jesus is stating the purpose for which he would be crucified. In your translation, follow the conventions of your language for purpose clauses. Alternate translation (without a comma preceding): “in order that” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.965)**)

John 3:16

For

For here indicates that Jesus is giving a reason why the statement in the previous two verses is true. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "This is true because" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

God so loved the world

Here, **so** could refer to: (1) the manner in which God loved the world. Alternate translation, as in the UST: "God loved the world in this way" (2) the degree to which God loved the world. Alternate translation: "God loved the world so much" (3) both the manner in which and the degree to which God loved the world. For this interpretation, see the discussion of John's use of double meaning in Part 3 of the Introduction to this book. Alternate translation: "in this way God loved the world so much"

the world

Here, **world** refers to the people who live in it. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the people in the world" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

that

Here, **that** introduces the result of what the previous clause stated. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "as a result" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

his One and Only Son

Here, **One and Only Son** refers to Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "his One and Only Son, Jesus" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

his One and Only Son

Here and throughout John's Gospel, the phrase **One and Only** is a title for Jesus that could refer to: (1) Jesus being unique as the only member of his kind. Alternate translation: "his Unique Son" (2) Jesus being the only child of his Father. Alternate translation: "his Only Begotten Son" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

his One and Only Son

One and Only Son is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 3:17

For

For here indicates that Jesus is giving a reason why the statement in the previous verse is true. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “God gave his One and Only Son because” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

For God did not send the Son into the world so that he might condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through him

These two clauses mean nearly the same thing, said twice for emphasis, first in the negative and then in the positive. Use whatever form your language uses for emphasis. Alternate translation: “For God truly sent his Son into the world so that he might save it” (See: **Parallelism (p.1057)**)

the Son

Son is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

the Son & through him

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the first person. Alternate translation: “me ... through me” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

the world

Here, **world** refers to the universe God created. It does not refer only to the people in the world or only to the earth. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the universe” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

so that he might condemn

Here, **he** refers to God; it does not refer to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “so that God might condemn” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

so that he might condemn the world

The word translated **condemn** means to judge someone to be guilty and deserving of punishment. Alternate translation: “so that he might judge the world as guilty”

τὸν κόσμον & ὁ κόσμος

Here, **world** refers to the people who live in it. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the people in the world ... the people in the world” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

so that the world might be saved

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, John implies that God did it. Alternate translation: “so that God might save the world” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

through him

This phrase indicates the means by which God would save the world. Alternate translation: “by means of him”

John 3:18

is not condemned, & has already been condemned

The word translated **condemn** means to judge someone to be guilty and deserving of punishment. See how you translated this term in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “is not judged as guilty ... has already been judged as guilty”

in him

Here, **him** refers to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “in Jesus” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

The one believing in him is not condemned

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, John implies that God did it. Alternate translation: “God does not condemn the one who believes in him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

but the one not believing has already been condemned

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, John implies that God did it. Alternate translation: “but God has already condemned the one who does not believe” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

he has not believed in the name of the One and Only Son of God

Here, **name** represents Jesus’ identity and everything about him. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “he has not believed in the One and Only Son of God” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

of the One and Only Son of God

Here and throughout John’s Gospel, the phrase **One and Only** is a title for Jesus that could refer to: (1) Jesus being unique as the only member of his kind. Alternate translation: “of the Unique Son of God” (2) Jesus being the only child of his Father. Alternate translation: “of the Only Begotten Son of God”

of & Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 3:19

the judgment

Here, **judgment** could refer to: (1) a verdict a judge pronounces in a court trial. Alternate translation: “the verdict” (2) the reason for a condemning judgment. Alternate translation: “the basis for condemnation”

the light has come into the world, & than the light

Here Jesus uses **light** to refer to the revelation of God’s truth and goodness in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this plainly. See how you translated this term in those places where **the light** also refers to Jesus in the 1:7–9. Alternate translation: “Jesus, who revealed the true and good things of God, has come into the world ... than Jesus” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the light has come into the world, & than the light

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If your language does not allow people to speak of themselves in the third person, you may need to specify who **the light** is. Alternate translation: “I, the light, have come into the world ... than me” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

men

Although the term **men** is masculine, Jesus uses the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

men loved the darkness

Here Jesus uses **darkness** to refer to what is false and evil. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. See the discussion of light and darkness in the General Notes for Chapter 1. Alternate translation: “men loved evil” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 3:20

For

For here indicates another reason why men love the darkness, as stated in the previous verse. People who do evil things hate the light. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "This is because" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

everyone is doing evil

This phrase refers to someone who habitually does evil things. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "everyone who habitually does evil"

the light and & to the light

See how you translated **the light** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "Jesus, who revealed the true and good things of God, and ... to Jesus" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the light and & to the light

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If your language does not allow people to speak of themselves in the third person, you may need to specify who **the light** is. Alternate translation: "me, the light, and ... to me" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

so that his deeds might not be exposed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "so that the light might not expose his deeds" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 3:21

the one doing the truth

This phrase refers to someone who habitually does true things. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “everyone who habitually does the truth”

the one doing the truth

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “the one who does true things” or “the one who does what is true” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

comes to the light

See how you translated **the light** in the previous two verses. Alternate translation: “comes to Jesus, who revealed the true and good things of God” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

comes to the light

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If your language does not allow people to speak of themselves in the third person, you may need to specify who **the light** is. See how you translated this expression in the previous two verses. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

his deeds might be revealed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the light might reveal his deeds” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

that they have been worked in God

This clause indicates what the light will reveal about the deeds of those who come to the light. The phrase **in God** indicates that the works these people have done were done with God’s help and not by their own strength or effort. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “that they have been done with God’s help”

John 3:22

After these things

This phrase introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "Some time later" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

John 3:23

John

Here, **John** refers to Jesus' cousin, often referred to as "John the Baptist." (See: **John (the Baptist) (p.1125)**) It does not refer to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "John the Baptist" or "John the Immerser" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Aenon

Aenon is the name of a town near the Jordan River close to Samaria. **Aenon** is the Aramaic word for springs of water, which explains John's comment in the next clause about there being much water there. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

Salim

Salim is the name of a town near the Jordan River close to Samaria. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

were being baptized

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, John implies that John the Baptist did it. Alternate translation: "John was baptizing them" or "he was baptizing them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 3:24

John had not yet been thrown

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Mark 6:17 implies that Herod did it.

Alternate translation: "Herod had not yet thrown John" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 3:25

Then a dispute came about from the disciples of John

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **dispute**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "Then the disciples of John began arguing" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

Then a dispute came about from the disciples of John with a Jew

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Then John's disciples and a Jew began to dispute" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

of John

Here, **John** refers to Jesus' cousin, often referred to as "John the Baptist." (See: **John (the Baptist) (p.1125)**) It does not refer to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "of John the Baptist" or "of John the Immerser" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 3:26

they went

Here, **they** refers to John the Baptist's disciples, who were disputing in the previous verse. If it would be misunderstood in your language, you could state it explicitly. Alternate translation: "John's disciples went" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

the one who was with you beyond the Jordan, about whom you had testified

This phrase refers to Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus, who was with you beyond the Jordan, about whom you had testified" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

behold, he is baptizing

John the Baptist's disciples used the term **behold** to call John's attention to what Jesus was doing. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use here. Alternate translation: "see how he is baptizing" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

they are all going to him

Here John the Baptist's disciples use the word **all** as a generalization for emphasis. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: "it seems like everyone is going to him" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1016)**)

John 3:27

A man is not able

John is speaking of people in general, not of one particular man. Alternate translation: "A person is not able" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

it has been given to him from heaven

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "heaven has given it to him" (See: **Active or Passive (p. 932)**)

it has been given to him from heaven

Here John the Baptist uses **heaven** to refer to God, who dwells in **heaven**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this plainly. Alternate translation: "it has been given to him by God" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 3:28

You yourselves

Here, **You** is plural and refers to all the people to whom John the Baptist is talking. Alternate translation: “You all” or “All of you” (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before that one

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: “that I said that I am not the Christ but that I have been sent before that one” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

I have been sent before that one

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God sent me before that one” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

that one

Here, **that one** refers to Jesus, whom John has called “the Christ” in the previous clause. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Jesus” or “the Christ” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

John 3:29

The one having the bride is the bridegroom. & of the bridegroom, & of the voice of the bridegroom

John the Baptist uses **bride** and **bridegroom** to refer to people who believe in Jesus and Jesus himself, respectively. Since these are important terms for Christians and for Jesus, you should translate the words directly and not provide a plain explanation in the text of your translation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words with similes. Alternate translation: “The one who is like one who has a bride is like a bridegroom ... of the one who is like a bridegroom ... of the voice of one who is like a bridegroom” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

But the friend of the bridegroom, the one having stood and hearing him, rejoices with joy

John the Baptist is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: “But I am the friend of the bridegroom, and I stood and heard him, and I rejoice” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

rejoices with joy

These words mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize how much joy John had because Jesus had come. Alternate translation: “rejoices greatly” (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

this my joy has been made complete

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “I rejoice greatly” or “I rejoice with complete joy” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

this my joy

Here, **my** refers to John the Baptist, the one who is speaking. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “this joy that I, John, have” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

John 3:30

It is necessary for that one to increase

Here, **that one** refers to Jesus, whom John the Baptist called “the bridegroom” in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “It is necessary for Jesus to increase” or “It is necessary for the bridegroom to increase” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

to increase, & to decrease

John the Baptist uses **increase** to refer to growing in importance and influence, while **decrease** refers to diminishing in importance and influence. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to be more influential ... to be less influential” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 3:31

The one coming from above is above all things. & The one coming from heaven is above all things

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. John repeats himself to emphasize that Jesus is greater than every person and every thing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases and include words that show emphasis. Alternate translation: "The one who comes from heaven is certainly above all things" (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

The one coming from above is above all things. & The one coming from heaven is above all things

Both of these phrases refer to Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus, the one who comes from above, is above all things ... Jesus, the one who comes from heaven, is above all things" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

from above

Here John the Baptist uses **above** to refer to heaven, the place where God dwells. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this plainly. Alternate translation: "from heaven" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

is above all things

John the Baptist uses **above** to refer to having superior status. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "is superior to all things" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

The one being from the earth is from the earth and speaks from the earth

Here, John the Baptist is referring to himself in the third person, but the statement is also true for all humans other than Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: "I, the one who is from the earth, am from the earth and speak from the earth" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

is from the earth

This phrase refers to having an earthly origin, which is the case for John the Baptist and every human being other than Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "originates from the earth" or "has an earthly origin" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

and speaks from the earth

This phrase refers to speaking based on an earthly perspective, which is the perspective of John the Baptist and every human being other than Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "and speaks from an earthly perspective" or "and speaks as someone from the earth" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

is above all things

John the Baptist uses **above** to refer to having superior status. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "is superior to all things" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 3:32

He testifies about that which he has seen and heard, & his testimony

He and **his** in this verse refer to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly.

Alternate translation: "Jesus testifies about that which he has seen and heard ... Jesus' testimony" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

which he has seen and heard

This phrase refers to what Jesus saw and heard while he was in heaven. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "which he has seen and heard in heaven" (See:

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935))

no one receives his testimony

Here, John the Baptist exaggerates to emphasize that only a few people believed Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: "very few people receive his testimony" or "it seems like no one receives his testimony" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1016)**)

John 3:33

The one having received his testimony

This phrase does not refer to a specific person, but to any person who does this thing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Anyone who has received his testimony" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

his testimony

Here, **his** refers to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus' testimony" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

has set his seal

This expression refers to placing a **seal** on a document in order to certify that what is written in the document is true. (See: **seal, sealed, unsealed (p.1141)**) Here this meaning is extended to refer to certifying that God is true. If your readers would not be familiar with this practice of sealing documents, you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: "has certified" or "has attested" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

John 3:34

the one whom God has sent

This phrase refers to Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus, whom God has sent" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

For

For here indicates that what follows is the reason why the previous sentence is true. We know that Jesus speaks the words of God because God has given him the Holy Spirit. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "We know this because" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

he does not give

Here, **he** refers to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "God does not give" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

he does not give the Spirit by measure

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context, especially this discussion of God giving to his Son in the next verse. Alternate translation: "he does not give the Spirit to him by measure" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

he does not give the Spirit by measure

This clause is a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that means the opposite of the intended meaning. If this is confusing in your language, you can express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: "he certainly gives the Spirit without measure" (See: **Litotes (p.1039)**)

John 3:35

Father & Son

Father and **Son** are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

has given all things into his hand

Here, giving **into his hand** means putting under his power or control. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this plainly. Alternate translation: “has given him control over everything” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 3:36

The one believing

This phrase does not refer to a specific person, but to any person who does this thing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Anyone who believes” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

in the Son & the Son

Son is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

ὁ & ἀπειθῶν

This phrase does not refer to a specific person, but to any person who does this thing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “anyone who disobeys” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

ὁ & ἀπειθῶν

The word translated **disobeys** can also be translated “does not believe.” Alternate translation: “the one who does not believe”

will not see life

John the Baptist uses **see** metaphorically to refer to experiencing or participating in something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “will not experience life” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

will not see life

Here, **life** refers to eternal life, as indicated by the previous clause. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “will not see eternal life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the wrath of God remains on him

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **wrath**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “God will continue to be angry against him” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

John 4

John 4 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus leaves Judea for Galilee (4:1–6)

Jesus meets a Samaritan woman (4:7–14)

Jesus teaches the Samaritan woman about worship (4:15–26)

Jesus teaches his disciples about evangelism (4:27–38)

Jesus' ministry in Samaria (4:39–42)

Jesus goes to Galilee (4:43–45)

Jesus' second sign: he heals an official's son (4:46–54)

[John 4:7–38](#) forms one story centered on the teaching of Jesus as the “living water” who gives eternal life to all who believe in him. (See: **believe, believer, belief, unbeliever, unbelief** (p.1109))

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

“It was necessary for him to pass through Samaria”

Jews avoided traveling through the region of Samaria, because Jews and Samaritans were longtime enemies who hated each other. So Jesus did what most Jews did not want to do. (See: **Samaria, Samaritan** (p.1139))

“an hour is coming”

Jesus used these words to begin prophecies about events that could be shorter or longer than sixty minutes. In such instances, “hour” refers to a point in time when something happens, not a set length of time. For example, “an hour ... when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth” refers to the point in time when people begin to do so ([4:23](#)).

The proper place of worship

Long before Jesus came to earth, the Samaritan people had broken the law of Moses by setting up their own temple on Mount Gerizim ([4:20](#)). Jesus explained to the Samaritan woman that in the near future it would no longer be important where people worshiped ([4:21–24](#)).

Harvest

Harvest refers to the time when people go out to get the food they have planted so they can bring it to their houses and eat it. Jesus used this as a metaphor to teach his followers that they need to go and tell other people about Jesus so those people can be part of God's kingdom. (See: **faith** (p.1116))

“The Samaritan woman”

John probably told this story to show the difference between the Samaritan woman, who believed, and the Jews, who did not believe and would later kill Jesus. (See: **believe, believer, belief, unbeliever, unbelief** (p.1109))

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“in spirit and truth”

The people who truly know who God is and enjoy worshiping him for who the Bible says he is are the ones who truly please him. The place where they worship him is not important.

John 4:1

4:1–6 give the background to the next event, which is Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan woman. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

John 4:1–3 is one long sentence. It may be necessary in your language to divide this long sentence into several shorter sentences.

Then when Jesus knew that the Pharisees heard that Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John

If it would be natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: "Now Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John. When he knew that the Pharisees had heard that he was doing this" (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

Then when Jesus knew

Then here introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "Some time later, when Jesus knew" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

John 4:2

Jesus himself was not baptizing

Here, **himself** is used to emphasize that Jesus was not baptizing disciples, but his disciples were doing the baptizing. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this emphasis. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1079)**)

but his disciples

Here John is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous clause. Alternate translation: “but his disciples were baptizing people” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 4:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 4:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 4:5

Then he comes

Then here indicates that the events the story will now relate came after the event just described in [4:3](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: “After leaving Judea, he comes” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.971)**)

he comes

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Sychar

Sychar is the name of a place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

John 4:6

there

In this case, **there** refers to the town of Sychar mentioned in the previous verse. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “there at Sychar” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Then Jesus

Then here indicates that the events the story will now relate came after the event just described in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: “When Jesus came to Sychar” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.971)**)

having grown weary

This clause indicates the reason why Jesus sat by the well. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “because he had grown weary” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

from the journey

This phrase indicates the reason why Jesus had grown weary. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “because of the journey” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

It was about the sixth hour

In this culture, people began counting the hours each day beginning around daybreak at six o'clock in the morning. Here, **the sixth hour** indicates a time in the middle of the day, when it would be the hottest. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this in the way the people of your culture reckon time. Alternate translation: “about noon” or “about 12:00 PM”

John 4:7

comes & says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Give me to drink

This is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as “please” to make this clear. Alternate translation: “Please give me to drink” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1022)**)

Give me to drink

Here, John records Jesus leaving out a word that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply this word from the context. Alternate translation: “Give me something to drink” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 4:8

for his disciples had gone away

This phrase indicates the reason why Jesus asked the woman for water. The disciples had gone away and taken the tools for drawing water with them, so that Jesus could not draw the water himself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “because his disciples had gone away” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

John 4:9

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

How do you, being a Jew, ask from me to drink, being a Samaritan woman

The woman is using the question form for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate her words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "I cannot believe that you, being a Jew, are asking a Samaritan woman for a drink!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1082)**)

do not have dealings with

Alternate translation: "do not associate with" or "have nothing to do with"

John 4:10

If you had known the gift of God and who is the one saying to you, '& you would have asked him

Jesus is making a conditional statement that sounds hypothetical, but he knows that the condition is not true. He knows that the woman does not know the gift of God or who he is. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that the speaker believes is not true. Alternate translation: "You surely do not know the gift of God and who it is who is saying to you ... Otherwise, you would have asked him" (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.958)**)

the gift of God

Here, **the gift of God** refers to the "living water" that Jesus mentions at the end of the verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "God's gift of living water"

the gift of God

Jesus uses **of** to describe a **gift** that comes from **God**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "the gift from God" (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

who is the one saying to you, '& would have asked him, and he would have given

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: "who I am who is saying to you ... would have asked me, and I would have given" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

the one saying to you, 'Give me to drink

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: "who is asking you to give him a drink" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

living water

The phrase **living water** usually refers to moving or flowing water. However, Jesus uses **living water** here to refer to the Holy Spirit who works in a person to save and transform them. However, the woman does not understand this and Jesus does not explain the metaphor to her in this verse. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

John 4:11

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Sir

The Samaritan woman calls Jesus **Sir** in order to show respect or politeness. (See: **lord, Lord, master, sir (p.1128)**)

the living water

See how you translated **the living water** in the previous verse.

John 4:12

You are not greater, are you, than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, and his sons and his cattle

The woman is using the question form for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate her words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You are certainly not greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, and his sons and his cattle!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

drank from it

Here, John records the woman leaving out a word that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply this word from the context. Alternate translation: "drank water from it" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

and his sons and his cattle

Here, John records the woman leaving out some words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous clause. Alternate translation: "and his sons drank water from it and his cattle drank water from it" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 4:13

will thirst again

Alternate translation: "will need to drink water again"

John 4:14

but whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never thirst & the water that I will give him will become a fountain of water in him, springing up to eternal life

Jesus speaks about receiving the Holy Spirit by continuing the metaphor of water. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this metaphor as a simile. Alternate translation: “but whoever is like one who drinks from the water that I will give him will be like one who never thirsts ... the water that I will give him will become like a fountain of water in him, resulting in eternal life” (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.945)**)

John 4:15

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Sir

The Samaritan woman calls Jesus **Sir** in order to show respect or politeness. (See: **lord, Lord, master, sir (p.1128)**)

to draw {water

Here, **draw** refers to taking water out of a well using a container that can hold water. Alternate translation: “get water” or “pull water up from the well”

John 4:16

He says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 4:17

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

You have rightly said, 'I do not have a husband

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation.
Alternate translation: "You have rightly said that you do not have a husband" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

John 4:18

This you have said is true

This you have said refers to the Samaritan woman's statement in the previous verse that she did not have a husband. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "You have spoken the truth when you said you do not have a husband" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

John 4:19

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Sir

The Samaritan woman calls Jesus **Sir** in order to show respect or politeness. (See: **lord, Lord, master, sir (p.1128)**)

I see that you are a prophet

The woman uses **see** to refer to understanding something. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I understand that you are a prophet" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 4:20

on this mountain

Here, **this mountain** refers to Mount Gerizim, the mountain where the Samaritans built their own temple. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “here on Mount Gerizim” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

you say

Here the word **you** is plural and refers to the Jewish people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “you Jewish people say” (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

the place

Here, **the place** refers to the Jewish temple, the place where God commanded his people to worship at that time. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Jewish temple” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 4:21

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

woman

Here, **woman** refers to the Samaritan woman. If it is impolite to call someone “woman” in your language, you can use another word that is polite, or leave it out.

an hour is coming

Here, **hour** refers to a point in time when something happens. It does not refer to a 60-minute length of time. See the discussion of this in the General Notes to this chapter. Alternate translation: “a point in time is coming” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

on this mountain

Here, **this mountain** refers to Mount Gerizim. See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “here on Mount Gerizim” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 4:22

You & you do not know

You is plural here in this verse and refers to the Samaritan people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “you Samaritan people ... you all do not know” (See: **Forms of You** (p.1002))

We & we know

We here is exclusive. Jesus is only referring to himself and the Jewish people. Your language may require you to mark this form. Alternate translation: “We Jewish people ... we all know” (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’** (p.998))

for salvation is from the Jews

The phrase **from the Jews** indicates that the Jewish people were the people group from which **salvation** came. This is true because the Savior Jesus was from the Jewish people. This phrase does not mean that the Jewish people themselves will save others from their sins. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “for salvation comes from among the Jewish people” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

salvation

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **salvation**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “the way to be saved” (See: **Abstract Nouns** (p.930))

John 4:23

an hour is coming

See the discussion of **an hour is coming** in the General Notes to this chapter and see how you translated this phrase in verse 21. (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the Father & the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

in spirit

Here, **spirit** could refer to: (1) the inner person, which is what a person thinks and feels. Alternate translation: “with their spirits” (2) the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: “in the Holy Spirit”

in spirit and truth

Here, **truth** refers to thinking correctly of what is true about God, which is revealed in the Bible. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “in spirit and in accordance with God’s Word” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

John 4:24

in spirit and truth

See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse.

John 4:25

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

the one called Christ

Christ is the Greek translation of **Messiah**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the one called Christ in the Greek language” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

When he comes, that one

Here, **he** and **that one** refer to the Messiah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “When the Messiah may come, the Messiah” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

that one will declare everything to us

The words **declare everything** imply all that the people need to know. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “he will tell us all that we need to know” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

to us

When the woman said “us,” she was including the people to whom she was speaking, so this would be inclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.998)**)

John 4:26

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

the one speaking to you

Jesus is referring to himself in third person. If this would confuse your readers, you can use the first person form, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

John 4:27

at this

Alternate translation: "at the time he said this" or "just as Jesus was saying this"

and they were amazed that he was speaking with a woman

In the culture of that time, it was very unusual for a Jew to speak with a **woman** he did not know, especially if they were alone or if that woman was a Samaritan. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly.

Alternate translation: "and they were amazed that he was speaking alone with an unknown woman, because people didn't usually do that" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

What are you seeking

This question could be spoken to: (1) Jesus. Alternate translation: "What do you want from this woman?" (2) the woman. Alternate translation: "What do you want from him?"

John 4:28

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

to the men

Here, **the men** could refer to: (1) the men who lived in the nearby town and would have been working out in the fields at that time. Alternate translation: "to the men of the town" (2) the people who lived in the nearby town. Alternate translation: "to the people of the town" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

John 4:29

Come, see a man who told me all things, as much as I have done

The Samaritan woman exaggerates to show that she is impressed by how much Jesus knows about her. If this might confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "Come see a man who knows very much about me even though I never met him before" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1016)**)

This is not the Christ, is it

This question is not a rhetorical question. The woman is not sure that Jesus is the **Christ**, so she asks a question that expects "no" for an answer. However, the fact that she asked the question instead of making a statement indicates that she is uncertain. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in a way that shows her uncertainty. Alternate translation: "Is it even possible that this is the Christ?"

John 4:30

They went out

They here refers to the men or people from the town to whom the woman had spoken. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Your translation will depend on how you translated “the men” in verse [28](#). Alternate translation: “The men of the town went out” or “The nearby townspeople went out” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

John 4:31

In the meantime

Alternate translation: "While the woman was going into town" or "During the time that the woman was in the town"

the disciples were urging him, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: "the disciples were urging him, and they said" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

Rabbi, eat

Here, **eat** is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as "please" to make this clear. Alternate translation: "Rabbi, please eat" (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1022)**)

John 4:32

I have food to eat

Here Jesus uses the word **food** to refer to doing God's will, as he states in [4:34](#). However, his disciples do not understand this and Jesus does not explain the metaphor to them in this verse. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

John 4:33

No one brought him to eat, did he

The disciples think Jesus is literally talking about something **to eat**. They begin asking each other this question, expecting a “no” response. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in a way that shows their uncertainty. Alternate translation: “Is it even possible that someone brought him food to eat?”

John 4:34

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

My food is that I might do the will of the one having sent me and might complete his work

Here Jesus uses **food** to refer to obeying God's **will**. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could express this with a simile. Alternate translation: "Like food satisfies a hungry person, doing the will of the one who sent me and completing his work satisfies me" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

of the one having sent me

Here, **the one who sent me** refers to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "of God, the one who sent me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 4:35

Do you not say, 'There are still four months, and the harvest comes

Jesus is using the question form for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You surely say, 'There are still four months, and the harvest comes!'" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

Behold

Jesus using the term **Behold** to call the disciples' attention to what he is about to say. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use here. (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

lift up your eyes

This phrase, **lift up your eyes**, is a common idiom in the Bible that is used to describe the act of looking at something or direct one's own attention toward something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "look" (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

see the fields

Jesus uses the word **fields** to refer to people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning with a simile or plainly. Alternate translation: "see these people who are like fields" or "see these people" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

they are already white for harvest

Jesus uses the phrase **white for harvest** to say that people are ready to receive the message of Jesus, like fields that are ready to be harvested. If it would be helpful in your language, you could convey the meaning with a simile or do it plainly. Alternate translation: "they are like a field that is ready to be harvested" or "they are already ready to believe my message" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 4:36

The one harvesting & and the one harvesting

Jesus continues to speak to describe people proclaiming and receiving his message. The act of **harvesting** crops is used to refer to the act of proclaiming Jesus' message to those who are ready to receive it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this metaphor as a simile. Alternate translation: "The one who is proclaiming the message to those who are being saved is like one who is harvesting ... and the one who is like a harvester" (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.945)**)

receives wages

Jesus continues to speak to describe people proclaiming and receiving his message. Those who proclaim Jesus' message are described as those who receive **wages** for their labor. Here, **wages** refers to the joy those who proclaim the message will receive, as indicated by the last clause in this verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this metaphor as a simile. Alternate translation: "has great joy that is like wages" (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.945)**)

and gathers fruit for eternal life

Jesus continues to speak to describe people proclaiming and receiving his message. Jesus uses the phrase **fruit for eternal life** to refer to people who believe his message and are forgiven for their sins, so that they can have eternal life with God in heaven. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this as a simile. Alternate translation: "and the people who believe the message and receive eternal life are like the fruit that the one who is harvesting gathers" (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.945)**)

the one sowing

Jesus continues to speak to describe people proclaiming and receiving his message. The act of **sowing** seed is used to refer to the act of preparing people to receive Jesus' message. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this metaphor as a simile. Alternate translation: "the one who is preparing people to receive the message is like one who is sowing seed" (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.945)**)

John 4:37

in this

Here, **this** could refer to: (1) the statements in the rest of this verse and the next verse. Alternate translation: “regarding what I am about to say,” (2) the statement in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “regarding what I have just said,” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

One is the one sowing

Jesus continues to speak to describe people proclaiming and receiving his message. This is part of an extended metaphor in verses 35–38. Here, **sowing** is used to refer to preparing people to receive the message of Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this with a simile. Alternate translation: “One preparing people to receive the message is like one sowing” (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.945)**)

the one harvesting

Jesus continues to speak to describe people proclaiming and receiving his message. This is part of an extended metaphor in verses 35–38. Here, **harvesting** refers to proclaiming the message of Jesus to those already prepared to receive it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this with a simile. Alternate translation: “the one proclaiming the message to those who are receiving it is like one harvesting” (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.945)**)

John 4:38

you & you & you

In this verse **you** is plural and refers to the disciples to whom Jesus is speaking. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “you who are my disciples ... you ... you disciples” (See: **Forms of You** (p.1002))

I sent you to harvest

Jesus continues to speak to describe people proclaiming and receiving his message. This is part of an extended metaphor in verses 35–38. Here, **harvest** refers to proclaiming the message of Jesus to those already prepared to receive it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this with a simile. Alternate translation: “I sent you to successfully proclaim my message like those who harvest” (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors** (p.945))

that on which you have not labored

This phrase refers to those who received Jesus’ message when his disciples proclaimed it to them. Although the disciples did not prepare those people to receive the message, they enjoyed the benefits of seeing those people trust in Jesus for salvation. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “those people whom you previously did not prepare to receive the message” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

Others have labored

Others here refers to those people who prepared people to receive Jesus’ message before Jesus’ disciples successfully proclaimed that message to them. This would include Jesus, John the Baptist, and possibly the Old Testament prophets as well. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Others such as myself and the prophets have labored” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

you have entered into their labor

Here, **entered into** means to have joined others or participated with others in doing something. Alternate translation: “you have joined in doing their work”

John 4:39

from that city

Here, **that city** refers to the Samaritan city of Sychar. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "from Sychar" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 935)**)

He told me all things that I have done

Here, **all things** is an exaggeration. The woman was impressed by how much Jesus knew about her. If this might confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "He told me many things that I have done" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1016)**)

John 4:40

to him, & him & he stayed

In this verse **him** and **he** refer to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly.
Alternate translation: "to Jesus ... Jesus ... Jesus stayed" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

John 4:41

his word

Here, **word** refers to the message that Jesus proclaimed. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "his message" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 4:42

they said

Here, **they** refers to the Samaritans from Sychar. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the local Samaritans said” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

We & believe & we & have heard, & we know

We throughout this verse refers to the Samaritan townspeople who came to Jesus apart from the Samaritan woman, so the pronoun would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.998)**)

this one

Here, **this one** refers to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “this man, Jesus” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

of the world

Here, **world** refers to everyone throughout the world who believes in Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “all the believers in the world” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 4:43

Now after the two days

This phrase introduces a new event that happened after the events the story has just related. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "After he had spent two days in Samaria" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

from there

Here, **there** could refer to: (1) the Samaritan city of Sychar. Alternate translation: "from Sychar" (2) the region of Samaria in general. Alternate translation: "from Samaria" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 935)**)

John 4:44

for

Here, **for** indicates that this verse provides one reason why Jesus wanted to go to Galilee. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "he went to Galilee because" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

for Jesus himself testified

The reflexive pronoun **himself** is added to emphasize that Jesus had **testified** or said this. You can translate this in your language in a way that will give emphasis to a person. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1079)**)

a prophet has no honor in his own country

Alternate translation: "people do not show respect or honor to a prophet of their own country" or "a prophet is not respected by the people in his own community"

in his own country

This could refer to: (1) the whole region of Galilee where Jesus came from. Alternate translation: "in the Galilee region where he was from" (2) the specific town Jesus grew up in, which is Nazareth. Alternate translation: "in his hometown of Nazareth"

John 4:45

When therefore

Here, **therefore** indicates that what follows is the result of what Jesus had testified in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “As a result of this being true, when” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

the Galileans welcomed him

Since this verse gives the result of Jesus saying in the previous verse that a prophet was not honored in his own country, it is important to indicate that welcoming Jesus was not the same as honoring him. They **welcomed him** because he did miracles, not because they honored him as a prophet. Alternate translation: “the Galileans only welcomed him”

having seen all {the things

This clause indicates the reason why the Galileans welcomed Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “because they had seen all the things” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

having seen all {the things

Here, **all** is an exaggeration that refers to the Galileans having seen many of Jesus’ miracles. If this might confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “having seen many of the things” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1016)**)

at the festival, & to the festival

Here, **the festival** refers the Passover festival, as indicated in [2:12-25](#). If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “at the Passover festival ... to the Passover” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 4:46

Then

Then indicates that the events which 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 Jesus entered Galilee and the Galileans welcomed him" (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.971)**)

and there was a certain royal official

This phrase introduces a new character in the story. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. The expression **royal official** identifies this man as someone who was in the service of the king. Since he is a new participant, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could call him something like "a man who was a government official who served the king" (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1031)**)

John 4:47

He

He here refers to the royal official. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "The official" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

he was about

Here, **he** refers to the royal official's son. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the official's son was about" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

John 4:48

Unless you would see signs and wonders, you would certainly not believe

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "Only if you see signs and wonders will you believe" (See: **Double Negatives (p.984)**)

you would see & you would & believe

The word **you** is plural in this verse. This means that Jesus was not only speaking to the royal official, but also to the other people who were there. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "you all would see ... you all would ... believe" (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

signs and wonders

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **wonders** describes the character of Jesus' miraculous **signs**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "wonderful miraculous signs" (See: **Hendiadys (p.1009)**)

John 4:49

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Sir

The royal official calls Jesus **Sir** in order to show respect or politeness. See how you translated this word in [4:11](#). (See: **lord, Lord, master, sir (p.1128)**)

come down

This is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as “please” to make this clear. Alternate translation, as in the UST: “please come down” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1022)**)

John 4:50

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

The man

Here, **The man** refers to the royal official who was introduced in verse [46](#). If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "The royal official" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

believed the word

Here, **word** refers to all that Jesus said to the man. It does not refer to one specific word that Jesus said. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "believed the words" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 4:51

he

In this verse **he**, **his**, and **him** refer to the royal official who was introduced in verse [46](#). If it would be misunderstood to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the royal official” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

saying that his son lives

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this as a direct quotation. You will also need to adjust the sentence to indicate to whom they are speaking. Alternate translation: “saying, ‘Your son lives’” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.979)**)

John 4:52

So he asked from them the hour in which he began to improve

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "So he asked from them, 'In what hour did he begin to improve?'" (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.979)**)

he began to improve

Here, **he** refers to the royal official's son who was ill. If it would be misunderstood to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "his son began to improve" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

at the seventh hour

In this culture, people began counting the hours each day beginning around daybreak at six o'clock in the morning. Here, the seventh hour indicates a time in the middle of the day. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this in the way the people of your culture reckon time. Alternate translation: "at about one o'clock in the afternoon"

John 4:53

the father

Here, **the father** refers to the royal official who was introduced in verse 46. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the royal official” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Jesus had said to him, “Your son lives

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “Jesus had said to him that his son lives” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.979)**)

he himself & believed

John uses the word **himself** to emphasize the importance of this event. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this emphasis. Alternate translation: “that same royal official ... believed” (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p. 1079)**)

John 4:54

Now Jesus again did this second sign

This verse is a comment about the events described in [4:46–53](#). John wrote much about the miraculous signs Jesus did. This is the second of those signs. Alternate translation: “That was the second sign Jesus did”

sign

See how you translated the term **sign** in [2:11](#). See also the discussion of signs in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: “significant miracle”

John 5

John 5 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus' third sign: he heals a paralyzed man (5:1–9)

Jewish leaders oppose Jesus' ministry (5:10–18)

Jesus says he is equal with God (5:19–30)

Jesus' witnesses are John the Baptist, Jesus' works, God, and the Scriptures (5:31–47)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Healing water

Many of the Jews believed that God would heal people who got into some of the pools in Jerusalem when the waters were “stirred up.” The man Jesus healed in this chapter was one of those people (5:2–7).

Testimony

In the Bible, a testimony is what one person says about another person. What a person says about himself is not as important as what other people say about that person. In this chapter, Jesus tells the Jews that God had told them who Jesus was, so he did not need to tell them who he was (5:34–37). This was because God had told the writers of the Old Testament what his Messiah would do, and Jesus had done everything they had written that he would do (5:44–47).

The resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment

In this chapter, Jesus mentions two resurrections, the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment (5:28–29). Regarding the resurrection of life, God will make some people alive again, and they will live with him forever, because he gives them his grace. Regarding the resurrection of judgment, God will make some people alive again and they will live apart from him forever, because he will treat them justly.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

The Son, the Son of God, and the Son of Man

Jesus refers to himself in this chapter as the “Son” (5:19), the “Son of God” (5:25), and the “Son of Man” (5:27). Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking about someone else. (See: **First, Second or Third Person** (p.1000))

“Son of Man”

Jesus refers to himself as the “Son of Man” in this chapter (5:27). Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking about someone else. See the discussion of this concept in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/sonofman\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#))

John 5:1

[5:1-4](#) give background information about the setting of the story. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

After these things

This phrase introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Some time later” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

went up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem is located on the top of a hill. Therefore, roads to **Jerusalem** went **up**. If your language has a different word for going up a hill than for walking on level ground or going down a hill, you should use it here.

John 5:2

a pool

This **pool** was a large manmade hole in the ground that people filled with water and used for bathing. Sometimes they lined these pools with tiles or stones.

in Hebrew

When John says **in Hebrew** in his Gospel, he refers to the language spoken by the Jews during his time. This language is now called Jewish Aramaic. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this explicitly. Alternate translation: “in Jewish Aramaic” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Bethesda

Bethesda is the name of a place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

roofed porches

These **porches** were structures with roofs that had at least one wall missing and were attached to the sides of buildings.

John 5:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 5:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 5:5

Now a certain man was there

This verse introduces the man lying beside the pool as a new character to the story. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1031)**)

was there

Here, **there** refers being at the pool called Bethesda in verse 2. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “was at the Bethesda pool” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 5:6

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 5:7

Sir

The man calls Jesus **Sir** in order to show respect or politeness. (See: **lord, Lord, master, sir (p.1128)**)

when the water is stirred up

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, verse [4](#) indicates who the man believed was doing the action. Alternate translation: “when an angel moves the water” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

into the pool

See how you translated **pool** in verse [2](#).

another goes down before me

The man believed that only the first person to enter the water after the water stirred would be healed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “another goes down before me and is healed”

John 5:8

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 5:9

Now that day

John uses the word **Now** to show that the words that follow provide background information for a new event in the story that takes place in [5:10–13](#). Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information.

Alternate translation: “The day on which Jesus healed the man” (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

John 5:10

So the Jews said

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

to the one healed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, John indicates who did the action in the previous verses. Alternate translation: “to the one whom Jesus had healed” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

It is the Sabbath

Your language might use an indefinite article rather than the definite article here, since the synagogue ruler is not speaking of a specific Sabbath. Alternate translation: “It is a Sabbath day”

not permitted for you to carry your bed

Here, the Jewish leaders (who were probably Pharisees) said this because they thought that the man was doing work by carrying his mat, and so he was disobeying God’s command to rest and not work on the Sabbath. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/lawofmoses\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/works\]\]](#) and **Sabbath (p.1137)**) If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “it is not permitted for you, according to our law, to carry your mat” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 5:11

The one having made me healthy

Alternate translation: "The one who made me well" or "The one who healed me of my illness"

that one said to me, 'Pick up your bed

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation.

Alternate translation: "that one said to me to pick up my mat" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

John 5:12

They asked him

They here refers to the Jewish leaders and **him** refers to the man whom Jesus had healed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “The Jewish leaders asked the man who was healed” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

having said to you, ‘Pick {it} up

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: “who told you to pick it up” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

John 5:13

the one having been healed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, John indicates who did the action in the previous verses. Alternate translation: “the one whom Jesus had healed” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

who it was

John is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “who it was who had healed him” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

a crowd being in the place

This could refer to: (1) the reason why Jesus left secretly. Alternate translation: “because a crowd was in the place” (2) the time when Jesus left secretly. Alternate translation: “while a crowd was in the place” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

a crowd

The word **crowd** is a singular noun that refers to a group of people. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: “a group of people” or “many people” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

John 5:14

After these things

After these things introduces a new event that happened some time after the events which the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Some time later” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

finds

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

him & to him

Here, **him** refers to the man whom Jesus had healed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the healed man ... that man” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

Behold

Jesus uses the term **Behold** to call the man’s attention to what he is about to say. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use here. (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 5:15

to the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [5:10](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 5:16

And because of this, the Jews began to persecute Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath

The writer uses the phrase **And because of this** to show that previous verse gave background information for what John will now present. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "Now the Jews began to persecute Jesus because he was doing these things on the Sabbath." (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

because of this

Here, **this** refers to what the man whom Jesus had healed told the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders began to persecute Jesus because he had healed the man on the Sabbath, which was something they believed was against the law of Moses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "because Jesus had healed him on the Sabbath" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in the previous verse. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

because he was doing these things

This phrase indicates a second reason why the Jewish leaders began persecuting Jesus. Here, **these things** refers to Jesus healing people on the Sabbath. The plural **things** indicates that he healed on the Sabbath multiple times, not just on the occasion recorded in verses 5-9. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "because he was doing these healings" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

on the Sabbath

Your language might use an indefinite article rather than the definite article here, since the synagogue ruler is not speaking of a specific Sabbath. Alternate translation: "on a Sabbath day"

John 5:17

My Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 5:18

Because of this, therefore

Here, **this** refers to what Jesus had said in the previous verse. One of the reasons why the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus was that Jesus called God his Father. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Because Jesus said this, therefore” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [5:10](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

because he not only was breaking the Sabbath

The phrase **breaking the Sabbath** is an idiom that means to disobey the regulations for the Sabbath that God gave in the law of Moses. The Pharisees themselves added many regulations which they considered to be equal to those God had given. It was the additional Jewish regulations that Jesus was disobeying, thereby making the Jewish leaders very angry with him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “because he not only was disobeying their Sabbath regulations” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

making himself equal to God

This clause, **making himself equal to God**, is the result of what Jesus had said in the previous clause. The result of Jesus calling God Father is that he was claiming to be equal with God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the result being that he was making himself equal to God” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

John 5:19

Therefore

Therefore indicates that what Jesus is about to say is a response to the accusations of the Jewish leaders that were mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Because the Jewish leaders had made these accusations” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

to them

Here, **them** refers to the Jewish leaders who wanted to kill Jesus and made accusations against him in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “to the Jewish authorities” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in 1:51. (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

I say to you

Since Jesus is speaking to a group of Jewish leaders, **you** is plural here and through 5:47. If your language does not have a different form for plural **you**, you can use another way to express it. Alternate translation: “I say to you Jews” or “I say to you all” (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

Son & Father

Son and **Father** are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

the Son & also the Son does

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If this would confuse your readers, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

from himself

Here, **from** is used to indicate the source of Jesus’ teaching and ability to do miracles. His teaching and miracles could only have authority if they came from God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this explicitly. Alternate translation: “on his own authority” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

what he would see the Father doing

Jesus uses **see** to refer to knowing something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “what he would perceive the Father doing” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 5:20

the Father & the Son

Father and **Son** are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

the Son

As in the previous verse, Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

he shows him & he will show him

Jesus uses **shows** and **show** to refer to revealing or making something known. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “he reveals to him ... he will reveal to him” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

he will show him

Here, **he** refers to God the Father and **him** refers to Jesus the Son. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Father will reveal to the Son” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

greater works than these

Here, **works** refers specifically to miracles. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “greater miracles than these” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

greater works than these

Here, **these** refers to the miracles that Jesus had already performed by the time he spoke these words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “greater works than these miracles I have already performed” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 5:21

Father & Son

Father and **Son** are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

makes {them} alive, & makes alive whom he desires

The phrase **makes them alive** could refer to: (1) eternal life. Alternate translation: “makes them have eternal life ... makes whom he desires have eternal life” (2) physical life, in which case it would repeat the idea of “raises the dead” in the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “makes them live again ... makes alive again whom he desires” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Son

As in the previous two verses, Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation, as in the UST: “I, the Son” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

John 5:22

the Father & to the Son

Father and **Son** are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

judgment

Here, **judgment** refers to the legal authority to judge people as guilty or innocent. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **judgment**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “power to judge others” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

to the Son

As in the previous three verses, Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

John 5:23

the Son & the Father. & not honoring the Son does not honor the Father

Father and **Son** are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

the Son & The one not honoring the Son

As in the previous four verses, Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

the Father having sent him

Here, this phrase refers to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "God, the Father who sent him" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 5:24

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

I say to you

Since Jesus is speaking to a group of Jewish leaders, **you** is plural here and through [5:47](#). If your language does not have a different form for plural **you**, you can use another way to express it. Alternate translation: "I say to you Jews" or "I say to you all" (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

the one hearing my word

Here, **hearing** means listening to something with the intent to heed it and respond appropriately. It does not mean simply to hear what someone says. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the one heeding my word" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

my word

Here, **word** refers to the message or teachings of Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "my message" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the one having sent me

Here, **the one who sent me** refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in [4:34](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

does not come into judgment

Jesus speaks of **judgment** as if it were a place a person could enter. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "will not be judged" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

he has passed from death to life

Here, **passed** means to move from one state to another. Alternate translation: "he has moved from death to life"

John 5:25

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse. (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

I say to you

Since Jesus is speaking to a group of Jewish leaders, **you** is plural here and through 5:47. If your language does not have a different form for plural **you**, you can use another way to express it. Alternate translation: "I say to you Jews" or "I say to you all" (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

an hour is coming

See the discussion of **an hour is coming** in the General Notes to Chapter 4 and see how you translated this phrase in 4:21. (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the dead

Here, **the dead** could refer to: (1) people who are spiritually dead. Alternate translation: "the spiritually dead" (2) people who are physically dead. Alternate translation: "the physically dead" (3) both the spiritually dead and physically dead. In this case, **an hour that is coming** would refer to the future resurrection of the dead while **is now** would refer to those spiritually dead people who were listening to Jesus when he spoke these words. Alternate translation: "the spiritually dead and physically dead" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

of the Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

of the Son of God

As in the previous verses in this paragraph, Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: "of me, the Son of God" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

will hear & the ones having heard

Here, **heard** means to listen to something with the intent to heed it and respond appropriately. See how you translated "hearing" in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "will heed ... those who have heeded" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

will live

This could refer to: (1) having eternal life. Alternate translation: "will have eternal life" (2) physical life, as in being resurrected after death. Alternate translation: "will become alive again" (3) both eternal life and physical life. Alternate translation: "will have eternal life and become alive again" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 5:26

the Father & to the Son

Father and **Son** are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

has life in himself, & to have life in himself

Here, the phrases **has life** and **have life** refer to being the source of life or having the ability to create life. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “is the source of life ... the right to be the source of life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

to the Son to have life in himself

As in the previous verses in this paragraph, Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

John 5:27

he gave him & he is

The first occurrence of **he** refers to God the Father, but **him** and the second occurrence of **he** refer to the Son of Man. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Father gave the Son ... the Son is” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

he gave him & he is the Son of Man

As in the previous verses in this paragraph, Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

he gave him authority to do judgment

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **authority** and **judgment**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. Alternate translation: “he authorized him to act as judge” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

the Son of Man

See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 5:28

Do not be amazed at this

Here, **this** refers to the Son of Man's authority to give eternal life and to carry out judgment, as stated in the previous two verses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Do not be amazed that the Father has given the Son this authority" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

an hour is coming

See the discussion of **an hour is coming** in the General Notes to Chapter 4 and see how you translated this phrase in verse [25](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

will hear his voice

As in the previous verses in this paragraph, Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

John 5:29

a resurrection of life

In this phrase, Jesus uses **of** to describe a **resurrection** that results in eternal **life**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. For further discussion of this phrase, see the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: “a resurrection that results in life” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

a resurrection of judgment

In this phrase, Jesus uses **of** to describe a **resurrection** that results in eternal **judgment**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. For further discussion of this phrase, see the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: “a resurrection that results in judgment” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

John 5:30

from myself

Here, **from** is used to indicate the source of Jesus' teaching and ability to do miracles. His teaching and miracles could only have authority if they came from God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "on my own authority" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Just as I hear, I judge

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "Just as I hear from the Father, I judge" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

my judgment is righteous

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **judgment** and **righteous**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. Alternate translation: "I judge rightly" or "I judge justly" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

of the one having sent me

Here, **the one having sent me** refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in [4:34](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 5:31

If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true

Here Jesus is referring to a rule in the law of Moses. According to Deuteronomy 19:15, a statement had to be confirmed by at least two witnesses in order to be considered true in legal decisions. If your audience is not familiar with the law of Moses in the Old Testament, then you can state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "You know that the law of Moses states that if I testify about myself, my testimony is not true" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

If I testify about myself

Jesus assumed that his listeners understood that he was referring to testifying about himself without any other witnesses. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "If I testify about myself without any other witnesses" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 5:32

There is another one testifying about me

Here, **another** refers to God the Father. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "There is another who is testifying about me, the Father" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 5:33

You have sent to John

Here and through 5:47, **You** is plural and refers to the Jewish leaders to whom Jesus is speaking. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “You Jewish authorities sent to John” (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

You have sent to John

Jesus is leaving out a word that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “You have sent messengers to John” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

to John

Here, **John** refers to Jesus’ cousin, often referred to as “John the Baptist.” (See: **John (the Baptist) (p.1125)**) It does not refer to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “to John the Baptist” or “to John the Immerser” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 5:34

from man

Here, **man** does not refer to any specific man, but to any human being. Alternate translation: “from mankind” or “from anyone” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

I say these things

Here, **these things** could refer to: (1) what Jesus said about John the Baptist in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “I say this about John” (2) all that Jesus has said in verses [17-33](#). Alternate translation: “I say these things about myself and John” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

so that you might be saved

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Jesus implies that God did it. Alternate translation: “so that God might save you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 5:35

That one

That one here refers to Jesus' cousin, often referred to as "John the Baptist." (See: **John (the Baptist) (p.1125)**) If it would be misunderstood to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "John the Baptist" or "John the Immerser" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

That one was the lamp that was burning and shining

Jesus uses the word **lamp** to refer to John the Baptist. In the way that lamps in those days burned oil and shined light, so John's teaching helped people understand God's truth and prepared them to receive Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could state this plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: "That one taught you the truth about God" or "That one was like a lamp that was burning and shining" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

in his light

Jesus uses the word **light** to refer to John the Baptist's teaching. In the way that light enables people to see in the dark, so John's teaching helped people understand God's truth and prepared them to receive Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could state this plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: "in his teaching" or "in his teaching that was like a light" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

for an hour

Here, **hour** refers to a short amount of time. It does not mean a 60-minute period of time or a specific point in time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "for a moment" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 5:36

for

Here, **for** indicates that what follows is an explanation of the “testimony” Jesus has mentioned in the previous clause. Alternate translation: “that testimony is”

the works

Here, **works** could refer to: (1) the miracles that Jesus did. Alternate translation: “the miracles” (2) Jesus’ miracles and teaching. Alternate translation: “the miracles and teaching”

the Father & that the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

the very works that I do—testify about me

Here Jesus is speaking of **works** as though they were a person who could **testify** about who he is. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this plainly. Alternate translation: “the very works that I do—are evidence for who I am” (See: **Personification (p.1060)**)

John 5:37

the Father having sent me has himself testified

The reflexive pronoun **himself** emphasizes that it is the Father, not someone less important, who has testified about who Jesus is. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this emphasis. Alternate translation: “none other than the Father himself who sent me has testified” (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1079)**)

the Father having sent me

Here this phrase refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in [5:23](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 5:38

his word

Here, **word** refers to the teachings that God gave to his people in the Scriptures. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “his teachings” or “the Scriptures he gave us” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

you do not have his word remaining in you

Here Jesus is speaking of God’s **word** as if it were an object that could remain inside people. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you do not live according to his word” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the one whom he has sent, this one

This phrase refers to Jesus. He is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation, as in the UST: “me, the one whom he has sent, me whom” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

John 5:39

in them you have eternal life

Some Jews in Jesus' time believed that a person could earn their way to heaven by studying the Scriptures and doing good deeds. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "you will get eternal life if you study them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 935)**)

in them & these are the ones

In this verse, **them**, **these**, and **the ones** all refer to the Scriptures. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state some of these words explicitly. Alternate translation: "in the Scriptures ... these Scriptures are the ones" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

these are the ones testifying about me

Here Jesus is speaking of the Scriptures as though they were a person who is **testifying** about who he is. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this plainly. Alternate translation: "these indicate who I am" (See: **Personification (p.1060)**)

John 5:40

you are not willing to come to me

Here, **come** does not mean to merely come near Jesus, but it means to follow him and be his disciple. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “you are not willing to come and by my disciples” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

you might have life

Here, **life** refers to eternal life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “you might have eternal life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 5:41

from men

Although the term **men** is masculine, Jesus uses the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “from people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

John 5:42

the love of God

This could mean: (1) they did not **love God**. Alternate translation: "love for God" (2) they had not received God's love. Alternate translation: "love from God" (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

John 5:43

in the name of my Father

Here, John records Jesus using the word **name** to refer to God's power and authority. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "with the authority of my Father" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

of & Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

you do not receive me

Here, **receive** means to accept a person into one's presence with friendliness. See how you translated a similar phrase in [1:11](#). Alternate translation: "you do not welcome me"

If another comes in his own name

Here, John records Jesus using the word **name** to refer to authority. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "If another comes in his own authority" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 5:44

How are you able to believe, receiving glory from one another, and are not seeking the glory that is from the only God

Jesus is using the question form for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "There is no way you are able to believe, receiving glory from one another, and are not seeking the glory that is from the only God!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

to believe

John records Jesus leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "to believe me" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

receiving glory from one another

Here, **receiving** could refer to: (1) the time they are receiving glory. Alternate translation: "while receiving glory from one another" (2) a causal statement. Alternate translation: "since receiving glory from one another"

John 5:45

The one accusing you is Moses, in whom you have hoped

Moses here could refer to: (1) the person named Moses who gave the Israelites the law of Moses. (2) the law of Moses itself. Alternate translation: "Moses accuses you in the law, the very law in which you have hoped" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 5:46

For if you believed Moses, you would believe me

John records Jesus making a conditional statement that sounds hypothetical, but he is already convinced that the condition is not true. Jesus knows that the Jewish leaders do not truly believe Moses. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that the speaker believes is not true. Alternate translation: "you must not believe Moses since you do not believe me" (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.958)**)

John 5:47

if you do not believe

John records Jesus speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what Jesus is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since you do not believe" (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.963)**)

how will you believe my words

Jesus is using the question form for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "you will certainly never believe my words!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

my words

Here, **words** refers to what Jesus said to these Jewish leaders. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "what I have told you" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 6

John 6 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus' fourth sign: Jesus feeds a large crowd (6:1–14)

Jesus' fifth sign: Jesus walks on the Sea of Galilee (6:15–21)

Jesus says he is the bread of life (6:22–71)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

King

The king of any nation was the richest and most powerful person in that nation. The people wanted Jesus to be their king because he gave them food. They thought he would make the Jews into the richest and most powerful nation in the world. They did not understand that Jesus came to die so God could forgive his people's sins and that the world would persecute his people.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Bread

Bread was the most common and important food in Jesus' day, so the word "bread" was their general word for "food." It is often difficult to translate the word "bread" into the languages of people who do not eat bread, because the general word for food in some languages refers to food that did not exist in Jesus' culture. Jesus used the word "bread" to refer to himself. He wanted the people to understand that they need him so they can have eternal life, just as people need food to sustain physical life. (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche\]\]](#))

Eating the flesh and drinking the blood

When Jesus said, "unless you would eat the flesh of the Son of Man and would drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves," he was speaking of believing in his sacrificial death on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. He also knew that before he died he would tell his followers to commemorate this sacrifice by eating bread and drinking wine. In the event this chapter describes, he expected that his hearers would understand that he was using a metaphor but would not understand to what the metaphor referred. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/flesh\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/blood\]\]](#))

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Parenthetical ideas

Several times in this passage, John explains something or gives the reader some background information needed to better understand the story. These explanations are intended to give the reader some additional knowledge without interrupting the flow of the narrative. This information is placed inside parentheses.

“Son of Man”

Jesus refers to himself as the “Son of Man” several times in this chapter. Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking about someone else. See the discussion of this concept in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sonofman\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#))

John 6:1

General Information:

Jesus had traveled from Jerusalem to Galilee. A crowd has followed him up a mountainside. Verses 1–4 tell the setting of this part of the story. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

After these things

This phrase, **After these things**, introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Some time later” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

of the Sea of Galilee (of Tiberias

The **Sea of Galilee** was called by several names, one of which was Sea **of Tiberias**. (See: **Sea of Galilee, Sea of Kinnereth, lake of Gennesaret, Sea of Tiberias (p.1140)**) If having two different names for the same place would be confusing in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “of the Sea of Galilee (also known as the Sea of Tiberias)” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:2

a great crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

signs

See how you translated **signs** in [2:11](#). See also the discussion of **signs** in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: “significant miracles”

John 6:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 6:4

Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near

In this verse John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to give background information about when the events happened. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information.

Alternate translation: "This event took place near the time of the Passover, the festival of the Jews" (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

John 6:5

Then

Then here could mean: (1) what follows is the next event in the story. Alternate translation: “Next” (2) what follows is the result of what happened in the previous verses. Alternate translation: “Therefore,” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.971)**)

having lifted up his eyes

Here, “lifted up his eyes” is an idiom that means to look upward. See how you translated a similar phrase in [4:35](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

a great crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 6:6

But he said this, testing him, for he himself knew what he was going to do

In this verse John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to explain why Jesus asked Philip where to buy bread. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "Now he said this at that time to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do" (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

testing him

Here John is stating the purpose for which Jesus asked Philip the question in the previous verse. In your translation, follow the conventions of your language for purpose clauses. Alternate translation (without a comma preceding): "so that he could test Philip" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.965)**)

him

Here, **him** refers to Philip. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Philip" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

he himself knew

Here, John uses the reflexive pronoun **himself** to make clear that the word **he** refers to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus himself knew" (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1079)**)

John 6:7

200 denarii {worth} of bread

The word **denarii** is the plural form of “denarius.” It was a denomination of money in the Roman Empire that was equivalent to one days’ wages. Alternate translation: “The amount of bread that cost 200 days’ wages” (See: **Biblical Money (p.948)**)

John 6:8

of Simon Peter

See how you translated the name **Simon Peter** in [1:40](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 6:9

five barley bread loaves

The grain **barley** was a common grain eaten by the poor in Israel because it was cheaper than wheat. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/other/barley\]\]](#)) *They would bake the barley into bread loaves**, which are lumps of flour dough that a person has shaped and baked. Alternate translation: “five loaves of barley bread” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1097)**)

what are these to so many

Andrew is using the question form to emphasize that they do not have enough food to feed everyone. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “these are not enough to feed so many!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1082)**)

John 6:10

Jesus said, “Make the men sit down

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “Jesus said to make the men sit down” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.979)**)

the men

Although the term **men** is masculine, Jesus uses the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “the people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

ἦν δὲ χόρτος πολὺς ἐν τῷ τόπῳ. ἀνέπεσαν οὖν οἱ ἄνδρες, τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὡς πεντακισχίλιοι.

If it would be natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: “So the men sat down, about 5,000 in number. (Now there was a lot of grass in the place.)” (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

Now there was a lot of grass in the place

John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to give background information about the place where this event happened. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: “The place where the people were all coming together had a lot of grass” (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

So the men sat down, about 5,000 in number

Here, **men** refers specifically to adult males. Although the term for “men” used earlier in this verse refers to a group that included men, women, and children, here John is counting only the **men**.

John 6:11

the loaves

This means **loaves** of bread, which are lumps of flour dough that a person has shaped and baked. These **loaves** are those five barley **loaves** mentioned in verse 9. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the five loaves of barley bread” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

having given thanks

John leaves out some words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “having given thanks to God for the food” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

he gave them

Here, **he** refers to “Jesus and his disciples.” Alternate translation: “Jesus and his disciples gave them” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

the fish

These **fish** are the two **fish** mentioned in verse 9. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “those two small fish” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:12

they were filled

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “they had finished eating” or “they had filled themselves” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

he says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

he says to his disciples, “Gather up

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “he says to his disciples to gather up” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.979)**)

John 6:13

baskets

Here, **baskets** refers to large baskets that were used for carrying food and goods while traveling. If your language has a word for this kind of basket, you could use it here. Alternate translation: “large traveling baskets” (See:

Translate Unknowns (p.1097))

John 6:14

the men

Although the term **men** is masculine, John uses the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “the people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

having seen the sign he did

This clause could refer to: (1) the time that they said the words which follow in the verse. Alternate translation: “at the time they saw the sign he did” (2) the reason that they said what follows in the verse. Alternate translation: “because they saw the sign he did”

the sign

Here, **sign** refers to the Jesus miraculously feeding the large crowd that was described in verses 5-13. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the sign of miraculously feeding the large crowd that” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Prophet coming into the world

Here, **the Prophet** refers to a prophet the Jews were waiting for, based on God’s promise to send a prophet like Moses, which is recorded in Deuteronomy 18:15. If your readers will not be familiar with this Old Testament reference, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Prophet whom God said he would send into the world” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:15

having realized that they were about to come

This clause could refer to: (1) the time that Jesus decided to withdraw. Alternate translation: “at the time he realized that they were about to come” (2) the reason that Jesus decided to withdraw. Alternate translation: “because he realized that they were about to come”

by himself alone

Here John uses the reflexive pronoun **himself** to emphasize that Jesus was completely alone. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this emphasis. Alternate translation: “completely alone” (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1079)**)

John 6:16

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

This is the next event in the story. Jesus' disciples go out onto the Sea of Galilee in a boat.

the sea

Here and throughout this chapter, **sea** refers to the Sea of Galilee. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly, as modeled by UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:17

and darkness had already happened, but Jesus had not yet come to them

In these clauses John provides background information about the situation in order to help readers understand what happens in this story. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

John 6:18

A strong wind was blowing, and the sea was being aroused

The first clause about the wind indicates the reason the **sea was being aroused** in the second clause. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "Because a strong wind was blowing, the sea was being aroused" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

was being aroused

John uses **aroused** to refer to the wind causing the sea to become turbulent. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "was being stirred up" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the sea was being aroused

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the wind was causing the sea to be aroused" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 6:19

having rowed

The boats used on the Sea of Galilee usually had positions for two, four, or six people who sat together and **rowed** with oars on each side of the boat. If your readers would not be familiar with rowed boats, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “having propelled the boat through the water by using oars” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

about 25 or 30 stadia

The word **stadia** is the plural of “stadium,” which is a Roman measurement of distance equivalent to about 185 meters or a little over 600 feet. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. Alternate translation: “about four and a half or five and a half kilometers” or “about three or three and a half miles” (See: **Biblical Distance (p.942)**)

they see

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 6:20

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 6:21

they were willing to receive him into the boat

It is implied that Jesus got **into the boat**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “they gladly received him into the boat” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

John 6:22

the crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

on the other side of the sea

Here, **the other side of the sea** refers to the side of the Sea of Galilee where Jesus had fed the crowd. It does not refer to the side of the Sea of Galilee that he and his disciples arrived at in the previous verse. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “on the side of the sea where Jesus performed the miracle” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

there was no other boat there except one

Here, **one** refers to the boat that the disciples had taken to cross the Sea of Galilee. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “there was no other boat there except the one that the disciples had taken” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:23

Other boats came from Tiberias close to the place where they had eaten the bread loaves

In this verse John provides background information about the story. The day after Jesus miraculously fed the crowd, some **boats** with people from **Tiberias** came to see Jesus. However, Jesus and his disciples had left that place the night before. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "Other boats came with people from Tiberias close to the place where the crowd had eaten the bread loaves" (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

the Lord

Here, **the Lord** refers to Jesus. It does not refer to God the Father. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly, as modeled by the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 935)**)

after the Lord had given thanks

John leaves out some words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "after the Lord had given thanks to God for the food" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 6:24

Therefore

Therefore indicates that this verse is the result of what happened in verse 22. This verse resumes the narrative that was interrupted by the background information in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Because Jesus and his disciples had gone to the other side of the Sea of Galilee” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

the crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in 5:13. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

are

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

into the boats

These **boats** are the **boats** mentioned in the previous verse. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “into the boats that had come from Tiberias” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

seeking Jesus

Here John is stating the purpose for which the crowd went to Capernaum. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation (without a comma preceding): “so that they could seek Jesus” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.965)**)

John 6:25

on the other side of the sea

Here, **on the other side** refers to the side of the Sea of Galilee that is opposite the side where Jesus had miraculously fed the crowd. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “on the opposite side of the sea from where Jesus had fed the crowd” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:26

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase is in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

signs

See how you translated this term in [2:11](#). See also the discussion of **signs** in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: “significant miracles”

were filled

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “filled yourselves” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 6:27

for the food that endures to eternal life

Here Jesus is using the word **food** to refer to himself, because he is the source of salvation, the One who gives **eternal life** to all who trust him. Jesus lasts forever, and so does the **eternal life** that he gives. However, the crowd does not understand this, and Jesus does not tell them this plainly at this time. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

for the food that endures to eternal life

John records Jesus leaving out a word that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply this word from the previous clause. Alternate translation: “work for the food that endures to eternal life” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

the Son of Man will give & this one

These two expressions are all refer to Jesus. He is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: “I, the Son of Man, will give ... me” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

which the Son of Man will give you

This phrase could give further information about: (1) “the food that endures to eternal life.” Alternate translation: “that is, the food the Son of Man will give you” (2) “eternal life.” Alternate translation: “that is, the life the Son of Man will give you” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.981)**)

Son of Man & God the Father

Son of Man and **God the Father** are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

the Son of Man

See how you translated **the Son of Man** in [1:51](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

has set his seal on this one

To “**set a seal**” on something means to place a mark on it in order to show to whom it belongs or to certify its authenticity. Here, the phrase is used as an idiom and could mean: (1) that the Father approves of the Son in every way. Alternate translation: “has affirmed his approval of him” (2) that the Son belongs to the Father. Alternate translation: “has affirmed that the Son belongs to him” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 6:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 6:29

This is the work of God: that you would believe in the one whom that one has sent

Here, Jesus says which **work** one must do in order to receive “the food that endures to eternal life” that was mentioned in verse 27. This **work** is not any kind of labor or deed that can be done, but it is faith in Jesus, which is a gift from God ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “This is the work of God that is required to receive the food that endures to eternal life: that you believe in the one whom that one has sent” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the one whom that one has sent

This phrase refers to Jesus. He is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

that one has sent

Here, **that one** refers to God the Father. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “God has sent” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

John 6:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 6:31

Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness

In this verse, John assumes that his readers will know that the crowd is referring to a story recorded in the Old Testament book of Exodus. In that story, the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron because they were hungry. God responded by providing a flake-like food that fell from the sky and could be baked into bread. The people called this flake-like food “manna.” (See: **manna (p.1130)**) You could indicate this explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers, particularly if they would not know the story. Alternate translation: “Our fathers ate the manna when they were wandering in the wilderness after leaving Egypt” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Our fathers

The crowd used **fathers** to refer to their ancestors. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Our ancestors” or “Our forefathers” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

it is written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the prophets wrote in the Scriptures” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

it is written

Here the crowd uses **it is written** to introduce a quotation from an Old Testament book (Psalm 78:24). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that the crowd is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “it was written in the scriptures” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: “it is written that he gave them bread from heaven to eat” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

He gave them bread from heaven to eat

He here could refer to: (1) Moses, in which case the crowd was mistakenly quoting a scripture about God and applying it to Moses. This is possible because Jesus says in the next verse, “Moses has not given you the bread from heaven.” Alternate translation: “Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat” (2) God, which is who it referred to in the scripture the crowd is quoting. Alternate translation: “God gave them bread from heaven to eat” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

bread

Here, John records the crowd using the word **bread** to represent food in general that is needed to sustain life. The manna that God gave the Israelites from heaven was not **bread**, but a food that could be baked into **bread**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “food” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 6:32

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

Moses has not given you

Here John records Jesus speaking in a way that emphasizes that **Moses** was not the source of manna in the wilderness. He seems to be correcting the crowd's incorrect understanding of the scripture they quoted in the previous verse. Use whatever form best communicates this kind of negative emphasis in your language. Alternate translation: "Moses was not the one who has given you"

the bread

Here John records Jesus using the word **bread** to represent food in general that is needed to sustain life. See how you translated this word in the previous verse. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

but my Father gives

This phrase serves two purposes. First, it implies that the **Father**, not Moses, was the source of the bread from heaven mentioned by the crowd in the previous verse. Second, it indicates that the **Father** is still giving bread from heaven, although not the kind of bread the crowd is expecting. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. You may also want to start a new sentence. Alternate translation: "Rather, my Father has given that bread and now gives" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

my Father gives you the true bread from heaven

Here Jesus is using **true bread** to refer to himself. However, the crowd does not understand this, and Jesus does not tell them this plainly until verse [35](#). Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

bread

See how you translated the word **bread** earlier in this verse and in the previous verse. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 6:33

the bread of God is

Here Jesus is using **bread** to refer to himself. However, the crowd does not understand this, and Jesus does not tell them this plainly until verse 35. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

the bread of God

This phrase could mean: (1) the bread came from God. Alternate translation: “the bread that God gives” (2) the bread belongs to God. Alternate translation: “God’s bread” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

the one coming down from heaven

This phrase refers to Jesus. However, the crowd does not understand this and Jesus does not tell them this plainly at this time. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

life

Here, **life** refers to eternal life. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly, as modeled in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

to the world

Here, **the world** refers to the people who live in it. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the people living in the world” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 6:34

Sir

The crowd calls Jesus **Sir** in order to show respect or politeness. (See: **lord, Lord, master, sir (p.1128)**)

bread

Here, **bread** could refer to: (1) food in general, as the word was used by the crowd in [6:31](#). This would mean that the crowd did not understand that Jesus was calling himself the bread from heaven. Alternate translation: "food" (2) some gift from God of which the crowd was uncertain. This would mean that the crowd recognized that Jesus was talking about something more spiritual than mere food but did not understand that he was talking about himself. Alternate translation: "heavenly food" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 6:35

I am the bread of life

John records Jesus continuing the **bread** metaphor to refer to himself. In Jesus' culture, **bread** was the primary food people ate to stay alive. Just as **bread** is necessary for sustaining physical life, Jesus is necessary for giving spiritual life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly or with a simile. Alternate translation: "Just as food keeps you physically alive, I can give you spiritual life" (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p. 945)**)

the bread of life

Jesus uses **of life** to the source of the **life** about which he is speaking. If this is not clear in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "the bread that produces life" (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

of life

Here, **life** refers to eternal life. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "of eternal life" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

The one coming to me will certainly not hunger, and the one believing in me will certainly not ever thirst

Jesus speaks about the person who trusts in him by continuing the metaphor of food that he began in verse 32. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this metaphor as a simile. Alternate translation: "The one coming to me will be like a person who never gets hungry, and the one believing in me will be like a person who never gets thirsty" (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.945)**)

The one coming to me will certainly not hunger, and the one believing in me will certainly not ever thirst

These two clauses mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize that anyone who trusts in Jesus will never lack spiritual satisfaction. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "The one who trusts me will certainly never lack spiritual satisfaction again" (See: **Doublet (p. 987)**)

The one coming to me

Here, **coming** does not mean to merely come near Jesus. It means to believe in him and be his disciple. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "The one coming to be my disciple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

will certainly not hunger, & will certainly not ever thirst

John records Jesus using a figure of speech twice in the same verse to express a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that has the opposite of the intended meaning. If this is confusing in your language, you can express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: "will always be full ... will always have his thirst quenched" (See: **Litotes (p.1039)**)

John 6:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 6:37

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

will come to me, & the one coming to me

In this verse, **come** and **coming** do not mean to merely come near Jesus, but they mean to believe in him and be his disciple. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “will come to be my disciples ... the one coming to be my disciple” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the one coming to me I will certainly not throw out

Jesus is using a figure of speech here to express a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that means the opposite of the intended meaning. If this is confusing in your language, you can express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: “I will keep everyone who comes to me” (See: **Litotes (p. 1039)**)

John 6:38

For

Connecting Statement:

For introduces the reason why Jesus will not throw out anyone who comes to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “This is true because” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p.968))

of the one having sent me

Here, **the one who sent me** refers to God. See how you translated it in [4:34](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

John 6:39

of the one having sent me

Here, **the one who sent me** refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in [4:34](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

I would not lose from it anyone whom

Jesus is using a figure of speech here to express a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that means the opposite of the intended meaning. If this is confusing in your language, you can express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: "I should keep all of them whom he has given" (See: **Litotes** (p.1039))

I would not lose from it & but will raise it up

Here, **it** refers to the whole group of believers as a whole. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly or use a plural pronoun. Alternate translation: "I would not lose from the group of believers ... but will raise that group up" or "I would not lose from them ... but will raise them up" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them** (p.1068))

will raise it up

Here, to **raise** up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "will cause them to live again" (See: **Idiom** (p.1020))

on the last day

Here, **the last day** refers to "the day of the Lord," which is the time when God judges everyone, Jesus returns to earth, and the bodies of those who are dead are raised from their graves. (See: **day of the Lord, day of Yahweh** (p.1114)) If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "on the day when I return and judge everyone" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

John 6:40

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone

For introduces the reason for the Father's will that Jesus stated in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "What I have just said is my Father's will, because his will is also that everyone" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

of my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

everyone seeing the Son

Jesus uses **sees** to refer to understanding something. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "everyone who understands who the Son is" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

I will raise him up

Here, to **raise** up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. See how you translated this term in the previous verse. (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

on the last day

Here, **the last day** refers to "the day of the Lord," which is the time when God judges everyone, Jesus returns to earth, and the bodies of those who are dead are raised from their graves. (See: **day of the Lord, day of Yahweh (p.1114)**) See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "on the day when I return and judge everyone" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:41

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

The Jewish leaders interrupt Jesus as he is speaking to the crowd. His conversation with these Jewish leaders is in verses [41-58](#).

Then the Jews

Here and to the end of this chapter, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

I am the bread

Here the Jewish leaders paraphrase what Jesus said in verse [33](#). See how you translated **bread** and **come down from heaven** in verse [33](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 6:42

Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know

Here the Jewish leaders are using the form of a question to emphasize that they believe that Jesus is just a normal person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation, and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "This is just Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

How then does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven

Here the Jewish leaders are using the form of a question to emphasize that they do not believe that Jesus came from heaven. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "He is lying when he says that he came from heaven!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

How then does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: "How then does he now say that he has come down from heaven?" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

John 6:43

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 6:44

to come to me

Here, **come** does not mean to merely come near Jesus. It means to believe in him and be his disciple. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “to come to be my disciple” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

having sent me

Here, this phrase refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in [5:23](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

would draw him

Alternate translation: “would pull him” or “would drag him”

him, & him

Although the pronoun **him** is masculine, Jesus uses the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “that person” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

will raise him up

See how you translated this phrase in [6:40](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

on the last day

Here, **the last day** refers to “the day of the Lord,” which is the time when God judges everyone, Jesus returns to earth, and the bodies of those who are dead are raised from their graves. (See: **day of the Lord, day of Yahweh (p.1114)**) See how you translated this phrase in verse [40](#). Alternate translation: “on the day when I return and judge everyone” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:45

It is written in the prophets

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation, as in the UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

It is written in the prophets

Here Jesus uses **It is written** to introduce a quotation from an Old Testament book (Isaiah 54:13). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Jesus is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: "It had been written by the prophets in the scriptures" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

in the prophets, 'And all will be taught by God

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: "in the prophets that all will be taught by God" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

all will be taught by God

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will teach all" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

comes to me

Here, **comes** does not mean to merely come near Jesus. It means to believe in him and be his disciple. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "comes to be my disciple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:46

the Father, & has seen the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

the one being from God—he has seen the Father

John records Jesus referring to himself in the third person. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the first person. Alternate translation: “me, the who is from God—I have seen the Father” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

John 6:47

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

the one believing

John records Jesus leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “the one believing in me” or “the one believing that I am the Messiah” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 6:48

I am the bread of life

See how you translated this phrase in [John 6:35](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 6:49

Your fathers

Jesus uses **fathers** to refer to ancestors. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly.
Alternate translation: "Your forefathers" or "Your ancestors" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

ate the manna in the wilderness

See how you translated this expression in verse [31](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:50

This is the bread which comes down from heaven, so that a {person} might eat from it and might not die

Jesus continues using the **bread** metaphor to express that one must believe in him in order to have eternal life just as one must **eat bread** to sustain physical life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this as a simile. Alternate translation: "I am this bread that comes down from heaven, just as one must eat bread to live, so must one believe in me in order to not die spiritually" (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.945)**)

This is & it

John records Jesus referring to himself in the third person. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the first person. Alternate translation: "I am ... me" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

the bread

See how you translated this term in verse [48](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

might eat from it

Here Jesus uses **eat** to refer to believing in him for salvation. What Jesus said plainly in verse [47](#) he says here. If this would confuse your readers, you could express this with a simile. Alternate translation: "might believe in me as one eats bread to live" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

might not die

Here Jesus uses **die** to refer to spiritual death, which is eternal punishment in hell that occurs after physical death. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "might not die spiritually" or "might not experience spiritual death" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 6:51

I am the living bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eats from this bread, he will live into eternity

As in the previous verse, Jesus continues using the **bread** metaphor to say that one must believe in him in order to have eternal life just as one **eats bread** to sustain physical life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this as a simile. Alternate translation: "I am the living bread that comes down from heaven. Just as one lives if they eat bread, so does one who believes in me live forever" (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p. 945)**)

I am

Jesus uses this phrase emphatically to make a strong statement about who he is. Use the most natural way to express emphasis in your language. Alternate translation: "I myself am" or "I am indeed" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the living bread

Here, **living** refers to being the source of life or having the ability to produce life, which is synonymous with "of life" in the phrase "the bread of life," which Jesus used in 6:35. See how you translated "the bread of life" in 6:35. Alternate translation: "the bread that gives life" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

If anyone eats from this bread, he will live into eternity

Here and in the previous verse, Jesus uses **eats** to refer to believing in Jesus for salvation. Jesus gives eternal life to those who believe in him. See how you translated "eat" in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "Just as food keeps you physically alive, I can give you spiritual life" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

my flesh

Here, John records Jesus using **flesh** to refer to his whole physical body. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "my body" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the bread

Here Jesus is using the **bread** metaphor slightly differently from how he has used it previously. Here it refers specifically to his physical body, which he would sacrifice on the cross to pay for the sins of those who believe in him. Since Jesus says this explicitly at the end of the verse, you do not need to explain its meaning further. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

for the life of the world

Here, **life** refers to eternal life. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "for the eternal life of the world" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 935)**)

for the life of the world

Here, **the world** is used to refer to the people in the world. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “for the life of the people in the world” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 6:52

Then the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

the Jews began to argue among themselves, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “then the Jews began to argue among themselves, and they said” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

How is this one able to give us his flesh to eat

Here the Jewish leaders are using the form of a question to emphasize that they are reacting negatively to what Jesus has said about **his flesh**. If this might be misunderstood in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “There is no way that this one is able to give us his flesh to eat!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

his flesh

Here, John records the Jews using **flesh** to refer to Jesus’ whole physical body. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “his body” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 6:53

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

you would eat the flesh of the Son of Man and would drink his blood

Here Jesus is using the phrases **eat the flesh** and **drink his blood**. Just as people need to **eat** and **drink** in order to live, people need to trust Jesus in order to have eternal life. However, the Jews did not understand this. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

you would eat the flesh of the Son of Man and would drink his blood

These two phrases, **eat the flesh** and **drink his blood**, mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize that trusting in Jesus is the only way to have eternal life. Because Jesus' **flesh** and **blood** are important concepts, do not combine them. Instead, you could communicate the emphasis in a way that is most natural in your language. Alternate translation: "you would indeed eat the flesh of the Son of Man and would indeed drink his blood" (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

of the Son of Man and would drink his blood

Jesus is speaking of himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

of the Son of Man

See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

you do not have life

Here, **life** refers to eternal life. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "you do not have eternal life" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:54

The one eating my flesh and drinking my blood has eternal life

The phrases “eating my flesh” and “drinking my blood” are a metaphor for trusting Jesus. Just as people need food and drink in order to live, people need to trust Jesus in order to have eternal life. However, the Jews did not understand this. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

The one eating my flesh and drinking my blood has eternal life

As in the previous verse, these two phrases, **eat the flesh** and **drink his blood**, mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used for emphasis. See how you translated the similar expressions in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “Indeed, the one eating my flesh and drinking my blood surely has eternal life” (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

will raise him up

See how you translated this phrase in [6:40](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

in the last day

Here, **the last day** refers to “the day of the Lord,” which is the time when God judges everyone, Jesus returns to earth, and the bodies of those who are dead are raised from their graves. (See: **day of the Lord, day of Yahweh (p.1114)**) See how you translated this phrase in verse [39](#). Alternate translation: “on the day when I return and judge everyone” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:55

my flesh & my blood

Here Jesus is using the phrases **my flesh** and **my blood** to refer to believing in him. However, the Jews did not understand this. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink

Here Jesus is using the phrases **true food** and **true drink** to say that he, Jesus, gives life to those who trust in him. However, the Jews did not understand this. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink

As in the previous two verses, these two phrases mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used for emphasis. See how you translated the similar expressions in the previous two verses. Alternate translation: “my flesh is indeed true food, and my blood is indeed true drink” (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

John 6:56

The one eating my flesh and drinking my blood

See how you translated this phrase in verse [54](#). (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

remains in me

Here, and frequently in John's Gospel, **remains in** indicates being united in a continuous personal relationship with someone. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. See the discussion of this expression in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: "has a close relationship with me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

and I in him

Here, John records Jesus leaving out a word that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If this would be confusing in your language, you could supply the word from the previous clause. Alternate translation: "and I remain in him" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 6:57

the living Father

Here, **living** refers to being the source of life or having the ability to create life. This is also how Jesus used **living** in verse 51. See how you translated **living** in verse 51. Alternate translation: “the Father who causes life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Father & Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

and I live because of the Father

Here, **live** refers to being the source of life or having the ability to create life. It does not mean to merely be alive. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “and I cause life because of the Father” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

and I live because of the Father

Here, **because of the Father** indicates the reason why Jesus has the ability to cause life. God the Father gave Jesus the ability to cause others to live. Jesus explained this concept in 5:25–26. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “and I cause life because the Father has enabled me to do so” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

so the one eating me

Jesus is using **eating me** to refer to trusting him. However, the Jews did not understand this. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. See how you translated similar expressions in verses 53–56. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

he will also live because of me

Here, **live** refers to having eternal life. It does not refer to being the source of life, as **living** and **live** are used previously in this verse. If this shift in meaning might confuse your readers, you could state the difference explicitly. Alternate translation: “he will also have eternal life because of me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:58

This is the bread that has come down from heaven

John records Jesus referring to himself in the third person. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

This is the bread & this bread

Jesus is continuing the **bread** metaphor to refer to himself. Just as **bread** is necessary for our physical life, Jesus is necessary for our spiritual life. However, the Jews did not understand this. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

the fathers

Here Jesus uses **fathers** to refer to ancestors. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the ancestors" or "the forefathers" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

not just as the fathers ate and died

John records Jesus leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous clause. Alternate translation: "this bread is not just as the bread that the fathers ate and died" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

the fathers ate and died

The phrase **ate and died** does not mean that the people died immediately after eating the bread. If this wording would confuse your readers, you could translate it in a way that shows a time gap between eating and drinking. Alternate translation: "the fathers ate and still died at a later time" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

The one eating this bread

Jesus spoke about himself as **this bread**. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

The one eating this bread

Jesus is using **eating this bread** to refer to trusting him. However, the Jews did not understand this. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

John 6:59

In this verse John gives background information about when this event happened. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

these things

Here, **these things** refers to what Jesus said to the crowd and Jewish leaders in verses [26-58](#). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “these teachings about being the bread of life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:60

having heard

Here, John leaves out a word that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “having heard this” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

This word is

Here, **word** stands for what Jesus had just spoken to the crowd in verses [26–58](#). If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “What he has just said is” or “These words are” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

hard

Here, **hard** refers to something that causes a negative reaction because it is harsh or unpleasant. It does not refer to something that is difficult to understand, but something that is difficult to accept. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “hard to accept” or “offensive” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

who is able to listen to it

Here the disciples use the question form for emphasis. If this would be confusing in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “no one is able to listen to it!” or “it is too hard to listen to!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 6:61

But Jesus, knowing in himself

This phrase implies that Jesus had supernatural knowledge. It indicates that Jesus knew what his disciples were saying even though he did not hear what they said. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Even though no one told Jesus, he knew” or “Even though Jesus had not heard them, he was fully aware” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

about this, & this

In this verse, **this** refers to what Jesus had just spoken to the crowd in verses [26–58](#). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “about these teachings ... what I teach” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

you

Here and throughout [6:61–71](#) **you** is plural and refers to Jesus’ disciples. If your language distinguishes between singular and plural second person pronouns, you should use the plural form of **you**. Alternate translation: “you disciples of mine” (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

John 6:62

if you would see the Son of Man going up to where he was before

Here, John records Jesus using only one part of a conditional sentence. He leaves out the second part of the conditional sentence for emphasis. Many languages need to have both parts of a conditional sentence in order to make the sentence complete. If this is true for your language, you could supply the second clause from the previous verse. Alternate translation: “if you would see the Son of Man going up to where he was before, would it offend you?” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

the Son of Man going up to where he was before

Jesus is speaking of himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

the Son of Man

See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

to where he was before

This phrase refers to heaven, where Jesus was **before** he came down to earth. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “to heaven, where I used to be” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:63

The Spirit is the one making alive

Here, **making alive** refers to giving eternal life, not physical life. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “The Spirit is the one giving eternal life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the flesh

Here, **the flesh** could refer to: (1) human nature, as in the UST. (2) Jesus’ body. Alternate translation: “my flesh” (3) both human nature and Jesus’ body. “your nature and my flesh” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

profits nothing

Here, **profit** means to be beneficial or useful. It does not mean to earn money. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “has no benefit” or “is no help at all” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

The words & they are life

Here, **words** stands for the teachings that Jesus had just spoken to the crowd in verses [26–58](#). If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “The teachings ... these teachings are life” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

are spirit

This could mean: (1) from the Spirit. Alternate translation: “are from the Spirit” (2) about the Spirit. Alternate translation: “are about the Spirit”

and they are life

This could mean: (1) give life. Alternate translation: “and they give life” (2) about life. Alternate translation: “and they are about life”

life

Here, **life** refers to eternal life. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:64

For Jesus knew from the beginning who are the ones not believing and who is the one that will be betraying him

In this sentence John gives background information to explain why Jesus said the earlier part of this verse. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "Jesus said this because he knew from the start who did not believe and who would later betray him" (See: **Background Information** (p.939))

who do not believe." & the ones not believing

The implied object of **believe** and **believing** is Jesus or Jesus' teaching. If your language requires an object for these words, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "who do not believe in me ... the ones not believing in me" or "who do not believe what I say ... the ones not believing what I say" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

John 6:65

Because of this

Here, **this** refers to the information Jesus said in the previous verse. If it would be misunderstood for your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Because of the disbelief I have just told you about” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

no one is able to come to me

See how you translated the identical phrase in verse [44](#). Alternate translation: “no one is able to come to be my disciple” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

it would have been granted to him

Here, the pronoun **it** refers to the ability to come to Jesus and be his disciple. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the ability to come to me would have been granted to him” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

it would have been granted to him by the Father

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the Father would give it to him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 6:66

stayed behind

Here, **stayed behind** is an idiom that refers to going back to living the way one had lived previously. Here, these people left Jesus to go back to living the way they had lived before they met him. If this might confuse your readers, you could state its meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “returned to their former manner of living” or “went back to their previous way of life” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

no longer were walking with him

Although Jesus did walk from one place to another, here **walking** is used to refer to how a person lives and behaves. These people were **no longer** living according to Jesus’ teaching and thus were no longer his disciples. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “no longer obeyed his teachings” or “no longer were his disciples” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 6:67

to the Twelve

John is using the adjective **Twelve** as a noun in order to indicate a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “the 12 apostles” or “the 12 men whom he had appointed to be apostles” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1049)**)

to the Twelve

If your language does not ordinarily use adjectives as nouns, you may be able to do that in this case, since this is a title by which the apostles were known. Even though it is a number, if you translate it as a title, as the ULT does, follow the conventions for titles in your language. For example, capitalize main words and write out numbers rather than use digits. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

You do not want to go away also, do you

John records Jesus asking this question in a way that expects a negative response. He does this to contrast **the Twelve** from the many other disciples who had just abandoned him. If your language has a question form that assumes a negative response, you should use it here. Alternate translation: “You probably do not want to go away also, am I right?” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:68

Simon Peter

See how you translated the name **Simon Peter** in [1:40](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

Lord, to whom will we go

Simon Peter is using the form of a question to emphasize that he desires to follow only Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Lord, we could never follow anyone but you!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

You have words of eternal life

Peter uses **of** to describe **words** that give **eternal life**. If this is not clear in your language, you could use express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "You have words that give eternal life" (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

words

John records Peter using the term **words** to describe the things that Jesus taught by using words. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the teaching" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 6:69

we

When Peter says **we**, he is speaking of himself and the rest of the twelve disciples, so **we** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.998)**)

the Holy One of God

Peter uses **of** to describe **the Holy One** who comes from **God**. If this is not clear in your language, you could use express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "the Holy One from God" (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

John 6:70

Did not I choose you, the Twelve, and one of you is a devil

Jesus gives this remark in the form of a question in order to emphasize that one of the twelve disciples will betray him. Alternate translation: "I chose you, the Twelve, myself, and one of you is a devil!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

the Twelve

See how you translated **the Twelve** in verse [67](#). (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1049)**)

one of you is a devil

The word **devil** could mean: (1) one of Jesus' twelve disciples was a wicked person whose thoughts and actions resembled those of the **devil** or was being influenced or controlled by the **devil**. It does not mean that this person actually was the devil in human form. It also does not imply that there is more than one devil. Alternate translation: "one of you is wicked like the devil" or "one of you is controlled by the devil" (2) one of Jesus' twelve disciples was speaking harmful and untrue things about Jesus to others. This meaning is possible because the word translated **devil** can also mean "slanderer." Alternate translation: "one of you is a slanderer" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 6:71

General Information:

In this verse John provides background information about what Jesus said in the previous verse. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

of Judas, {son} of Simon Iscariot

Judas and **Simon** are names of two men. This **Simon** is not the same as Simon Peter. **Iscariot** is a distinguishing term that most likely means he came from the village of Kerioth. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

the Twelve

See how you translated **the Twelve** in verse [67](#). (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1049)**)

John 7

John 7 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus goes to Jerusalem for the Festival of Shelters (7:1–13)

Jesus says his authority is from God (7:14–24)

Jesus says he came from God (7:25–31)

Jesus says he will return to God (7:32–36)

Jesus says he is the living water (7:37–39)

The people disagree about who Jesus is (7:40–44)

The Jewish leaders disagree about who Jesus is (7:45–53)

Translators may wish to include a note at [7:53](#) to explain to the reader why they have chosen or chosen not to translate [7:53–8:11](#). These verses are not in the best and oldest ancient manuscripts. If the translators have chosen to translate these verses, then they will want to either put them in a footnote outside of the main text or mark them in some way, such as square brackets ([]), to indicate that the passage may not have originally been in John's Gospel. (See: **Textual Variants (p.1095)**)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

“Believing in him”

A recurring theme in this chapter is the concept of believing Jesus to be the Messiah. Some people believed he was the Messiah, while others did not. Some were willing to recognize his power and even the possibility that he was a prophet, but most were unwilling to believe that he was the Messiah. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/christ\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/prophet\]\]](#))

“My time has not yet come”

This phrase and “his hour had not yet come” are used in this chapter to indicate that Jesus is in control of the events that are happening in his life.

“Living water”

This is an important metaphor used in the New Testament to refer to the Holy Spirit. See the discussion of this metaphor in the note about “living water” for [4:10](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Prophecy

In [7:33–34](#) Jesus gives a prophecy about his return to heaven without explicitly indicating his statement as prophecy.

Irony

Nicodemus explains to the other Pharisees that the Law requires them to hear directly from a person before making a judgment about that person. The Pharisees in turn made a judgment about Jesus without speaking to Jesus.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“Did not believe in him”

Jesus’ brothers did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah at the time the events in this chapter took place. (See: **believe, believer, belief, unbeliever, unbelief (p.1109)**)

“The Jews”

This term is used in two different ways in this passage. It is used specifically to refer to the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus and were trying to kill him (7:1, 11, 13, 15, 35). It is also used in 7:2 to refer to Jewish people in general. The translator may wish to use the terms “Jewish leaders” and “Jewish people” to clarify this distinction.

John 7:1

after these things

This phrase introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “some time later” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

the Jews

Here and throughout this chapter, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. Apart from one exception in [7:2](#), it does not refer to the Jewish people in general. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). Alternate translation: “the Jewish authorities” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 7:2

In this verse John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to give background information about when the events happened. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information.

Alternate translation: "This event took place near the time of the Shelters Festival, the festival of the Jews" (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

of the Jews

Unlike in the previous verse and throughout this chapter, **the Jews** here refers to the Jewish people in general. It does not refer to the Jewish leaders. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly.

Alternate translation: "of the Jewish people" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 7:3

his brothers

These were Jesus' younger **brothers**, the other sons of Mary and Joseph who were born after Jesus. Since the Father of Jesus was God and their father was Joseph, they were actually his half-brothers. That detail is not normally translated, but if your language has a specific word for a man's younger brother, it would be appropriate to use it here. Alternate translation: "his younger brothers" or "his half-brothers" (See: **Kinship (p.1037)**)

your works that you do

Here, **works** refers to the powerful miracles that Jesus was performing. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "your miracles that you do" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 7:4

seeks himself

Here, Jesus' brothers use the reflexive pronoun **himself** in order to emphasize their belief that Jesus wants to make **himself** famous. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this emphasis. Alternate translation: "seeks for his own benefit" (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1079)**)

seeks himself to be in openness

Alternate translation: "seeks publicity for himself" or "seeks public attention"

If you do these things

John records Jesus' brothers speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but they mean that it is actually true. Although they didn't believe that Jesus was the Messiah at this time, they did not deny that he was doing miracles. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what the brothers are saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since you do these things" (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.963)**)

to the world

Here, **the world** is used figurative to refer to all of the people in the world. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to all people" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 7:5

For not even his brothers were believing in him

In this verse John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to give background information about the brothers of Jesus. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "Jesus' brothers said this because even they did not believe in him" (See: **Background Information (p. 939)**)

his brothers

See how you translated **brothers** in verse 3. Alternate translation: "his younger brothers" or "his half-brothers" (See: **Kinship (p.1037)**)

John 7:6

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

My time is not yet come

This could mean: (1) It was not the right **time** for Jesus to go to Jerusalem for the festival because God had not yet told him to go. This meaning explains why he eventually went to the festival in verse 10. Alternate translation: "Now is not the right time for me to go to Jerusalem" (2) It was not the right **time** for Jesus to publicly reveal himself as the Messiah, which is what his brothers wanted him to do. Alternate translation: "Now is not the right time for me to publicly reveal myself as the Messiah" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

your

All instances of "you" and **your** in verses 6–8 are plural. They only refer to Jesus' brothers. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1003)**)

but your time is always ready

Alternate translation: "but any time is good for you"

John 7:7

The world is not able to hate you

The world here refers to the people who live in the world. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “All the people in the world are not able to hate you” (See: **Metonymy** (p. 1047))

it hates & about it & the works of it

In this verse, **it** refers to the people in **the world**. If you translated **the world** with a plural noun, then you should change these pronouns to plural form as well. Alternate translation: “they hate ... about them ... their works” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them** (p.1068))

I testify about it that the works of it are evil

Alternate translation: “I tell them that what they are doing is evil”

John 7:8

You go up

John records Jesus saying **go up** to refer to going to Jerusalem, because that city is at a higher elevation than Galilee, which is where Jesus and his brothers were at this time. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate where they would go. Alternate translation: "You go up to Jerusalem" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

my time has not yet been fulfilled

This phrase means the same as "My time is not yet come" in verse 6. See how you translated this phrase there. Alternate translation: "Now is not the right time for me to go to Jerusalem" or "Now is not the right time for me to publicly reveal myself as the Messiah" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 7:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 7:10

his brothers

See how you translated this phrase in verse 3. Alternate translation: “his younger brothers” or “his half-brothers” (See: **Kinship (p.1037)**)

he also went up

See how you translated “go up” in verse 8. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

not publicly, but as in secret

These two phrases mean the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize that Jesus did not want to attract public attention in Jerusalem. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: “very secretly” (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

John 7:11

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

Where is that one

Here, John records the Jewish leaders saying **that one** as a disrespectful way to refer to Jesus without saying his name. If your language has a similar way to refer to someone in an indirect but derogatory manner, you may use it here. Alternate translation: "Where is that so-and-so" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 935)**)

John 7:12

murmuring

Although the word translated **murmuring** usually refers to grumbling or complaining, here it refers to speaking quietly, without a negative meaning. Some people in **the crowd** were discussing who Jesus was and didn't want the religious leaders to hear them. If your word for **murmuring** only has a negative connotation in your language, use a different neutral expression. Alternate translation: "quiet discussion" or "whispering" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the crowds & the crowd

Here, **crowds** refers to several different groups of people, while **crowd** refers to a group of people in general. See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). Alternate translation: "the groups of people ... the group of people" (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

he leads the crowd astray

Here the people use **leads astray** to refer to persuading someone to believe something that is not true. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "he misleads the crowd" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 7:13

because of the fear of the Jews

John is using **of** to describe the **fear** that the people had for the Jewish leaders. If this use of the possessive form would be confusing in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: "because of their fear that the Jews would harm them" (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

of the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 7:14

the festival

Here, **the festival** refers to the Jewish Festival of Shelters mentioned in verse [1](#). See how you translated the word **festival** there. Alternate translation: “the Shelters festival”

into the temple

Since only priests could enter **the temple** building, this refers to **the temple** courtyard. John is using the word for the entire building to refer to one part of it. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “into the temple courtyard” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 7:15

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

marveled

The word translated **marveled** refers to being amazed or in wonder of something in either a negative or positive way. Since the Jewish leaders despised Jesus, their amazement was unfavorable toward him. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “showed their surprise” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

How does this one know letters, not being educated

The Jewish leaders are using the form of a question to emphasize that they were surprised and annoyed by how much knowledge Jesus had about Scripture. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate their words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “He certainly cannot know so much about the scriptures, not being educated!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

this one

Here, John records the Jewish leaders saying **this one** as a disrespectful way to refer to Jesus and to avoid saying his name. If your language has a similar way to refer to someone in an indirect but derogatory manner, you may use it here. Alternate translation: “this so-and-so” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

not being educated

Here, the Jewish leaders use **educated** to refer to receiving a Jewish religious education, which would include studying the Hebrew scriptures and Jewish religious traditions. This does not mean that they thought Jesus didn’t know how to read or write. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “not being trained in our scriptures and doctrines” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Jews marveled, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “the Jews marveled, and they said” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

John 7:16

of the one having sent me

Here, **the one having sent me** refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in [4:34](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 7:17

it is from God, & from myself

Here, **from** is used to indicate the source of Jesus' teaching. A teaching could only have authority if God was its source. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "it is with God's authority ... only with my own authority" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 7:18

from himself

Here, **from** is used to indicate the source of what the person is speaking. A teaching could only have authority if God was its source. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “by his own authority” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

seeks his own glory, but the one seeking the glory of the one having sent him

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “seeks to make himself glorious, but the one seeking to make the one who sent him glorious” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

there is no unrighteousness in him

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **unrighteousness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “he is not wicked” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

John 7:19

Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you does the law

Jesus is using the form of a question to add emphasis. If your language does not use this type of question, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "It was Moses who gave you the law, but none of you obeys the law!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

the law? & does the law

See how you translated **the law** in 1:17. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

does the law

Here, **does the law** means to keep, follow, or obey **the law**. If this use of **does** would be confusing in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "obeys the law"

Why do you seek to kill me

Jesus is using the form of a question to emphasize that the Jewish leaders who want to **kill** him for breaking the law of Moses are themselves breaking that law. If your language does not use this type of question, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You break the law yourselves and yet you want to kill me!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 7:20

The crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

You have a demon

Alternate translation: "A demon is inside of you!" or "You must be under the control of a demon!"

Who seeks to kill you

The crowd is using the form of a question to add emphasis. If your language does not use this type of question, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "No one wants to kill you!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 7:21

one work

Here, **work** refers to the time when Jesus miraculously healed a paralyzed man on the Jewish day of rest called the Sabbath, as recorded in [5:5-9](#). If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly.

Alternate translation: "one miracle on the Sabbath" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

you all marvel

The word translated **marvel** refers to being amazed or in wonder of something in either a negative or positive way. Since some people in this crowd despised Jesus, their amazement was unfavorable toward him. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "you are all surprised" (See:

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935))

John 7:22

Because of this

Here, **this** refers to someone doing something on the Sabbath to help someone else. More specifically, Jesus is referring to the time he offended the Jews by healing a paralyzed man on the Sabbath. This event was indirectly mentioned in the previous verse. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "On account of activities like healing taking place on the Sabbath" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers

Here Jesus provides additional information about where the Jewish practice of circumcision came from. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

the fathers

Here, **fathers** refers specifically to the first ancestors of the Jewish people, who are often called "the Patriarchs." Those people are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It does not refer to the ancestors of the Jewish people in general. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "the Patriarchs" or "the men who founded the Jewish people" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

on the Sabbath you circumcise a man

Jesus implies that to **circumcise** a child was a kind of work. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "you circumcise a male baby on the Sabbath. That is working too" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

a man

Jesus is speaking of any Jewish **man** in general, not of one particular **man**. If this use of **man** would be misunderstood in your language, you could use a more natural expression. Alternate translation: "men" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

John 7:23

If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath

John records Jesus speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what Jesus is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath" (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.963)**)

a man receives

See how you translated **man** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "men receive" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

the law

See how you translated **the law** in 1:17. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

the law of Moses might not be broken

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "you might not break the law of Moses" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the law of Moses might not be broken

Here, Jesus uses **broken** to refer to disobeying the regulations that God gave in **the law of Moses**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the regulations of the law of Moses might not be disobeyed" (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

why are you angry with me because I made a man completely healthy on the Sabbath

Jesus is using the question form for emphasis. If your language does not use this type of question, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "you should not be angry with me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 7:24

Do not judge according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment

Jesus implies that the people should not decide what is right based only on what they can see. A person does something for a reason and that reason cannot be seen. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Do not judge people according to appearance! Instead, decide what is right according to what God says is right" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

according to appearance

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **appearance**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "according to what you see" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

judge righteous judgment

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **judgment**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "judge righteously" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

John 7:25

Is not this the one they seek to kill

Here, **the Jerusalemites** are using the question form for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way.

Alternate translation: "This is the one they are seeking to kill!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 7:26

they say nothing to him

The Jerusalemites use this phrase in order to imply that the Jewish leaders are not opposing Jesus. Alternate translation: “they say nothing to oppose him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

The rulers do not truly know that this is the Christ, do they

Here, the Jerusalemites ask this question in a way that expects a negative response, but also expresses uncertainty about that response. If your language has a question form that assumes a negative response with uncertainty, you should use it here. Alternate translation: “Could it be possible that the rulers really know this is the Christ?” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

The rulers

This phrase refers to the Jewish religious leadership, specifically the Jewish council called the Sanhedrin, which made decisions about Jewish law. (See: **council (p.1113)**) If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “The members of the Jewish ruling council” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 7:27

this one

Here, John records the Jerusalemites saying **this one** as a disrespectful way to refer to Jesus without saying his name. If your language has a similar way to refer to someone in an indirect but derogatory manner, you may use it here. Alternate translation: “this so-and-so” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 7:28

Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: "Then Jesus cried out in the temple. While he was teaching, he said" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

cried out

Alternate translation: "spoke in a loud voice"

in the temple

Jesus and the people were actually in the courtyard of the **temple**. See how you translated **temple** in [7:14](#). Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

from myself

See how you translated **from myself** in verse [17](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the one having sent me

Here, **the one having sent me** refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in verse [16](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the one having sent me is true

Here, **true** could mean: (1) real, in contrast to a false god. In this case, Jesus would be saying that the Father is the only real God. Alternate translation: "the one who sent me is the real God" (2) truthful, in contrast to a liar. In this case, Jesus would be saying that Father who sent him always tells the truth. Alternate translation: "the one who sent me can be trusted" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 7:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 7:30

Therefore

Therefore indicates that this verse states the result of what had happened in the previous verses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “As a result of Jesus saying these things” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

they were seeking

Here, **they** could refer to: (1) the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: “the Jewish authorities were seeking” (2) the Jerusalemites. Alternate translation: “the people dwelling in Jerusalem were seeking” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

no one laid a hand on him

To lay **a hand on** someone is an idiom which means to grab someone or hold onto someone. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “no one grabbed him” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

his hour had not yet come

Here, the word **hour** is used to refer to the time God had planned for Jesus to be arrested and killed. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the right time to arrest him had not yet come” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 7:31

from among the crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns** (p.955))

When the Christ may come, he will not do more signs than what this one has done, will he

The **crowd** uses the form of a question to add emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this type of question by translating these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "When the Christ may come, surely he will not do more signs than this one has done!" (See: **Rhetorical Question** (p.1082))

signs

See how you translated **signs** in [2:11](#). See also the discussion of **signs** in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: "significant miracles"

John 7:32

the crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

murmuring

Although the word translated **murmuring** usually refers to grumbling or complaining, here it refers to speaking quietly, without a negative meaning. Some people in **the crowd** were discussing whether or not Jesus was the Messiah and didn't want the religious leaders to hear them. See how you translated this word in verse [12](#).

John 7:33

I am still with you for a short time

Alternate translation: "I will remain with you for only a short period of time"

I go away

Here Jesus uses **go away** to refer to his death and return to heaven. However, the Jews did not understand this. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p. 1106)**)

the one having sent me

This phrase refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in verse [16](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 7:34

where I am, you will not be able to come

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: “you will not be able to come to the place where I am” (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

John 7:35

The Jews therefore said among themselves

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

this one

Here, John records the Jewish leaders saying **this one** as a disrespectful way to refer to Jesus and to avoid saying his name. See how you translated this phrase in verse [15](#). Alternate translation: “this so-and-so” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

He is not about to go to the dispersion of the Greeks and to teach the Greeks, is he

The Jewish leaders are using the form of a question to add emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this type of question by translating these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “Surely he is not about to go to the dispersion of the Greeks and to teach the Greeks!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

the dispersion

Here, **dispersion** refers to the Jewish people who were spread across the Greek-speaking world that was outside of the land of Israel. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Jews who are dispersed” or “the Jews who are scattered” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the dispersion of the Greeks

The Jews used the phrase **of the Greeks** to describe the location where the Jews were dispersed. If this use of the possessive form would be confusing in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “the Jews who are dispersed among the Greeks” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

John 7:36

What is this word that he said

Here, **word** is used to refer to the meaning of the message that Jesus had shared. The Jewish leaders had failed to understand that message. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "What was he talking about when he said" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

he said, 'You will seek me, but will not find {me}, and where I am, you will not be able to come

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation, as in the UST. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

You will seek me, but will not find {me}, and where I am, you will not be able to come

See how you translated this in verse [34](#).

John 7:37

General Information:

About three or four days has passed since the events described in verses 14–36. It is now the last day of the Festival of Shelters, and Jesus speaks to the crowd.

cried out, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “cried out, and he said” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

cried out

See how you translated this phrase in verse 28.

If anyone thirsts

Here Jesus uses **thirst** to refer to a person’s need for God, just as someone would **thirst** for water. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: “If anyone who recognizes their need for God is like a thirsty person who desires water” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

let him come to me and drink

Here Jesus uses **come** and **drink** to refer together to believing in Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly or use similes. Alternate translation: “let him believe in me” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 7:38

The one believing in me, just as the scripture says

If it would be natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. You will also need to adjust some words to fit the new order. Alternate translation: "As the scripture says about anyone who believes in me" (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

just as the scripture says, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his stomach

If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: "rivers of living water will flow from the stomach of the one believing in me, just as the scripture says" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

the scripture says

Here Jesus uses **scripture** as if it were a person who could speak. If this might confuse your readers, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the prophets spoke in the scriptures" (See: **Personification (p.1060)**)

Rivers of living water will flow

Here Jesus uses **rivers** to refer to a constant and abundant flow of **living water**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "An abundance of living water will flow" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

of living water

Jesus uses **living water** here to refer to the Holy Spirit who works in a person to save and transform them. However, since John explains this meaning in the next verse, you do not need to explain it further here. See how you translated **living water** in 4:10. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

of living water

Here, **living** is used to mean "giving eternal life" or "causing people to live forever." If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "of water that gives eternal life" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

his

The pronoun **his** could refer to: (1) the person who believes in Jesus. This meaning is used in most Bible translations and assumes that a new sentence begins at the beginning of this verse. Alternate translation, as in the ULT: "his" (2) Jesus. This meaning is used in some ancient church writings and assumes that the sentence at the end of the previous verse continues into through **the one believing in me** in this verse. Alternate translation: "my" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

from his stomach

Here the **stomach** is used to refer to the non-physical part of a person. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “from inside of him” or “from his heart” (See: **Metonymy** (p.1047))

John 7:39

General Information:

In this verse John gives information to clarify what Jesus was talking about in the previous verse. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

the Spirit was not yet

John implies here that **the Spirit** would later come to dwell in those who trusted in Jesus. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Spirit had not yet come to dwell in the believers” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

had not yet been glorified

Here the word **glorified** could refer to: (1) the time when Jesus would die on the cross and rise from the dead (See: John 12:23). Alternate translation: “had not yet been crucified and resurrected” (2) the time when Jesus would ascend to his Father in heaven. Acts 1–2 records the Holy Spirit coming after Jesus went up to heaven. Alternate translation: “had not yet returned to God in glory” (3) both the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Alternate translation: “had not yet been glorified by his death, resurrection, and return to heaven” See the discussion of double meaning in Part 3 of the Introduction to the Gospel of John. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 7:40

Then

Then here indicates that what follows is the continuation of the narrative from 7:38, which John had interrupted with background information in 7:39. If it would be helpful in your language, you could show reference to earlier events by translating this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: “After Jesus had said this about the Holy Spirit,” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.971)**)

some from the crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in 5:13. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

these words

John uses the term **words** to describe the content of what Jesus had said by referring to something associated with it, the **words** he used to communicate it. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “these things he was saying” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the Prophet

See how you translated **the Prophet** in 1:21. Alternate translation: “the Prophet whom God promised to send to us” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 7:41

Indeed, the Christ does not come from Galilee, does he

These people are using the form of a question to add emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this type of question by translating these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Indeed, the Christ surely does not come from Galilee!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 7:42

Has the Scripture not said that the Christ will come from the seed of David and from Bethlehem, the village where David was

The people are using the form of a question to add emphasis. This group of people does not believe Jesus is the Messiah, because they do not think he came from Bethlehem. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this type of question by translating the words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "The scriptures surely say that the Christ will come from the seed of David and from Bethlehem, the village where David was!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

Has the Scripture not said

Scripture here is referred to as though it were a person who could speak. If this use of **said** might be confusing for your readers, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Have the prophets not said in the scriptures" (See: **Personification (p.1060)**)

John 7:43

a division happened in the crowd

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **division**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "the crowd was divided" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

in the crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

John 7:44

some of them

Here, **them** refers to the people in the crowd with whom Jesus had just spoken, particularly those who were opposed to him. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “some of his opponents in the crowd” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

no one laid hands on him

See how you translated this phrase in [7:30](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 7:45

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 7:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 7:47

You have not also been deceived, have you

The **Pharisees** ask this question in a way that expects a negative response but also expresses uncertainty about that response. If your language has a question form that assumes a negative response with uncertainty, you should use it here. Alternate translation: "Could it be possible that you have also been deceived?" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

You have not also been deceived, have you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "He has not also deceived you, has he?" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 7:48

None from the rulers have believed in him, or from the Pharisees, have they

Here, **the Pharisees** are using the form of a question to add emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this type of question by translating these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Surely none from the rulers have believed in him, or from the Pharisees!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

the rulers

Here, **rulers** refers to the Jewish religious leadership, specifically the Jewish council called the Sanhedrin, which made decisions about Jewish law. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/other/council\]\]](#)) See how you translated rulers* in [3:1](#). Alternate translation: "a member of the Jewish ruling council" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 7:49

crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

the law

See how you translated **the law** in [1:17](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

they are accursed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God has cursed them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 7:50

the one having come to him earlier, being one from them

John provides this information to remind us of who Nicodemus is and the conversation he had with Jesus that is recorded in [chapter 3](#). Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: “this man was a Pharisee who had spoken with Jesus at an earlier time” (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

being one from them

Alternate translation: “although he was one of them” or “despite being one of them”

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 7:51

Our law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he does, does it

Nicodemus is using the form of a question to add emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this type of question by translating his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Our law certainly does not judge a man unless it might first hear from him and might know what he does!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

Our law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he does, does it

Nicodemus speaks of the **law** as if it were a person. If this use of **law** is not natural in your language, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "It is not written in our law that we may judge a man unless we might first hear from him and might know what he does, is it" (See: **Personification (p.1060)**)

a man

Here, **a man** does not refer to a specific man. It refers to any man in general. Alternate translation: "any man" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

John 7:52

You are not also from Galilee, are you

The Jewish leaders know that Nicodemus is not **from Galilee**. They ask this question as a way of scoffing at him. If your language does not use questions in this way, use another way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: "You must also be one of those people from Galilee!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

Search, and see

Here, John records the Jewish leaders leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply the missing words from the context. Alternate translation: "Look carefully and read what is written in the Scriptures to learn" (See: **Ellipsis (p. 989)**)

no prophet rises up from Galilee

The Jewish leaders believed that Jesus came **from Galilee** and that no **prophet** in the scriptures came **from Galilee**. Therefore, based on their reasoning, Jesus could not be a **prophet**. However, what they believed was incorrect. Jesus did not originally come from Galilee, but Bethlehem in Judea. Also, the prophet Jonah came **from Galilee** ([2 Kings 14:25](#)) and [Isaiah 9:1-7](#) said that the Messiah would be a great light rising from Galilee. If your readers might not understand what the Jewish leaders are implying, you could state it explicitly. Alternate translation: "no prophet rises up from Galilee, so this man cannot be a true prophet" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

rises up

Here, **rises up** means to appear. Alternate translation: "appears"

John 7:53

General Information:

The best early texts do not have [7:53–8:11](#). The ULT has set them apart in square brackets ([]) to show that John probably did not include them in his original text. See the discussion of this textual issue in the General Notes to this chapter. (See: **Textual Variants (p.1095)**)

John 8

John 8 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus forgives the adulterous woman [8:1-11](#)

Jesus says he is the light of the world (8:12-20)

Jesus says he came from above (8:21-30)

Jesus says he frees people from sin (8:31-36)

Jesus describes the true children of Abraham and the children of Satan (8:37-47)

Jesus is greater than Abraham (8:48-59)

Translators may wish to include a note at [8:1](#) to explain to the reader why they have chosen to translate or to not translate [8:1-11](#). [7:53-8:11](#) are not in the best and oldest ancient manuscripts. Those ancient texts which do have these verses also have many differences between them, which are additional evidence that these verses were not originally in the Gospel of John. If the translators have chosen to translate these verses, then they will want to either put them in a footnote outside of the main text or mark them in some way, such as square brackets ([]), to indicate that the passage may not have originally been in John's Gospel. (See: **Textual Variants (p.1095)**)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Light and darkness

Generally in John's Gospel, light represents what is true and good and darkness represents what is false and evil. Similar to the discussion of light in [1:4-9](#), in [8:12](#) Jesus applies the light metaphor to himself in order to show that he is the embodiment of God's truth and goodness. Jesus calls himself the Light of the World because he is the one who enables people to know God's truth and goodness. (See: [\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/other/light\]\]](#))

I AM

John records Jesus saying these words as an independent phrase three times in this chapter ([8:24](#), [28](#), [58](#)). They stand alone as a complete sentence, and they literally translate the Hebrew expression "I AM," by which Yahweh identified himself to Moses in [Exodus 3:14](#). For these reasons, many people believe that when Jesus said these words he was claiming to be Yahweh. (See: **Yahweh (p.1150)**).

Translation Issues in This Chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter ([8:28](#)). Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking about someone else. See the discussion of this concept in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. (See: [\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sonofman\]\]](#) and [\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#))

John 8:1

General Information:

The best early texts do not have [7:53–8:11](#). The ULT has set them apart in square brackets ([]) to show that John probably did not include them in his original text. See the discussion of this textual issue in the General Notes to this chapter. (See: **Textual Variants (p.1095)**)

John 8:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 8:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 8:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 8:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 8:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 8:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 8:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 8:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 8:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 8:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 8:12

In this verse Jesus begins speaking to a crowd near the treasury in the temple some time after the events of [John 7:1-52](#). John does not mark the beginning of this new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

again spoke to them, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “spoke to the people again, and he said” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

I am the light of the world; & but will have the light of life

Here Jesus uses **light** to refer to God’s truth and goodness that are revealed to the world by Jesus. He is the embodiment of God’s truth and goodness. See the discussion of **light** and **darkness** in the General Notes to this chapter. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a simile. Alternate translation: “I am the one who reveals God’s truth and goodness, that is like a light, to the world ... but will have that truth and goodness of life” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

of the world

Here, **world** refers to all the people in the world. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “of the people of the world” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the one following me

Here, **following** means to become Jesus’ disciple and obey his teachings. See how you translated a similar phrase in [1:43](#). Alternate translation: “the one who becomes my disciple” or “the one who obeys me” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

may certainly not walk in the darkness

Here Jesus uses the phrase **walk in the darkness** to refer to living a sinful life. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile. Alternate translation: “may certainly not live as if he were living in the darkness of sin” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

light of life

Here, John records Jesus using the **of** to describe **light** that gives **life**. If this use of the possessive form is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “light that brings life” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

of life

Here, **life** refers to eternal **life**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “eternal life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 8:13

You testify about yourself

The Pharisees assumed that their listeners understood that they were referring to Jesus testifying about himself without there being any other witnesses to confirm his **testimony**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "You are testifying about yourself without any other witnesses" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

your testimony is not true

The Pharisees are implying that the **testimony** of only one person **is not true** because of a rule in the law of Moses. According to [Deuteronomy 19:15](#), a statement had to be confirmed by at least two witnesses in order to be considered true in legal decisions. If your audience is not familiar with the law of Moses in the Old Testament, then you can state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "your testimony about yourself cannot be true because the law of Moses requires at least two witnesses" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 8:14

but you do not know

In [8:14–20](#) Jesus uses the plural form of **you** to indicate that he is speaking to the Pharisees. He is not speaking directly to those who believe in him. If this would confuse your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “but you Pharisees do not know” (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

John 8:15

the flesh

Here Jesus uses **the flesh** to refer to human standards. Such standards are superficial and based on the limitations of sinful human nature. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “standards limited by human nature” or “superficial human standards” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

I do not judge anyone

This could mean: (1) Jesus does not judge anyone in the same manner as the Pharisees, that is, **according to the flesh**. Alternate translation: “I do not judge anyone according to the flesh” (2) Jesus is not judging anyone at that time. Alternate translation: “I do not judge anyone at this time” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 8:16

my judgment

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **judgment**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “what I judge” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

my judgment is true

Here, Jesus is contrasting the nature of the Pharisees’ **judgment** with the nature of his own **judgment**. Alternate translation: “my judgment is right” or “my judgment is according to what is true”

I am not alone

Here, Jesus implies that he is **not alone** when he judges people. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “I am not alone in how I judge” or “I do not judge alone” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Father having sent me

Here, this phrase refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in [5:23](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 8:17

it is written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Jesus implies that “Moses” did it.

Alternate translation: “Moses wrote” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the testimony of two men is true

Here, Jesus is referring to a rule in the law of Moses. According to [Deuteronomy 19:15](#), a statement had to be confirmed by at least two witnesses in order to be considered true in legal decisions. If it would be helpful to your readers, then you can state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “if the testimony of two men agrees, then it is valid” or “if two men say something that agrees, then it should be considered to be true” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 8:18

the Father having sent me testifies about me

In addition to Jesus himself, God **the Father** also **testifies about** Jesus. Jesus thus implies that his testimony is true, because there are two witnesses. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “my Father, who sent me, also brings evidence about me. So you should believe that what we tell you is true” or “my Father, who sent me, also testifies about me. Therefore, my testimony is true” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Father having sent me

Here, this phrase refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in verse 16. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

ὁ & Πατήρ

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 8:19

οὔτε ἐμὲ οἶδατε, οὔτε τὸν Πατέρα μου. εἰ ἐμὲ ᾔδειτε, καὶ τὸν Πατέρα μου ἂν ᾔδειτε

In this verse, **know** refers to knowing who Jesus and God actually are, not just knowing information about them. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “You know neither who I am nor who my Father is; if you had known who I am, you would have known who my Father is also” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

if you had known me, you would have known my Father also

Here, Jesus is making a conditional statement that sounds hypothetical, but he is already convinced that the condition is not true. He knows that the Pharisees do not know who he really is and do not really know God. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that the speaker believes is not true. Alternate translation: “you do not know me, because if you did, you would also know my Father” (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.958)**)

John 8:20

In this verse John finishes telling about the events in the story by giving background information about where these events happened. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Some languages may require the information about the setting to be placed at the beginning of this part of the story in [8:12](#). (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

these words

Here, **these words** refers to what Jesus had just spoken in verses [12-19](#). If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “these things about himself” or “these things to the Pharisees” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the treasury

A **treasury** is the place where treasures are stored. In Jesus’ time, the temple **treasury** referred to a place in the courtyard that had containers for receiving money offerings. If your readers would not be familiar with this use of **treasury**, you could give a fuller description. Alternate translation: “the place where people gave money” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

his hour had not yet come

Here, the word **hour** is used to refer to the time God had planned for Jesus to be arrested and killed. See how you translated this phrase in [7:30](#). Alternate translation: “the right time to arrest him had not yet come” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 8:21

Then again he said to them

Then again here introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “At another time he again said to them” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

I go away, & Where I go away

Two times in this verse Jesus uses **go away** to refer to his death and return to God in heaven. However, the Jews did not understand this. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

in your sin

Here, **sin** is singular. This could refer to one: (1) the specific sin of rejecting Jesus as the Messiah. Alternate translation: “in your sin of unbelief” (2) sinfulness in general. Alternate translation: “in your state of sinfulness” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

Where I go away, you are not able to come

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: “You are not able to come to where I go” (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

John 8:22

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

He will not kill himself, will he

John records the Jewish leaders using the form of a question in a way that expects a negative response but also expresses uncertainty about that response. If your language has a question form that assumes a negative response with uncertainty, you should use it here. Alternate translation: "Could it be possible that he will kill himself?" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you are not able to come

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Is that why he says that where he goes, we will not be able to come" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

Where I go, you are not able to come

See how you translated this clause in the previous verse.

John 8:23

You are from the things below

In 8:23–30 Jesus uses the plural form of **you** to indicate that he is speaking to the Jewish leaders. He is not speaking directly to those who believe in him. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “You Jewish authorities are from below” (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

You are from the things below

The phrase **from below** could refer to: (1) the origin of the subject. Alternate translation: “You came from the things below” (2) the place where the subject belongs. Alternate translation: “You belong to the things below” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the things below

Here, John records Jesus using **the things below** to refer to **this world**. It does not refer to hell. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “You are from this lower world” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

I am from the things above

The phrase **from the things above** could refer to: (1) the origin of the subject. Alternate translation: “I came from the things above” (2) the place where the subject belongs, which is heaven. Alternate translation: “I belong to the things above” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

I am from the things above

Here, John records Jesus using **the things above** to refer to heaven. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “I am from heaven” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

You are from this world; I am not from this world

The phrase **from this world** could refer to: (1) the origin of the subject. Alternate translation: “You come from this world; I do not come from this world” (2) the place where the subject belongs. Alternate translation: “You belong to this world; I do not belong to this world” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

this world; & this world

Here, **this world** refers to everything in the universe that has been corrupted by sin and is hostile to God. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “this sinful world ... this sinful world” or “this world that opposes God ... this world that opposes God” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 8:24

you will die in your sins. & I am, you will die in your sins

This phrase **you will die in your sins** is different from the similar statement in verse [21](#) because **sins** is plural in this verse but singular in that verse. Therefore, make sure that you translate **sins** differently than how you translated “sin” in verse [21](#).

that I am

This could mean: (1) Jesus is identifying himself as Yahweh, who identified himself to Moses as “I AM” in [Exodus 3:14](#). Alternate translation: “that I am the I AM” (2) Jesus expects the people to understand that he is referring to what he already has already said about himself in the previous verse: “that I am from above” See the discussion of this phrase in the General Notes for this chapter. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 8:25

they said

Here, **they** refers to the Jewish leaders. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Jewish authorities said” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

What have I even been saying to you from the beginning

Jesus is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize that he has already told the Jewish leaders who he is. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “I am who I have been telling you I am since the beginning!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 8:26

But the one having sent me is true; and the things that I heard from him, these things I say to the world

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases and make a new sentence. Alternate translation: "But I will say to the world the things that I heard from him who sent me. He is true" (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

the one having sent me & from him

These phrases refer to God. However, since the Jewish leaders did not understand what Jesus meant when he used these phrases, you do not need to explain their meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

the one having sent me is true

Here, **true** means to be truthful or to speak only the truth. If this use of **true** would be confusing in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the one who sent me is truthful" or "the one who sent me tells the truth"

and the things that I heard from him, these things

Jesus says that **the one who sent him is true** in order to imply that **these things** he **heard** and spoke are **true**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "and the true things that I heard from him, these true things" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

these things I say to the world

Here, John records Jesus using **the world** to refer to the people who live in **the world**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "these things I say to everyone" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 8:27

General Information:

In this verse John gives information about the Jewish leaders to explain their reaction to Jesus' teaching. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

about the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 8:28

When you have lifted up

Here, John records Jesus referring to when he would be **lifted up** on the cross to be killed. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “When you have lifted me up on a cross to kill me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

When you have lifted up the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking of himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this clause in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

the Son of Man

See how you translated **the Son of Man** in [1:51](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

I am

See how you translated this phrase in verse [24](#) and also see the discussion of this phrase in the General Notes for this chapter. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

from myself

See how you translated this phrase, **from myself**, in [5:30](#). Alternate translation: “on my own authority” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

just as the Father taught me, I speak these things

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 8:29

the one having sent me

Here, this phrase refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in [4:34](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

with me

Here Jesus uses **with me** to refer to God's help. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "helping me" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 8:30

As} he is speaking these things

Here, John is describing something that happened at the same time as the other clause in the sentence. If this might confuse your readers, you could make this clear in your translation with an appropriate connecting word or phrase. Alternate translation: "At the time Jesus was saying these things" (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.973)**)

John 8:31

the Jews

In 8:31–59 **those Jews** could refer to: (1) some Jewish people from Judea who were in the temple courtyard with Jesus. Alternate translation: “those Judeans” (2) some of the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: “those Jewish authorities” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

you

In 8:31–59 Jesus uses the plural form of **you** to indicate that he could be speaking to: (1) some Jewish people from Judea who were in the temple courtyard with Jesus. Alternate translation: “you Judeans” (2) some of the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: “you Jewish authorities” (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

remain in my word

The phrase **remain in my word** means to obey what **Jesus** said. If this might confuse your readers, you can express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “obey what I have said” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 8:32

the truth will free you

Jesus speaks of **truth** as though it were a person who could **free** someone. If this might be confusing for your readers, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “knowing the truth will cause you to be free” or “if you obey the truth, God will set you free” (See: **Personification (p.1060)**)

the truth, & the truth

Here, **the truth** refers to what Jesus reveals about God, which would include his plan for forgiving sinful people through Jesus’ death on the cross. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “what is true about God ... those true things” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

John 8:33

how can you say, 'You will be free

The Jews are using the question form here to emphasize their shock at what Jesus has said. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "We do not need to be set free!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

how can you say, 'You will be free

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "how can you say that we will be free" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

John 8:34

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

is a slave of sin

Here Jesus uses the word **slave** to refer to someone who cannot stop sinning. This implies that **sin** is like a master for the person who sins. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile instead. Alternate translation: “is like a slave to sin” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 8:35

the slave does not remain & the son remains

Jesus is speaking of slaves and sons in general, not of one particular **slave** and **son**. If this would be misunderstood in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: “slaves do not remain ... sons remain” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

in the house

Here, Jesus uses **house** to refer to the family that lives inside the **house**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “as a permanent member of a family” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the son remains into eternity

This clause is in contrast to the previous clause. Although slaves do not remain permanent members of the family who owns them, sons are permanent family members. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “but the son remains into eternity” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.961)**)

the son remains into eternity

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous clause. Alternate translation: “the son remains in the house into eternity” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 8:36

if the Son frees you, you will be truly free

It is implied that Jesus is talking about freedom from sin. Alternate translation: “if the Son sets you free from sin, you will truly be free” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

if the Son frees you

Unlike the generic use of **son** in the previous verse, here Jesus uses **the Son** to refer to himself in the third person. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the first person. Alternate translation: “if I, the Son, free you” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

if the Son frees you

Here Jesus uses **frees** to refer to stopping people from being controlled by their sinful desires. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly or with a simile. Alternate translation: “if the Son frees you from being controlled by sin” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the Son

Son is an important title for Jesus, **the Son** of God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

you will be truly free

Here Jesus uses **free** to refer to people no longer being controlled by their sinful desires and thus able to avoid sinning. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly or with a simile. Alternate translation: “you will truly no longer be controlled by sin” or “you will truly be able to refrain from sin” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 8:37

my word has no place in you

This phrase **has no place in you** is an idiom that means to truly accept or believe something. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a similar idiom in your language or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you do not receive my words in your hearts” or “you reject my words” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

my word

Here, **word** refers to the message or teachings of Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “my message” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 8:38

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

and & what you heard from the father, you do

In this clause, Jesus uses the phrase **the father** to refer to the devil. Despite using the same words as in the previous clause, here Jesus is not referring to God. However, since Jesus did not yet reveal what he meant when he used this phrase, but was speaking ambiguously, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

John 8:39

father

Here the people use **father** to refer to their ancestor. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Our forefather" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

children of Abraham

Here Jesus uses **children** to mean "descendants." If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "descendants of Abraham" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the works of Abraham

Jesus is using **of** to describe **works** that were done by **Abraham**. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: "the works done by Abraham" (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

John 8:40

Abraham did not do this

Here, **this** refers to what Jesus said earlier in the verse about what the Jews were trying to do to him. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Abraham did not seek to kill someone who told him the truth from God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 8:41

You do the works of your father

Jesus uses the phrase **your father** to refer to the devil. However, since the Jews did not understand what Jesus meant when he used this phrase, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

We have not been born from sexual immorality

Here, the Jews imply that Jesus does not know who his real father is and that his birth is the result of an immoral sexual relationship. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “We do not know about you, but we are not illegitimate children” or “We were all born from proper marriages” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 8:42

If God were your Father, you would have loved me

Jesus is making a conditional statement that sounds hypothetical, but he already knows that the condition is not true. Jesus knows that the Jews speaking to him here do not love him and are not true followers of God. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that the speaker believes is not true. Alternate translation: "God is surely not your father, because if he were, you would love me" (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.958)**)

have I come from myself

Here, **from** is used to indicate Jesus' origin. He could only have authority if he came from God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "have I come on my own authority" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

that one

Here, **that one** refers to God the Father. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "God" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

John 8:43

Because of what do you not understand my speech

Jesus is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize the truth of what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "I will tell you why you do not understand what I say!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

you are not able to hear my words

Here, **hear** means to listen to something with the intent to heed it and respond appropriately. It does not mean simply to hear what someone says. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "you are not able to heed my words" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

my words

Here, Jesus uses **words** to refer to his teachings. See how you translated this phrase in [5:47](#). Alternate translation: "my teachings." (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 8:44

You are from your father, the devil

The phrase **from your father** could refer to: (1) the person to whom the subject belongs, as in the UST. (2) the origin of the subject. Alternate translation: “You came from your father, the devil” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

That one

Here, **That one** refers to **the devil**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “The devil” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

was a murderer from the beginning

Here, **the beginning** refers to the time when the first humans, Adam and Eve, sinned. It does not refer to the very beginning of time. The devil tempted Eve to sin and Adam sinned as well. Because they sinned, all living things die as part of the punishment for sin. Therefore, Jesus calls **the devil** a **murderer** for starting the process that brought death to the world. You could indicate this explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers, particularly if they would not know the story. Alternate translation: “was a murderer from the time when he tempted the first people to sin” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

does not stand in the truth

The phrase **does not stand in the truth** is an idiom that means to not accept or approve of what is true. If this might confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “does not approve of the truth” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

there is no truth in him

Here Jesus speaks of **truth** as if it were an object that could exist inside someone. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “he never speaks the truth” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

he speaks from his own {nature

Alternate translation: “he speaks according to his character” or “he speaks what is most natural for him to speak”

the father of it

Here Jesus uses **father** to refer to the one who originated the act of lying. Since **the devil** is the first being to tell a lie, he is called the **father** of lying. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the first one to lie” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the father of it

Here, **it** refers to the act of lying. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the father of lying” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 8:45

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 8:46

Which one of you convicts me concerning sin

Jesus is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize that he has never sinned. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "None of you can convict me concerning sin!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

If I speak the truth

John records Jesus speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what John is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since I speak the truth" (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.963)**)

why do you not believe me

Jesus is using a rhetorical question here to scold the Jews for their unbelief. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "you have no reason for not believing me!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 8:47

He who is from God & you are not from God

The phrase **from God** could refer to: (1) the person to whom the subject belongs, as in the UST. (2) the origin of the subject. Alternate translation: "He who came from God ... you did not come from God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

He who is from God

Although **He** is masculine, Jesus is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: "A person who is from God" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

hears & you do not hear

Here, **hears** and **hear** mean to listen to something with the intent to heed it and respond appropriately. See how you translated **hear** in verse [43](#). Alternate translation: "heeds ... you do not heed" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the words of God

Here, Jesus uses **words** to refer to what God has said. See how you translated **words** in [5:47](#). Alternate translation: "the things that God has said" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 8:48

The Jews

Here, **The Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

Do we not rightly say that you are a Samaritan and have a demon

The Jews are using a rhetorical question here to accuse Jesus and to dishonor him. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "We certainly say rightly that you are a Samaritan and have a demon!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

you are a Samaritan

Most Jewish people in Jesus' time hated and despised Samaritans, so his Jewish opponents here called Jesus a **Samaritan** in order to insult him. Use the natural form in your language to indicate that this is an insult. Alternate translation: "you are one of those accursed Samaritans" or "you are an enemy Samaritan" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

have a demon

See how you translated this phrase in [7:20](#). Alternate translation: "a demon is inside of you!" or "you must be under the control of a demon!"

John 8:49

I do not have a demon

See how you translated the similar phrase in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “a demon is not inside of me” or “I am not under the control of a demon”

John 8:50

do not seek my glory

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "I do not seek to glorify myself" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

there is one seeking and judging

Here, **one** refers to God. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "God is the one seeking and judging" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

one seeking

Here, Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "one seeking my glory" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

judging

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. Here, **judging** could refer to: (1) God **judging** between what Jesus said about himself and what his Jewish opponents were saying about him. Alternate translation: "judging between your testimony and mine" (2) God condemning those who dishonor Jesus. Alternate translation: "judging those who dishonor me" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 8:51

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

my word

Here, **word** refers to the message or teachings of Jesus. See how you translated this phrase in [5:24](#). Alternate translation: “my message” or “what I say” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

he will certainly not see death

Here Jesus uses **see** to refer to experiencing or participating in something. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “he will certainly not experience death” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

he will certainly not see death into eternity

Jesus uses **death** to refer to spiritual **death**, which is eternal punishment in hell that occurs after physical **death**. However, the Jews did not understand this. Therefore, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. Alternate translation: “he will certainly not die” (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

John 8:52

The Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

you have a demon

Alternate translation: “a demon is inside of you” or “you must be under the control of a demon”

you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “you say that if anyone keeps your word” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

If anyone keeps my word

See how you translated this in the previous verse.

he will certainly not taste death into eternity

The Jews say here that Jesus used **taste** to refer to experiencing or participating in something. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “he will certainly not ever experience death” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

death

See how you translated **death** in the previous verse. (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 8:53

You are not greater than our father Abraham who died, are you

The Jews are using this question to emphasize that they do not think that Jesus is **greater than Abraham**. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You are certainly not greater than our father Abraham who died!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

our father

See how you translated this phrase in verse [39](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

Who do you make yourself out to be

The Jews are using this question to rebuke Jesus for thinking that he is more important than Abraham. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You should not think that you are so important!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 8:54

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

about whom you say, 'He is our God

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "about whom you say that he is your God" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

John 8:55

his word

Here Jesus uses **word** to refer what God has said. If this would be confusing in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “what God says” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 8:56

Your father

See how you translated this phrase in verse 39. (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

he might see & he saw

Here Jesus uses **see** to refer to experiencing or participating in something. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "he might experience ... he experienced it" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

my day

Here Jesus uses **my day** to refer to the time when Jesus came to earth. If this would be confusing in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "my coming" or "the time when I would come to earth" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

he saw and was glad

This phrase could mean: (1) Abraham literally **saw** a prophetic vision of Jesus coming to earth. Alternate translation: "he foresaw my coming through revelation from God and was glad" (2) when his son Isaac was born, Abraham metaphorically **saw** that God was beginning to fulfill the covenant that would culminate in Jesus coming to earth. Alternate translation: "he perceived my coming when God gave him a son, and he was glad" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 8:57

the Jews

See how you translated **the Jews** in [8:31](#). Alternate translation: “the Judeans” or “the Jewish leaders” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

You do not yet have 50 years, and you have seen Abraham

Here, **the Jews** opposing Jesus are using this question to express their shock that Jesus claims to have seen Abraham. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “You are less than fifty years old! You could not possibly have seen Abraham!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 8:58

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

I am

See how you translated **I am** verse [24](#) and also see the discussion of this phrase in the General Notes for this chapter. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 8:59

they picked up stones in order to throw at him

The Jews opposing **Jesus** are outraged at what **Jesus** said in the previous verse. Here, John implies that they **picked up stones** in order to kill him by stoning because he had made himself equal to God (See: **stone, stoning (p. 1147)**). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “they picked up stones in order to kill him, because he claimed to be equal with God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the temple

Jesus and his Jewish opponents were in the courtyard of **the temple**. See how you translated **temple** in [8:14](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 9

John 9 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus' sixth sign: he heals a blind man (9:1–12)

The Pharisees question the formerly blind man whom Jesus healed (9:13–34)

Jesus speaks with the formerly blind man and some Pharisees (9:35–41)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

“Who sinned?”

Many of the Jews in Jesus' time believed that if a person was blind or deaf or crippled, it was because he, his parents, or someone else in his family had sinned. The rabbis even taught that it was possible for a baby to sin while still in the womb. This was not the teaching of the law of Moses. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/lawofmoses\]\]](#))

“A sinner”

The Pharisees call some people in this chapter “sinners.” The Jewish leaders thought these people were sinful, but in reality the leaders were also sinful. This can be taken as irony. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-irony\]\]](#))

“He does not keep the Sabbath”

The Pharisees thought that Jesus was working, and so breaking the Sabbath, by healing the blind man. (See: [Sabbath \(p.1137\)](#))

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: [righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness \(p.1135\)](#))

Seeing and being blind

Jesus uses the healing of the blind man as a metaphor for spiritual blindness. Just as a blind man cannot see the physical world, a man who is spiritually blind does not recognize God's truth, which includes his sinfulness and need for salvation. The blind man in this story is first healed from his physical blindness ([9:6–7](#)), then from his spiritual blindness ([9:38](#)). By contrast, the Pharisees are not physically blind but are spiritually blind. Jesus calls the Pharisees blind because they have seen him do great miracles that only someone sent from God could do, but they still refuse to believe that God sent him or that they are sinners who need to repent ([9:39–40](#)). (See: [Metaphor \(p.1041\)](#))

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“Son of Man”

Jesus refers to himself as the “Son of Man” in this chapter (9:35). Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking about someone else. See the discussion of this concept in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sonofman\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#))

John 9:1

And

And here shows that John intended for the events in this chapter to be directly connected to what Jesus said in the previous chapter. In [chapter 8](#), Jesus said that he is the Light of the World. In this chapter, Jesus demonstrates that he is the Light of the World by giving physical sight and spiritual light to a blind man. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.975)**)

John 9:2

asked him, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “asked him, and they said” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

who sinned, this one or his parents, so that he might be born blind

This question reflects the ancient Jewish belief that sin caused illnesses and other deformities. See the discussion of this in the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: “Teacher, we know that sin causes a person to be blind. Whose sin caused this man to be born blind? did this man himself sin, or was it his parents who sinned?” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

so that he might be born blind

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “so that he might be blind when his mother bore him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 9:3

so that the works of God might be revealed in him

Here, John records Jesus leaving out some information that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous verse. Alternate translation: “he was born blind so that the works of God might be revealed in him” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

the works of God

Jesus is using **of** to describe **works** that are performed by **God**. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “the works done by God” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

the works of God might be revealed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “I might reveal the works of God” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

in him

Here, **him** could refer to: (1) the man’s body, especially his blind eyes. Alternate translation: “in his body” (2) the man’s body and spirit. Alternate translation: “in his body and spirit” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1068)**)

John 9:4

us

When Jesus says **us** here, he is including himself and the disciples who are with him. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.998))

the works of the one having sent me

Here, Jesus is using **of** to describe **works** that God wants Jesus and his disciples to do. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: "the works that the one who sent me demands" (See: **Possession** (p.1062))

of the one having sent me

Here, **the one having sent me** refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in 4:34. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

while it is day. Night is coming

Here, **day** and **night** could mean: (1) the time when Jesus was on the earth with his disciples and the time when he was no longer on earth, respectively. Alternate translation: "while I am still with you. The time when I will leave you is coming" (2) a person's lifetime and the time that person dies, respectively. Alternate translation: "while we are still alive. The time when we will die is coming" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

while it is day

Here Jesus uses **day**. He compares the time when he and his disciples can do God's work to the daytime, which is the time when people normally work. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "while it is the time like the daylight hours when people usually work" (See: **Metaphor** (p.1041))

Night is coming

Here Jesus uses **Night**. He compares the time when he and his disciples cannot do God's work to the nighttime, which is the time when people normally cannot work because it is too dark to see. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: "The time like the night hours is coming when people cannot work" (See: **Metaphor** (p.1041))

John 9:5

in the world

Here Jesus uses **world** to refer to the earth on which people live. It does not refer only to the people in the world or to the entire universe. Alternate translation: “on the earth” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

I am the light of the world

See how you translated this clause in [8:12](#). Alternate translation: “I am the one who is like a light and who reveals God’s truth and goodness to the world” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 9:6

made mud from the saliva

Jesus used his fingers to mix the dirt and **saliva** into **mud**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “used his fingers to mix the dirt and saliva to make mud” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 9:7

wash & washed

Here, Jesus wanted the blind man to **wash** the mud off of his eyes in the pool and that is what the man did. Jesus did not want him to bathe or **wash** his whole body. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “and wash your eyes ... washed his eyes” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the pool of Siloam

Jesus is using **of** to describe a **pool** that is called **Siloam**. If this is not clear in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the pool named Siloam” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

which is translated “Sent

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “which means ‘Sent’” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

which is translated “Sent

In this clause John provides a brief break in the storyline in order to explain to his readers what **Siloam** means. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: “which means ‘Sent’” (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

which is translated “Sent

John assumes that his readers will know that he is saying what the name **Siloam** means when translated from the Aramaic language into Greek. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: “which is the Aramaic word for ‘Sent’” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

came back

As the next verse suggests, the man **came back** to his home, not to Jesus. Your language may state “went” rather than **came** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: “went back” (See: **Go and Come (p.1007)**)

seeing

Here, **seeing** means that the man became able to see before coming back. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “after becoming able to see” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 9:8

that he was a beggar

This clause is missing some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “those who had seen that he was a beggar” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

Is not this the one sitting and begging

The people here are using a rhetorical question to express their surprise at seeing the blind man who has been healed. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “This man is the one who used to sit and beg!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 9:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 9:10

How were your eyes opened

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "How did your eyes become opened?" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

How were your eyes opened

Here, **eyes opened** describes the ability to see by referring to something associated with vision coming into action, specifically, the **eyes**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "How are you able to see?" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 9:11

called Jesus

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “whom we call Jesus” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

made mud

See how you translated a similar phrase in [9:6](#). Alternate translation: “used his fingers to mix the dirt with saliva to make mud” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

wash.’ & and having washed

See how you translated **wash** in [9:7](#). Alternate translation: “wash your eyes ... and having washed my eyes” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

I received my sight

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **sight**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “I could see” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

John 9:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 9:13

They bring

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 9:14

General Information:

In this verse John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to give background information about when Jesus healed the man. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes

The negative reaction of the Pharisees described in the following verses is based on their belief that, according to their religious law, Jesus' actions were considered to be work. Therefore, they believed that he was disobeying God's command to rest and not work on the Sabbath. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/lawofmoses\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/works\]\]](#) and **Sabbath (p.1137)**). If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. These were two deeds the Pharisees considered to be work." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

opened his eyes

Here, **opened eyes** describes the ability to see by referring to something associated with vision coming into action, specifically, the **eyes**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "caused him to see" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 9:15

Then again the Pharisees also began asking him

Here, **again** means that this is the second time people questioned the blind man whom Jesus had healed. It does not mean that this is the second time **the Pharisees** questioned him. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Then, in addition to his neighbors questioning him, the Pharisees also began asking him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he received his sight

See how you translated a similar phrase in [9:11](#). Alternate translation: “he could see” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

I washed

See how you translated **washed** in [9:11](#). Alternate translation: “I washed my eyes” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 9:16

he does not keep the Sabbath

The phrase **he does not keep the Sabbath** means he disobeys the regulations for the Sabbath that God gave in the law of Moses. The Pharisees added many regulations which they considered to be equal with those that God had given. It was these additional regulations that Jesus was disobeying, thereby making the Pharisees very angry with him. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “he does not obeying our Sabbath regulations” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

This man is not from God

Here, **from** is used to indicate Jesus’ origin. He could only have authority if he came **from God**. Since Jesus was not obeying the Pharisees’ rules, they refused to believe that God had given him authority. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “This man does not have God’s authority” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

How is a man, a sinner, able to do such signs

Some people are using a rhetorical question here to emphasize that Jesus’ signs prove he is not a sinner. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “A sinner cannot possibly do such signs!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

signs

See how you translated this term in [2:11](#). See also the discussion of **signs** in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: “significant miracles”

there was a division among them

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **division**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “they divided themselves against each other” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

John 9:17

they ask

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

since he opened your eyes

Because the next verse indicates that the Pharisees did not believe that the man used to be blind, here, **since** does not mean that they thought the man had really been healed. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "since you claim that he opened your eyes" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he opened your eyes

Here, **he opened your eyes** describes the newly gained ability to see by referring to something associated with vision coming into action, specifically, the **eyes**. See how you translated a similar phrase in [9:14](#). Alternate translation: "he caused you to see" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 9:18

Therefore

Therefore here indicates that what follows is the result of what the man said about Jesus in the previous verse. Because the formerly blind man believed Jesus was a prophet, **the Jews** who opposed Jesus refused to believe that the man had really been blind. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Since the man said that Jesus was a prophet” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders, which in this chapter may have been a group of leaders among the Pharisees. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 9:19

they asked them, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “they asked him, and they said” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

was born blind

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “he was blind when you bore him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 9:20

he was born blind

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "he was blind when his mother bore him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 9:21

has full maturity

The phrase **full maturity** describes a person who is an adult and is legally responsible for himself. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “is an adult” or “is a full-grown man” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 9:22

General Information:

In this verse John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to give background information about the man's parents being afraid of the Jewish leaders. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

of the Jews. & the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders, which in this chapter may have been a group of leaders among the Pharisees. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

he would be put out of the synagogue

Here John uses **put out of the synagogue** to refer to no longer being allowed to go into the synagogue and no longer belonging to the group of people who attend services at the synagogue. When people were **put out of the synagogue**, they were shunned by their local community. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "he would not be allowed to enter the synagogue" or "he would no longer belong to the synagogue community" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 9:23

He has full maturity

See how you translated this phrase in [9:21](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 9:24

they called the man

Here, **they** refers to the Jewish leaders introduced in (9:18)

Give glory to God

This is an idiom that Jewish people used when commanding someone to take an oath. It first appears in [Joshua 7:19](#) when Joshua orders Achan to confess his sin. If this might confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "Speak the truth before God" (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

this man

Here, John records the Jewish leaders saying **this man** as a disrespectful way to refer to Jesus and to avoid saying his name. If your language has a similar way to refer to someone in an indirect but derogatory manner, you may use it here. Alternate translation: "this so-and-so" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 9:25

that one

Here, **that one** refers to the man who had been blind. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the man who had been blind” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

John 9:26

How did he open your eyes

Here, **open eyes** describes the ability to see by referring to something associated with vision coming into action, specifically, the **eyes**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express the meaning plainly.

Alternate translation: "How did he cause you to see?" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 9:27

Why do you want to listen again

The man is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize his amazement that the Jewish leaders have asked him to tell them again what happened. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way.

Alternate translation: "I am surprised that you want to listen again to what happened to me!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

You do not want to become his disciples also, do you

Here the formerly blind man actually means to communicate the opposite of the literal meaning of his words. He knows that the Jewish leaders do not want to follow Jesus, but asks this question to ridicule them. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "It sounds like you also want to become his disciples!" (See: **Irony (p.1034)**)

John 9:28

of that one

Here John records the Jewish leaders saying **that one** as a disrespectful way to refer to Jesus and to avoid saying his name. If your language has a similar way to refer to someone in an indirect but derogatory manner, you may use it here. Alternate translation: “of that so-and-so” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

but we are disciples of Moses

Here, the pronoun **we** is exclusive. The Jewish leaders are speaking only of themselves. Your language may require you to mark this form. Alternate translation: “but we true Jews are disciples of Moses” (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.998)**)

John 9:29

this one

Here John records the Jewish leaders saying **this one** as a disrespectful way to refer to Jesus and to avoid saying his name. If your language has a similar way to refer to someone in an indirect but derogatory manner, you may use it here. Alternate translation: “this so-and-so” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

where this one is from

Here, the Jewish leaders use **from** to indicate Jesus’ origin. He could only have authority if he came **from** God, but they say that they do not know where he came **from**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “where this one gets his authority” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 9:30

Now this is a remarkable thing, that you do not know

If the plain statement form for this seems unnatural, you could translate this as an exclamation and you may need to make a new sentence. Alternate translation: "This is amazing! You do not know" or "How remarkable! You do not know" (See: **Exclamations (p.996)**)

where he is from

See how you translated **from** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "where he gets his authority" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he opened my eyes

See how you translated a similar phrase in [9:14](#). Alternate translation: "he caused me to see" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 9:31

does not hear sinners, & he hears this one

Here, **hear** and **hears** mean paying attention to or listening to something with the intent to heed it and respond appropriately. It does not mean simply to **hear** what someone says. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “does not heed sinners ... he heeds this one” (See: **Metaphor (p. 1041)**)

John 9:32

it has never been heard

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “no one has ever heard” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

opened the eyes of one having been born blind

See how you translated a similar phrase in [9:14](#). Alternate translation: “caused one having been born blind to see” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

of one having been born blind

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “of one who was blind when his mother bore him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 9:33

If this one were not from God, he would not be able to do anything

Here, the formerly blind man uses a double negative sentence pattern to emphasize the positive fact that Jesus must be **from God**. If this double-negative pattern would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "Only a man from God would be able to do anything like that!" (See: **Double Negatives (p.984)**)

If this one were not from God

The formerly blind man is making a conditional statement that sounds hypothetical, but he is already convinced that the condition is not true. He has concluded that Jesus must have come **from God** because he healed him. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that the speaker believes is not true. Alternate translation: "If this one were not from God, but he is" (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.958)**)

were not from God

See how you translated **from God** in 9:16. Alternate translation: "did not have God's authority" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

anything

Here, **anything** does not mean "anything at all." It means **anything** like the miraculous signs that Jesus was performing, particularly his healing of this man who was born blind. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "anything like healing a man blind from birth" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 9:34

You were completely born in sins, and you are teaching us

The Jewish leaders are using a question to emphasize their belief that this man was not qualified to question their opinion. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You were completely born in sins, and you are not qualified to teach us!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

You were completely born in sins

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Your mother bore you completely in sins" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

You were completely born in sins

The Jewish leaders mention the formerly blind man being **born in sins** to imply that the **sins** of his parents had caused his blindness. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "You were born blind completely because of your parents' sins" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

they put him out

Here John uses **threw him out** to refer to him no longer being allowed to go into the synagogue and no longer belonging to the group of people who attend services at the synagogue. When people were thrown out of the synagogue, they were shunned by their local community. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "he was forbidden to enter the synagogue" or "he was forbidden to belong to the synagogue community" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 9:35

General Information:

Jesus finds the man whom he healed in (9:1-7) and begins to speak to him and the crowd.

they had put him out

See how you translated a similar phrase in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “they had forbidden him from entering the synagogue” or “they had forbidden him from belonging to the synagogue community” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

having found him

Here, **found** implies that **Jesus** had first searched for the man. It does not mean that Jesus unintentionally or accidentally met the man at another time. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “having looked for him and found him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Son of Man

Here Jesus refers to himself as the “Son of Man”. However, the formerly blind man did not realize that Jesus was speaking of himself, and Jesus does not explain the metaphor to him until verse 37. Therefore, you do not need to explain that Jesus is speaking about himself here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

the Son of Man

See how you translated this phrase in 1:51. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 9:36

sir

The formerly blind man calls Jesus **sir** in order to show respect or politeness. He does not yet know that Jesus is the Lord. (See: **lord, Lord, master, sir** (p.1128))

John 9:37

and that one is the one speaking with you

Here, Jesus is referring to himself in third person. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the first person form. Alternate translation: "and I, the one who is speaking with you, am that one" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

John 9:38

Lord

Now that the formerly blind man knows that Jesus is the **Lord**, he calls Jesus **Lord**. (See: **lord, Lord, master, sir** (p. 1128))

I believe

Here, the formerly blind man is leaving out some words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from [9:36](#). Alternate translation: “I believe that you are the Son of Man” (See: **Ellipsis** (p.989))

John 9:39

For judgment

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **judgment**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “In order to judge” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

so that those not seeing might see and those seeing might become blind

Here, **not seeing**, **see**, **seeing**, and **become blind** are metaphors. See the discussion of these metaphors in the General Notes for this chapter. If these uses of these words would confuse your readers, you could use similes or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “so that those who know they are spiritually blind might receive spiritual sight, and those who falsely think they have spiritual sight might remain spiritually blind” or “so that those who recognize that they don’t know God might know him, and those who falsely think they know God might continue not knowing him” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

so that those not seeing might see and those seeing might become blind

Here, **so that** could indicate that: (1) the rest of the verse is the result of Jesus’ **judgment**, which may require starting a new sentence. Alternate translation: “The result of my judgment will be that those not seeing might see and those seeing might become blind” (2) the rest of the verse is an explanation of the **judgment** Jesus mentioned at the beginning of the verse, which may also require starting a new sentence. Alternate translation: “That judgment is that those not seeing might see and those seeing might become blind” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

John 9:40

We are not also blind, are we

Several **Pharisees** are using a rhetorical question here to emphasize that they do not think that they are spiritually blind. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "We surely are not also blind!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

We are not also blind, are we

Here the Pharisees use **blind** to refer to not knowing God's truth. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: "We are not also ignorant of God's truth, are we?" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 9:41

If you were blind, you would have no sin

See how you translated **blind** in 9:39–40. Alternate translation: “If you did not know God’s truth, you would have no sin” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

you would have no sin, & Your sin remains

In these two phrases, Jesus speaks of **sin** as if it were an object that a person could possess or that could remain with a person. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you would not be sinful ... You are still sinful” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

you say, ‘We see.’ Your sin remains

See how you translated **see** in 9:39. Alternate translation: “you say, ‘We know God’s truth.’ Your sin remains” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

you say, ‘We see.’ Your sin remains

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “you say that you see, so your sin remains” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

John 10

John 10 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus tells the Parable of the Sheep Pen (10:1–6)
Jesus says he is the gate of the sheep pen (10:7–10)
Jesus says he is the Good Shepherd (10:11–18)
The Jewish leaders disagree about who Jesus is (10:19–21)
Jesus says he is God at the Festival of Dedication (10:22–42)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Blasphemy

Blasphemy is when a person claims that he is God or claims that God has told him to speak when God has not told him to speak. The law of Moses commanded the Israelites to kill blasphemers by throwing stones at them until they died. When Jesus said, “I and the Father are one,” the Jews thought he was blaspheming, so they picked up stones to kill him. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/blasphemy\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/lawofmoses\]\]](#))

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Parables

Parables were short stories that Jesus told so that people who wanted to believe in him could easily understand the lesson he was trying to teach them. People who did not want to believe in him would not be able to understand the message (10:1–6).

Sheep

Jesus spoke metaphorically of people as sheep because sheep do not see well, do not think well, often walk away from those who care for them, and cannot defend themselves when other animals attack them. God’s people are similar to sheep in that they also are weak and do foolish things like rebelling against God. (See: **ewe, ram, sheep, sheepfold, sheepshearers, sheepskins** (p.1115))

Sheep pen

A sheep pen was a space with a stone wall around it in which shepherds would keep their sheep for periods of time, such as over night. There were large sheep pens in which multiple flocks were kept, and also smaller sheep pens for a single flock. Once they were inside the sheep pen, the sheep could not run away, and animals and thieves could not easily get inside to kill or steal them. In 10:1–5, Jesus uses the sheep pen as a metaphor for the people of Israel. Out of the “sheep pen” of the Jewish people, Jesus calls his first “sheep.”

Laying down and taking up life

Jesus speaks of his life as if it were a physical object that he could: (1) lay down on the ground, which is a metaphor for dying, or (2) pick up again, which is a metaphor for becoming alive again.

John 10:1

General Information:

In [10:1-5](#), Jesus speaks a parable, which he then uses for teaching purposes in [10:7-18](#). Here, the “shepherd” is a metaphor for Jesus and “sheep” is a metaphor for people. “His own sheep” are the people who follow Jesus, and the **thief**, **robber**, and “strangers” are the Jewish leaders, including the Pharisees, who try to deceive the people. Since Jesus does not explain the meaning of this parable here, you should not explain the metaphors within the parable itself. (See: **Parables (p.1055)**)

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

In [10:1-21](#), Jesus continues to speak to the Pharisees whom he was speaking with at the end of the last chapter. This section continues the story which began in [9:35](#).

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

sheep pen

A **sheep pen** is an enclosed or fenced area where a shepherd keeps his sheep. See the discussion of this term in the General Notes for this chapter. If your readers would not be familiar with this way of protecting livestock, you could use a general expression for a roofless space surrounded by walls or a fence. Alternate translation: “walled area for protecting the sheep” or “place where sheep are kept” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

a thief and a robber

The words translated **thief** and **robber** describe two different kinds of criminals. A **thief** is a person who steals by stealth, but a **robber** is a person who steals by force or violence. For this reason, you may want to use “or” instead of **and** between these two terms. Alternate translation: “a thief or a robber” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 10:2

the shepherd of the sheep

Jesus is using **of** to describe a **shepherd** who takes care of **the sheep**. If this is not clear in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the shepherd who cares for the sheep” or “the shepherd in charge of the sheep” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

John 10:3

The gatekeeper

A **gatekeeper** is a person who guards the sheep pen and opens the gate for the shepherd. If your readers would not be familiar with this way of protecting livestock, you could use a general expression for a person who guards an entrance. Alternate translation: “The gate guard” or “The person guarding the gate” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

The gatekeeper opens

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous verse. Alternate translation: “The gatekeeper opens the gate” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

for this one, & his voice, & he calls his own sheep

In this verse, **this one**, **his**, and **he** refer to the shepherd mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “for this shepherd ... the shepherd’s voice ... the shepherd calls his own sheep” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

the sheep hear his voice

Here, **hear** could mean: (1) all the sheep in the pen **hear** the shepherd’s **voice**, but not all of them respond to it, as in the ULT. This meaning implies that there are multiple flocks in the sheep pen. (2) the sheep that belong to the shepherd heed or obey his **voice**. This implies that **the sheep** are identical with **his own sheep**. Alternate translation: “the sheep heed his voice” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

he calls his own sheep by name

Here, **his own sheep** are designated as a separate group among **the sheep** of the previous clause. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “he calls his own sheep by name out from among all the sheep” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 10:4

he goes ahead of them

Shepherds in Jesus' culture led their sheep by walking in front of them. If people who take care of livestock in your culture do not do this, you might need to state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "he leads them to pasture by walking in front of them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 10:5

the voice of strangers

Here, the word **voice** is singular in form, but it refers to all of the strangers' voices as a group. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: "the voices of strangers" (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

John 10:6

this parable

This **parable** is an illustration from the work of shepherds that uses metaphors. See the discussion of parables in the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: “this analogy” (See: **Parables (p.1055)**)

to them

In this verse, **them**, **those ones**, and **they** refer to the Pharisees, whom Jesus was speaking with in [9:40–41](#). If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly, as the UST does. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

John 10:7

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

In [10:7-18](#), Jesus uses ideas from the parable he told in [10:1-5](#) in order to teach about himself, those who believe in him, and those who deceive the people.

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

I am the gate

Here Jesus uses the word **gate** differently than he did in [10:1-2](#). Here, Jesus uses **gate** to say that he provides access into heaven, where God dwells. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile. Alternate translation: "I am like the gate" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

I am the gate of the sheep

Jesus is using **of** to describe himself as a **gate** that is for **the sheep** to use. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: "I am the gate for the sheep" (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

of the sheep

Here, Jesus uses **sheep** to refer to people who believe in him. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile. Alternate translation: "of those who follow me like sheep" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 10:8

Everyone who came before me

Everyone here is an exaggeration that refers to the majority of Israel's leaders, including the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders. Not every leader of Israel throughout history was wicked, but most were. If this might confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "Most leaders who came before me" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1016)**)

a thief and a robber

Here Jesus uses **thief** and **robber** to refer to the Jewish leaders who were deceiving the people. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile. Alternate translation: "like a thief and a robber" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

a thief and a robber

The words translated **thief** and **robber** describe two different kinds of criminals. See how you translated this expression in [10:1](#). Alternate translation: "a thief or a robber" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the sheep

In this verse, Jesus uses **sheep** to refer specifically to the Jewish people who believed in him. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the sheep who follow me" or "the sheep, my disciples" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

did not hear them

Here, **hear** means listening to something with the intent to heed it and respond appropriately. It does not mean simply to **hear** what someone says. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "did not heed them" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 10:9

I am the gate

Here Jesus uses the word **gate** to say that he provides access into heaven, where God dwells. See how you translated this phrase in [10:7](#). Alternate translation: "I am like the gate" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

If anyone enters through me

Here Jesus uses **enters through me** to refer to trusting in him for salvation. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "If anyone believes in me for salvation" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

he will be saved

Here, **saved** refers to being **saved** from the eternal punishment in hell that all people deserve because of their sins. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "he will be saved from hell" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

he will be saved

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will save him" or "I will save him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

he will go in and go out

The phrase **go in and go out** is a common Old Testament idiom meaning to travel and move around freely in a safe environment. If this might confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "he will move about freely" or "he will go around in a safe environment" (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

will find pasture

Jesus uses the phrase **** find pasture**** to refer to having one's needs provided for. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "will find sustenance" or "will receive everything that he needs" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 10:10

The thief

Jesus is speaking of thieves in general, not of one particular **thief**. If this would be misunderstood in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: "A thief" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

The thief

Jesus uses **thief** to refer to the Jewish leaders who were deceiving the people. See how you translated the similar use of this word in 10:8. Alternate translation: "Every leader is like a thief who" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

does not come except in order that he might steal

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "comes only in order that he might steal" (See: **Double Negatives (p.984)**)

he might steal and kill and destroy

Here, Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "he might steal and kill and destroy the sheep" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

they might have

Here, **they** refers to the sheep, which is a metaphor for God's people. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "the sheep might have" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

so that they might have life

Here, **life** refers to eternal **life**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "so that they might have eternal life" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

and might have it abundantly

Here, **abundantly** implies that the eternal **life** Jesus' followers will receive has more blessings than anyone could expect. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "and might have it with abundant blessings" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 10:11

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

In [10:11–18](#), Jesus uses ideas from the parable he told in [10:1–5](#) to proclaim that he is the good shepherd who leads his sheep to heaven and takes care of them.

I am the good shepherd

Jesus uses the phrase **good shepherd** to refer to himself. Just as a **good shepherd** takes care of his **sheep**, Jesus takes care of his followers. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile. Alternate translation: “I am like a good shepherd” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

lays down his life

Here Jesus uses **lays down his life** to refer to voluntarily dying. This is a polite way of referring to something unpleasant. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: “voluntarily dies” (See: **Euphemism (p.994)**)

the sheep

See how you translated **sheep** in the [10:8](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 10:12

the hired man

Jesus uses the phrase **hired servant** to refer to the Jewish leaders and teachers. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “each of your leaders is like a hired servant” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the hired man

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the man whom someone hired” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the wolf & the wolf

A **wolf** is a fierce wild dog that is known for attacking and devouring livestock. If your readers would not be familiar with this animal, you could use the name of a fierce predator or wild dog in your area that commonly eats farmers’ livestock, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “the fierce predator ... that predator” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

the sheep & the sheep

See how you translated **sheep** in the [10:8](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the wolf seizes and scatters them

This clause describes two events. The first event causes the second event. When **the wolf** attacks and **seizes** a sheep, the other sheep scatter. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: “the wolf seizes a sheep, and the rest of the sheep scatter” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.971)**)

John 10:13

a hired man

See how you translated a similar phrase in the previous verse. (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

it is not a concern to him about the sheep

Jesus compares a **hired man** who abandons **the sheep** to the Jewish leaders and teachers who do not care for God's people. See how you translated **sheep** in the [10:8](#). Alternate translation: "he is not concerned about the sheep, just like your leaders are not concerned about God's people" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 10:14

I am the good shepherd

See how you translated this phrase in [10:11](#). Alternate translation: "I am like a good shepherd" (See: **Metaphor** (p. 1041))

John 10:15

the Father & the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

I lay down my life

See how you translated the similar phrase in [10:11](#). Alternate translation: “I voluntarily die” (See: **Euphemism (p.994)**)

the sheep

See how you translated this phrase in the [10:8](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 10:16

I have other sheep that are not from this sheep pen

Jesus uses **other sheep** to refer to his followers who are not Jews. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: "I have disciples who are not from the Jews" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

this sheep pen

Jesus uses **sheep pen** to refer to the people of Israel. See the discussion of this in the General Notes for this chapter. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the Jewish people" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

to bring them also

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that this phrase would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. This could mean: (1) Jesus will bring them to himself, as in the UST. (2) Jesus will bring them to God. Alternate translation: "to bring them also to God" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

they will hear my voice

Here, **hear** refers to listening to something with the intent to heed it and respond appropriately. See how you translated this word in [10:8](#). Alternate translation: "they will heed my voice" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

one flock

Jesus uses **flock** to refer to all of his followers, including Jews and non-Jews, as if they are one group, like a **flock** of **sheep**. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "one group" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

one shepherd

Jesus uses **shepherd** to refer to himself. See the discussion of this in the General Notes for the chapter. See also how you translated **shepherd** in [10:11](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 10:17

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes speaking to the crowd.

Because of this the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so that I might take it up again

Here, **this** refers to all the information in the second clause. If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: “Because I lay down my life so that I might take it up again, the Father loves me” (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

I lay down my life

See how you translated the similar phrase in [10:11](#). Alternate translation: “I voluntarily die” (See: **Euphemism (p.994)**)

so that I might take it up again

Jesus refers to becoming alive again as if life were an object that he could **take up**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “so that I might cause myself to be alive again” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 10:18

No one takes it away from me

Here Jesus refers to his life as if it were an object that someone could take away. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “No one is causing me to die” (See: **Metaphor (p. 1041)**)

I lay it down & to lay it down

See how you translated the similar phrase in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “I voluntarily die ... to voluntarily die” (See: **Euphemism (p.994)**)

I lay it down from myself

The reflexive pronoun **myself** is used here to emphasize that Jesus voluntarily lays down his own life. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this emphasis. Alternate translation: “I myself lay it down” (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1079)**)

to take it up again

See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “to cause myself to be alive again” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 10:19

A division again occurred among the Jews

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **division**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "The Jews divided themselves against each other again" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders, which in this chapter and the previous chapter may have been a group of leaders among the Pharisees. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

because of these words

Here, **these words** refers to what Jesus has just said to **the Jews** in the previous verses. It wasn't the words themselves that caused division, but the meaning of what Jesus said. If this would be misunderstood in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "because of the things he said" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 10:20

He has a demon

See how you translated a similar phrase in [7:20](#). Alternate translation: “A demon is inside of him!” or “He must be under the control of a demon!”

Why do you listen to him

Jesus’ opponents are using the form of a question to emphasize that the people should not listen to Jesus. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “You should certainly not listen to him!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 10:21

These are not the words of a demon-possessed man

Here, **words** refers to what a **demon-possessed man** would say. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "These things are not what a demon-possessed man would say" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

A demon is not able to open the eyes of the blind, is he

The people are using the form of a question to emphasize that they do not believe that a **demon** could heal a **blind** person. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Certainly a demon cannot cause a blind man to see!" or "Certainly a demon cannot give sight to blind people!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

to open the eyes of the blind

Here, **open the eyes** describes the ability to see by referring to something associated with vision coming into action, specifically, **the eyes**. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to cause the blind to see" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 10:22

General Information:

Some Jews begin to question Jesus during **the Festival of Dedication**. This verse gives background information about the time when the events of [10:24-39](#) took place. The next verse gives background information about the place where those events took place. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

the Festival of Dedication

The **Festival of Dedication** is an eight-day holiday that Jews celebrate in the **winter** to remember when they dedicated the Jewish temple to God after it had been defiled by the Syrians. If your readers would not be familiar with this holiday, you could use a general expression to explain it. Alternate translation: “the Jewish temple dedication festival” or “the Jewish festival for remembering the dedication of their temple” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

John 10:23

Jesus was walking in the temple

Jesus was walking in the courtyard of **the temple**. See how you translated **temple** in 8:14. Alternate translation: “Jesus was walking in the temple courtyard” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

the porch of Solomon

Here, the possessive form describes **the porch** that was associated with King **Solomon** in some way. It may have been the only remaining part of the temple built during the time of **Solomon**. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “the porch associated with Solomon” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

porch

A **porch** was a structure with a roof; it had at least one wall missing and was attached to the side of a building. See how you translated this word in 5:2. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

John 10:24

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

are you taking away our life

Here, **taking away our life** is an idiom that means to keep people in suspense by not telling them something. If this might confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “will you keep us from knowing for sure?” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 10:25

The works

Here, **works** could refer to: (1) the miracles that Jesus did. Alternate translation: “The miracles” (2) Jesus’ miracles and teaching. Alternate translation: “The miracles and teaching” See how you translated **works** in 5:36. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

in the name of my Father

Here, **name** could mean: (1) Jesus performed miracles by means of God’s authority. Alternate translation: “through my Father’s authority” (2) Jesus performed miracles as God’s representative. Alternate translation: “as my Father’s representative” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

of my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

these testify concerning me

Jesus speaks of his **works** as though they were a person who could testify and offer proof in a court of law. If this might be confusing for your readers, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “these offer proof concerning me” (See: **Personification (p.1060)**)

John 10:26

not from my sheep

Jesus uses **sheep** to refer to people who believe in him. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “not my followers” or “not my disciples” (See: **Metaphor (p. 1041)**)

John 10:27

My sheep

See how you translated **My sheep** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “My followers” or “My disciples” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

hear my voice

Here, **hear** means listening to something with the intent to heed it and respond appropriately. See how you translated this word in [10:16](#). Alternate translation: “heed my voice” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

they follow me

See how you translated a similar phrase in [8:12](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 10:28

no one will snatch any of them from my hand

Here, Jesus uses the word **hand** to refer to his protective care and **snatch** to refer to removing someone from that care. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “no one will steal any of them away from me” or “they all will remain secure forever in my care” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 10:29

My Father, who has given them to me

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

no one is able to snatch them from the hand of the Father

Here, Jesus uses the word **hand** to refer to God's protective care and **snatch** to refer to removing someone from that care. See how you translated **hand** and **snatch** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "no one will steal any of them away from my Father" or "they all will remain secure forever in my Father's care" (See: **Metonymy (p. 1047)**)

John 10:30

are one

Here, the word translated **one** means to be one entity. Although this expression implies that Jesus is God, he is not identical to God **the Father**. Therefore, **one** cannot be translated as “one person.” If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “are one entity” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 10:31

The Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

so that they might stone him

The Jews opposing Jesus are outraged at what Jesus said in the previous verse. Here, John implies that they wanted to kill him with stones because he had made himself equal to God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “so that they might stone him because he claimed to be equal with God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 10:32

many good works & of those works

See how you translated **works** in [10:25](#). Alternate translation: “many good miracles ... of those miracles” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

from the Father

This phrase could refer to: (1) the source of the **good works**. Alternate translation: “originating from the Father” (2) the one who enabled the **good works**. Alternate translation: “given to me by the Father”

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

For which of those works are you stoning me

Here Jesus is using irony. Jesus knows the Jewish leaders do not want to stone him because he has done **good works**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Your certainly are not stoning me because of those works!” (See: **Irony (p.1034)**)

John 10:33

The Jews answered him

See how you translated this phrase in [10:31](#). Alternate translation: “The Jewish authorities answered him” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

for blasphemy

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **blasphemy**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “because you are blaspheming” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

blasphemy

Here, the **Jews** use the word **blasphemy** with its technical sense, which refers to a human being claiming to be God. This is what the Jewish leaders felt Jesus was doing in [10:30](#). Here, **blasphemy** does not have a general sense of “insult.” See the discussion of this term in the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: “committing the crime of blasphemy” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

making yourself God

This phrase means to claim to be God. It does not mean to try to make oneself into God or become God. Alternate translation: “saying that you are God”

John 10:34

Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods

Here Jesus uses the form of a question to add emphasis. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "It is certainly written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods"'." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

Is it not written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Did not a prophet write" (See: **Active or Passive (p. 932)**)

Is it not written in your law

Here Jesus uses **written in your law** to introduce a quotation from (Psalm 82:6). Psalms is considered to be part of the Old Testament "wisdom literature." However, the Jews sometimes used **law** broadly to refer to the entire Old Testament. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state explicitly that Jesus was quoting from Psalms. Alternate translation: "Has it not been written in the Psalms" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

in your law

Jesus is using the name of the first part of the Hebrew Scriptures, the **law**, to represent the entire Hebrew Scriptures in general. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "in your Scriptures" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

I said, "You are gods

Jesus quotes [Psalm 82:6](#) where God calls some humans **gods**. Jesus does this in order to show that God also used the word "god" to refer to people other than himself. In the verse that Jesus quotes, the first person **I** refers to God. If this might be misunderstood by your readers, you could state it explicitly. Alternate translation: "I, God, said, 'You are gods'" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

I said, "You are gods

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "I said that you are gods" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

John 10:35

Verses 35 and 36 are one sentence. In this sentence, Jesus argues by moving from a weaker reason to a stronger reason (an argument from the lesser to the greater). Based on the scripture he quoted in verse 34, Jesus argues that, since God calls humans **gods** in that verse, it is even more appropriate to call him God because he is the Son of God. You may need to change the order of the clauses in order for this idea to be clearer in your language.

If he called them gods

If indicates a conditional sentence that extends until the end of the next verse. Jesus is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what John is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since he called them gods" (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.963)**)

the word of God came

Here, Jesus used the term **word** to describe the message that God said by using words. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "God's message came" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the word of God came

Jesus speaks of **the word of God** as though it were a person who moved toward those who heard it. If this might be confusing for your readers, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "God spoke his word" (See: **Personification (p.1060)**)

the Scripture is not able to be broken

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "no one can break the Scripture" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the Scripture is not able to be broken

This phrase could mean: (1) no one can prove that the Scriptures are false or contain errors. Alternate translation: "the Scriptures are not able to be proven false" (2) the authority of Scripture cannot be ignored. Alternate translation: "the Scriptures are not able to be ignored" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 10:36

do you say to the one the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'

Here Jesus uses the form of a question to rebuke his opponents for accusing him of blasphemy. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "you should not say to the one the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God!'" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

do you say & You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'

If the direct quotations inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the two instances of second direct quotations as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "do you say ... that he is blaspheming because I said that I am the Son of God" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

to the one the Father sanctified and sent into the world

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: "to me whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

You are blaspheming

Jesus is leaving a word that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply this word from the context. See how you translated "blasphemy" in [10:33](#) and also see the discussion of this term in the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: "You have committed the crime of blaspheming God" or "You are guilty of blaspheming God" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

the Son of God

This phrase, **the Son of God**, is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 10:37

the works of my Father

Here Jesus is using **of** to describe **works** that God wants him to do. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. See how you translated a similar phrase in [9:4](#). Alternate translation: “the works that my Father demands” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

of & Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 10:38

But if I am doing them

Here, Jesus is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what Jesus is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "But since I am doing them" (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.963)**)

believe in the works

Here, **believe in** means to acknowledge that the **works** Jesus does are done with the authority of the Father and prove that he is God. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "believe that the works I do are from God" or "believe that the works I do are done with God's power" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Father {is} in me, and I in the Father

Here Jesus uses the word **in** to express the close personal relationship between himself and God. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "my Father has a close relationship with me, and I have a close relationship with my Father" (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

the Father {is} in me, and I in the Father

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize that the truth of what Jesus is saying. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "my Father and I are completely joined together as one" (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

John 10:39

he went away out of their hand

Here, John used the word **hand** to refer to the custody or possession of the Jewish leaders. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "he escaped from them" (See:

Metonymy (p.1047))

John 10:40

beyond the Jordan

Here, **beyond the Jordan** refers to the region of Judea that is on the east side of the **Jordan** River, which is the side opposite from Jerusalem. See how you translated this expression in [1:28](#). Alternate translation: “on the side of the Jordan River opposite from Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John

Here, **John** refers to Jesus’ cousin, often referred to as “John the Baptist.” (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/names/johnthebaptist\]\]](#)) *It does not refer to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. See how you translated John* in [1:26](#).* Alternate translation: “John the Baptist” or “John the Immerser” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John first was baptizing

Here, **first** refers to the beginning of John’s ministry. It does not mean that **John** was the **first** person to baptize people in that location. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “John was baptizing during the first days of his ministry” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he stayed there

Jesus remained on the east side of **Jordan** for a short period of time. If your language requires a length of time for **stay**, you can use a general expression. Alternate translation: “Jesus stayed there for several days” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 10:41

sign

See how you translated **sign** in [2:11](#). See also the discussion of signs in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: “significant miracle”

this one

Here, **this one** refers to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “this man, Jesus” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

John 10:42

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 11

John 11 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus returns to Judea (11:1–16)

Jesus' seventh sign: Jesus makes Lazarus become alive again (11:17–46)

The Jewish leaders plan to kill Jesus (11:47–57)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Ancient Jewish burial customs

According to the burial customs of that time, a dead person's family would wrap the dead body with many strips of linen cloth and place it on a table inside a tomb. The tomb was either a cave or a room cut out of the side a large rock. According to Jewish tradition, the body was left to decompose in the tomb for one year. Then the family would place the bones in a stone box. If your readers would be unfamiliar with these burial customs, then you may need to provide explanations in your translation or in a note for [11:38–44](#).

Passover

After Jesus made Lazarus become alive again, the Jewish leaders were determined to kill Jesus, so he started traveling secretly from place to place. The Pharisees knew that he would come to Jerusalem for the Passover festival because God had commanded all Jewish men to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. Thus they planned to catch him and kill him during Passover ([11:55–57](#)). (See: **Passover (p.1131)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“One man dies for the people”

In the law of Moses, God commanded the priests to kill animals so that God would forgive the people's sins. In this chapter, the high priest Caiaphas says, “It is better for you that one man dies for the people than that the whole nation perishes” ([11:50](#)). He said this because he loved his “place” and “nation” ([11:48](#)) more than he loved the God who had made Lazarus become alive again. He wanted Jesus to die so that the Romans would not destroy the temple and Jerusalem. However, God wanted Jesus to die so that he could forgive all of his people's sins.

“The Jews”

This term is used in three different ways in this chapter. Unlike in other parts of John's Gospel, it is used here primarily to refer to the Jewish people who were living in Judea, especially Judean friends and relatives of Lazarus. Some of these Judeans believed in Jesus and others opposed him ([11:36–37](#)). The term is also used specifically at least once in this chapter to refer to the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus and were trying to kill him ([11:8](#) and possibly [11:54](#)). Finally, the term is used in [11:55](#) to refer to the Jewish people in general. The translator may wish to use the terms “Judeans,” “Jewish authorities,” and “Jewish people” to clarify these distinctions.

Hypothetical situation

When Martha and Mary said, “If you had been here, my brother would not have died,” they were speaking of a situation that could have happened but did not happen ([11:21](#), [32](#)). Jesus had not come, and their brother did die.

John 11:1

General Information:

[11:1–2](#) provide background information about **Lazarus** and his sisters. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus from Bethany

This verse introduces **Lazarus** as a new character in the story. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. Alternate translation: “There was a man named Lazarus, who was from Bethany and was sick” (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1031)**)

her sister Martha

Because those who wrote scripture usually listed the names of siblings in order from oldest to youngest, the list in [11:5](#) suggests that **Martha** was the oldest and **Lazarus** was the youngest of the three siblings. If your language uses different words for **sister** depending on birth order, use the word for an older **sister** here. Alternate translation: “her older sister Martha” (See: **Kinship (p.1037)**)

John 11:2

Now Mary was the one having anointed the Lord with myrrh and having wiped his feet with her hair

Here, John refers to an event that would happen at a time following the events recorded in this chapter (12:1–8). If this might confuse your readers, you could translate this as a future event. Alternate translation: “Now it was Mary who would later anoint the Lord with myrrh and wipe his feet with her hair” (See: **Order of Events (p.1051)**)

brother Lazarus

Because those who wrote scripture usually listed the names of siblings in order from oldest to youngest, the list in 11:5 suggests that Martha was the oldest and **Lazarus** was the youngest of the three siblings. If your language uses different words for **brother** depending on birth order, use the word for a younger **brother** here. Alternate translation: “younger brother Lazarus” (See: **Kinship (p.1037)**)

John 11:3

the sisters sent to him, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “the sisters sent to him, and they said” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

sent to him

Here, John is leaving out a word that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply this word from the context. Alternate translation: “sent messengers to him” or “sent a message to him” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

Sir, behold, he whom you love is sick

Here, the **sisters** are using a present statement to make a request indirectly. They tell Jesus that Lazarus is **sick**, because they want Jesus to come and heal him. If this use of a statement is confusing in your language, you can use a more natural form for instruction. Alternate translation: “Sir, behold, he whom you love is sick and needs your help” (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1089)**)

behold

Here, **behold** means to take notice of something or pay attention to something. It is used here to emphasize the urgency of the words that follow. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “take notice” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 11:4

is not to death

Here, **not to** indicates that what follows is not the result of the **sickness**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "This sickness will not result in death" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

but for the glory of God

Jesus is stating the purpose for Lazarus's **sickness**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: "but for the purpose of glorifying God" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.965)**)

for the glory of God

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "in order to glorify God" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

so that the Son of God may be glorified by it

Jesus is stating the second purpose for Lazarus's **sickness**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a second purpose clause. Alternate translation: "and for the purpose of glorifying the Son of God" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.965)**)

the Son of God

Jesus is referring to himself in third person. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the first person form, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 11:5

In this verse John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to give background information about Jesus' relationship with **Lazarus** and his sisters. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

sister

Because those who wrote scripture usually listed the names of siblings in order from oldest to youngest, the list in [11:5](#) suggests that Martha was the oldest and Lazarus was the youngest of the three siblings. If your language uses different words for **sister** depending on birth order, use the word for a younger **sister** here. Alternate translation: "younger sister" (See: **Kinship (p.1037)**)

John 11:6

Therefore

Therefore connects this verse to the previous verse in order to indicate that Jesus delayed going to Lazarus because he loved him and his sisters. Jesus' delay is not in contrast to his love for them. Although Lazarus's family would suffer for a short time, they would experience a great blessing when Jesus brought Lazarus back to life. Alternate translation: "Because Jesus loved them" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

John 11:7

he says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 11:8

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#) and the discussion of this term in the General Notes for this chapter. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

you are going back there again

Here the disciples use the form of a question to emphasize that they do not want Jesus to go to Jerusalem. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “you surely should not go back there again!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 11:9

Are there not 12 hours in the day

Jesus is using the form of a question for emphasis. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "There are surely 12 hours in the day." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

If someone walks in the daytime, he does not stumble, because he sees by the light of this world

Here Jesus speaks about **someone** walking **in the daytime** in order to comfort his disciples who were worried about going to Judea. In this metaphor Jesus uses **the light of this world** to refer to himself, who has previously called himself "the Light of the World" in [8:12](#) and [9:5](#). This whole metaphor could mean: (1) if Jesus and his disciples did God's work during the limited time God had given him to work with them (**the daytime**), they would not fail (**stumble**) because Jesus was with them. This interpretation has a similar meaning to Jesus' statement in [9:4](#). Alternate translation: "If you do God's work during the time I am here, you will succeed, because you are with me, the light of this world." (2) someone who acts according to God's will (**walks in the daytime**) does not fail (**stumble**) because Jesus guides that person. Alternate translation: "If someone acts according to God's will, he will succeed, because I, the light of this world, will guide him" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 11:10

But if someone walks at night, he stumbles because the light is not in him

In this verse Jesus expands the metaphor from the previous verse about a person walking outside. In this metaphor Jesus uses **the light** to refer to himself, who has previously called himself “the Light of the World” in [8:12](#) and [9:5](#). This whole metaphor could mean: (1) if his disciples tried to do God’s work after the limited time God had given him to be with them (the **night** which comes after “the daytime”), they would fail (**stumble**) because Jesus would not be with them. This interpretation has a similar meaning to Jesus’ statement in [9:4](#). Alternate translation: “If you try to do this work after I have left, you will fail because I, the light, am not with you.” (2) someone who does not act according to God’s will (**walks at night**) is an unbeliever who fails completely (**stumble**) because that person does not know Jesus. Alternate translation: “If someone does not act according to God’s will, he will fail because he does not know me, the light” (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.945)**)

John 11:11

he says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep

Jesus uses **fallen asleep** to refer to being dead. This is a polite way of referring to something unpleasant. Since Jesus explains the meaning in [11:14](#), you do not need to explain it here. However, If you have an idiom for this idea in your language, you may use it here. (See: **Euphemism (p.994)**)

but I am going so that I may wake him out of sleep

Here, **wake him out of sleep** refers to Jesus' plan to cause Lazarus to become alive again. If you have an idiom for this idea in your language, you may use it here. Since the disciples do not understand what Jesus is saying here, do not translate this plainly. (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 11:12

if he has fallen asleep

See how you translated **fallen asleep** in the previous verse. (See: **Euphemism (p.994)**)

John 11:13

In this verse John briefly stops telling the events in the story in order to give background information about Jesus' conversation with his disciples. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

those ones

Here, **those ones** refers to Jesus' disciples. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

he is speaking

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

the sleep of slumber

John is using **of** to describe **sleep** that is **slumber**. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: "sleep that is actually sleep" or "natural sleep" (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

John 11:14

Jesus then said to them plainly

Here, **plainly** means to say something clearly without using and metaphors or others figures of speech. Because the disciples did not understand the metaphor Jesus told them in [11:11](#), he told them the meaning plainly.

Alternate translation: "Jesus then said to them in words that they could understand"

John 11:15

for your sakes

Alternate translation: "for your benefit" or "for your good"

so that you may believe

Here, Jesus is leaving out some words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply this word from the context. You may also need to start a new sentence.

Alternate translation: "for I allowed this to happen so that you may believe in me" or "for I let Lazarus die so that you may believe that I am the Messiah" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 11:16

Didymus

Didymus is the name of a man. It is a Greek word that means “twin” and is Thomas' other name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

John 11:17

Jesus found him having already been in the tomb for four days

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Jesus found him; people had put his body in the tomb four days earlier" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 11:18

Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about 15 stadia away

This verse gives background information about the place where this event took place. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "This event took place in Bethany, which was near Jerusalem and was about 15 stadia away" (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

15 stadia away

The word **stadia** is the plural of "stadium," which is a Roman measurement of distance equivalent to about 185 meters or a little over 600 feet. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. Alternate translation: "about two miles away" (See: **Biblical Distance (p.942)**)

John 11:19

This verse gives background information about the people who were present when this event took place. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to people living in Judea, particularly the Jewish friends of Lazarus' family. It does not refer to the Jewish leaders or those Jews who opposed Jesus. See the discussion of this term in the General Notes for this chapter. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

their brother

See how you translated **brother** in [11:2](#). (See: **Kinship (p.1037)**)

John 11:20

she heard, “Jesus is coming

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this statement as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “she heard that Jesus was coming” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.979)**)

John 11:21

if you were here, my brother would not have died

Martha is making a conditional statement that sounds hypothetical, but she knows that the condition is not true. **Jesus** had not been there and her **brother** had **died**. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that the speaker believes is not true. Alternate translation: “if you had been here, but you were not, my brother would not have died, but he did” (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.958)**)

brother

See how you translated **brother** in [11:2](#). (See: **Kinship (p.1037)**)

John 11:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 11:23

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Your brother will rise again

Here, **rise again** is an idiom that refers to a died person becoming **alive again**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Your brother will become alive again” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

brother

See how you translated **brother** in [11:2](#). (See: **Kinship (p.1037)**)

John 11:24

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

he will rise again

See how you translated **rise again** in the previous verse. (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

in the resurrection

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **resurrection**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “when God resurrects people” or “when God brings people back from the dead” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

on the last day

Here, **the last day** refers to “the day of the Lord,” which is the time when God judges everyone, Jesus returns to earth, and the bodies of those who are dead are raised from their graves. (See: **day of the Lord, day of Yahweh (p.1114)**). If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “on the day when God judges everyone” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 11:25

the resurrection

Here, **Jesus** calls himself **the resurrection** in order to say that he is the one who causes dead people to come back to life. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the one who resurrects dead people” or “the one who brings dead people back to life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the life

Here, **Jesus** calls himself **the life** in order to say that he is the one who gives people eternal **life**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the one who makes people live forever” or “the one who causes people to live forever” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

even if he dies

Here, **dies** refers to physical death. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “even if his body dies” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

will live

Here, **live** refers to having eternal life. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “will have eternal life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 11:26

everyone living

Here, **living** refers to having eternal life, as “live” does in the previous verse. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “everyone who has eternal life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

may certainly not die into eternity

Here, **die** refers to spiritual death, which is eternal punishment in hell that occurs after physical death. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind this use of **die** explicitly. See how you translated a similar phrase in [6:50](#). Alternate translation: “may certainly not die spiritually into eternity” or “may certainly not experience spiritual death into eternity” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

may certainly not die into eternity

Jesus is using a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that is the opposite of the intended meaning. If this is confusing in your language, you can express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: “may certainly live into eternity” (See: **Litotes (p.1039)**)

John 11:27

She says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

coming into the world

This phrase refers to a prophet the Jews were waiting for, based on God's promise to send **into the world** a prophet like Moses, which is recorded in [Deuteronomy 18:15](#). If your readers will not be familiar with this Old Testament reference, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "whom God said he would send into the world" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 11:28

sister

See how you translated **sister** in [11:5](#). (See: **Kinship (p.1037)**)

Teacher

Here, **Teacher** refers to Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly.
Alternate translation: "Teacher, Jesus," (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 11:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 11:30

Now Jesus had not yet come into the village

Here John provides a brief break in the story to give background information regarding the location of Jesus. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "At that time Jesus had not yet come into the village" (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

John 11:31

the Jews

See how you translated **the Jews** in [11:19](#).

being with her in the house and comforting her

This phrase is making a distinction between **the Jews** who were **comforting Mary** in her **house** and those who were not doing so. It is not giving us further information about **the Jews**. If this might confuse your readers, you could make the relationship between these phrases more clear. Alternate translation: “the Jews, that is, those Jews who were with her in the house and comforting her” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding** (p. 981))

John 11:32

she fell down at his feet

Here, **fell down** means that Mary voluntarily threw herself down on the ground in front of Jesus to show the respect that she had for him. The phrase does not mean that **Mary** involuntarily **fell down**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “she prostrated herself at his feet” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

she fell down at his feet, saying to him

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “she fell down at his feet and said to him” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

Lord, if you were here, my brother would not have died

See how you translated this sentence in [11:21](#).

John 11:33

the Jews

See how you translated **the Jews** in [11:19](#).

he was deeply disturbed in the spirit and he troubled himself

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. John combines these phrases to express the intense emotional distress that Jesus was feeling. Alternate translation: “he was very upset” (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

he was deeply disturbed

The word translated **deeply disturbed** could mean: (1) Jesus was experiencing very intense negative emotions, in which case the meaning would be similar to **troubled**. Alternate translation: “he was deeply moved” (2) Jesus was angry or indignant, which is what the word means in other books in the Bible. Alternate translation: “he was outraged” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he was deeply disturbed in the spirit

Here, **spirit** refers to Jesus’ **spirit**. It does not refer to the Holy Spirit. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “he was deeply disturbed within himself” or “he was deeply disturbed inside” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 11:34

Where have you laid him

Jesus is referring to putting Lazarus' dead body in a tomb as laying him down. This is a polite way of referring to something unpleasant and accurately describes the Jewish burial practice of laying a dead body on a table inside the tomb. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: "Where have you entombed him?" (See: **Euphemism (p.994)**)

John 11:35

Jesus wept

The word translated **wept** is different from the word used to describe the weeping of Mary and the Jews with her in [11:31-33](#). The word here just means to shed tears. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Jesus cried” or “Jesus shed tears” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 11:36

the Jews

See how you translated **the Jews** in [11:19](#).

John 11:37

Was this one, having opened the eyes of the blind man, not able to act so that this one also would not die

Some of the Jews use the form of a question to express their surprise that Jesus did not heal Lazarus. This could mean: (1) they believed that Jesus loved Lazarus, but doubted his ability to heal him. "He opened the eyes of the blind man, but he was not able to keep this man from dying." (2) they thought that Jesus did not really love Lazarus because he healed the blind man but not him. Alternate translation: "He could open the eyes of the blind man. So if he really loved this man, he surely would have healed him!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

having opened the eyes of the blind man

See how you translated a similar phrase in [9:14](#). Alternate translation: "who caused the blind man to see" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 11:38

being deeply disturbed in himself

See how you translated the similar phrase in [11:33](#).

Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it

John provides a brief break in the story to describe the tomb where the people had entombed Lazarus. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "The place Lazarus was entombed was a cave that had a stone laying against it." (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

John 11:39

says, "& says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

the sister

Martha was Lazarus' oldest **sister**. If your language uses different words for **sister** depending on birth order, use the word for a older or oldest **sister** here. Alternate translation: "the oldest sister" (See: **Kinship (p.1037)**)

for it is four days

This means that it has been **four days** since Lazarus **died**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "for he has been dead for four days" or "for it has been four days since he died" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 11:40

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Did I not say to you that, if you believe, you will see the glory of God

Jesus is using the form of a question to emphasize that God is about to do something wonderful. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "I certainly said to you that, if you believe, you would see the glory of God!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

if you believe

Here, Jesus is leaving out some words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply this word from the context. Alternate translation: "if you believe in me" or "if you believe that I am the Messiah" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

the glory of God

This could mean: (1) God receives the glory. Alternate translation: "the glorification of God" (2) glory that comes from God. Alternate translation: "the glory from God" (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

the glory of God

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "God glorified" or "how glorious God is" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

John 11:41

Jesus lifted up his eyes

Here, “lifted up his eyes” is an idiom that means to look upward. See how you translated a similar phrase in [4:35](#).
(See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 11:42

the crowd that is standing around

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

John 11:43

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 11:44

his feet and hands having been bound with cloths, and his face having been bound with a cloth

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “someone having bound his feet and hands with cloths, and someone having bound his face with a cloth” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

his feet and hands having been bound with cloths, and his face having been bound with a cloth

Wrapping a dead body in strips of **cloth** was the burial custom in this culture. See the discussion of this in the General Notes for this chapter. If your readers would not be familiar with such a custom, you could describe it more specifically, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “his feet and hands having been bound with burial cloths, and his face having been wrapped with a burial cloth” or “his feet, hands, and face having been wrapped in clothes for burial” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 11:45

General Information:

[11:45–54] explain what happened after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

the Jews

See how you translated this phrase in [11:19](#).

John 11:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 11:47

the Sanhedrin

The **Sanhedrin** is the name of the highest ruling council of the Jews. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Sanhedrin, their ruling council” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Sanhedrin

Sanhedrin is the name of a governing body. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

What will we do

It is implied here that the council members are talking about Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “What are we going to do about Jesus” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

this man

Here, the Jewish leaders say **this man** as a disrespectful way to refer to Jesus and to avoid saying his name. If your language has a similar way to refer to someone in an indirect but derogatory manner, you may use it here. Alternate translation: “this so-and-so” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

signs

See how you translated **signs** in 2:11. See also the discussion of signs in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: “significant miracles”

John 11:48

all will believe in him

The Jewish leaders were afraid that the people would try to make Jesus their king and rebel against the Roman government. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this explicitly. Alternate translation: “everyone will believe in him, make him king, and revolt against the Roman government” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Romans will come

The Jewish leaders use **the Romans** to refer to the Roman army. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Roman soldiers will come” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

and will take away both our place

Here, **place** could mean: (1) the Jewish temple, as in the UST. (2) the city of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “and will take away both our city, Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

nation

Here, **nation** refers to all of the Jewish people. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Jewish nation” or “the people of our nation” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 11:49

one certain man among them, Caiaphas

This phrase introduces **Caiaphas** as a new character in the story. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. Alternate translation: “there was a man among them named Caiaphas” (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1031)**)

You do not know anything

Here, **Caiaphas** uses an exaggeration in order to insult his hearers. If this would confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that shows contempt. Alternate translation: “You do not understand what is happening” or “You speak as though you know nothing” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1016)**)

John 11:50

and the whole nation would not perish

Caiaphas implies that the Roman army would kill all of the people of the Jewish **nation** if Jesus is allowed to live and cause a rebellion. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “and the Romans would not kill all the people of our nation” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 935)**)

and the whole nation would not perish

Here, **nation** refers to all of the Jewish people. See how you translated this word in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “and all the people of our nation would not perish” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 11:51

General Information:

In 11:51–52 John interrupts the story to explain that Caiaphas was prophesying even though he did not realize it at the time. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

from himself

Here, **from himself** could mean: (1) Caiaphas was speaking something he had thought of himself. Alternate translation: “on his own initiative” (2) Caiaphas was speaking from his own authority, which is how the phrase is used in 5:19. Alternate translation: “on his own authority” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

but being high priest that year

This clause indicates the reason why Caiaphas **prophesied** a true prophecy from God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “because he was high priest that year” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

to die for the nation

See how you translated **nation** in the previous verse. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 11:52

the nation

See how you translated **nation** in the previous verse. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

the children of God

Here John uses the word **children** to express the relationship between God and those who trust Jesus for salvation. That relationship is like the relationship between **children** and their father. See the discussion of this phrase in the General Notes to chapter 1. Since this is an important metaphor in the Bible, you should keep it in your translation. However, you can use a simile if it might confuse your readers. Alternate translation: “those who are like God’s children” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

so that also the children of God having been scattered would be gathered together into one

If your language does not use the passive voice, you could express the ideas of these two passive phrases in active forms or in another way that is natural in your language. You may need to change the sentence structure in order to do this. Alternate translation: “so that also Jesus would gather together into one the children of God whom God had scattered” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

would be gathered together into one

Here, John is leaving out a word that some languages would need in order for the sentence to be complete. The word **people** is implied by the context. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “would be gathered into one people” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 11:53

Therefore

John is telling his readers what the Jewish leaders did as a result of what Caiaphas said in [11:49-50](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Consequently” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

they plotted

The word translated **plotted** could mean: (1) the Jewish leaders made plans together for how to kill Jesus. Alternate translation: “they schemed” (2) the Jewish leaders were determined to kill Jesus. Alternate translation: “they resolved”

John 11:54

walked openly among the Jews

Here, **the Jews** does not refer to the Jewish people in general. It could refer to: (1) the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: “among the Jewish authorities” (2) the people living in Judea. Alternate translation: “among the Judeans” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

walked openly among the Jews

Here John uses **walked openly** to mean “walked around where everyone could see him.” If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “walked around where all the Jews could see him” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the country

Here, **country** could refer to: (1) an area of land. Alternate translation: “the area” or “the district” (2) the rural area outside cities where fewer people live. Alternate translation: “the countryside” or “the rural area”

There he stayed with the disciples

Jesus and his disciples **stayed** in Ephraim for a short period of time. If your language requires a length of time for **stayed**, you can use a general expression. Alternate translation: “There he stayed with the disciples for a time” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 11:55

went up to Jerusalem

The phrase **went up** is used here because Jerusalem is at a higher elevation than the surrounding areas. See how you translated **went up** in [7:10](#).

the country

Here, **country** could refer to: (1) an area of land. Alternate translation: “the area” or “the district” (2) the rural area outside cities where fewer people live. Alternate translation: “the countryside” or “the rural area”

John 11:56

General Information:

The event in 11:57 occurs before the event in this verse. If this order might confuse your readers, you can combine these verses and put the text of 11:57 before the text of this verse. (See: **Order of Events (p.1051)**)

they were looking for Jesus

Here, **they** refers to the Jewish people who had traveled to Jerusalem before the Passover celebration, as described in the previous verse. If this use of **they** might be confusing in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Jewish people who came to Jerusalem before the Passover celebration were looking for Jesus” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

in the temple

The people were standing in the courtyard of **the temple**. See how you translated **temple** in 8:14. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

What does it seem to you

This is an idiom used to ask for someone’s opinion. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “What is your opinion” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

That he may certainly not come to the festival

The people are using a rhetorical question here to emphasize that they do not think Jesus will **come** to the **Passover** festival. The speakers here were wondering if Jesus would come to the festival since the Jewish leaders wanted to kill him. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “He will certainly not come to the festival!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

That he may certainly not come to the festival

The people are leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous sentence. Alternate translation: “Does it seem to you that he will come to the festival?” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 11:57

Now the chief priests

This event occurs before that of the previous verse. If this order might confuse your readers, you can combine these verses and put the text of this verse before the text of [11:56](#). Another option would be to clearly state that this verse refers to an earlier event. Alternate translation: “Earlier, the chief priests” (See: **Order of Events (p.1051)**)

John 12

John 12 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Mary pours perfume on Jesus (12:1–11)
Jesus enters Jerusalem (12:12–19)
Some Greeks come to Jesus (12:20–26)
Jesus predicts his death (12:27–36)
John explains the Jews' rejection of Jesus (12:37–43)
Jesus says that he is God (12:44–50)

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry sections in [12:38](#) and [40](#), which are quotations from the Old Testament.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Mary poured perfume on Jesus' feet

The Jews would put oil on a person's head to make that person feel welcome and comfortable. They would also put oil on a person's body after the person had died but before they buried the body. However, they would never think to put oil on a person's feet, because they thought that feet were dirty.

The donkey and the colt

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an animal, which was a common practice for kings. The kings of Israel in the Old Testament rode on donkeys. So by riding on a donkey Jesus was showing that he was the king of Israel.

Glory

Scripture often speaks of God's glory as a great, brilliant light. When people see this light, they are afraid. In [12:16](#) John says that the glory of Jesus is his resurrection and possibly his return to heaven as well.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Light and darkness

In [12:35–36](#), [46](#), Jesus uses an extended metaphor in which light represents what is true and good, and darkness represents what is false and evil. He applies that light metaphor to himself in order to show that he is the embodiment of God's truth and goodness. (See: **righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness** (p.1135))

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. A paradox occurs in [12:25](#): “He who loves his life will lose it; but he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” But in [12:26](#) Jesus explains what it means to keep one’s life for eternal life.

“Son of Man”

Jesus refers to himself as the “Son of Man” several times in this chapter. Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking about someone else. See the discussion of this concept in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sonofman\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#))

John 12:1

Then, six days before the Passover

John uses this phrase to mark the beginning of a new event. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "Some time later, six days before the Passover" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

had raised from the dead

Here, **raised** is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "had caused to live again" (See: **Idiom (p. 1020)**)

John 12:2

the ones reclining to eat

At a relaxed meal such as this one, it was the custom in this culture for host and guests to eat while lying down comfortably around a table that was close to the ground. You could translate this by using the expression in your language for the customary posture at a meal. Alternate translation: “those sitting down at the table to eat” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

John 12:3

a litra of perfumed oil

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. A **litra** is about one third of a kilogram or three quarters of a pound. If your language does not measure liquids by weight, you may refer to its volume equivalent, which would be about half a liter. You might also refer to the container that could hold that amount. Alternate translation: “about half a liter of perfume” or “a one-half liter bottle of perfume” (See: **Biblical Weight (p.953)**)

of perfumed oil

Here, **perfumed oil** refers to a liquid made from the oils of pleasant-smelling plants and flowers. This **oil** was put on a person's skin or hair in order for that person to smell pleasant. If your readers would not be familiar with this **oil**, you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “of scented liquid” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

of perfumed oil of very precious pure nard

John is using **of** to describe **perfumed oil** that is made from **very precious pure nard**. If this use of the possessive **of** would be confusing in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “of perfumed oil made from very precious pure nard” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

of very precious pure nard

The **perfumed oil** was made from the **oil** of a **nard** plant, which is sometimes called “spikenard.” The **oil** is extracted from the roots of this plant. If your readers would not be familiar with **nard** plants, you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “of very precious scented plants” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

Now the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfumed oil

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “Now the fragrance of the perfumed oil filled the house” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 12:4

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 12:5

For what reason was this perfumed oil not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor

Judas is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize that he thought the **perfumed oil** should not be poured on Jesus. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation, and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "This perfume could have been sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

for 300 denarii

The word **denarii** is the plural form of "denarius." It was a denomination of money in the Roman Empire that was equivalent to one day's wages. Alternate translation: "for 300 days' wages" (See: **Biblical Money (p.948)**)

to the poor

Judas is using the adjective **poor** as a noun in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "to people who are poor" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1049)**)

John 12:6

In this verse John interrupts the story to explain why Judas made the statement in the previous verse. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

he said this, not because it was a concern to him about the poor, but because he was a thief

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: “he said this because he was a thief, not because it was a concern to him about the poor” (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

the poor

See how you translated **the poor** in the previous verse. (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1049)**)

but because he was a thief

John is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous clause. Alternate translation: “but he said this because he was a thief” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

the things being put in it

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “what people gave him to put in it” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 12:7

Leave her alone so that she might have kept it for the day of my burial

This could mean: (1) Jesus is stating the purpose for which Mary did not sell the perfume. In this case he would be leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. This translation would require supplying those words from Judas' objection in [12:5](#) and making a new sentence. Alternate translation: "Leave her alone. She did not sell this perfumed oil so that she might keep it for the day of my burial" (2) Jesus is giving the purpose for his command in the previous clause. In this case he would be implying that there was some leftover perfumed oil which Mary could later put on his dead body. Alternate translation: "Leave her alone so that she might keep it for the day of my burial" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

Leave her alone so that she might have kept it for the day of my burial

If Jesus is stating the reason why Mary had the perfume, then Jesus is implying that Mary's actions can be understood as anticipating his death and **burial**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. You may need to add a new sentence. Alternate translation: "Leave her alone. She did not sell this perfumed oil so that she might keep it to prepare my body for burial, as she had just done" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 12:8

For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me

Jesus' statement in this verse implies that Mary acted properly by pouring the expensive perfume on him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "She acted appropriately, because you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

you always have the poor with you

Jesus implies that there will always be opportunities to help **the poor**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "you always have the poor with you that you can help" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the poor

See how you translated **the poor** in the [12:6](#). (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1049)**)

you & have & with you, & you do & have

In this verse every occurrence of **you** is plural and refers to the disciples and those who were with Jesus at the dinner. (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

but you do not always have me

Jesus implies that he will not always be with them, because he will die. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "but I will not always be here with you" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 12:9

Then

Then is used here to mark a break in the main storyline. This break continues until the end of [12:11](#). In this verse John gives background information about a new group of people that has come to Bethany. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

a large crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to people from Judea. See the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: “the Judeans” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

he is

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

he had raised from the dead

See how you translated this phrase in [12:1](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 12:10

plotted

See how you translated **plotted** in [11:53](#).

they might also put Lazarus to death

Here, **also** implies that **the chief priests** want to kill **Lazarus** in addition to Jesus, whom they have already plotted to kill in [11:53](#). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “they might put Lazarus to death in addition to Jesus” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 12:11

because of him

This phrase implies that the fact that Lazarus was alive after he had been dead caused many **Jews** to believe in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “because Lazarus was alive after having died” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

of the Jews

See how you translated this phrase in [12:9](#).

went away

Here, John uses **went away** to refer to the fact that **many of the Jews** stopped believing the teachings of the Jewish religious authorities and starting trusting Jesus instead. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “stopped listening to them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 12:12

General Information:

Jesus enters Jerusalem and the people honor him as a king of Israel.

On the next day

John uses this phrase to mark the beginning of a new event. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "On the day after that happened," (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

the great crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

the festival

Here, **festival** refers to the Jewish Passover festival. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "the Passover festival" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 12:13

the branches of the palm trees

In that culture a **palm tree** branch was a symbol that represented the nation of Israel. Here, the people were waving these **branches** to express their belief that Jesus was the Messiah who would free Israel from Roman rule. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this use of **the branches of the palm trees** by stating the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the branches of the palm trees, which represented their hope to be freed from Roman rule” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

cried out

This phrase introduces a quotation from the Old Testament book of Psalms ([Psalm 118:25–26](#)) which occurs next in the verse. The Jews recite Psalm 118 at the Passover festival to express their hope that the Messiah would come. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

Hosanna! Blessed {is} the one coming in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel

This sentence is a quotation from [Psalm 118:25–26](#). It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off all of this material with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1073)**)

Hosanna

Hosanna is the Greek pronunciation of an expression in the Hebrew language that means “Please save!” It is a quotation from part of [Psalm 118:25](#). If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Save us now!” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

in the name of the Lord

Here, **name** refers to a person’s power and authority. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “with the Lord’s authority” or “as God’s representative” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 12:14

In 12:14–16 John interrupts the story to give background information about how Jesus fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah riding on a **donkey**. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

Jesus, having found a young donkey, sat on it

John implies that Jesus will ride the **donkey** into Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Jesus, having found a young donkey, sat on it, riding it into the city” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

just as it is written

This phrase introduces a combination of parts of various quotations from the Old Testament which occur in the next verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that John is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “just as the prophets wrote in the Old Testament” or “as it had been written in the scriptures” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

just as it is written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “as prophets wrote in the Scripture” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 12:15

This verse is a combination of parts of various quotations from the Old Testament. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off all of this material with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1073)**)

daughter of Zion

Here, **daughter of Zion** is used to refer to the people who lived in Jerusalem. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you people of Jerusalem” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

a colt of a donkey

A **colt** is a young male **donkey**.

John 12:16

these things & these things & these things

In this verse, **these things** refers to the words of the Old Testament prophecies that were quoted in the previous verse, which were fulfilled in the events described in [12:13–14](#). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “these words from the scriptures” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

when Jesus was glorified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, John implies that God did it. Alternate translation: “when God glorified Jesus” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

was glorified

Here, **glorified** could refer to: (1) when Jesus became alive again after he was killed. Alternate translation: “when Jesus came back to life” (2) when Jesus returned to heaven. Alternate translation: “when Jesus went back to heaven” (3) both Jesus’ resurrection and return to heaven. Alternate translation: “when Jesus came back to life and went back to heaven” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

these things had been written about him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the prophets have written these things about him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 12:17

the crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

testified the crowd being with him

Here, **the crowd** refers to the group of Jews who had seen Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead at Bethany in Chapter 11. This is a different **crowd** than the crowd mentioned in the next verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “one crowd testified that they had been with him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

raised him up from the dead

See how you translated this phrase in [12:1](#).

John 12:18

the crowd

Here, **the crowd** refers to a group of people who were coming out of Jerusalem to see Jesus as he came. This is a different **crowd** than the crowd mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “a second crowd” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

τοῦτο & τὸ σημεῖον

This phrase refers to Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, an event that was mentioned in the previous verse. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “this sign, bringing a dead man back to life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

sign

See how you translated **sign** in [2:11](#). See also the discussion of signs in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: “significant miracle”

John 12:19

You see that you are accomplishing nothing

The Pharisees imply here that it might be impossible to stop Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "It seems like we can do nothing to stop him" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Behold, the world has gone after him

The Pharisees use **the world** as an exaggeration to express their shock that so many people have come out to follow Jesus. If this would confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that shows shock. Alternate translation: "Behold, it seems like everyone has gone after him" (See: **Hyperbole (p.1016)**)

the world

Here, **world** refers to the people who lived in it. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "every person in the world" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

has gone after him

Here, **gone after** means to follow Jesus and become his disciple. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "has become his disciple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 12:20

Now certain Greeks

This phrase marks the introduction of **certain Greeks** as new characters in the story. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1031)**)

Greeks

Here, the term **Greeks** refers to non-Jewish people who lived in the Roman Empire. It does not refer only to people from the country of Greece or to people who speak the Greek language. (See: **Greek, Grecian, Hellenist (p.1120)**) If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Gentiles” or “non-Jews” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the ones going up

The phrase **going up** is used specifically for the act of going to Jerusalem, which is a city at a higher elevation than the area around it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “those going up to Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

so that they might worship at the festival

John is leaving out a word that some languages would need in order a clause to be complete. If your language requires an object for the verb **worship**, you can supply it from the context. Alternate translation: “to worship God at the festival” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

the festival

This refers to the Jewish Passover **festival**. See how you translated this word in [12:12](#).

John 12:21

Bethsaida

See how you translated **Bethsaida** in 1:44. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

asked him, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “asked him by saying” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

Sir

Speaking to **Philip**, the Greeks called him **Sir** in order to show respect or politeness. (See: **lord, Lord, master, sir (p. 1128)**)

we want to see Jesus

The Greeks are using a statement to make a request. If this is confusing in your language, you can use a more natural form for a request. Alternate translation: “may we see Jesus?” or “could you take us to see Jesus?” (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1089)**)

John 12:22

speaks to Andrew

Philip tells **Andrew** about the Greeks' request to see **Jesus**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "relates to Andrew what the Greeks had said" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

goes and speaks & go and speak

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

speak to Jesus

Philip and **Andrew** tell **Jesus** about the Greeks' request to see him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "speak to Jesus about what the Greeks had said" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 12:23

answers them, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “answered them by saying” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

The hour has come

See the discussion of this in the General Notes to Chapter 4 and see how you translated this phrase in [4:21](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

so that the Son of Man might be glorified

Here, Jesus refers to his upcoming death, resurrection, and return to heaven as the time when he would be **glorified**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “so that the Son of Man might be glorified through his death, resurrection, and ascension” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking of himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

the Son of Man

See how you translated **the Son of Man** in [1:51](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

so that the Son of Man might be glorified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who will do the action, Jesus implies that God will do it. Alternate translation: “so that God might glorify the Son of Man” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 12:24

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

unless a grain of wheat, having fallen into the earth, dies, it remains by itself; but if it would die, it bears much fruit

Here Jesus uses **a grain of wheat** to refer to himself. He speaks of the death of that **grain** to refer to his death, burial, and resurrection. He also uses **fruit** to refer to those people who will trust in him for salvation after his resurrection. Just as a seed is planted and grows into a plant that will bear **much fruit**, so will many people trust in Jesus after he is killed, buried, and raised back to life. If this would confuse your readers, you could use a simile or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I am like a grain of wheat. Unless that grain of wheat, having fallen into the earth, dies, it remains by itself; but if it would die, it bears much fruit" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 12:25

The one loving his life loses it

Here, **the one loving his life** refers to someone who thinks that his own physical life is more important than anything else. If this clause would be confusing in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Whoever values his own life more than anything else will still die” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

the one hating his life in this world will keep it for eternal life

Here, **the one hating his life** refers to someone who values his own physical life less than he values being a disciple of Jesus. The word “hating” here does not refer to having negative feelings about one’s life or despising oneself. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “whoever values being my disciple more than he values his own life will keep it for eternal life” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

for eternal life

The phrase **eternal life** states the result of what precedes it. The **one hating his life** will **keep** that life, which will result in **eternal life**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “and also gain eternal life” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

John 12:26

let him follow me

In this context, to **follow** someone means to become that person's disciple. See how you translated a similar phrase in [1:43](#). Alternate translation: "let him follow me as my disciple" (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

where I am, there will my servant also be

Here, Jesus implies that those who serve him will be with him in heaven. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "when I am in heaven, my servant will also be there with me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 12:27

what might I say? 'Father, save me from this hour

Here Jesus uses a rhetorical question to emphasize what he will not do. Although Jesus desires to avoid crucifixion, he chooses to be obedient to God and let himself be killed. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "I will not say, 'Father, save me from this hour!'" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

this hour'? & this hour

In this verse **this hour** refers to the time when Jesus would suffer and die on the cross. See how you translated **hour** in [12:23](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

because of this

Here, **this reason** refers to Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "in order to suffer and die," or (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 12:28

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

glorify your name.” & I have both glorified {it}, & I will glorify {it

In this verse, **name** and **it** refer to God himself. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “glorify yourself ... I have both glorified myself ... I will glorify myself” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

a voice came from heaven

Here John refers to the sound of God’s **voice** as if it were an object that **came from heaven**. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “God spoke from heaven” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 12:29

the crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

John 12:30

This voice did not come

Here, Jesus refers to the sound of God's **voice** as if it were an object that came down from heaven (See: [12:28](#)). If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "God did not speak this" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 12:31

Now is the judgment of this world

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **judgment**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "Now God will judge this world" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

of this world

Here, **this world** is used to refer to all the people in the **world**. See how you translated **world** in 1:29. (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

Now will the ruler of this world be thrown out

Here, **ruler of this world** refers to Satan. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "Now Satan will be thrown out" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Now will the ruler of this world be thrown out

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who will do the action, Jesus implies that God will do it. Alternate translation: "Now God will throw out the ruler of this world" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 12:32

I am lifted up from the earth

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “people lift me up from the earth” (See: **Active or Passive** (p.932))

if I am lifted up from the earth

Here, **lifted up from the earth** could refer to: (1) Jesus’ crucifixion only, in which case **earth** would refer to the ground. Alternate translation: “if I am lifted up from the ground on a cross” (2) Jesus’ crucifixion and return to heaven, in which case **earth** refers to both the ground and the planet. See the discussion about double meaning in the Part 3 of the Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: “if I am lifted up from the earth on a cross and then up to heaven” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

will draw everyone to myself

See how you translated “draws” in [6:44](#). Alternate translation: “will pull everyone to myself”

will draw everyone to myself

Here, **everyone** is an exaggeration that Jesus uses to refer to all people groups, both Jews and non-Jews. The context of non-Jewish people coming to see Jesus in [12:20](#) suggests this meaning. This clause does not mean that every individual person will believe in Jesus. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “will draw people from both Jews and non-Jews” or “will draw people, all people, Jews and non-Jews alike” (See: **Hyperbole** (p.1016))

John 12:33

General Information:

In this verse John explains the meaning of what Jesus said in the previous verse. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

John 12:34

the crowd

See how you translated **crowd** in [5:13](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

the law

The crowd is using the name of the first part of the Hebrew Scriptures, the law, to represent the entire Hebrew Scriptures in general. See how you translated this use of **the law** in [10:34](#). Alternate translation: “the Scriptures” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up

Here, the phrase **lifted up** means “crucified.” If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “it is necessary for the Son of Man to be crucified” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Son of Man & Son of Man

See how you translated **the Son of Man** in [1:51](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Who is this Son of Man

This could mean: (1) they are asking to know the identity of **the Son of Man**. Alternate translation: “What is the identity of this Son of Man?” (2) they are asking to know what Jesus means when he says, ‘Son of Man.’ Alternate translation: “What kind of Son of Man are you talking about?” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 12:35

The light will be with you & while you have the light

Jesus uses **light** to refer to refer to himself. He is “the Light of the World” who reveals God’s truth and goodness the way a **light** reveals a person’s surroundings. See how you translated **light** in [8:12](#). Alternate translation: “The one who reveals God’s truth and goodness will be with you ... while you have him” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

The light will be with you & while you have the light

Jesus is speaking of himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these phrases in the first person. Alternate translation: “I, the light, will be with you ... while you have me” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

Walk

Jesus uses **Walk** to refer to how a person lives and behaves. He is telling the crowd to live and act according to the example that he has shown them while he has been with them. If this would be confusing in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Behave righteously” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

so that darkness might not overtake you

Jesus uses **darkness** as though it were a person who could **overtake** someone. If this might be confusing for your readers, you could express this meaning plainly or with a simile. Alternate translation: “so that you do not act sinfully, as if the darkness of sin had taken control of you” (See: **Personification (p.1060)**)

darkness

Here Jesus uses **darkness** to refer to what is false and evil. See how you translated this term in [1:5](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the one walking in the darkness

Jesus uses this phrase to refer to a person who lives a sinful life and behaves sinfully. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: “the one who lives sinfully” or “the one who does not behave righteously” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 12:36

the light, & in the light

Both occurrences of **the light** here refer to Jesus. See how you translated **light** in the previous verse. (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

sons of light

Here, **sons of light** is an idiom that refers to people who live according to God's truth and goodness, which Jesus has revealed to them. Here, **sons** does not refer specifically to male children and **light** does not refer to Jesus. If this expression would be confusing in your language, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: "people who share in God's truth and goodness" (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 12:37

General Information:

In [12:37–43](#) John interrupts the main storyline in order to explain how the Jewish people had fulfilled prophecies that had been spoken by the prophet Isaiah. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information for these verses. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

signs

See how you translated **signs** in [2:11](#). See also the discussion of **signs** in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: “significant miracles”

John 12:38

so that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “in order to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the word of Isaiah the prophet

Here, **word** refers to the specific prophecy written down by Isaiah that is quoted in the second half of this verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “this prophecy of Isaiah the prophet” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

in which he said

This phrase introduces a quotation that occurs in the rest of this verse. The quotation is from the Old Testament book written by Isaiah the prophet (Isaiah 53:1). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that John is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “which Isaiah said in the Old Testament” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed

This sentence is a quotation from Isaiah 53:1. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off all of this material with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1073)**)

Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed

This quotation from Isaiah 53:1 contains two rhetorical questions to express the prophet's dismay that the people do not believe his **report**. If you would not use rhetorical questions for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as two statements or exclamations and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “Lord, no one has believed our message! It seems like the arm of the Lord has been revealed to no one!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “to whom has the Lord revealed his arm” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the arm of the Lord

Here, John quotes **Isaiah** using **arm** to refer to the Lord's power. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the Lord's power” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 12:39

this

Here, **this** refers to the reason for the Jews' unbelief. That reason is given in the quotation from **Isaiah** provided in the next verse. It does not refer back to the quotation from **Isaiah** in the previous verse.

for Isaiah had again said

This phrase introduces a quotation from the Old Testament book written by **Isaiah** the prophet (Isaiah 6:10) which occurs in the next verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that John is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: "for Isaiah had again said in the Old Testament" or "for according to Isaiah" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

John 12:40

He has blinded their eyes, and he has hardened their heart; so that they might not see with their eyes and might understand with their heart, and might turn, and I will heal them

This verse is a quotation from Isaiah 6:10. It is a prophecy that God told Isaiah to speak against the Jewish people because they kept rejecting God. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off all of this material with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1073)**)

He has blinded their eyes

Here John quotes Isaiah using **blinded their eyes** to refer to causing people to not be able to understanding what they see. Although the Jews saw Jesus' many miracles, most of them did not understand that those miracles proved that Jesus was sent by God. If this use of **blinded** and **eyes** would confuse your readers, you could state the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: "He has caused them to not be able to understand" or "He has made them like those who are blind" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

he has hardened their heart

John quotes Isaiah using the phrase **hardened their heart** to refer to causing the Jewish people to become stubborn. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "he has made them stubborn" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

their heart; & with their heart

Both occurrences of the singular noun **heart** in this verse refer to all of the hearts of the people as a group. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: "their hearts ... with their hearts" (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

they might not see with their eyes

John quotes Isaiah using the phrase **see with their eyes** here to refer to people understanding something that they **see**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "they might not see and perceive" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

might understand with their heart

John quotes Isaiah using the phrase **understand with their heart** to refer to the Jewish people truly understanding something. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "might fully understand" or "might understand deep within themselves" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

and might turn

John quotes Isaiah using **turn** to mean "repent," which means to stop sinning and start obeying the Lord. If this might confuse your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "and they would repent" or "and they would stop sinning and obey God" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

and I will heal them

John quotes Isaiah using **heal** to refer to forgiving people of their sins. It does not refer to physical healing. If this might confuse your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “and I would forgive them” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 12:41

his glory

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “how glorious he is” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

John 12:42

the rulers

Here, **rulers** refers to the Jewish religious leadership, specifically the Jewish council called the Sanhedrin, which made decisions about Jewish law. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/other/council\]\]](#)) See how you translated rulers* in 3:1. Alternate translation: “the members of the Jewish ruling council” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

so that they would not be put out of the synagogue

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “so that the Pharisees would not ban them from the synagogue” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

they would not be put out of the synagogue

John uses **put out of the synagogue** to refer to no longer being allowed to go into the synagogue and no longer belonging to the group of people who attended services at the synagogue. When people were put out of the synagogue, they were shunned by their local community. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “they would not be allowed to enter the synagogue” or “they would no longer belong to the synagogue community” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 12:43

they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God

Here, **loved** refers to preferring one thing over something else. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “they preferred the glory of men more than the glory of God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the glory of men

John is using **of** to describe **glory** that is given by **men**. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “the glory that is given by men” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

the glory of men

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both **men** and women. Alternate translation: “the glory of people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

the glory of God

John is using **of** to describe **glory** that is given by **God**. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “the glory that is given by God” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

John 12:44

Now

Now here introduces a new event that happened at some time after the events in [12:20-36](#). The story does not say how long after the previous events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "At another time" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

Jesus cried out and said

John uses **cried out** to imply that Jesus was speaking loudly to a crowd of people. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus cried out and said to a crowd" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the one having sent me

Here, **the one having sent me** refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in [4:34](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 12:45

the one having sent me

Here, **the one having sent me** refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 12:46

I have come {as} a light to the world

Here Jesus uses **light** to refer to himself. See how you translated **light** in [8:12](#). Alternate translation: "I have come as the one who reveals God's truth and goodness to the world" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

to the world

Here, **world** refers to the people who live in it. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to the people living in the world" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

might not remain in the darkness

Here Jesus uses **darkness** to refer to what is false and evil. See how you translated **darkness** in [12:35](#) and also see the discussion of **light** and **darkness** in the General Notes for Chapter 1. Alternate translation: "might not remain in sin and evil" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 12:47

my words

Here, **words** refers to the message or teachings of Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “my message” or “what I say” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

but does not keep {them

Here, **keep** means to obey. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “but does not obey them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

I do not judge him; & so that I might judge the world

In this verse, the word **judge** implies condemnation. Jesus did not come to condemn people to be eternally punished in hell. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “I do not condemn him ... so that I might condemn the world” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the world, & the world

See how you translated **the world** in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 12:48

my words

See how you translated **my words** in the previous verse.

one judging & will judge

See how you translated this **judge** in the previous verse.

one judging him. The word which I have spoken, this will judge him

Jesus refers to his **word** as though it were a person who could judge someone. He means that his teachings will be used as the criterion by which God will judge those who have rejected Jesus. If this might be confusing to your readers, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “one by which he will be judged. The word which I have spoken, this will be the standard by which you will be judged” (See: **Personification (p.1060)**)

on the last day

See how you translated this phrase in [6:39](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 12:49

from myself

Here, **from** is used to indicate the source of what Jesus spoke. See how you translated this phrase in [7:17](#). Alternate translation: “by my own authority” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

what I should say and what I should speak

Here, **what I should speak** could refer to: (1) the manner in which Jesus **should speak**. Alternate translation: “what I should say and the manner in which I should say it” (2) the same meaning as **what I should say**, in which case the two phrases would be a doublet used for emphasis and could be combined into one clause. Alternate translation: “exactly what I should say” (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

John 12:50

I know that his command

Here, **his command** refers to the teachings that God commanded Jesus to speak, as mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “I know that what he commanded me to speak” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

his command is eternal life

This phrase means that what God commanded Jesus to say gives **eternal life** to those who believe it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “his command gives eternal life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 13

John 13 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

The Passover meal begins: Jesus washes his disciples' feet (13:1–20)

Jesus predicts that Judas will betray him (13:21–30)

Jesus commands his disciples to love each other (13:31–35)

Jesus predicts that Peter will deny him (13:36–38)

The events of this chapter are commonly referred to as the “Last Supper.” In many ways this Passover meal parallels the sacrifice of Jesus as the lamb of God. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/lordssupper\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/passover\]\]](#))

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

The washing of feet

People in the Ancient Near East thought that feet were very dirty. Only servants would wash people's feet. The disciples did not want Jesus to wash their feet, because they considered him to be their master and themselves to be his servants, and it was a servant's job to wash the feet of master and guests. However, Jesus wanted to show them that his disciples need to humbly serve and love each other. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1091)**)

I AM

John records Jesus saying these words as an independent phrase one time in this chapter (13:19). They stand alone as a complete sentence, and they literally translate the Hebrew expression “I AM,” by which Yahweh identified himself to Moses in Exodus 3:14. For these reasons many people believe that when Jesus said these words he was claiming to be Yahweh. (See: **Yahweh (p.1150)**).

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“The disciple whom Jesus loved”

The Apostle John first referred to himself as the disciple “whom Jesus loved” in this chapter (13:23). Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking about someone else. If this is the case, then you will need to add a first person pronoun to these references and the other references to John in (13:23–25). If your language can retain the third person references, then you may still want to make these references to John explicit by adding “John” next to them. See the discussion of this in Part 1 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/names/johntheapostle\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#))

“Son of Man”

Jesus refers to himself as the “Son of Man” in this chapter (13:31). Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking about someone else. See the discussion of this concept in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sonofman\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#))

John 13:1

General Information:

It is not yet **Passover**, and **Jesus** is with his disciples for the evening meal. [13:1–4](#) explain the setting of the story and give background information about Jesus and Judas. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

his hour had come

Here, the word **hour** is used to refer to the time God had planned for Jesus to be arrested and killed. See how you translated this word in [7:30](#). Alternate translation: “the right time to arrest him had come” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

his own in the world

This phrase refers to Jesus’ disciples. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “his own disciples who were with him in the world” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he loved them to the end

Here, **to the end** could mean: (1) **to the end** of Jesus’ life. If you use this meaning, make sure that you do not translate this phrase in a way that could imply that Jesus did not continue to love them after his death. Alternate translation: “he loved them to the time of his death” (2) utterly or completely. Alternate translation: “he loved them to the uttermost” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 13:2

the devil having already put into the heart of Judas, {son} of Simon Iscariot, so that he might betray him

Here, **put into the heart** is an idiom that means to cause someone to think about something. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the devil had already caused Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to think about betraying Jesus” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

of Judas, {son} of Simon Iscariot

See how you translated this phrase in [6:71](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

John 13:3

knowing

Here, the word **knowing** could mean: (1) the rest of this verse is the reason why Jesus did the result that John describes in the next verse. Alternate translation: “because he knew” (2) this verse provides a contrast between who Jesus is and what he would do in the next verse. Alternate translation: “although he knew” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

into his hands

Here, John uses **hands** to refer to power and authority. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “into his power” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 13:4

he gets up & takes off

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

he gets up from supper

During Jesus' time, people would often eat meals while lying on their sides on low couches next to the table. Here, **gets up** means that Jesus went from lying on his side on a couch next to the table where he was eating **supper** to standing up. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "he gets up from the table where he was eating supper" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

takes off his outer clothing

Here, **outer clothing** refers to clothing that is worn over undergarments. It does not refer to a coat that would be worn over a person's regular clothing. Use the term in your language for the regular clothing that people wear on top of their underwear.

having taken a towel

Here, **towel** refers to piece of cloth that is long enough to wrap around Jesus' waist and still has enough leftover cloth to wipe the disciples' feet. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "having taken a long towel" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 13:5

he pours

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

that was tied around himself

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "that he had tied around himself" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 13:6

he comes & He says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Lord, do you wash my feet

Peter is using a rhetorical question here to show that he does not want Jesus to wash his feet. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Lord, it is not right for you to wash my feet!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 13:7

after these things

Here, **these things** refers to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "after the events that are about to take place" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 13:8

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

If I do not wash you, you have no share with me

Jesus uses two negative statements to convince **Peter** to allow him to **wash** his **feet**. If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "I must wash you so that you can have a share with me" (See: **Double Negatives (p.984)**)

If I do not wash you, you have no share with me

Here, Jesus' use of **no share with me** could imply: (1) that Peter must let him wash his feet if he wants to receive his **share** of the inheritance that God promised to give his people. Alternate translation: "If I do not wash you, you will not share in God's promised inheritance with me" (2) that Peter must let him wash his feet if he wants to continue being his disciple. Alternate translation: "If I do not wash you, you will no longer be my disciple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 13:9

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

not only my feet

Peter is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “wash not only my feet” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 13:10

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

The one that has been washed has no need, except to wash his feet

In this verse, Jesus uses **washed** to refer to God forgiving a person for their sins. He also uses **feet** to refer to daily sins, because people in Jesus' culture had to wash their **feet** frequently due to wearing sandals while walking on dusty, dirty roads. If this might confuse your readers, you could state their meanings clearly or use similes. Alternate translation: "The one who has received God's forgiveness for their sins, only needs to be forgiven for his daily sins" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

The one that has been washed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "The one who someone has washed" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

but he is completely clean, and you are clean

In this verse, Jesus uses **clean** to refer to someone who has been forgiven for their sins. If this might be confusing in your language, you could state its meaning clearly or use a simile. Alternate translation: "but he has been completely forgiven for his sins, and you have been forgiven" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

you

Here Jesus uses the word **you** to refer to all of his disciples, not only Peter. Use a plural form of **you** if your language distinguishes between singular and plural **you**. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1003)**)

John 13:11

Here John interrupts the story to give the reason why Jesus made his comment in the end of the previous verse. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p. 939)**)

Not all are clean

See how you translated **clean** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “Not all of you have received God’s forgiveness” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 13:12

Do you understand what I have done for you

Jesus is using a question to emphasize the importance of what he is teaching his disciples. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You need to understand what I have done for you!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 13:13

You call me 'The Teacher' and 'The Lord

Here Jesus implies that his disciples have great respect for him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "You show me great respect when you call me 'teacher' and 'Lord.'"

(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 13:14

If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet

Jesus is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what Jesus is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, and I have" (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.963)**)

John 13:15

you also would do just as I did to you

Jesus is using a statement to give an instruction. Jesus is telling his disciples to follow his example and serve one another. If this is confusing in your language, you can use a more natural form for instruction. Alternate translation: "you also must do just as I did to you" (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1089)**)

John 13:16

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in 1:51. (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

a slave is not greater than his master, nor {is} a messenger greater than the one having sent him

Here, **greater** means to be more important or deserving of more respect than another person. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “a slave is not respected more than his master, nor is a messenger respected more than the one who sent him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

a slave is not greater than his master, nor {is} a messenger greater than the one having sent him

These two clauses mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize that Jesus’ disciples are not more important than him, so they should humbly serve each other. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: “none of you are greater than me” (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

a slave is not greater than his master

Jesus uses the words **slave** and **master** to refer to his disciples and himself, respectively. He is telling his disciples that they should humbly serve each other because they are not more important than him, and he has humbly served them. If this might confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express Jesus’ meaning plainly. Alternative translation, “you are not greater than me” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

nor {is} a messenger greater than the one having sent him

Jesus uses **messenger** and **the one who sent him** to refer to his disciples and himself, respectively. He is telling his disciples that they should humbly serve each other because they are not more important than him, and he has humbly served them. If this might confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express Jesus’ meaning plainly. Alternative translation, “and you are not greater than me” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 13:17

If you know these things

Jesus is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what Jesus is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "If you know these things, which you do," (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.963)**)

you are blessed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Jesus implies that God did it. See the UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 13:18

I am not speaking about all of you

Here Jesus is referring back to what he just said in the previous verse. He means that not all of those to whom he is speaking will be blessed for serving each other, because one of them, Judas Iscariot, will betray him. If this clause would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "I am not speaking this about all of you" or "I am not saying that God will bless all of you" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

I know whom I have chosen

Here Jesus states that he knew the character of every person he chose to be his disciple. Therefore, he knew Judas would betray him when he chose him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I know exactly the kind of men I have chosen to be my disciples" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

but so that the scripture might be fulfilled

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "but I chose one who will betray me so that the scripture might be fulfilled" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

so that the scripture might be fulfilled

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "this is in order to fulfill the scripture" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

so that the scripture might be fulfilled

Here Jesus uses **that the scripture might be fulfilled** to introduce a quotation from an Old Testament book (Psalm 41:9). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Jesus is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: "so that what is written in the Psalms might be fulfilled" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

The one eating bread with me lifted up his heel against me

This sentence is a quotation from Psalm 41:9. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off all of this material with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1073)**)

The one eating bread with me lifted up his heel against me

The phrase, **The one eating bread with me**, here is an idiom that refers to someone who acts like a friend would act. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "The one who has acted like he is my friend" (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

lifted up his heel against me

Here, **lifted up his heel** is an idiom that refers to someone who has become an enemy. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “has turned against me” or “has become my enemy” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 13:19

From this moment I tell you

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context, as modeled by the UST. (See: **Ellipsis (p. 989)**)

I am

See how you translated **I am** in [8:24](#), and also see the discussion of this phrase in the General Notes for Chapter 8. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 13:20

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

the one receiving & receives & receiving & receives

In this verse, **receiving** and **receives** mean to accept or welcome a person into one's presence with friendliness. See how you translated this word in [1:12](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

the one having sent me

Here, **the one having sent me** refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in [4:34](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 13:21

was troubled in spirit

See how you translated a similar phrase in [11:33](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

John 13:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 13:23

one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved

This phrase refers to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. See the discussion of this phrase in Part 1 of the Introduction to the Gospel of John and the discussion in the General Notes for this chapter. If this phrase would be confusing to your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “I, one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved” or “John, one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

reclining to eat

During Jesus’ time, people would often eat meals while lying on their sides on low couches next to a table. If your readers would not be familiar with this meal practice, you could use a general expression for sitting to have a meal. Alternate translation: “seated at the table” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

against the chest of Jesus

In Jesus’ culture, lying with one’s head **against** the side of another person when having a meal was considered to be a sign that the two people had a very close friendship. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “closely beside Jesus as a close friend” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 13:24

to this one

Here, **this one** refers to John, who calls himself the disciple “whom Jesus loved” in the previous verse. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “to the disciple whom Jesus loved” or “to me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 13:25

that one says

Here, **that one** refers to John, who calls himself the disciple “whom Jesus loved” in [13:23](#). If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “that disciple whom Jesus loved says” or “I say” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

says

[13:28](#) indicates that the disciples did not know why Jesus spoke to Judas in the way he did. This means that they must not have heard the conversation in this verse and the next, because John and Jesus were speaking quietly. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “said in a quite voice” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 13:26

to Judas, {son} of Simon Iscariot

See how you translated this phrase in [6:71](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

John 13:27

And after the bread

John is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "And after Judas took the bread" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

Satan then entered into him

Here, **entered into** is an idiom that means that **Satan** took control of Judas. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "Satan then started to command Judas" (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 13:28

In [13:28-29](#) John interrupts the main storyline in order to provide background information about the disciples' confusion. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

of the ones reclining to eat

See how you translated **reclining to eat** in [13:23](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 13:29

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

festival

Here, **festival** refers to the Jewish Passover festival. See how you translated this word in [12:12](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

so that he might give something to the poor

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "Give something to the poor" (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.979)**)

John 13:30

Now it was night

In this sentence John provides background information about the time of day when Judas **went out** to betray Jesus. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p. 939)**)

John 13:31

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him

In this verse, Jesus twice uses the past tense **has been glorified** in order to refer to something that will happen in the future. He is doing this to show that the event will certainly happen. If this is confusing in your language, you could use the future tense. Alternate translation: "Now the Son of Man will be glorified, and God will be glorified in him" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Now the Son of Man has been glorified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Jesus implies that God did it. Alternate translation: "Now God will glorify the Son of Man" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the Son of Man has been glorified

Jesus is speaking of himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, have been glorified" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

the Son of Man

See how you translated **the Son of Man** in [1:51](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

God has been glorified in him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "he will glorify God" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 13:32

In some Bibles, this verse begins with the clause, “If God has been glorified in him”. However, these words are not in most of the oldest ancient manuscripts. Nevertheless, if a translation of the Bible already exists in your region, consider using whichever reading is found in that version. If a translation does not already exist, we recommend that you follow the reading in the ULT text. (See: **Textual Variants (p.1095)**)

him & him

Both occurrences of the pronoun **him** refer to the Son of Man, Jesus. If this use of **him** would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Son of Man ... the Son” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

God will glorify him in himself

The word **himself** here refers to God and is used to emphasize that God is the one who would **glorify** Jesus. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this emphasis. Alternate translation: “God himself will glorify him” (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1079)**)

John 13:33

Little children

Jesus is using the phrase **Little children** to describe the disciples to whom he is speaking. He loves them as if they were his own children. If this might confuse your readers, you could translate this plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: "You dear disciples who are like children to me" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

to the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

and just as I said to the Jews, 'Where I go, you are not able to come.' Now I also say this to you

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: "and just as I said to the Jews, now I also say this to you, 'Where I go, you are not able to come.'" (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

Where I go, you are not able to come

See how you translated this sentence in [8:21](#). (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

John 13:34

just as I have loved you, so also you would love one another

Jesus is using a future statement to give an instruction. If this is confusing in your language, you can use a more natural form for instruction. Alternate translation: “just as I have loved you, so also you must love one another” (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1089)**)

John 13:35

everyone

Here, Jesus uses **everyone** as an exaggeration that refers only to those people who would see how the disciples loved each other. If this might confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent expression. (See: **Hyperbole** (p. 1016))

John 13:36

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 13:37

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

I will lay down my life

See how you translated a similar phrase in [10:11](#). (See: **Euphemism (p.994)**)

John 13:38

Will you lay down your life for me

Jesus is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize the truth of what he is saying. He knows that Peter is not really willing to **lay down** his life for Jesus. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You will certainly not lay down your life for me!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1082)**)

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

the rooster may certainly not crow before which you will deny me three times

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this negative statement as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "you will surely deny me three times before the rooster crows"

the rooster may certainly not crow before which

Jesus is referring to a certain time of day. Roosters crow just before the sun appears in the morning. In other words, Jesus is referring to dawn. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "before another morning begins" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the rooster

A **rooster** is a bird that calls out loudly around the time the sun comes up. If your readers would not be familiar with this bird, you could use the name of a bird in your area that calls out or sings just before dawn, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: "the bird that sings in the morning" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1097)**)

the rooster

Jesus is not speaking of one particular **rooster** but of roosters in general. Alternate translation: "the roosters" or "the birds" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

John 14

John 14 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus says he is the way to the Father (14:1–14)

Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will come (14:15–31)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

“My Father’s house”

Jesus used these words to refer to heaven, where God dwells. It does not refer to any temple in Jerusalem or to a church building. (See: **heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly (p.1121)**)

The Holy Spirit

Jesus told his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to them. He called the Holy Spirit the Helper (14:16), who is always with God’s people to help them and to speak to God for them. Jesus also called him the Spirit of Truth (14:17), who tells God’s people what is true about God so they know him better and serve him well. (See: **Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of the Lord, Spirit (p.1123)**)

John 14:1

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

The part of the story from the previous chapter continues in this chapter. Jesus reclines at the table with his disciples during the evening meal and continues to speak to them.

In [14:1-7](#) the word “you” is always plural and refers to Jesus’ disciples. (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

Do not let your heart be troubled

Jesus uses **heart** to represent the disciples’ thoughts and emotions. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Do not let your thoughts be troubled” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

Believe in God; believe also in me

Both of these clauses could be: (1) commands, as in the UST. (2) statements. Alternate translation: “You believe in God; you also believe in me” (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.1089)**)

John 14:2

In the house of my Father

Jesus uses **house** to refer to heaven, which is the place where God dwells. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “In the place where my Father dwells” or “In heaven where my Father dwells” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

of & Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

But if not, I would have told you, for I am going to prepare a place for you

The word translated **for** could also be translated “that,” in which case this sentence would be a question instead of a statement. With either interpretation the point of the sentence is the same: Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said in the previous sentence is true. He is going to heaven **to prepare a place for** his people. Alternate translation: “But if not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?”

John 14:3

if I go

Jesus is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he knows that it will actually take place. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what Jesus is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: “when I go” (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.963)**)

John 14:4

the way

Here Jesus uses **the way**. This could refer to: (1) himself as the means by which people can go to God in heaven, which is clearly the meaning for **the way** in [14:6](#). (2) a manner of life that will eventually lead someone to be with God in heaven. Since the disciples did not understand this when Jesus said it, you do not need to explain its meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1106)**)

John 14:5

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

How are we able to know the way

Thomas is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize the truth of what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "We surely do not know the way!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 14:6

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

the way

Here Jesus uses **the way** to indicate that he is the means by which people can go to God, who is in heaven. Trusting in Jesus is the only way to have access to God. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the one who gives people access to the Father” or “the means by which one may come to the Father” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the truth

Jesus uses **the truth** to indicate that he is the one who reveals God’s truth to people. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the one who reveals God’s truth” or “the means by which people can know God’s truth” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the life

Jesus uses **the life** to indicate that he is the means by which people can receive eternal **life**. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the one who makes people spiritually alive” or “the means by which one may receive eternal life” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

no one comes to the Father except through me

Here, **through me** means that a person can come to God only by trusting Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “no one comes to the Father except by believing in me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 14:7

If you have known me

Jesus is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what Jesus is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: “If you have known me, and you have known me” (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.963)**)

John 14:8

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Lord, show us the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 14:9

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

So long a time I am with you, and you do not know me, Philip

Jesus is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize the truth of what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "So long a time I am with you, and you should know me, Philip!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

you, & you

The first occurrence of **you** in this verse is plural, but the second occurrence is singular. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

How do you say, 'Show us the Father

Jesus is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize what he is saying to Philip. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You really should not say, 'Show us the Father!'" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 14:10

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me

Jesus is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize what he is saying to Philip. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “You really should believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

I am in the Father, and the Father is in me

See how you translated this expression in [10:38](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

Father, & the Father & Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

The words that I say to you

Here, **you** is plural. Jesus shifts from speaking to Philip to speaking to all of his disciples. (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

The words

Here, **words** refers to the message or teachings of Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “The message” or “The teachings” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

from myself

See how you translated **from myself** in [5:30](#). Alternate translation: “on my own authority” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

work

See how you translated **work** in [7:3](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 14:11

I {am} in the Father, and the Father {is} in me

See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse. (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

the works

See how you translated **work** in the previous verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 14:12

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

the one believing in me, the works that I do, he also will do

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: “the one believing in me will also do the works that I do” (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

the works

See how you translated **works** in the previous verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

and he will do greater than these

Jesus is leaving out a word that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply the word from the previous clause. Alternate translation: “and he will do greater works than these” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 14:13

whatever you ask

Jesus is leaving out a word that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply the word from the context. Alternate translation: “whatever you might ask God” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

whatever you ask in my name

Here, **ask in my name** could mean: (1) to request something as the representative of Jesus or as if Jesus himself were requesting it. Alternate translation: “whatever you might ask as if I were asking” or “whatever you might ask that I would ask” (2) to request something with the authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: “whatever you ask with my authority” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

so that the Father may be glorified in the Son

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. The one that may do the action could be: (1) Jesus, in which case **in the Son** would mean “by the Son.” Alternate translation: “so that the Son may glorify the Father” (2) everyone who experiences the result of what has been asked. Alternate translation: “so that everyone may glorify the Father in the Son” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the Father & Son

Father and **Son** are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

in the Son

Jesus is speaking of himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this phrase in the first person. Alternate translation: “in me, the Son” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

John 14:14

If you ask me anything in my name

See how you translated **in my name** in the previous verse. (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 14:15

you will keep my commandments

Here, **keep** means to obey. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "you will obey my commandments" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 14:16

Helper

Helper here refers to the Holy Spirit. See the discussion of this term in the General Notes for this chapter. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “one who helps, the Holy Spirit” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 14:17

the Spirit of Truth

The **Spirit of Truth** refers to the Holy Spirit. See the discussion of this term in the General Notes for this chapter. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Holy Spirit of Truth” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Spirit of Truth

Jesus is using **of** to describe the **Spirit** who teaches people the **Truth** about God. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “the Spirit that teaches God’s truth” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

whom the world is not able to receive

Here Jesus uses **world** to refer to the people in the **world** who oppose God. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “whom the people in this world who oppose God are not able to receive” or “whom those who oppose God are not able to receive” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

will be in you

Jesus uses the future tense **will** to indicate that the Holy **Spirit** would be inside Jesus’ disciples at a future point in time. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “will be in you at a future time” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 14:18

I will not leave you as orphans

Jesus uses **orphans** to refer to people who have no one to care for them. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I will not leave you with no one to care for you" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

I am coming

Here Jesus uses the present tense **I am coming** to refer to something that will happen in the near future. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you could use the future tense in your translation. Alternate translation: "I will come" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 14:19

the world

See how you translated **the world** in [14:17](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

Because I live, you will also live

In this verse, Jesus uses **live** to refer to living forever after one's resurrection. Because Jesus will live forever after his death and resurrection, so too will his disciples live forever after they die and are resurrected. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "Because I live forever, you will also live forever" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Because I live

Here Jesus uses the present tense **I live** to refer to when he comes back to life after his death. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you could use the future tense in your translation. Alternate translation: "Because I will live" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 14:20

In that day

On that day here refers to the time that Jesus' disciples would see him again after his resurrection. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "When you see me again" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

I am in my Father, and you {are} in me, and I {am} in you

In this verse Jesus uses **in** to indicate being united with someone. If this might confuse your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I am united with my Father, and you are united with me, and I am united with you" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

you {are} in me, and I {am} in you

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize the unity between Jesus and his disciples. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "you and I are just like one person" (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

John 14:21

The one having my commandments

Jesus speaks of **commandments** as if they were an object that someone could possess. If your readers would not speak of knowing **commandments** in this way, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternative translation, “The one knowing my commandments” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

keeping them

Here, **keeping** means obeying. See how you translated this word in [14:15](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

and the one loving me will be loved by my Father

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “and my Father will love the one loving me” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

I will show myself to him

This could mean: (1) Jesus will reveal himself to his disciples after his resurrection, as also stated in [14:19](#). Alternate translation: “I will show myself to him after I live again” (2) Jesus will reveal his character to the minds of anyone who loves and obeys him, as suggested by his statement in [14:23](#). Alternate translation: “I will reveal to him what I am like” (3) Jesus will both reveal himself to his disciples after his resurrection and reveal his character to everyone who loves and obeys him. Alternate translation: “I will reveal myself to him after I live again and will reveal what I am like” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 14:22

Judas (not Iscariot)

Here, **Judas** is the name of a man who was another disciple of Jesus. He was not the other disciple named **Judas** who was from the village of Kerioth and betrayed Jesus. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

what has happened that you are about to show yourself to us

Judas uses the expression **what has happened** to express his confusion about what Jesus said in the previous verse. The Jewish people were expecting the Messiah to come and reveal himself to the whole **world**, but Jesus said he would only show himself to his disciples. Therefore, **Judas** thinks something has caused Jesus to act differently than he had expected. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "what is causing you to only show yourself to us" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

to us

When **Judas** says **us**, he is speaking of himself and Jesus' other disciples, so **us** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.998)**)

to the world

Here, **world** refers to the people who live in it. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to the people living in the world" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 14:23

he will keep my word

See how you translated a similar phrase in [8:51](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

we will come to him, and we will make a dwelling place with him

When **Jesus** says **we** in this verse, he is speaking of himself and God the Father, so **we** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.998)**)

and we will make a dwelling place with him

This clause refers to God and **Jesus** dwelling within the person who **loves** and obeys **Jesus**. After Jesus' resurrection and return to heaven, he and God live inside every believer through the Holy Spirit. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "and we will live within him" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 14:24

does not keep my words

See how you translated a similar phrase in [8:51](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the word

Here, **word** refers to what Jesus has just said in the preceding verses. If this would confuse your readers, you could express that meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “these things I have just said” or “this statement” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

is not mine

Here, **mine** refers to the source of what Jesus has said. What Jesus has said did not come from himself, but from God. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “does not come from me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

of the Father having sent me

Jesus is using **of** to describe the source of **the word**. If this is not clear in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “has come from the Father who sent me” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

of the Father having sent me

Here this phrase refers to God. See how you translated this phrase³ in [5:23](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

of the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 14:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 14:26

Now the Helper—the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything, and he will remind you of everything that I said to you

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of the phrases in this verse. Alternate translation: “Now the Helper will teach you everything, and he will remind you of everything that I said to you. He is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name.” (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

the Helper

See how you translated **the Helper** in [14:16](#).

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

in my name

Here, **in my name** could mean: (1) as the representative of Jesus or in place of Jesus. Alternate translation: “as my representative” or “in place of me” (2) with the authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: “with my authority” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

everything

Here, **everything** is an exaggeration that Jesus uses for emphasis. He means that the **Holy Spirit** would teach the disciples all that they needed to know about what he had taught them. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the plain meaning. Alternate translation: “everything that you need to know about what I have said” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1016)**)

John 14:27

I leave you peace; I give you my peace

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **peace**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "I leave you a peaceful feeling; I give you my peaceful feeling" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 930)**)

I leave you peace

Jesus speaks of **peace** as if it were an object that he could **leave** with someone. If this would confuse your readers, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: "You will feel peace after I leave" (See: **Metaphor (p. 1041)**)

I do not give to you as the world gives

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous sentence. Alternate translation: "I do not give to you peace as the world gives peace" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

I do not give to you as the world gives

Here, **as the world gives** could mean: (1) the manner in which **the world gives peace**. Alternate translation: "I do not give to you in the manner that the world gives" (2) the type of **peace** that **the world gives**. Alternate translation: "I do not give to you the kind of peace that the world gives" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

world

See how you translated the **world** in [14:17](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

Do not let your heart be troubled

See how you translated this clause in [14:1](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 14:28

I said to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "I said to you that I am going away, and I will come back to you" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

If you loved me, you would be glad

Jesus is making a conditional statement that sounds hypothetical, but he knows that the condition is not true. Jesus knows that at this point his disciples don't truly love him in the way that they should. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that the speaker believes is not true. Alternate translation: "If you loved me, but you don't, you would be glad, but you aren't" (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.958)**)

I am going to the Father

Here Jesus implies that he will return to his **Father**. Alternate translation: "I am going back to the Father" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Father is greater than I am

Here Jesus could mean: (1) that the Father has greater authority than the Son while the Son is on the earth. Alternate translation: "the Father has greater authority than I have here" (2) that Jesus functions in a subordinate role to the Father for all time. Alternate translation: "the role of the Father is superior to the role that I have" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Father, & the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 14:29

I have told you

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "I have told you this" or "I have told you what will happen" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 14:30

the ruler of the world

Here, **the ruler of this world** refers to Satan. See how you translated this phrase in [12:31](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he has nothing in me

Here, **has nothing in me** means that Satan has no control over Jesus and cannot make him do anything. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "he is not able to control me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 14:31

but so that the world might know that I love the Father, and just as the Father commanded me, thus I do

Here, **so that** introduces a purpose clause. The first event that is done to accomplish this purpose could be: (1) a phrase Jesus left out that can be supplied from the context of the previous verses. Alternate translation: “but the ruler of this world is coming so that the world might know that I love the Father, and just as the Father commanded me, thus I do” or “but these things will happen so that the world might know that I love the Father, and just as the Father commanded me, thus I do” (2) what is stated later in the sentence, in which case the order of the clauses must be changed. Alternate translation: “but just as the Father commanded me, thus I do so that the world might know that I love the Father” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.965)**)

the world

See how you translated **the world** in [14:17](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the Father, & the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 15

John 15 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus says he is the vine (15:1-8)

Jesus commands his disciples to love each other (15:9-17)

Jesus promises that his disciples will be persecuted (15:18-16:4)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Vine

Jesus used the vine as a metaphor for himself. The vine of the grape plant takes water and minerals from the ground and gives them to the leaves and grapes that are on the branches. Without the vine, the branches, grapes, and leaves die. He wanted his followers to know that unless they loved and obeyed him, they would be unable to do anything that pleased God. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/other/vine\]\]](#), [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/other/grape\]\]](#), and

Metaphor (p.1041))

“Remain in me”

Jesus uses the word “remain” as a metaphor. He is speaking of a believer being spiritually joined to someone else as if the person “remained” in the other person. Christians are said to “remain” in Christ. The Son is said to “remain” in believers. Many translators will find it impossible to represent these ideas in their languages in exactly the same way. In (15:7), the UST expresses this idea of “my words remain in you” as “obey what I have taught you.”

Translators may find it possible to use this translation as a model.

John 15:1

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

The part of the story from the previous chapter continues. Jesus continues to speak to his disciples either at the end of their evening meal or after they have finished that meal and are walking to Gethsemane. It is unclear whether or not they left immediately after Jesus said "Let us go from here," at the end of the previous chapter ([John 14:31](#)).

I am the true vine

Jesus uses the **true vine** to refer to himself. As a **vine** is the source of life for its branches, so Jesus causes people to live in a way that pleases God and brings other people to believe in Jesus. Since the **vine** is an important metaphor in the Bible, you should translate the words directly or use a simile and not provide a plain explanation in the text of your translation. Alternate translation: "I am like a true vine" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

true

The word translated **vine** refers specifically to the grapevine plant that produces grapes. If your readers would not be familiar with grapevines, use an equivalent word in your language for a **vine** that produces fruit. Alternate translation: "grapevine" or "fruit-producing vine" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

my Father is the farmer

Jesus uses **farmer** to refer to God. Just as a **farmer** takes care of the **vine** to ensure it is as fruitful as possible, so God takes care of his people. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile. Alternate translation: "my Father is like a gardener" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the farmer

While **farmer** is a general term for anyone who farms the ground, in this context it refers to someone who takes care of grapevines and grows grapes. Alternate translation: "vine grower" or "grape farmer"

John 15:2

Every branch in me not bearing fruit, & and every one that bears fruit, & so that it might bear more fruit

Jesus speaks about people who claim to be his disciples but are not by continuing the metaphor of a vine. In this paragraph, Jesus uses **branch** to refer to both true and false disciples. He also uses **bearing fruit**, **bears fruit**, and **bear more fruit** to refer to living in a manner that pleases God, especially demonstrating the Christian qualities called the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22–23. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this metaphor as a simile. Alternate translation: “Everyone who claims to be my disciple but does not please God is like a branch in me that does not bear fruit ... and every person who pleases God is like a branch that bears fruit ... so that he might be like a branch that bears more fruit” (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.945)**)

he takes it away

Alternate translation: “he cuts it off of the vine and takes it away” or “he breaks it off of the vine and throws it away”

he prunes it

The word translated **prunes** could mean: (1) to remove excess parts from a plant. Alternate translation: “he trims it” (2) to cause something to become clean. Alternate translation: “he cleans it” (3) to remove excess parts from a plant in order to make it clean. See the discussion of John’s use of double meaning in Part 3 of the Introduction to this book. Alternate translation: “he prunes it so that it will be clean”

John 15:3

You are already clean

The word translated **clean** is related to the word translated “prunes” in the previous verse. Here Jesus uses **clean** to imply that the branches have already been cleaned by pruning off the excess parts. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a simile. Alternate translation: “You are like branches that have already been pruned and are clean” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the word

Here, **word** refers to the message or teachings of Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the message” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

You & to you

The words **You** and **you** in this verse are plural and refer to the disciples of Jesus. (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

John 15:4

Remain in me, and I in you. & you remain in me

See how you translated a similar phrase in [6:56](#). See also the discussion of **Remain in me** in the General Notes for this chapter. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 15:5

I am the vine; you {are} the branches

See how you translated **vine** in [15:1](#) and “branch” in [15:2](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

The one remaining in me and I in him

See how you translated this similar expression in the previous verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he bears much fruit

See how you translated **bears fruit** in [15:2](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

do nothing

Here Jesus uses **do nothing** to refer to doing **nothing** that pleases God. It does not refer to doing **nothing** at all. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “do nothing that pleases God” or “do nothing acceptable to God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 15:6

If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown outside like a branch and is dried up, and they gather them and throw {them} into the fire, and they are burned up

In the middle of this verse, Jesus changes from referring to the **branch** in a singular form to a plural form. If this change would be confusing in your language, you could change the singular forms into plural forms. Alternate translation: "If people do not remain in me, they are thrown outside like branches and are dried up, and they gather them into the fire, and they are burned up"

does & remain in me

See how you translated **remain in me** in the previous two verses. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he is thrown outside like a branch and is dried up

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the farmer throws him outside like a branch, and he dries up" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

a branch

Jesus uses **branch** to refer to someone who claims to be Jesus' disciple, but is not. See how you translated the similar use of **branch** in [15:2](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

and they gather them and throw {them} into the fire, and they are burned up

The first **they** in this verse refers to an indefinite subject, but the second **they** refers to the object. If this would be confusing in your language, you could translate them differently. Alternate translation: "and some helpers gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned up" or "and someone gathers them and throws them into the fire, and those branches are burned up" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

they are burned up

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the fire burns them up" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 15:7

you remain in me

See how you translated **remain in me** in the previous three verses. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

my words remain in you

This is an idiom that means to obey Jesus. See how you translated a similar expression in [8:31](#) (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

ask whatever you desire

Jesus is leaving out a word that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply the word from the context. Alternate translation: “ask God whatever you desire” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

it will be done for you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God will do it for you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 15:8

My Father was glorified in this

Jesus is using the past tense in order to refer to something that will happen in the future. He is doing this to show that the event will certainly happen. If this is confusing in your language, you could use the future tense. Alternate translation: "My Father will be glorified in this" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

My Father was glorified in this

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "You have glorified my Father in this" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

My Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

you would bear much fruit

See how you translated a similar expression in [15:5](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

you would be my disciples

Alternate translation: "show that you are my disciples" or "demonstrate that you are my disciples"

John 15:9

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

Remain in my love

Jesus uses **Remain in** to refer to continuing in a certain state. Jesus is commanding his disciples to continue being in a close and loving relationship with him by obeying his commands. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Continue having a loving relationship with me” or “Live in a way that enables you to continue experiencing my love” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 15:10

you keep & have kept

Here, **keep** and **kept** refer to obeying. See how you translated this word in [14:15](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

you will remain in my love, & remain in his love

See how you translated the similar clause in the previous verse. (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

of the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 15:11

I have spoken these things to you so that my joy might be in you

Alternate translation: "I have told you these things so that you will have the same kind of joy that I have"

and your joy might be complete

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "so that you will be completely joyful" or "so that you will be joyful to the fullest extent" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 15:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 15:13

No one has greater love than this—that he would lay down his life for his friends

Alternate translation: “The greatest love a person can have for his friends is to voluntarily die for them” or “The best way that a person can show that he loves his friends is to willingly die for them”

life

Here, **life** refers to physical **life**. It does not refer to eternal life. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “physical life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

would lay down his life

See how you translated the similar phrase in [10:11](#). (See: **Euphemism (p.994)**)

John 15:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 15:15

my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 15:16

would bear fruit

In this verse, **bear fruit** could mean: (1) preach the gospel to people who respond by trusting in Jesus, as suggested by the use of **go** before **bear**. Alternate translation: “would lead people to believe in me” (2) live in a manner that pleases God, as **bear fruit** is used in [15:2–8](#). Alternate translation: “would do what pleases God” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

and your fruit would remain

Here, **remain** means to last forever. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “and your fruit should last forever” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 935)**)

so that whatever you would ask

Here, **so that** introduces a purpose clause. It could mean: (1) the content of this clause is the purpose for Jesus choosing his disciples. Alternate translation: “and he chose you so that whatever you would ask” (2) the content of this clause is the purpose for the disciples’ fruit remaining. Alternate translation: “and this fruit would remain so that whatever you would ask” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.965)**)

of the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

in my name

See how you translated **in my name** in [14:13](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 15:17

These things

Here, **These things** could refer to: (1) the commands Jesus referred to in the previous verses. Alternate translation: "These commands" (2) the command in the second half of this verse. Alternate translation: "This"

John 15:18

If the world hates you

Jesus is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what Jesus is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: “If the world hates you, and it does hate you” (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.963)**)

the world

Here Jesus uses **world** to refer to the people in the **world** who oppose God. See how you translated **world** in [14:17](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 15:19

If you were from the world

Jesus is making a conditional statement that sounds hypothetical, but he is already convinced that the condition is not true. He knows that his disciples are not **from the world**. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that the speaker believes is not true. Alternate translation: "If you were from the world, but you are not" (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.958)**)

the world, the world & the world, & the world, & the world

See how you translated **the world** in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

But because you are not from the world, but I chose you from the world, on account of this the world hates you

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these clauses. Alternate translation: "But because you are not from the world, this world hates you, but I chose you from the world" (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

John 15:20

Remember the word that I said to you

Here, Jesus uses **word** to refer to what he says later in this sentence. If this use of **word** might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Remember the teaching that I said to you" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

A slave is not greater than his master

See how you translated this phrase in [13:16](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

if they kept my word, they will & keep

See how you translated a similar phrase in [8:51](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 15:21

they will do all these things to you

Here, **all these things** refers to the bad things Jesus told his disciples that the unbelievers in the world would do to them in [15:18–20](#). If this use of **these things** might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “they will hate and persecute you” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

because of my name

Here, Jesus uses **my name** to refer to himself. People will make his followers suffer because they belong to him. If this use of **name** would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “because you belong to me” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the one having sent me

Here, **the one having sent me** refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in [4:34](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 15:22

If I had not come and spoken to them

Jesus is making a conditional statement that sounds hypothetical, but he knows that the condition is not true. He knows that he did come and speak to the world. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that the speaker believes is not true. Alternate translation: “If I had not come and spoken to them, but I did” (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.958)**)

they would not have sin

Jesus speaks of **sin** as if it were an object that a person could possess. See how you translated a similar phrase in [9:41](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

sin, & sin

Here, Jesus uses **sin** to refer specifically to the **sin** of rejecting Jesus and his teachings. It does not refer to **sin** in general, because everyone is guilty of **sin**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the sin of rejecting me and my teachings ... sin of rejecting me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 15:23

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 15:24

If I had not done the works that no one else did among them, they would have no sin, but

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: “Because I have done the works that no one else did among them, they have sin, and” (See: **Double Negatives (p.984)**)

If I had not done the works that no one else did among them, they would have no sin

Jesus is making a conditional statement that sounds hypothetical, but he knows that the condition is not true. He has done **works that no one else did** among the people. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that the speaker believes is not true. Alternate translation: “If I had not done the works that no one else did among them, but I did, they would have no sin, but they do have sin” (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.958)**)

they would have no sin

See how you translated this phrase in [15:22](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

they have both seen

The object of the verb **seen** could be: (1) **the works** referred to earlier in the verse. Alternate translation: “they have both seen the works” (2) Jesus and the **Father**, referred to at the end of the verse. Alternate translation: “they have both seen me and my Father” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

my Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 15:25

the word

Here, Jesus uses **word** to refer to a specific prophecy in the Old Testament. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the prophecy” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the word that is written in their law

Here Jesus uses **the word that is written** to introduce a quotation from an Old Testament book (Psalm 35:19 or 69:4). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that John is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “the statement that has been written in their scriptures” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

the word that is written in their law might be fulfilled

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “they might fulfill the word that a prophet wrote in their law” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

law

Jesus is using the name of the first part of the Hebrew Scriptures, the **law**, to represent the entire Hebrew Scriptures in general. See how you translated a similar expression in [10:34](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

They hated me without a cause

This sentence is a quotation from Psalm 35:19 or 69:4. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off all of this material with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1073)**)

John 15:26

the Helper

See how you translated **Helper** in [14:16](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Father—& Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

the Spirit of Truth

See how you translated **the Spirit of Truth** in [14:17](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 15:27

the beginning

Here Jesus uses **beginning** to refer to the first days of his ministry. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the very first days when I began teaching the people and doing miracles” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 16

John 16 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus promises that his disciples will be persecuted (15:18–16:4)

Jesus describes the work of the Holy Spirit (16:5–15)

Jesus says that he will return to his Father (16:16–28)

Jesus says that his disciples will soon abandon him (16:29–33)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

The Holy Spirit

Jesus told his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to them. The Holy Spirit is the Helper (14:16) who is always with God's people to help them and to speak to God for them. He is also the Spirit of Truth (14:17) who tells God's people what is true about God so they know him better and serve him well. (See: **Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of the Lord, Spirit** (p.1123))

“The hour is coming”

Jesus used the words, “the hour is coming,” to begin prophecies about events that were about to occur. He is not referring to the 60 minute hour, but to a point in time when these prophecies will be fulfilled. “The hour” in which people would persecute his followers (16:2) lasted for many years. However, “the hour” in which his disciples would scatter and leave him alone (16:32) was less than sixty minutes long. (See: **prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess** (p.1133))

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Simile

Jesus said that just as a woman is in pain when she gives birth to a baby, so also his followers would be sad when he died. But just as the woman is happy after the baby is born, so also his followers would be happy when Jesus became alive again. (See: **Simile** (p.1086))

John 16:1

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

The part of the story from the previous chapter continues. Jesus continues to speak to his disciples either at the end of their evening meal or after they have finished that meal and are walking to Gethsemane. It is unclear whether or not they left immediately after Jesus said "Let us go from here" at the end of the Chapter 14 ([John 14:31](#)).

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

Verses 1–4 are part of the same topic Jesus began in [15:18](#). He is speaking about the persecution that his disciples will experience.

these things

Here, **these things** refers to what Jesus has just said in [15:18–25](#) about the coming persecution of his disciples. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "the warnings that you will be hated by everyone" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

you might not fall away

Here, Jesus uses **fall away** to refer to no longer trusting in him or no longer being his disciple. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "you might not stop trusting me" or "you might not stop being my disciple" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 16:2

put out of the synagogues

See how you translated a similar phrase in [9:22](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

an hour is coming

See how you translated this phrase in [4:21](#) and see the discussion of this phrase in the General Notes to Chapter 4. (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

for everyone having killed you

Here, **for** could indicate: (1) time, as in the UST. (2) an explanation of to what **an hour** refers. Alternate translation: “that everyone who kills you wants” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.975)**)

John 16:3

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 16:4

I have spoken these things to you

Here, **these things** refers to what Jesus has just said in [16:2-3](#) regarding what the Jews will do to his disciples. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "I have told you that the Jews will persecute you" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

when their hour comes

See how you translated **hour** in [16:2](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

in the beginning

See how you translated **beginning** in [15:27](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 16:5

the one having sent me

Here, **the one having sent me** refers to God. See how you translated this phrase in [4:34](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

and none of you asks

Here Jesus uses **and** to emphasize his surprise that they are not asking him where he is going, as they had done previously in [13:36](#) and [14:5](#). Use a natural form in your language to express this emphasis. Alternate translation: “but none of you are even asking” or “but how is it that none of you asks” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

asks me, ‘Where are you going

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “asks me where I am going” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

John 16:6

sadness has filled your heart

Jesus speaks of **sadness** as if it were a thing that could fill someone. If this use of **sadness** would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “your heart is very sad” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

sadness has filled your heart

See how you translated **heart** in [14:1](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 16:7

if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you

If it would be more natural in your language, you can translate this double negative expression in a positive form.
Alternate translation: “the Helper will come to you only if I go away” (See: **Double Negatives (p.984)**)

Helper

See how you translated **Helper** in [14:26](#).

John 16:8

that one

Here, **that one** refers to the Holy Spirit, who is called “the Helper” in the previous verse. If this use of **that one** might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Holy Spirit” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

world

See how you translated **world** in [1:29](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

about sin and about righteousness and about judgment

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **sin**, **righteousness**, and **judgment**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. Alternate translation: “about what is sinful and about what is righteous and about the fact that God will judge them” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

about righteousness

Here, **righteousness** could refer to: (1) God’s **righteousness**, which **the world** does not have. Alternate translation: “about the righteousness that the world lacks” (2) the false **righteousness** in **the world**, such as the actions of the Pharisees, which people thought were **righteous**. Alternate translation: “about the world’s false righteousness” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 16:9

about sin, because they do not believe in me

Alternate translation: "about their sinfulness, because they are guilty of sin by not believing in me"

John 16:10

about righteousness

See how you translated the phrase **about righteousness** in 16:8. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

you will no longer see me

Jesus uses this phrase to imply that anyone who could **see** him saw true righteousness. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “you will no longer see my righteous example” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 16:11

about judgment

See how you translated the phrase **about judgment** in [16:8](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the ruler of this world

Here, **the ruler of this world** refers to Satan. See how you translated this in [12:31](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the ruler of this world has been judged

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Jesus implies that God did it. Alternate translation: "God has judged the ruler of this world" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

has been judged

This could mean: (1) Satan has already been condemned to future judgment. Alternate translation: "has already been condemned" (2) Satan's future judgment is so certain that Jesus uses the past tense. Alternate translation: "will be judged" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 16:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 16:13

the Spirit of Truth

See how you translated the phrase **the Spirit of Truth** in [14:17](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he will guide you into the whole truth

Here, **truth** refers to true information about Jesus and God. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “he will guide you into all truth about me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

from himself

See how you translated this phrase in [5:19](#). Alternate translation: “on his own authority” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he will say whatever he will hear

Jesus implies that God the Father will speak to the Spirit. If this might confuse to your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “he will say whatever God tells him to say” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the things coming

Alternate translation: “things that are about to happen” or “things that will soon take place”

John 16:14

That one

Here, **That one** refers to the Holy Spirit, who is called “the Spirit of Truth” in the previous verse. If this use of **That one** might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “The Holy Spirit” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

from the things of mine

Here, **the things of mine** could refer to: (1) what Jesus has said. Alternate translation: “from the things I have said” (2) who Jesus is and what he has said and done. Alternate translation: “from my true identity and the things I have done” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 16:15

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

from the things of mine

See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 935)**)

John 16:16

you no longer see me

Here Jesus uses **see** in the present tense to refer to something that will happen in the near future. If this is confusing in your language, you could use the future tense. Alternate translation: "you will no longer see me" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 16:17

What is this that he says to us, 'A little {while} and you do not see me, and again a little {while} and you will see me,' and, 'Because I go to the Father

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "What is this that he says to us when he says that in a little while we will not see him, and again a little while and we will see him, and also says that it is because he goes to the Father" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

What is this that he says to us

The disciples use this clause to indicate that they do not understand what Jesus has just said about his death that will happen soon. Use the most natural way in your language to express this confusion. Alternate translation: "What is he talking about when he says to us" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

A little {while} and you do not see me, and again a little {while} and you will see me

See how you translated the similar statement in the previous verse.

Because I go to the Father

See how you translated this statement in [16:10](#).

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 16:18

A little {while

See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse.

John 16:19

Are you seeking among yourselves concerning this, that I said, 'A little {while} and you do not see me, and again a little {while} and you will see me

Jesus is using this question to get his disciples to focus on what he has just told them so that he can give an explanation. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You are seeking among yourselves concerning this, that I said, 'A little while and you do not see me, and again a little while and you will see me.'" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

that I said

The word **that** introduces a clause that explains to what the preceding **this** refers. Use a word or phrase that introduces a further explanation or elaboration in your language. Alternate translation: "namely, that I said," (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.975)**)

A little {while} and you do not see me, and again a little {while} and you will see me

See how you translated this statement in [16:16](#).

John 16:20

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet** (p.987))

but the world will be glad

Here Jesus uses **world** to refer to the people in the **world** who oppose God. See how you translated **world** [14:17](#). (See: **Metonymy** (p.1047))

You will be grieved

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “You will have grief” or “What happens will grieve you” (See: **Active or Passive** (p.932))

your sorrow will become joy

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **sorrow** and **joy**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. Alternate translation: “you will change from being sorrowful to being joyful” (See: **Abstract Nouns** (p.930))

John 16:21

When a woman gives birth, she has pain because her hour has come, but when she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers her suffering, because of the joy that a man has been born into the world

Jesus is speaking of women in general, not of one particular **woman**. If this would be misunderstood in your language, you could use a more natural expression. Alternate translation: "When women give birth, they have pain because their hour has come, but when they have given birth to their children, they no longer remember their suffering, because of the joy that men have been born into the world" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

her hour

Here, **her hour** refers to the time when the **woman gives birth**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the time for her to give birth" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

she no longer remembers her suffering

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **suffering**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "she no longer remembers that she suffered" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

John 16:22

your heart will be glad

See how you translated **heart** in [14:1](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 16:23

in that day

Here, **in that day** refers to the time that Jesus' disciples would see him again after his resurrection. See how you translated this phrase in [14:20](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

of the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

in my name

See how you translated the phrase **in my name** in [14:13](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 16:24

in my name

See how you translated this phrase in the previous verse. (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

your joy may be fulfilled

See how you translated a similar phrase in [15:11](#). (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 16:25

figures of speech; & figures of speech

See how you translated this phrase in [10:6](#). (See: **Parables (p.1055)**)

an hour is coming

See how you translated this phrase in [4:21](#) and see the discussion of this phrase in the General Notes to Chapter 4. (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

I will tell you plainly about the Father

Alternate translation: "I will tell you about the Father in a way that you will clearly understand."

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 16:26

In that day

See how you translated this phrase in [14:20](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

in my name

See how you translated this phrase in [14:13](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

I do not say to you that I will ask the Father

Here Jesus implies that he will not have to **ask the Father** on behalf of his disciples, because they can ask God directly after Jesus becomes alive again. If this statement would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "I do not say to you that I will need to ask the Father" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 16:27

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 16:28

the Father, & the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

into the world. & I am leaving the world

Here, **world** refers to the earth on which people live. It does not refer to the people in the world or to the entire universe. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to the earth ... I am leaving the earth" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 16:29

say

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

in figures of speech

See how you translated this word in [16:25](#). (See: **Parables (p.1055)**)

John 16:30

you do not have need that anyone would question you

By saying that Jesus does not need anyone to ask him questions, his disciples are implying that Jesus already knows what people will ask him before they ask. Since he already knows what they will ask him, he does not need them to ask him. If this statement would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "so, now you finally place your trust in me!" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 935)**)

John 16:31

Just now do you believe

This could mean: (1) Jesus is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize what he is saying. Alternate translation: "So, now you finally place your trust in me!" (2) Jesus is asking a question in order to express doubt that the disciples really believe in him, since he knows they will soon leave him. Alternate translation: "Do you really trust me now?" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 16:32

an hour is coming

See how you translated this phrase in [16:25](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

and has come

Here Jesus uses **has come** in the past tense to refer to something that will happen in the very near future. If this use of **has come** might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “and will come right away” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

you might be scattered

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “others will scatter you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

to his own

Alternate translation: “each of you to his own place” or “every one of you to his own place”

the Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 16:33

so that you might have peace in me

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **peace** in another way. Alternate translation: “so that you might experience a peaceful feeling in me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

you might have peace & you have troubles

Here, Jesus speaks of **peace** and **troubles** as if they were objects that someone can possess. If these uses of **peace** and **troubles** might confuse your readers, you could use different expressions. Alternate translation: “you might be peaceful ... you experience troubles” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

in me

Here, **in me** refers to being united with Jesus or having a close relationship with him. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “because of your relationship with me” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

I have conquered the world

Here Jesus uses **world** to refer to the people in the **world** who oppose God. See how you translated **world** in [14:17](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 17

John 17 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

This chapter is one long prayer that can be divided into three parts according to the topics of Jesus' prayer requests: 1. Jesus prays for himself (17:1–5) 2. Jesus prays for his disciples (17:6–19) 3. Jesus prays for all Christians (17:20–26)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Glory

Scripture often speaks of God's glory as a great, bright light that visually represents how great God is. When people see this light, they are afraid. In this chapter Jesus asks God to show his followers his true glory (17:1). (See: **glory**, **glorious**, **glorify** (p.1118))

Jesus is eternal

Jesus existed before God created the world (17:5). John wrote about this in 1:1.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Prayer

Jesus is God's one and only Son (3:16), so he could pray differently from the way other people pray. He used many words that might seem to be commands. Your translation should make Jesus sound like a son speaking with love and respect to his father and telling him what the father needs to do so that the father will be honored.

John 17:1

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

The part of the story from the previous chapter continues. Jesus had been speaking to his disciples, but now he begins to pray to God.

said these things

Here, **these things** refers to everything that Jesus told his disciples in [chapters 13–16](#). If this use of **these things** might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “described what would happen to him and his disciples” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

having lifted up his eyes

See how you translated this idiom in [6:5](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

to the heaven

Here, **heaven** refers to the sky. The Jews believed that **heaven**, the place where God dwells, was located above the sky. If this use of **heaven** might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “beyond the sky toward God in heaven” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Father, & Son

Father and **Son** are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

the hour has come

Here, Jesus uses **hour** to refer to the time when Jesus would suffer and die. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the time for me to suffer and die has come” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

Glorify

Glorify here is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as “please” to make this clear. Alternate translation: “Please glorify” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1022)**)

your Son & the Son

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

John 17:2

since you gave him authority {over} all flesh

Here, **since** indicates that this clause is the reason for the request given in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “because you gave him authority over all flesh” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

him & him, he would give

Throughout this verse Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

all flesh

Jesus is describing people by referring to something associated with them, the **flesh** that they are made of. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “over all human beings” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 17:3

Now this is eternal life

The clause could mean: (1) the rest of the verse describes what **eternal life** is. Alternate translation: “Now this is what it means to have eternal life” (2) the rest of the verse describes the means by which one receives eternal life. Alternate translation: “Now this is how people live forever”

the one you sent, Jesus Christ

Jesus uses **the one you sent** and **Jesus Christ** to refer to himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

John 17:4

the work that you have given me

Here, Jesus uses **work** to refer to Jesus' entire ministry while on the earth. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the ministry that you have given me here" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 17:5

Father, glorify me along with yourself with the glory that I had with you

Here, **with yourself** and **with you** refer to Jesus and God the **Father** being physically near to each other. If this use of **with** might be confusing to your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Father, glorify me at your side with the glory that I had at your side” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

glorify

Here, **glorify** is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as “please” to make this clear. Alternate translation: “please glorify” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1022)**)

with the glory

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “with the glorious characteristics” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

before the world was made

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “before we made the world” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 17:6

I revealed your name

Jesus uses **name** to refer to God himself. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly.
Alternate translation: "I revealed you" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

from the world

See how you translated **world** in [1:29](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

they have kept your word

See how you translated a similar phrase in [8:51](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 17:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 17:8

the words

See how you translated **words** in [5:47](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 17:9

the world

Here Jesus uses **world** to refer to the people in the **world** who oppose God. See how you translated **world** in [14:17](#).
(See: **Metonymy** (p.1047))

John 17:10

I am glorified in them

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “they glorify me” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

in them

This could mean: (1) **all things** are the means by which Jesus is glorified. Alternate translation: “by means of them”
 (2) Jesus is glorified **in all things**. Alternate translation: “within them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 17:11

I am no longer & am coming to you

Here Jesus uses **am** in the present tense to refer to something that will happen in the near future. If this is confusing in your language, you could use the future tense. Alternate translation: "I will no longer ... I am about to come to you" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

in the world, but they are in the world

Here Jesus uses **world** to refer to both being on the earth and being among the people in the **world** who oppose God. If this use of **world** would be confusing in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "in this world with people who oppose you, but they are in this hostile world" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

keep

Here, **keep** is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as "please" to make this clear. Alternate translation: "please keep" (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1022)**)

keep them in your name

Here, **name** could refer to: (1) God's power. Alternate translation: "keep them by your power" (2) God himself, as in [17:6](#). In this case, Jesus would be requesting that God keep his disciples united with God. Alternate translation: "keep them in unity with you" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 17:12

I kept them in your name

See how you translated a similar phrase in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

not one of them perished, except for the son of destruction

Here Jesus uses **perished** and **destruction** to refer to spiritual death, which is eternal punishment in hell that occurs after physical death. If this use of these words might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “not one of them died spiritually, except for the son of spiritual death” or “not one of them experienced spiritual death, except for the son of spiritual death” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

not one of them perished, except for the son of destruction

Jesus uses the past tense **perished** to refer to eternal punishment as if it had already happened, even though **the son of destruction** had not yet **perished**. If this use of the past tense might confuse your readers, you could use the future tense. Alternate translation: “not one of them will perish, except for the son of destruction” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

the son of destruction

Here, **son of destruction** refers to Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Judas, the son of destruction” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the son of destruction

Here, **son of** is an idiom used to describe what a person is like. The defining characteristic of Judas was that he would be destroyed because he betrayed Jesus. If this use of **son of** might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the one characterized by destruction” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

the son of destruction

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **destruction**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “the son that must be destroyed” or “the son whom you will destroy” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

so that the scripture would be fulfilled

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “so that he would fulfill the scripture” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 17:13

the world

See how you translated **the world** in [17:11](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

so that they would have my joy fulfilled in themselves

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “so that I might give them my full joy” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 932)**)

John 17:14

your word

See how you translated **your word** in [17:6](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the world & from the world, & I am not from the world

Here, **the world** refers to the people in **the world** who oppose God. If this use of **the world** might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the people who oppose you ... from those who oppose you ... I am not from them” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

they are not from the world, just as I am not from the world

The phrase **from the world** could refer to: (1) the place where the subject belongs. Alternate translation: “they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world” (2) the origin of the subject. Alternate translation: “they did not come from the world, just as I did not come from the world” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 17:15

the world

Here Jesus uses **world** to refer to both being on the earth and being among the people in the **world** who oppose God. See how you translated this use of **world** in [17:11](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

you would keep them from the evil one

Here, **the evil one** refers to Satan. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “you would keep them from Satan, the evil one” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 17:16

They are not from the world, just as I am not from the world

See how you translated **from the world** in [17:14](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 17:17

Sanctify

Sanctify is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as “please” to make this clear. Alternate translation: “Please sanctify” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1022)**)

Sanctify them by the truth

The phrase **by the truth** could refer to: (1) the means by which Jesus’ disciples would be sanctified. Alternate translation: “Sanctify them by means of the truth” (2) the realm in which Jesus’ disciples would be sanctified. Alternate translation: “Sanctify them in the truth” (3) both the means and realm of the disciples’ sanctification. See the discussion of John’s use of double meaning in Part 3 of the Introduction to this book. Alternate translation: “Sanctify them by means of and in the truth” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

your word

See how you translated **your word** in [17:6](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 17:18

into the world, & into the world

Here, **the world** refers to the people who live in the world. See how you translated **the world** in [1:29](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 17:19

for their sakes I have sanctified myself

Jesus uses the phrases **for their sakes** and **sanctified** together to refer to his sacrificial death on the cross. If this clause might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “for their sakes I have sanctified myself to die as a sacrifice” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

so that they themselves may also be sanctified in truth

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “so that they may also sanctify themselves in truth” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

sanctified in truth

The phrase **in truth** could refer to: (1) the means by which Jesus’ disciples would be sanctified. Alternate translation: “sanctified by means of truth” (2) the nature or degree of their sanctification. Alternate translation: “truly sanctified” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 17:20

through their word

Here, **word** refers to the message that Jesus and his disciples proclaimed. If this use of **word** might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “through their message” (See: **Metonymy** (p. 1047))

John 17:21

that & that

The first **that** in this verse indicates one of Jesus' prayer requests, namely, that all those who believe in Jesus would be united to each other. The second **that** indicates another prayer request, namely, that all those who believe in Jesus would be united to Jesus and God the Father. If this would not be clear in your language, you could make these two prayer requests more explicit by making them into two sentences. Alternate translation: "I request that ... I also request that" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

you, Father, {are} in me, and I in you

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. See how you translated a similar phrase in [10:38](#). Alternate translation: "you, Father, and I are completely joined together as one" (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

so that the world would believe that you have sent me

Here, **so that** could indicate: (1) that what follows is the purpose for believers to be united to Jesus and God the Father, as in the UST. (2) that what follows is the result of believers being united to Jesus and God the Father. Alternate translation (with a comma preceding): "with the result that the world would believe that you have sent me"

the world

Here, **the world** is used to refer to all the people in **the world**. See how you translated **the world** in [1:29](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 17:22

The glory that you gave to me, I also have given to them

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these clauses. Alternate translation: “I have also given to them the glory that you gave to me” or “I have honored them just as you have honored me” (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

John 17:23

I in them

This verse explains the statement “they would be one, just as we are one,” which is in the previous verse. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “I mean that I am in them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

so that they may be made complete as one

Here, **so that** indicates that this is the second purpose for Jesus giving the glory he received from God to those who believe in him, which he stated in the previous verse. If this use of **so that** might confuse your readers, you could state this explicitly by repeating the idea from the previous verse and starting a new sentence. Alternate translation: “I have given them your glory so that they may be completely united” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.965)**)

so that the world may know that you sent me

Here, **so that** could refer to: (1) the purpose for those who believe in Jesus being **complete as one**. Alternate translation: “for the purpose of the world knowing that you send me” (2) a third purpose for Jesus giving the glory he received from God to those who believe in him. This interpretation would require making a new sentence. Alternate translation: “I have also given them your glory so that the world may know that you sent me” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.965)**)

the world

See how you translated **the world** in [17:21](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

you loved them

Here, **them** refers to those who believe in Jesus, just like **them** does at the beginning of the verse. These believers are also the main subject of Jesus’ prayer in [17:20–26](#). If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “you loved those who believe in me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 17:24

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

where I am

Here Jesus uses **am** in the present tense to refer to something that will happen in the near future. If this is confusing in your language, you could use the future tense. Alternate translation: “where I will soon be” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

where I am

Jesus uses **where I am** to refer to heaven. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “where I am in heaven” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

before the foundation of the world

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **foundation**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “before we founded the world” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

of the world

Here, **world** refers to the universe that God created. It does not refer only to the people in the world or only to the earth. Alternate translation: “the whole universe” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 17:25

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

the world did not know you

Here, **the world** refers to the people in **the world** who are opposed to God. Alternate translation: “those who are against you did not know you” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 17:26

name

Here, **name** refers to God himself. See how you translated this word in [17:6](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the love with which you have loved me may be in them

Here Jesus speaks of God's **love** as if it were an object that could be inside a person. If this use of **love** might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "they may love others in the same way that you have loved me" or "the love with which you have loved me may be experienced by them" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

and I in them

Here, Jesus uses the word **in** to express the close personal relationship between himself and those who believe in him. See how you translated a similar phrase in [10:38](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 18

John 18 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Soldiers and guards arrest Jesus (18:1–11)

The priests question Jesus, and Peter denies Jesus (18:12–27)

Pilate questions Jesus (18:28–40)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

“It is not lawful for us to put any man to death”

The Roman government did not allow the Jews to kill criminals, so the Jews needed to ask Pilate, the governor, to kill him (18:31).

King of the Jews

When Pilate asked if Jesus were the King of the Jews (18:33), he was asking if Jesus were claiming to be a political leader like King Herod, whom the Romans allowed to rule Judea. When he asked the crowd if he should release the King of the Jews (18:39), he is mocking the Jews, because the Romans and Jews hated each other. He was also mocking Jesus, because he did not think that Jesus was a king at all. (See: **Irony (p.1034)**)

John 18:1

General Information:

18:1–2 give background information for the events that follow. Verse 1 says where the events took place. Verse 2 gives background information about Judas. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

Having spoken these things, Jesus

John uses this phrase to mark the beginning of a new event that happened soon after the events that the story has just told. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Soon after Jesus spoke these words, he” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

the brook of the Kidron

John is using **of** to describe a **brook** that is called **Kidron**. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “the Kidron Brook” or “the brook that people called ‘Kidron’” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

the brook of the Kidron

Kidron is a valley in Jerusalem that is between the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

where there was a garden

The word translated **garden** can refer to a place with flowers, vegetables, or trees. Matthew 26:36 and Mark 14:32 indicate that the **garden** that Jesus and his disciples went to was a grove of olive trees. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: “where there was a grove of olive trees” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 18:3

officers

See how you translated **officers** in [7:32](#).

comes

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 18:4

knowing all the things happening to him

Here, **knowing** introduces a clause that indicates the reason why Jesus went out to meet the soldiers and guards. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “since he knew all things happening to him” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

John 18:5

Jesus the Nazarene

The soldiers and guards call Jesus **the Nazarene** because he was from the town of Nazareth in Galilee. If this might confuse your readers, you could use a more natural expression in your language. Alternate translation: "Jesus, from the town of Nazareth" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

He says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

I am

This could mean: (1) Jesus is just answering their question. In this case he is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. Alternate translation: "I am he" or "I am whom you are looking for" (2) Jesus is not only answering their question but also identifying himself as Yahweh, who identified himself to Moses as "I AM" in Exodus 3:14. Alternate translation: "I am God" or "I am the I AM" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

Now Judas, the one betraying him, was also standing with them

In this sentence John provides background information about Judas' location when he was **betraying** Jesus. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: "Now Judas was also there with them to betray Jesus" (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

John 18:6

I am

See how you translated **I am** in the previous verse. (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

fell to the ground

Here John implies that the men fell to the ground involuntarily because of Jesus' power. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "fell to the ground because of Jesus' power" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:7

Jesus the Nazarene

See how you translated **Jesus the Nazarene** in [18:5](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

John 18:8

I am

See how you translated **I am** in [18:5](#). (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 18:9

In this verse John provides some background information about Jesus fulfilling Scripture. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

This was} so that would be fulfilled the word that he said

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “This happened in order to fulfill the word that he had said” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the word that he said

Here, **the word** refers to what Jesus said while praying to God the Father in [17:12](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this plainly. Alternate translation: “what he had said when he was praying to his Father” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 18:10

Simon Peter

See how you translated **Simon Peter** in [1:40](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

a sword

The word translated **sword** here refers to a small sword that is similar to a dagger or long knife. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “a dagger” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Malchus

Malchus is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

John 18:11

The cup which the Father has given me, should I certainly not drink it

Jesus is using the form of a question to add emphasis to his statement. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "I should certainly drink the cup that the Father has given to me!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

The cup which the Father has given me, should I certainly not drink it

Here Jesus uses **cup** to refer to the sufferings he will soon experience as if they were a **cup** of bitter-tasting liquid that God would give him to **drink**. If this use of **cup** and **drink** would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "My suffering which the Father wants me to endure, should I certainly not endure it" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 18:12

of the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

tied him up

The soldiers **tied** Jesus' hands together in order to prevent him from escaping. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "tied his hands to prevent him from escaping" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:13

first to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year

Usually there would only have been one high priest, but at this time the Romans were appointing the high priests for Judea, and it caused a controversy. One Roman official had appointed **Annas**, but ten years later another official deposed him and caused **Caiaphas** to be **high priest** instead. However, the Jews still considered Annas to be **high priest**. It would probably be best to state the matter as simply as possible for your readers. Alternate translation: "first to the high priest Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the other high priest that year" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:14

In this verse John interrupts the main storyline in order to provide some background information about Caiaphas. This information helps the reader understand why they took Jesus to Caiaphas. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

the Jews

See how you translated **to the Jews** in [18:12](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

it would be better for one man to die on behalf of the people

See how you translated the similar clause in [11:50](#).

it would be better for one man to die on behalf of the people

Caiaphas is leaving out a clause that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from his original statement in [11:50](#). Alternate translation: "it would be better for one man to die on behalf of the people than to let the Romans kill all of the Jewish people" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 18:15

another disciple followed Jesus. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered

Here, **another disciple** and **that disciple** could refer to: (1) the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. This interpretation would mean that these phrases would be similar to the phrase “the other disciple, whom Jesus loved” that occurs in (20:2). Alternate translation: “I, another disciple, followed Jesus. Now I was known to the high priest, and I entered” (2) an unknown disciple. Alternate translation: “a certain disciple, followed Jesus. Now that other disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Now that disciple was known to the high priest

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “Now the high priest knew that disciple” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

to the high priest, & of the high priest

In verses 15–23, **the high priest** refers to Annas, which is indicated in 18:13. It does not refer to Caiaphas. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “to the high priest Annas ... of Annas” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:16

the other disciple

See how you translated **the other disciple** in the previous verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

who was known to the high priest

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "whom the high priest knew" (See: **Active or Passive** (p. 932))

John 18:17

says & says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Are you not also from the disciples of this man

The **female servant** is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize that she believes **Peter** is one of Jesus' **disciples**. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You are certainly also from the disciples of this man!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 18:18

In this verse John interrupts the main storyline in order to provide some background information about the people who were warming themselves around the fire. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

Now the servants and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold, and they were warming themselves

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these clauses. Alternate translation: “Now because it was cold, the servants and the officers had made a charcoal fire and were standing there, warming themselves” (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

the servants

Here, **the servants** refers to the personal **servants** of the high priest. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the servants of the high priest” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:19

the high priest

According to [18:13](#) the **high priest** here is Annas. He would later send Jesus to Caiaphas in [18:24](#). If this use of **high priest** might confuse your readers, you could state who the person is explicitly. Alternate translation: “Annas, the high priest” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:20

to the world

Here Jesus uses **the world** to refer to all of the people in the world. If this use of **world** would be confusing in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to all people” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

I have spoken openly to the world

Here, **to the world** is an exaggeration that Jesus uses to emphasize that he spoke publicly. If this would confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that shows emphasis. Alternate translation: “I have spoken openly to the people” or “I have spoken openly for everyone to hear” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1016)**)

in a synagogue

Jesus is speaking of synagogues in general, not of one particular **synagogue**. If this would be misunderstood in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: “in synagogues” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

where all the Jews come together

Here, **all the Jews** is an exaggeration that Jesus uses to emphasize that Jesus spoke where many Jewish people could hear him. If this would confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that shows emphasis. Alternate translation: “where so many Jews come together” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1016)**)

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish people in general. It does not refer to the Jewish leaders. If this would be misunderstood in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Jewish people” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:21

Why do you ask me

Jesus is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize the truth of what he is saying. The Jewish law required the Jewish leaders to question witnesses first in legal cases. Therefore, Jesus is using this question to emphasize that the Jewish leaders are breaking their own law by questioning him instead of questioning witnesses. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You should not be asking me these questions!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

Behold

Jesus uses **Behold** to call attention to what he is about to say. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use here. Alternate translation: "Take notice" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 18:22

gave Jesus a slap, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: "gave Jesus a slap and said" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

Do you answer the high priest in this manner

The officer is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation, and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You should not answer the high priest in this manner!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 18:23

testify about the wrong

Alternate translation: "tell me what I said that was wrong"

but if rightly, why do you strike me

Jesus is using the form of a question to add emphasis to what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "but if rightly, you should not strike me!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 18:24

Annas & to Caiaphas the high priest

For political reasons both **Annas** and **Caiaphas** were high priests at this time. See how you translated these names in [18:13](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:25

Now

Now here indicates that John is changing topics to return to the story about Peter in the high priest's courtyard. [18:25-27](#) describe what Peter was doing in the courtyard while the high priest was questioning Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you can make this clear in your translation with an appropriate connecting word or phrase. Alternate translation: "In the meantime," or "While Jesus was being questioned," (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.973)**)

Are you not also from among his disciples

Someone in the high priest's courtyard is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize that he believes **Peter** is one of Jesus' **disciples**. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You are certainly also from the disciples of this man!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 18:26

Did I not see you in the garden with him

One of the high priest's **servants** is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize that he believes **Peter** is one of Jesus' disciples. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "I surely saw you in the garden with him!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

the garden

See how you translated **garden** in [18:1](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:27

Peter then denied {it} again

Here, **it** refers to **Peter** knowing and being with Jesus. If this use of **it** might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Peter then denied again that he knew Jesus or had been with him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

a rooster

See how you translated **rooster** in [13:38](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

John 18:28

General Information:

Here John changes topics from describing what Peter was doing to describing what was happening to Jesus. In the next section, Jesus' accusers bring him to Caiaphas to be questioned by him.

they led

Here, **they** refers to the Jewish leaders and temple guards who were accusing Jesus. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the Jewish authorities and their guards led" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas

Here John implies that they are leading Jesus away from Caiaphas' house. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas' house" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

to the governor's palace

The **governor's palace** refers to the headquarters of the Roman governor. The next verse indicates that the Roman governor's name was Pilate. If this would confuse your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "to the house of the Roman governor, Pilate" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

ἦν δὲ πρωῒ. καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐκ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον, ἵνα μὴ μιανθῶσιν, ἀλλὰ φάγωσιν τὸ Πάσχα

In this sentence John interrupts the main storyline in order to provide some background information about why the Jewish people with Jesus did not enter the **governor's palace**. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

they did not enter into the governor's palace so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "they remained outside the governor's palace so that they would remain ceremonially clean, and might eat the Passover" (See: **Double Negatives (p.984)**)

they did not enter into the governor's palace so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover

Pilate, the Roman governor, was not a Jew. The Jewish leaders believed that they would become ceremonially unclean if they entered the house of someone who was not a Jew. If they became ceremonially unclean, then they would not be allowed to celebrate the Passover festival. Therefore, the Jewish leaders did not enter the governor's palace. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain this in the simplest way possible. Alternate translation: "they themselves did not enter into the governor's palace because the governor was a Gentile. They

believed that entering a Gentile's home would defile them, so that they would not be allowed to eat the Passover."
(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Passover

John is using the name of this part of the festival, **Passover**, to refer to the meal that people shared on that occasion. If your readers might not understand this, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the Passover meal" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 18:29

What accusation do you bring against this man

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **accusation**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "What crime do you accuse this man of committing" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 930)**)

John 18:30

this one

Here the Jewish leaders say **this one** as a disrespectful way to refer to Jesus without saying his name. If your language has a similar way to refer to someone in an indirect but derogatory manner, you may use it here. Alternate translation: “this so-and-so” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

If this one were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over to you

The Jewish leaders are making a conditional statement that sounds hypothetical, but they are already convinced that the condition is not true. They have concluded that Jesus is an evildoer. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that the speaker believes is not true. Alternate translation: “If this one were not an evildoer, but he is, we would not have handed him over to you, but we did” (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.958)**)

If this one were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over to you

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: “This man is an evildoer, so we have brought him to you” (See: **Double Negatives (p.984)**)

John 18:31

The Jews said to him

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death

According to Roman law, the Jews could not **put anyone to death**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "According to Roman law, it is not lawful for us to put anyone to death" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:32

General Information:

In this verse John interrupts the main storyline in order to provide some background information about Jesus predicting how he would die. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

This was so that the word of Jesus would be fulfilled

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “This happened in order to fulfill the word of Jesus” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

to indicate by what kind of death he was about to die

Here, **kind of death** refers to the manner in which Jesus would die. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “to indicate in what manner he was about to die” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:33

summoned Jesus

Here, **summoned** implies that **Pilate** ordered some of his soldiers to bring Jesus to him inside his headquarters. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “ordered his soldiers to bring Jesus inside to him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:34

from yourself

Here, **from** indicates the origin of Pilate's question. Jesus is asking Pilate if the question Pilate asked in the previous verse was his own idea. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "based on your own idea" or "on your own initiative" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:35

I am not a Jew, am I

Pilate is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize that he was not interested in Jewish religious disagreements. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Well I am certainly not a Jew, and I have no interest in these matters!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

Your own nation

Here, **nation** refers to the people who were part of the Jewish **nation**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Your fellow Jews" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 18:36

from this world. & from this world

See how you translated **from this world** in [8:23](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

this world. & this world, & from here

In this verse, Jesus uses **this world** and **here** to refer to everything in the universe that has been corrupted by sin and is hostile to God. See how you translated a similar use of **this world** in [8:23](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

If my kingdom were from this world, my servants would fight so that I would not be handed over to the Jews

Jesus is making a conditional statement that sounds hypothetical, but he already knows that the condition is not true. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that the speaker believes is not true.

Alternate translation: "If my kingdom were from this world, but it is not, my servants would fight so that I would not be handed over to the Jews, but they do not" (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.958)**)

so that I would not be handed over to the Jews

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "so that someone would not have handed me over to the Jews" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

to the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 18:37

You say that & am a king

Here Jesus is probably answering Pilate's question in the affirmative. However, since he doesn't clearly say, 'Yes, I am a king,' you do not need to explain the meaning further here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p. 1106)**)

I & For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world

These two phrases mean the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize that Jesus came to the earth to tell people the truth about God. If stating the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: "For this reason I came here" (See: **Parallelism (p.1057)**)

the world

Here, **world** refers to the universe that God created. It does not refer only to the people in the world or only to the earth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the universe" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

to the truth

Here, **truth** refers to what Jesus reveals about God, which would include his plan for forgiving sinful people through Jesus' death on the cross. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "to the true things about God" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

Everyone being from the truth

This phrase is an idiom that refers to someone who believes the **truth** about God. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "Everyone who believes the truth" (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

hears

Here, **hears** means to listen to something with the intent to heed it and respond appropriately. See how you translated this word in [8:43](#). Alternate translation: "heeds" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

my voice

Jesus uses **voice** to refer to what Jesus says. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to the things I say" or "to me" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 18:38

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

What is truth

Pilate is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize that he does not believe anyone really knows what **truth** is. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “No one can know the truth!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

truth

Here, **truth** refers to any true information. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “What is true” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

I find no guilt in him

Pilate speaks of **guilt** as if it were an object that can be inside a person. If your readers would not understand this, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternative translation: “I find no evidence that he is guilty of any crime” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 18:39

I would release one {person} to you

Pilate implies that he would **release** a prisoner when the Jewish leaders asked him to do so. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "I would release one prisoner to you at your request" or "I would release one prisoner to you when you asked" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

at the Passover

Here, **the Passover** refers to the entire **Passover** festival. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "at the Passover festival" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 18:40

they cried out again, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “they cried out again and said” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

Not this one, but Barabbas

The Jewish leaders are leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous verse. Alternate translation: “Do not release this one, but release Barabbas” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

this one

Here the Jewish leaders say **this one** as a disrespectful way to refer to Jesus without saying his name. If your language has a similar way to refer to someone in an indirect but derogatory manner, you may use it here. Alternate translation: “this so-and-so” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Now Barabbas was a robber

In this sentence John provides background information about **Barabbas**. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

a robber

The word usually translated **robber** can also refer to an insurrectionist, as is indicated by the description of **Barabbas** in Mark 15:7. Alternate translation: “an insurrectionist”

John 19

John 19 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Soldiers beat and mock Jesus (19:1–3)

The Jewish leaders convince Pilate to crucify Jesus (19:4–16)

Soldiers crucify Jesus (19:17–27)

Jesus dies on the cross (19:28–37)

Jesus' friends put his body in a tomb (19:38–42)

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text in order to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in [19:24](#), which are words from the Old Testament.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

“Purple garment”

Purple is a color that is from a mixture of red and blue. The soldiers mocked Jesus by putting a purple garment on him. This was because kings wore purple garments. They spoke and acted like they were giving honor to a king, but everyone knew that they were doing it because they hated Jesus. (See: **Irony (p.1034)**)

“You are not Caesar’s friend”

Pilate knew that Jesus was not a criminal, so he did not want to have his soldiers kill him. But the Jews told him that Jesus was claiming to be a king, and anyone who did that was breaking Caesar’s laws ([19:12](#)).

Ancient Jewish burial customs

According to the burial customs of that time, a dead person’s family would wrap the dead body with many strips of linen cloth and place it on a table inside a tomb. The tomb was either a cave or a room cut out of the side a large rock. According to Jewish tradition, the body was left to decompose in the tomb for one year. Then the family would then place the bones in a stone box. If your readers would be unfamiliar with these burial customs, then you may need to provide explanations in your translation or in a note for [19:39–42](#).

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried ([19:41](#)) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Sarcasm

The soldiers were insulting Jesus when they said, "Hail, King of the Jews." Pilate was insulting the Jews when he asked, "Should I crucify your king?" He was probably also insulting both Jesus and the Jews when he wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." (See: **Irony (p.1034)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Gabbatha, Golgotha

John explained the meanings of these two Aramaic words ("The Pavement" and "The Place of a Skull"). Then he used Greek letters to express the sound of these words. You should also use the letters of your language to express the sounds of these Aramaic words.

John 19:1

Connecting Statement:

Connecting Statement:

The part of the story from the previous chapter continues. Pilate has been speaking outside his headquarters with the Jewish leaders who are accusing Jesus.

Therefore, Pilate then took Jesus and whipped {him

Pilate himself did not whip Jesus. John uses **Pilate** to refer to the soldiers whom Pilate ordered to whip Jesus. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Pilate then ordered his soldiers to take Jesus and whip him" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 19:2

twisted together a crown from thorns

John uses **thorns** to refer to small branches with **thorns** on them. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “twisted together a crown from thorny branches” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

They put {it} on his head and put a purple garment on him

In Roman culture, a **crown** and **purple garment** were worn by kings. The soldiers put a **crown** made from thorns and a **purple garment** on Jesus in order to mock him. If your readers would not understand this, you could express the meaning explicitly. See the discussion of this idea in the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: “They put it on his head and put a purple garment on him in order to ridicule him by pretending that he was a king” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 19:3

and were saying, “Hail, King of the Jews

Hail was a common greeting, but the soldiers use this greeting in order to mock Jesus. They also did not believe that Jesus was really the **King of the Jews**. They actually mean to communicate the opposite of the literal meaning of their words. If this might confuse your readers, you could provide a brief explanation. Alternate translation: “and they said in a mocking manner, ‘Hail, King of the Jews’” (See: **Irony (p.1034)**)

John 19:4

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

to them

The pronoun **them** refers to the Jewish leaders who had brought Jesus to Pilate. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "to the Jewish authorities" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

I find no guilt in him

See how you translated a similar clause in [18:38](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 19:5

went

Your language may state “came” rather than **went** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural in your language. (See: **Go and Come (p.1007)**)

the crown of thorns and the purple garment

See how you translated **crown**, **thorns**, and **purple garment** in [19:2](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 19:6

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

they cried out, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “they cried out and said” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

I find no guilt in him

See how you translated a similar clause in [19:4](#) and [18:38](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 19:7

The Jews answered him

Here, **The Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in 1:19. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

he made himself to be the Son of God

Here, **made himself** is an idiom that refers to pretending to be something they think he is not. If this might confuse your readers, you could use plain language. Alternate translation: "he pretended to be the Son of God" (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

the Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

John 19:8

this word

Here, **word** refers to what the Jewish leaders said in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this plainly. Alternate translation: “what they said about Jesus claiming to be the Son of God” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

he became even more afraid

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “he grew even more afraid of condemning Jesus” or “he grew even more afraid than before of what might happen to him if he condemned Jesus” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 19:9

he entered into the governor's palace again and says to Jesus

John implies that the soldiers brought Jesus back into the governor's palace so Pilate could speak with him. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "he entered into the governor's palace again and told the soldiers to bring Jesus back inside. Then he says to Jesus" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 19:10

Are you not speaking to me

Pilate is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize his surprise that Jesus does not answer his question. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "I cannot believe you are refusing to speak to me!" or "Answer me!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

Do you not know that I have authority to release you, and I have authority to crucify you

Pilate is using a rhetorical question here to emphasize what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You should know that I am able to release you or to order my soldiers to crucify you!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1082)**)

John 19:11

You do not have any authority over me, except for what has been given to you from above

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "You only have authority over me because that authority has been given to you from above" (See: **Double Negatives (p.984)**)

except for what has been given to you from above

Here, **above** is used to refer to God who dwells in heaven **above**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: "from heaven" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

except for what has been given to you from above

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "except for what God has given to you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

has a greater sin

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "has a greater sin than your sin" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

has a greater sin

Jesus speaks of **sin** as if it were an object that a person could possess in varying amounts. If this use of **sin** might be misunderstood in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "are more sinful" or "has committed worse sin" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 19:12

At this

Here, **this** refers to Jesus' answer. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: "When Pilate heard Jesus' answer" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

this one

The Jewish leaders say **this one** as a disrespectful way to refer to Jesus and to avoid saying his name. If your language has a similar way to refer to someone in an indirect but derogatory manner, you may use it here. Alternate translation: "this so-and-so" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

cried out, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: "cried out and said" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

you are not a friend of Caesar

Alternate translation: "you do not support Caesar" or "you are opposing the emperor"

making himself a king

See how you translated a similar phrase in [19:7](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 19:13

these words

Here, **these words** refers to what the Jewish leaders had said in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this plainly. Alternate translation: “what the Jewish leaders said to him” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

brought Jesus out

John implies that **Pilate** ordered his soldiers to bring Jesus out. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: “commanded the soldiers to bring Jesus out” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

sat down

Since a person would sit down to teach or make official statements, the phrase **sat down** here implies that Pilate was going to speak to the people about what he had decided to do with Jesus. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: “he sat down to judge” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

in the judgment seat

The **judgment seat** was a special chair in which a leader sat when he was making an official judgment. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **judgment**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “in the seat used for judging people” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.930)**)

in a place called “The Pavement

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “in a place the people called ‘The Pavement’” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

in Hebrew

See how you translated this phrase in [5:2](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Gabbatha

Here John writes out the sounds of this Jewish Aramaic word with Greek letters. Since John translates the meaning earlier in the verse, you should write out this word using the most similar sounds in your language.

John 19:14

Now

Now marks a break in the storyline. Here John provides information about the upcoming Passover festival and the time of day when Pilate presented Jesus to the Jewish leaders. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

It was about the sixth hour

In this culture, people counted the hours each day beginning around daybreak at six o'clock in the morning. Here, **the sixth hour** indicates noon. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this in the way the people of your culture reckon time. Alternate translation: "about noon" or "about 12:00 PM"

he says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

he says to the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 19:15

Take {him} away! Take {him} away

Take him away here implies taking a person away to be executed. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Take him away to be killed! Take him away to be killed!” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Should I crucify your king

Pilate uses **I** to imply that he would order his soldiers to crucify Jesus. Pilate himself did not crucify people. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Should I command my soldiers to crucify your king” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Pilate says to them, “Should I crucify your king

Pilate does not believe that Jesus is a king. He actually means to communicate the opposite of the literal meaning of his words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could provide a brief explanation. Alternate translation: “Pilate says to them in a mocking manner, ‘Should I crucify your king’” (See: **Irony (p.1034)**)

John 19:16

he then handed him over to them so that he might be crucified

In this verse, the pronouns **them** and **they** refer to the Roman soldiers who would crucify Jesus. These pronouns do not refer to “the chief priests” in the previous verse because they did not crucify people. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1068)**)

so that he might be crucified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “so that the soldiers might crucify him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

and} led {him} away

The phrase **led him away** implies that the soldiers led Jesus away in order crucify him. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “and led him away to be crucified” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 19:17

to the {place} called “The Place of a Skull,” which in Hebrew is called “Golgotha

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “to the place that the people called ‘The Place of a Skull,’ which the Jews call ‘Golgotha’ in Hebrew” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

in Hebrew

See how you translated this phrase in [5:2](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Golgotha

Here John writes out the sounds of this Jewish Aramaic word using Greek letters. Since John translates the meaning earlier in the verse, you should write out this word using the most similar sounds in your language.

John 19:18

with him two others

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous clause. Alternate translation: “they also crucified two others with him” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 19:19

Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross

John uses **Pilate** to imply that **Pilate** ordered his soldiers to write the title and put it on the cross. Pilate probably would not have done this himself. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "Pilate also commanded his soldiers to write a title on a sign and put it on the cross" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

on the cross

Here, **the cross** refers specifically to **the cross** on which Jesus was crucified. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "on the cross they used to crucify Jesus" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

on it was written: JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "that person wrote on it these words: Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 19:20

the place where Jesus was crucified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the place where they crucified Jesus” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

the city

Here, **the city** refers to Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the city called Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

And it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “The one who prepared the sign wrote the words in three languages: Hebrew, Latin, and Greek” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

in Hebrew

See how you translated this phrase, **in Hebrew**, in [5:2](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

in Latin

Latin was the language spoken by the Roman government and Roman soldiers. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: “in the language spoken by the Romans” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 19:21

Therefore, the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate

The chief priests had to go back to Pilate's headquarters in order to speak to him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Then the chief priests of the Jews went back to Pilate and said to him" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

That one

The Jewish leaders say **That one** as a disrespectful way to refer to Jesus and to avoid saying his name. If your language has a similar way to refer to someone in an indirect but derogatory manner, you may use it here. Alternate translation: "That so-and-so" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

That one said, "I am King of the Jews

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "That one said that he is the King of the Jews" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

John 19:22

What I have written I have written

Pilate implies that he will not change the words on the notice. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: "I have written what I wanted to write, and I will not change it" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

What I have written I have written

Pilate uses **I** to imply that he ordered his soldiers to write the title and put it on the cross. Pilate probably would not have done this himself. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "What I told them to write is what they have written" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 19:23

and the tunic

The next verse implies that the soldiers kept the tunic separate from the clothes that they divided. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: “and the tunic they did not divide” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Now

There is a break from the main storyline that begins with the word **Now** and continues to the end of the next verse. In this break John tells us how this event fulfills Scripture. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

woven in one piece

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “someone had woven it in one piece” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 932)**)

John 19:24

we should cast lots for it, whose it will be

The soldiers are leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. The soldiers will **cast lots** and the winner will receive the shirt. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “we should cast lots for it in order to decide whose it will be” or “we should cast lots for it and the winner will get to keep it” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

we should cast lots for it, & cast lots

The term **lots** refers to objects with different markings on various sides that were used to decide randomly among several possibilities. They were tossed onto the ground to see which marked side would come up on top. If your readers would not be familiar with **lots**, you could use a general expression for gambling. Alternate translation: “we should gamble for it ... gambled” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

This happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled which says

Here John uses **that the scripture would be fulfilled** to introduce a quotation from an Old Testament book (Psalm 22:18). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Jesus is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “This happened so that what is written in the Psalms might be fulfilled” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

This happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled which says

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “This fulfilled the scripture that said” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

They divided my garments among themselves and cast lots for my clothing

In these phrases, John quotes Psalm 22:19. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off all of this material with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1073)**)

John 19:25

the cross of Jesus

John is using **of** to describe **the cross** on which the soldiers had crucified Jesus. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “the cross on which Jesus was crucified” (See:

Possession (p.1062))

John 19:26

the disciple whom he loved

See how you translated a similar phrase in [13:23](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Woman

See how you translated **Woman** in [2:4](#).

behold, your son

Here, Jesus uses **son** to indicate that he wants his disciple, John, to be like a **son** to his mother. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “here is the man who will act like a son to you” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 19:27

he says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

to the disciple, "& the disciple took her into his own {home

In this verse, **the disciple** and **his** refer to John, who calls himself "the disciple whom he loved" in the previous verse and who is the author of this Gospel. If this would be confusing in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "to the disciple whom Jesus loved ... that disciple took her into his own home" or "to me ... I took her into my own home" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Behold, your mother

Here, Jesus uses **mother** to indicate that he wants his **mother** to be like a **mother** to his disciple, John. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Here is the woman to whom you will be like a mother" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

from that hour

Here, **hour** refers to a point in time. It does not refer to a 60-minute length of time. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "from that time" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

John 19:28

After this

After this introduces a new event that happened soon after the events the story has just told. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Soon afterward” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

all things had already been completed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “he had already completed all things” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

all things

Here, **all things** refers to everything that God sent Jesus to the world to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “all the things that God had sent him to do” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the scripture might be completed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “he might fulfill the scripture” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

so that the scripture might be completed

Here John uses **that the scripture might be completed** to introduce a quotation from an Old Testament book (Psalm 69:21). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Jesus is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “so that what is written in the Psalms might be fulfilled” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 19:29

A container full of sour wine was placed there

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “Someone had placed there a container full of sour wine” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

of sour wine & of the sour wine

Here, **sour wine** refers to the inexpensive **wine** that common people in Jesus’ culture would usually drink to quench thirst. Therefore, the person who gave Jesus this **sour wine** was acting kindly and responding to what he had said in the previous verse. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “of common wine ... of that wine” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 935)**)

so having put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop

John implies that someone dipped the **sponge** into the container full of sour wine so that the **sponge** would be **full of the sour wine**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “so having dipped a sponge in the container so that it was full of sour wine, they put it on a hyssop” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

a sponge

A **sponge** is a small object that can soak up and hold liquid that comes out of it when the **sponge** is squeezed. If your readers would not be familiar with this thing, you could use the name of something your readers would use for soaking up liquid, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “something to soak up liquid” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

on a hyssop

Here, **hyssop** refers to the stalk from a plant that grows in Israel. Matthew and Mark called this stalk a “reed” in Matthew 27:48 and Mark 15:36. If your readers would not be familiar with this plant, you could use the name of a plant in your area that has stalks or reeds, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “a reed of a plant called hyssop” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

John 19:30

the sour wine

See how you translated this phrase, **the sour wine**, in the previous verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

It is finished

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. The thing Jesus **finished** could be: (1) all the work that God had sent Jesus to the world to do. This interpretation would connect this phrase to the statement Jesus made in [17:4](#) when he said that he had “completed the work” that God had given him to do. Alternate translation: “I finished all that I came here to do” (2) all the Old Testament prophecies about what Jesus would do the first time he came to the earth. This interpretation would connect this phrase to the statement in verse 28, “knowing that all things had already been completed, so that the scripture might be completed.” Alternate translation: “I completed all that the scripture has said about me” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

he gave up his spirit

This clause is an idiom that means “willingly die.” If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “he allowed himself to die” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 19:31

Then the Jews, because it was a day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross during the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was an especially important day), asked Pilate that their legs would be broken and they would be taken away

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these clauses. Alternate translation: "Then, because it was the day of preparation, the Jews asked Pilate that the men's legs would be broken and they would be taken away, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross during the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was an especially important day)" (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

a day of preparation

Here, **day of preparation** refers to the day when the Jewish people prepared for both the Passover festival and the Sabbath. See how you translated a similar phrase in [19:14](#). Alternate translation: "the day when the Jews prepared for both the Passover festival and the Sabbath" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

so that the bodies would not remain on the cross during the Sabbath

According to Jewish religious law, dead bodies could not remain on crosses during the Sabbath. Therefore, the Jewish leaders wanted Pilate to order his soldiers to execute the three men on crosses and remove their bodies before the Sabbath began at sundown. If this clause might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "so that the bodies would not remain on the cross during the Sabbath, which the Jewish law forbids" or "so that the bodies would not remain on the cross during the Sabbath and thereby violate Jewish law" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

on the cross

John is speaking of the three crosses on which the men were hanging. He is not referring to one particular **cross**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: "on the three crosses" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1005)**)

for that Sabbath was an especially important day

John notes that this **Sabbath** was **an especially important day** because it was the first day of the Passover celebration. If this statement would confuse your readers, express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "for that Sabbath was especially important because it occurred during the Passover festival" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

that their legs would be broken and they would be taken away

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "to have someone break their legs and take them away" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

their legs would be broken and they would be taken away

The Jewish leaders wanted Pilate's soldiers to break the legs of the men who were hanging on crosses because doing that would cause the men to die quickly. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "their legs would be broken so that they would die quickly and their bodies could be taken away" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 19:32

of the other one having been crucified with him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “of the other man with whom they had crucified him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 19:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 19:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 19:35

This verse is a break from the main storyline in which John provides some background information about himself. John is telling readers that they can trust what he has written because he saw these events happen. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

the one that had seen this & his & that one knows that he speaks the truth

These phrases refer to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. He is speaking of himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: "I, the one who saw this ... my ... I know that I speak the truth" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

so that you would also believe

John is leaving out some of the words that this clause would need in many languages in order to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "so that you would also believe that Jesus is the Messiah" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 19:36

General Information:

[19:36–37](#) are another break from the main storyline in which John tells us that the two events in [19:33–34](#) made some prophecies in scripture come true. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

these things happened in order that the scripture would be fulfilled

Here John uses **that the scripture would be fulfilled** to introduce a quotation from an Old Testament book (Psalm 34:20). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Jesus is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “these things happened in order that what is written in the Psalms might be fulfilled” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

these things happened

Here, **these things** refers to the two events described in [19:33–34](#). If it would be more natural in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the soldiers did not break Jesus’ legs but pierced his side” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

in order that the scripture would be fulfilled

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “in order to fulfill the words that someone wrote in scripture” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

Not one of his bones will be broken

This sentence is a quotation from Psalm 34:20. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off all of this material with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1073)**)

Not one of his bones will be broken

This is a quotation from Psalm 34:20. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “No one will break even one of his bones” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 19:37

another scripture says

Here John uses **another scripture says** to introduce a quotation from an Old Testament book (Zechariah 12:10). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Jesus is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “the prophet Zechariah wrote in another scripture that” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1071)**)

They will look at him whom they pierced

This sentence is a quotation from Zechariah 12:10. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off all of this material with quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1073)**)

John 19:38

after these things

After this introduces a new event that happened soon after the events the story has just told. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “soon afterward” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

Joseph from Arimathea

Since Luke 23:50 indicates that **Joseph** was a member of the Sanhedrin, he was likely dwelling in Jerusalem. Therefore, John would mean here that **Joseph** was originally **from Arimathea**. **Joseph** had not come **from Arimathea** to Jerusalem for this occasion. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Joseph, who was originally from Arimathea” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Joseph from Arimathea

Arimathea was a city in Judea. Alternate translation: “Joseph who was from the city called Arimathea” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

for fear of the Jews

John is using **of** to describe the **fear** that **Joseph** felt for the Jewish leaders. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “because he feared the Jews” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

for fear of the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

that he might take away the body of Jesus. & took away his body

John implies that **Joseph** wanted to **take away the body of Jesus** in order to bury it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “that he might take away the body of Jesus in order to bury it ... took away and buried his body” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Pilate gave him permission

John implies that **Pilate** gave **Joseph** permission to take away Jesus' body. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Pilate gave him permission to take away the body of Jesus” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 19:39

Nicodemus

Nicodemus was one of the Pharisees who respected Jesus. See how you translated this name in [3:1](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

the one having come to him at first at night

This clause refers to the meeting between Jesus and Nicodemus that is described in [chapter 3](#). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “who had met Jesus before when he visited him at night” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes

According to the burial customs of Jesus’ time, people prepared this **mixture** in order to put it on Jesus’ body as a way to honor him and to counteract the smell of decay. If this would confuse your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes to put on Jesus’ body” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

of myrrh and aloes

This **mixture of myrrh and aloes** consisted of pleasant-smelling substances that were mixed together into an ointment that was put on a dead body in order to counteract the smell of decay. If your readers would not be familiar with these substances, you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “of pleasant-smelling substances” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

about 100 litras in weight

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this weight in terms of modern measurements either in the text or a footnote. One **litra** is about one third of a kilogram or three quarters of a pound. Alternate translation: “about 33 kilograms in weight” or “weighing about thirty-three kilograms” (See: **Biblical Weight (p.953)**)

John 19:40

wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices

Wrapping a dead body in strips of cloth was the burial custom in this culture. See the discussion of this in the General Notes for this chapter. If your readers would not be familiar with such a custom, you could describe it more specifically, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “wrapped strips of linen cloth around his body and put spices under the strips of cloth” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

John 19:41

In this verse John interrupts the main storyline in order to provide some background information about the location of the tomb where they would bury Jesus. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Now in the place where they crucified Jesus there was a garden" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

in which no one had yet been buried

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "in which people had not yet buried anyone" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

no one had yet been buried

The phrase **no one had yet** translates two negative words in Greek. John uses them together to emphasize that the tomb had never been used. If your language can use two negatives together for emphasis without them cancelling each other to create a positive meaning, it would be appropriate to use that construction here. (See: **Double Negatives (p.984)**)

John 19:42

because of the day of preparation of the Jews

According to Jewish law, no one could work after sundown on **the day of preparation** because sundown marked the beginning of the Sabbath and Passover. This meant that they had to bury Jesus' body quickly. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "because the Passover and Sabbath were about to begin that evening" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

because of the day of preparation of the Jews and because the tomb was close by, they laid Jesus there

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these clauses. Alternate translation: "they laid Jesus there because of the day of preparation of the Jews and because the tomb was close by" (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

the day of preparation of the Jews

See how you translated a similar phrase in [19:14](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

they laid Jesus

John is referring to putting Jesus' dead body in a tomb as laying him down. This is a polite way of referring to something unpleasant, and it accurately describes the Jewish burial practice of laying a dead body on a table inside the tomb. See how you translated a similar expression in [11:34](#). Alternate translation: "they entombed Jesus" (See: **Euphemism (p.994)**)

John 20

John 20 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John go to Jesus' tomb and find it empty (20:1–10)

Mary Magdalene meets Jesus (20:11–18)

Ten disciples meet Jesus (20:19–25)

Thomas meets Jesus (20:26–29)

John states the purpose for this Gospel (20:30–31)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried (20:1) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was a room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could look inside or enter.

“Receive the Holy Spirit”

If your language uses the same word for “breath” and “spirit,” be sure that the reader understands that Jesus was performing a symbolic action by blowing air out of his mouth, and that Jesus was referring to the Holy Spirit, not his breath. (See: [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/translate-symaction\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/holyspirit\]\]](#))

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Rabboni

John used Greek letters to express the sound of this Aramaic word. Then he explained that the word means “Teacher.” You should also use the letters of your language to express the sounds of the Aramaic word.

Jesus' resurrection body

We do not know what Jesus' body looked like after he became alive again. His disciples knew he was Jesus because they could see his face and touch the places where the soldiers had put the nails through his hands and feet and pierced his side. However, he could also walk through solid walls and doors and sometimes people didn't recognize him. It is best not to say more than what the ULT says about Jesus' resurrection body.

Two angels in white

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about angels in white clothing with the women at Jesus' tomb. Two of the authors called them men, but that is only because the angels appeared in human forms. Two of the Gospel authors wrote about two angels, but the other two authors wrote about only one of them. It is best to translate each of these passages as it appears in the ULT rather than trying to make the passages all state the exact same thing. (See: Matthew 28:1–2 and Mark 16:5 and Luke 24:4 and John 20:12)

John 20:1

on the first of the week

John uses **first** to imply the **first** day of the week. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "on the first day of the week" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

on the first of the week

Here John is actually using a cardinal number, "one," to mean **first**. If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can also use a cardinal number here in your translation. Alternate translation: "on day one of the week" (See: **Ordinal Numbers** (p.1053))

comes & sees

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past** (p.1066))

sees the stone having been rolled away

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "sees that someone had rolled away the stone" (See: **Active or Passive** (p.932))

John 20:2

she runs & comes & she says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

disciple whom Jesus loved

This phrase refers to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. See the discussion of this phrase in Part 1 of the Introduction to the Gospel of John and the General Notes to Chapter 13. See also how you translated similar phrases in [13:23](#) and [18:15](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

to them

If you translated **the other disciple whom Jesus loved** with a first person form earlier in the verse, then you will need to use the first person plural “us” here. Alternate translation: “to us” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

to them

If you translated **the other disciple whom Jesus loved** with a third person form and your language marks the dual form, then the pronoun **them** here would be in the dual form. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

the Lord & him

Here Mary speaks of Jesus’ dead body as if it were Jesus himself. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Lord’s body ... it” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

we do not know where they have laid him

When Mary says **we**, she is speaking of herself and some women who came to the tomb with her. These women are mentioned in Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1; and Luke 24:1, 10, 24. Since she is not speaking of the two disciples, **we** is exclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.998)**)

John 20:3

the other disciple

See how you translated **the other disciple** in the previous verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

went out, & they went

If you translated **the other disciple** in the previous verse with a third person form and your language marks the dual form, then the verbs **went out** and **went** would be in the dual form here. (See: **Verbs (p.1102)**)

they went

If you translated **the other disciple** in the previous verse with a third person form and your language marks the dual form, then the pronoun **they** here would be in the dual form. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

they went

If you translated **the other disciple** in the previous verse with a first person singular form, then you will need to use the first person plural “we” here. Alternate translation: “we went” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

John 20:4

the two were running together, and the other disciple quickly ran ahead

If you translated **the other disciple** with a first person form in [20:2](#), then you will need to use first person pronouns in this verse. Alternate translation: “we were running together, and I quickly ran ahead” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

the other disciple

See how you translated **the other disciple** in [20:2](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 20:5

he sees & but he did not enter

If you translated **the other disciple** with a first person form in the previous verse, then you will need to use first person pronouns in this verse. Alternate translation: "I saw ... but I did not enter" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

he sees

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

linen cloths

Wrapping a dead body in strips of cloth was the burial custom in this culture. See the discussion of this in the General Notes for Chapter 19. If your readers would not be familiar with such a custom, you could describe it more specifically, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: "the linen cloths in which they had wrapped Jesus' body for burial" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

John 20:6

comes & he sees

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

him

If you translated **the other disciple** with a first person form in [20:4](#), then you will need to use the first person “me” here. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

linen cloths

See how you translated **linen cloths** in the previous verse. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

John 20:7

the cloth that had been on his head

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the cloth that someone had put on his head” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

his

The pronoun **his** refers to Jesus, not to Peter or John. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

linen cloths

See how you translated **linen cloths** in the previous verse. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1097)**)

but having been folded up in one place by itself

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “but someone had folded it up in one place by itself” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 20:8

the other disciple

See how you translated **the other disciple** in [20:2](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

went in, and he saw and believed

If you translated **the other disciple** with a first person form in this verse, then you will need to use the first person throughout this verse. Alternate translation: “went in, and I saw and believed” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

he saw

John is leaving out some of the words that this phrase would need in many languages in order to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “he saw the linen cloths where Jesus’ body had lain” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

believed

John is leaving out some of the words that this phrase would need in many languages in order to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “he believed that Jesus had risen from the dead” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 20:9

For

For here indicates that this verse provides background information about the kind of belief that was mentioned in the previous clause. **For** here does not indicate a reason or cause. At that time, the disciples believed Jesus had risen from the dead only because the tomb was empty. They still did not understand that the scriptures said Jesus would rise from the dead. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: “But even then” (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

to rise from the dead

Here, **rise from the dead** is an idiom that refers to a dead person becoming alive again. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “become alive after he died” (See: **Idiom (p. 1020)**)

John 20:10

went away again to their {own homes

Since the disciples were staying within walking distance of Jesus' tomb, the **homes** they went to must have been in Jerusalem. They did not go back to their homes in Galilee. Alternate translation: "went back to where they were staying in Jerusalem" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 20:11

Mary

Mary here refers to **Mary** Magdalene. See how you translated this **Mary** in [19:25](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 20:12

she sees

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

two angels in white

Here, **white** refers to the color of the clothing that the angels were wearing. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "two angels in white clothing" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

one at the head and one at the feet of where the body of Jesus had lain

Here, **at the head** and **at the feet** refer to the locations in the tomb where Jesus' head and feet used to be. If this might confuse your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "one at the place of his head and one at the place of his feet where the body of Jesus had been" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

had lain

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "someone had laid" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 20:13

say & She says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Woman

See how you translated the similar use of **Woman** in [2:4](#) and [4:21](#).

my Lord, & him

Here, Mary speaks of Jesus' dead body as if it were Jesus himself. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "my Lord's body ... it" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 20:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 20:15

says & says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Woman

See how you translated the word **Woman** in the previous verse.

him & him, & him

Here, Mary speaks of Jesus' dead body as if it were Jesus himself. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "my Lord's body ... it ... it" (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

and I will take him away

Here Mary Magdalene implies that she would **take** Jesus' body **away** and bury it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "and I will take him away and bury him again" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 20:16

says & says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

in Hebrew, “Rabboni” (which means “Teacher

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: “‘Rabboni’ (which means ‘Teacher’ in Hebrew)” (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

in Hebrew

See how you translated **in Hebrew** in [5:2](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Rabboni

Here John writes out the sounds of this Jewish Aramaic word with Greek letters. Since John translates the meaning later in the verse, you should write out this word using the most similar sounds in your language.

John 20:17

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

the Father; & my Father & your Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

my brothers

Jesus used the word **my brothers** here to refer to his disciples. If this might confuse your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “my disciples, who are like brothers,” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

say to them, ‘I go up to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God

If the direct quotation inside a direct quotation would be confusing in your language, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “say to them that I go up to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1076)**)

I go up

Here Jesus uses the present tense **I go up** to refer to something that will happen in the near future. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you could use the future tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “I will go up” (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God

These two long phrases mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize to whom Jesus will return. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: “to God, who is my Father and your Father” (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

John 20:18

comes

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Mary Magdalene comes

Your language may state “goes” rather than **comes** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: “Mary Magdalene goes” (See: **Go and Come (p.1007)**)

Mary Magdalene comes

John is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “Mary Magdalene comes to where the disciples were staying” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 20:19

the first of the week

See how you translated **the first of the week** in [20:1](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p. 935))

the first of the week

Here John is actually using a cardinal number, “one,” to mean **first**. If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can also use a cardinal number here in your translation. Alternate translation: “on day one of the week” (See: **Ordinal Numbers** (p.1053))

the doors of where the disciples were having been closed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the disciples having closed the doors of where they were” (See: **Active or Passive** (p.932))

for fear of the Jews

See how you translated this phrase in [19:38](#). (See: **Possession** (p.1062))

of the Jews

Here, **the Jews** refers to the Jewish leaders. See how you translated this term in [1:19](#). (See: **Synecdoche** (p.1093))

Peace to you

This is an idiomatic expression, based on the Hebrew word and concept of “shalom.” It was both a greeting and a blessing. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “I greet all of you and I wish for God to bless you” (See: **Idiom** (p.1020))

John 20:20

he showed them his hands

John uses **his hands** to refer to the nail marks from crucifixion that were in Jesus' **hands**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "he showed them the nail marks in his hands" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

his side

John uses **his side** to refer to the wound that a Roman soldier made in Jesus' **side** with a spear. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the spear wound in his side" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

having seen the Lord

This could refer to: (1) the time when the disciples rejoiced, as in the UST. (2) the reason why the disciples rejoiced. Alternate translation: "because they saw the Lord" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.968)**)

John 20:21

Peace to you

See how you translated **Peace to you** in the previous verse. (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

Father

Father is an important title for God. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

Just as the Father has sent me, so I send you

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these clauses. Alternate translation: “I send you just as the Father has sent me” (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

has sent me, so I send you

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “has sent me into the world, so I send you into the world” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 20:22

he breathed on {them

When Jesus **breathed on them**, he did this symbolic action in order to show that he would give his disciples the **Holy Spirit** in the near future. If this would be helpful to your readers, you could explain its significance. Alternate translation: “he breathed on them as a symbolic action” or “he breathed on them to symbolically show that he was going to give them the Holy Spirit” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1091)**)

he breathed on {them

Here, **breathed on** refers to Jesus blowing air out of his mouth. It does not refer to the normal act of inhaling and exhaling air into one’s lungs. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “he blew air on them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 20:23

they have been forgiven for them

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will forgive them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

whoever's {sins} you retain, they have been retained

To retain **sins** means to not forgive someone for the **sins** that they have committed. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "whoever's sins you might not forgive, they will not be forgiven" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

they have been retained

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will retain them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 20:24

the Twelve

See how you translated **the Twelve** in [6:67](#). (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1049)**)

the one called Didymus

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “whom people called Didymus” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 20:25

Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails and put my finger into the mark of the nails and put my hand into his side, I will certainly not believe

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: “I will certainly not believe unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails and put my finger into the mark of the nails and put my hand into his side” (See: **Information Structure (p.1025)**)

Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails and put my finger into the mark of the nails and put my hand into his side, I will certainly not believe

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: “I will believe only if I see in his hands the mark of the nails and put my finger into the mark of the nails and put my hand into his side” (See: **Double Negatives (p.984)**)

the mark of the nails & the mark of the nails

In both of these occurrences, Thomas is using **of** to describe **mark** made by **nails**. He is referring to the holes in Jesus’ hands that were made by the nails that soldiers used to crucify him. Alternate translation: “the marks made by nails ... those marks” (See: **Possession (p.1062)**)

into his side

See how you translated **his side** in 20:20. (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

I will certainly not believe

Thomas is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “I will certainly not believe that Jesus has become alive again” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 20:26

comes

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

the doors having been closed

See how you translated this phrase in [20:19](#). (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

Peace to you

See how you translated **Peace to you** in [20:19](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 20:27

he says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

here

Jesus uses **here** to refer to the places on his **hands** where there were holes. These holes in Jesus' **hands** were made by the nails that soldiers used to crucify him. If this might confuse your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "in these holes" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

my hands

Jesus uses **my hands** to refer to the holes in Jesus' **hands** that were made by the nails that soldiers used to crucify him. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the nail marks in my hands" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

my side

Jesus uses **my side** to refer to the wound that a Roman soldier made in his **side** with a spear. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the spear wound in his side" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

do not be unbelieving, but believing

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize that Jesus wants Thomas to believe that he has become alive again. If your language does not use repetition to do this, you could use one phrase and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "you absolutely must believe" (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

do not be unbelieving, but believing

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "do not be unbelieving that I have become alive again, but believe it" (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 20:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

John 20:29

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

you have believed; & having believed

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “you have believed that I have become alive again ... having believed that I have become alive again” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

blessed {are} the ones not having seen

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God blesses those not having seen” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

not having seen

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “not having seen me” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

John 20:30

General Information:

In [20:30-31](#) John comments about the story he has written in chapters 1 through 20. He also states his reason for writing this book. He does this in order to indicate that the story is almost finished. Use the natural form in your language for expressing the conclusion of a story. (See: **End of Story (p.992)**)

signs

See how you translated the term **signs** in [2:11](#). See also the discussion of **signs** in Part 3 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. Alternate translation: “significant miracles”

which have not been written in this book

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Since John wrote this Gospel, you should use the first person pronoun “I” to indicate who did the action. Alternate translation: “which I have not written in this book” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 20:31

these things

Here, **these things** could mean: (1) the miraculous signs that John wrote about in his Gospel and mentioned in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “these signs” (2) everything that John wrote about in his Gospel. Alternate translation: “everything in this book” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

but these things have been written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “but the author wrote about these things” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

you would believe & you would have

In this verse **you** is plural and could refer to: (1) people who are reading this Gospel and do not trust in Jesus for salvation. Alternate translation: “you might believe ... you might have” (2) people who are reading this Gospel and already believe in Jesus. Alternate translation: “you would continue believing ... you would continue to have” (See: **Forms of You (p.1002)**)

Son of God

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.1100)**)

believing

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “believing that Jesus is the Christ” (See: **Ellipsis (p.989)**)

life

Here, **life** refers to eternal **life**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. See the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

in his name

Here, **in** indicates the means by which people can have eternal **life**. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “by means of his name” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

in his name

Here, **his name** could refer to: (1) Jesus himself. Alternate translation: “through union with him” or “by the power of his person” (2) calling on Jesus’ name for salvation. Alternate translation: “by calling on his name” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1093)**)

John 21

John 21 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Jesus eats breakfast with his disciples (21:1–14)

Jesus restores Peter as his disciple (21:15–19)

Jesus and Peter speak about John (21:20–23)

John concludes his Gospel (21:24–25)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

The metaphor of sheep

Before Jesus died, he spoke of himself taking care of his people as if he were a good shepherd taking care of sheep (10:11). After he became alive again, Jesus commanded Peter to take care of other believers in the same way. (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“The disciple whom Jesus loved”

The apostle John referred to himself as the disciple “whom Jesus loved” twice in this chapter (21:7, 20). Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking about someone else. If this is the case, then you will need to use a first person pronoun for these references and the other references to John throughout this chapter. You would also need to use first person plural pronouns in this chapter for all references to the disciples as a group, since John was one of them. If your language can retain the third person references, then you may want to make these references to John explicit by adding “John” next to them. See the discussion of this in Part 1 of the General Introduction to the Gospel of John. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/names/johntheapostle\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-123person\]\]](#))

Different words for “love”

In 21:15–17, Jesus and Peter speak to each other using two different words in the original language that could both be translated as “love.” These words are often used interchangeably. However, when they are used together, as in 21:15–17, they can have slightly different meanings. One word can refer to a type of love that is based on affection and friendship, but the other word can refer to a type of love that is based on sincere devotion and high esteem for the person being loved. Although the UST translates both of these words as “love,” the notes will provide more specific alternatives.

John 21:1

After these things

This phrase introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: "Some time later" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1028)**)

Sea of Tiberias

This **Sea** was also called "the Sea of Galilee." See how you translated the similar name in [6:1](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

John 21:2

General Information:

[21:2-3](#) provide background information on what happens in the story before Jesus appears to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

Thomas called Didymus

See how you translated this phrase in [11:16](#). (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

Cana of Galilee

See how you translated **Cana of Galilee** in [2:1](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1012)**)

the {sons} of Zebedee

This phrase refers to the disciples John and James, whom Jesus called “sons of thunder” in Mark 3:17. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “James and I, the sons of Zebedee” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 21:3

says & They say

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

We

When the disciples say **We**, they are speaking of themselves without Peter, so **We** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.998)**)

are coming

Your language may state “going” rather than **coming** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural in your language. Alternate translation: “are going” (See: **Go and Come (p.1007)**)

got into a boat

Here, **got in a boat** implies that they also took the boat out on the Sea of Tiberias in order to fish. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “got into a boat and went fishing” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 21:4

it is

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 21:5

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

Children

Here Jesus uses the word **Children** as an affectionate way to address his disciples. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "My dear friends" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

you do not have any fish to eat, do you

Jesus asks this question in a way that expects a negative response. He knows that the disciples did not catch any fish. If your language has a question form that assumes a negative response, you should use it here. Alternate translation: "you were not able to get any fish to eat, were you?" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 21:6

you will find some

Here, **some** refers to fish. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "you will find some fish" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 21:7

that disciple whom Jesus loved

This phrase refers to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. See the discussion of this phrase in Part 1 of the Introduction to the Gospel of John and the General Notes for this chapter. See also how you translated similar phrases in [13:23](#), [18:15](#), and [20:2](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

put on his outer garment

Here, **outer garment** refers to a coat that would be worn over a person's regular clothing. If this would confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "put on his cloak" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

for he was undressed

Here, **undressed** does not mean that Peter was naked. Rather, Peter had taken off **his outer garment** so that it would be easier for him to work. Now that he was about to greet Jesus, he wanted to wear more clothing. Alternate translation: "for he had taken off most of his clothes" (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

threw himself into the sea

This implies that Peter jumped into the **sea** in order to swim to the shore. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "threw himself into the sea and swam to shore" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 21:8

for they were not far from the land, but about 200 cubits away

Here John provides this background information about the location of the boat the disciples were fishing in. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: “for the boat was near the land, only about 200 cubits away” (See: **Background Information (p.939)**)

they were

If you translated “the disciple whom Jesus loved” in the previous verse with a first person form, then you will need to use the first person plural “we” here. You will also need to use first person plural pronouns in all occurrences of third person plural pronouns that refer to the disciples throughout the rest of this chapter. Alternate translation: “we were” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1000)**)

200 cubits

A **cubit** is a measurement of distance equivalent to a little less than half of one meter or about one yard. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. Alternate translation: “about 90 meters” or “about 100 yards” (See: **Biblical Distance (p.942)**)

John 21:9

they see

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

a charcoal fire kindled and a fish laid on it

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “a charcoal fire that Jesus had kindled, and a fish that Jesus had laid on it” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

a fish laid on it and a bread loaf

The words **fish** and **bread** are singular nouns. These could mean: (1) Jesus had one fish and one loaf of bread, as in the UST. (2) Jesus had an unknown amount of fish and bread that are referred to collectively. Alternate translation: “some fish laid on it, and some bread loaves” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.955)**)

John 21:10

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 21:11

Therefore, Simon Peter went up

Here, **went up** means that Simon Peter went back to the boat. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Simon Peter went up into the boat” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

the net was not torn

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the fish did not tear the net” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

John 21:12

says & it is

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

to ask him, “Who are you

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “to ask him who he is” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.979)**)

John 21:13

comes & takes & gives {it

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

John 21:14

the third time that

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use a cardinal number here. Alternate translation: “time number 3.” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1053)**)

was revealed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “showed himself” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

having been raised from the dead

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God having raised him from the dead” (See: **Active or Passive (p.932)**)

having been raised from the dead

Here, **raised from the dead** is an idiom that refers to a dead person becoming alive again. See how you translated a similar phrase in [20:9](#). Alternate translation: “having become alive after he died” (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 21:15

says & He says & He says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

do you love me & I love you

The two occurrences of **love** in this verse are two different words in the original language. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could show this in your translation. See the discussion of this concept in the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: “do you love me with great esteem ... I love you with affection” or “do you love me deeply ... I love you like a friend” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

more than these

Here, **these** could refer to: (1) the other disciples who were there with Jesus and Peter. This meaning would indicate Jesus is asking Peter if he loves Jesus more than the other disciples love him. Alternate translation: “more than these disciples love me” (2) the fish, boat, and other equipment that were used for catching fish, which was Peter’s former job. Alternate translation: “more than these fishing tools” or “more than your former job” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Feed my lambs

Jesus uses **Feed my lambs** to refer to providing for the spiritual needs of people who trust in Jesus. Here Jesus is commanding Peter to take care of other believers in the same way that Jesus took care of them while he was with them. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: “Take care of the people who believe in me like a shepherd feeds lambs” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 21:16

He says & He says & He says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

a second {time

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use a cardinal number here. Alternate translation: “time number 2.” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1053)**)

do you love me?” & I love you

The two occurrences of **love** in this verse are two different words in the original language. See how you translated these phrases in the previous verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Take care of my sheep

This sentence has the same meaning as “Feed my lambs” in the previous verse. See how you translated that similar sentence there. Alternate translation: “Take care of the people who believe in me like a shepherd takes care of lambs” (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 21:17

He says & he says & says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

the third {time}, "& the third {time

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: "time number 3 ... time number 3." (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1053)**)

do you love me?" & Do you love me?" & I love you

The three occurrences of **love** in this verse are all the same word in the original language. However, this word is different from the word Jesus used for **love** in the previous two verses when he asked Peter, "Do you love me?" You should use the same word for **love** in this verse that you used for Peter's responses in the previous two verses when he said, "You know that I love you." See the discussion of this concept in the General Notes for this chapter. Alternate translation: "do you love me with affection ... Do you love me with affection ... I love you with affection" or "do you love me like a friend ... Do you love me like a friend ... I love you like a friend" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

he said to him the third {time}, "Do you love me

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "he asked him the third time if he loved him" (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.979)**)

Feed my sheep

This sentence has the same meaning as "Feed my lambs" in verse 15 and "Take care of my sheep" in the previous verse. See how you translated those similar sentences in the previous two verses. Alternate translation: "Take care of the people who believe in me like a shepherd feeds sheep" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

John 21:18

Truly, truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the statement that follows. See how you translated this phrase in [1:51](#). (See: **Doublet (p.987)**)

you used to gird yourself & will gird you

Although **gird** means to put on a belt, Jesus uses it in this verse to refer to putting on clothes. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you used to dress yourself ... will dress you” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

you will stretch out your hands

Here, **stretch out** means to extend one’s hands away from one’s sides. This describes the posture of someone who is being crucified. It does not mean that the **hands** themselves stretch. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “you will extend your hands out from your sides” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 21:19

Now he said this, indicating with what manner of death he will glorify God

Now here indicates that in this sentence John is giving background information in order to explain what Jesus said in the previous verse. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See:

Background Information (p.939))

he says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See:

Predictive Past (p.1066))

Follow me

See how you translated the phrase **Follow me** in [1:43](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 21:20

sees

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

the disciple whom Jesus loved

This phrase refers to the apostle John, who wrote this Gospel. See the discussion of this phrase in Part 1 of the Introduction to the Gospel of John and the General Notes for this chapter. See also how you translated similar phrases in [13:23](#), [18:15](#), [20:2](#), and [21:7](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

following them

If your language marks the dual form, then the pronoun **them** here would be in the dual form. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

at the dinner

John here refers to **the dinner** Jesus had with his disciples on the night before he was crucified. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “at the last dinner they had together before Jesus died” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

Lord, who is the one betraying you

See how you translated the similar sentence in [13:25](#).

John 21:21

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

But Lord, what about this one

Peter implies that he wants to know what will happen to John in the future. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "Lord, what will happen to this one?" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

John 21:22

says

Here John uses the present tense in past narration in order to call attention to a development in the story. (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

If I want him to remain

Here, **him** refers to John, the “disciple whom Jesus loved” in [John 21:20](#). (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1068)**)

I come

Jesus uses **come** here to refer to the time in the future when he will return to earth from heaven. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “I come back to this world” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

what {is that} to you

Jesus is using a rhetorical question here to mildly rebuke Peter. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “that has nothing to do with you!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1082)**)

follow me

See how you translated this sentence in [1:43](#). (See: **Idiom (p.1020)**)

John 21:23

this word

Here, **this word** refers to what **the brothers** say about John's future in the next clause. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the following report about John's future" (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

this word spread

John uses **spread** to refer to **this word** being repeated among the believers. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "this word was repeated" (See: **Metaphor (p.1041)**)

the brothers

Although the term **brothers** is masculine, John is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: "the fellow believers" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1104)**)

that disciple

Here, **that disciple** refers to the apostle John. If this might confuse your readers, you could state that explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.935)**)

does not die. & that he does not die

John is using the present tense in order to refer to something that will happen in the future. If this might confuse your readers, you could use the future tense. Alternate translation: "will not die ... that he will not die" (See: **Predictive Past (p.1066)**)

to him

The pronoun **him** here refers to Peter. If this might confuse your readers, you could state that explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

that he does not die, & him

The pronouns **he** and **him** here refer to John. If this might confuse your readers, you could state that explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1068)**)

If I want him to remain until I come, what {is that} to you

See how you translated this sentence in the previous verse.

John 21:24

General Information:

In [21:24–25](#) John indicates the end of his Gospel by giving a closing comment about himself and what he has written in this book. Use the natural form in your language for expressing the conclusion of a story. (See: **End of Story** (p.992))

This is the disciple testifying about these things and the one having written these things, and we know that his testimony is true

In this verse John is speaking about himself in the third person. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the first person. Alternate translation: “I am the disciple who testifies about these things and who wrote these things, and we know that my testimony is true” (See: **First, Second or Third Person** (p.1000))

these things & these things

In this verse, **these things** refers to everything that John has written in this Gospel. If this might confuse your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “everything in this book ... all these things” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.935))

we know

Here the pronoun **we** is exclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’** (p.998))

we know

Here, **we** could refer to: (1) John and the other eyewitnesses to the earthly life of Jesus, as in [1:14](#) and 1 John 1:2–7. Alternate translation: “We eyewitnesses of Jesus’ life know” (2) the elders in the church at Ephesus where John lived at the end of his life. Alternate translation: “We elders of the church at Ephesus know” However, since who **we** refers to is uncertain, it would be best not to explain the meaning further. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit** (p.1106))

John 21:25

if each one were written down

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “if someone wrote down each one” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 932)**)

not even the world itself to have enough room for the books being written

John exaggerates to emphasize that Jesus did very many good things. If this would confuse your readers, you could use an equivalent expression from your language to show this emphasis. Alternate translation: “a very large amount of books about these miracles would be written” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1016)**)

the world

Here, **the world** refers to either the surface of the earth or the universe. Either meaning would achieve John’s purpose. If your language does not have a general expression for **world**, you could use an alternate expression. Alternate translation: “the whole earth” or “the whole universe” (See: **Metonymy (p.1047)**)

the books being written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the books that someone would write” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 932)**)



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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: [John 1:14](#); [John 1:16](#); [John 1:17](#); [John 2:11](#); [John 3:21](#); [John 3:25](#); [John 3:36](#); [John 4:22](#); [John 4:23](#); [John 5:22](#); [John 5:27](#); [John 5:30](#); [John 7:18](#); [John 7:24](#); [John 7:43](#); [John 8:16](#); [John 8:32](#); [John 8:50](#); [John 9:11](#); [John 9:15](#); [John 9:16](#); [John 9:39](#); [John 10:19](#); [John 10:33](#); [John 11:4](#); [John 11:24](#); [John 11:40](#); [John 12:31](#); [John 12:41](#); [John 14:27](#); [John 16:8](#); [John 16:20](#); [John 16:21](#); [John 17:5](#); [John 17:12](#); [John 17:24](#); [John 18:29](#); [John 18:37](#); [John 18:38](#); [John 19:13](#)

Active or Passive

Some languages use both active and passive sentences. In active sentences, the subject does the action. In passive sentences, the subject is the one that receives the action. Here are some examples with their subjects bolded:

- 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: John 1:3; John 1:6; John 1:17; John 1:24; John 1:41; John 1:42; John 2:2; John 2:17; John 2:22; John 3:6; John 3:14; John 3:17; John 3:18; John 3:20; John 3:21; John 3:23; John 3:24; John 3:25; John 3:27; John 3:28; John 3:29; John 5:7; John 5:10; John 5:13; John 5:34; John 6:12; John 6:18; John 6:26; John 6:31; John 6:45; John 6:65; John 7:23; John 7:47; John 7:49; John 8:17; John 9:2; John 9:3; John 9:7; John 9:10; John 9:11; John 9:19; John 9:20; John 9:32; John 9:34; John 10:9; John 10:12; John 10:13; John 10:34; John 10:35; John 11:17; John 11:44; John 11:52; John 12:3; John 12:6; John 12:14; John 12:16; John 12:23; John 12:31; John 12:32; John 12:38; John 12:42; John 13:5; John 13:10; John 13:17; John 13:18; John 13:31; John 14:13; John 14:21; John 15:6; John 15:7; John 15:8; John 15:11; John 15:25; John 16:11; John 16:20; John 16:24; John 16:32; John 17:5; John 17:10; John 17:12; John 17:13; John 17:19; John 18:9; John 18:15; John 18:16; John 18:32; John 18:36; John 19:11; John 19:13; John 19:16; John 19:17; John 19:19; John 19:20; John 19:23; John 19:24; John 19:28; John 19:29; John 19:30; John 19:31; John 19:32; John 19:36; John 19:41; John 20:1; John 20:7; John 20:12; John 20:19; John 20:23; John 20:24; John 20:26; John 20:29; John 20:30; John 20:31; John 21:2; John 21:9; John 21:11; John 21:14; John 21:25

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: John 1:1; John 1:4; John 1:6; John 1:11; John 1:13; John 1:14; John 1:19; John 1:21; John 1:22; John 1:24; John 1:25; John 1:26; John 1:27; John 1:28; John 1:29; John 1:31; John 1:33; John 1:36; John 1:38; John 1:39; John 1:40; John 1:41; John 1:42; John 1:48; John 1:50; John 1:51; John 2:10; John 2:11; John 2:12; John 2:14; John 2:16; John 2:17; John 2:18; John 2:22; John 2:25; John 3:1; John 3:6; John 3:8; John 3:9; John 3:10; John 3:12; John 3:13; John 3:14; John 3:16; John 3:17; John 3:23; John 3:25; John 3:26; John 3:31; John 3:32; John 3:34; John 3:36; John 4:6; John 4:18; John 4:20; John 4:21; John 4:22; John 4:25; John 4:27; John 4:34; John 4:37; John 4:38; John 4:39; John 4:43; John 4:45; John 4:50; John 4:53; John 5:2; John 5:5; John 5:10; John 5:16; John 5:18; John 5:19; John 5:20; John 5:21; John 5:23; John 5:24; John 5:25; John 5:26; John 5:27; John 5:28; John 5:30; John 5:31; John 5:32; John 5:33; John 5:34; John 5:37; John 5:39; John 5:40; John 6:1; John 6:11; John 6:14; John 6:16; John 6:21; John 6:22; John 6:23; John 6:24; John 6:25; John 6:27; John 6:29; John 6:31; John 6:32; John 6:33; John 6:35; John 6:37; John 6:38; John 6:39; John 6:40; John 6:44; John 6:45; John 6:49; John 6:51; John 6:53; John 6:54; John 6:56; John 6:57; John 6:58; John 6:59; John 6:60; John 6:61;

John 6:62; John 6:63; John 6:64; John 6:65; John 6:67; John 6:70; John 7:2; John 7:3; John 7:8; John 7:10; John 7:11; John 7:12; John 7:15; John 7:16; John 7:17; John 7:18; John 7:21; John 7:22; John 7:24; John 7:26; John 7:27; John 7:28; John 7:33; John 7:35; John 7:38; John 7:39; John 7:40; John 7:47; John 7:48; John 7:52; John 8:12; John 8:13; John 8:16; John 8:17; John 8:18; John 8:19; John 8:22; John 8:23; John 8:24; John 8:26; John 8:28; John 8:29; John 8:36; John 8:40; John 8:41; John 8:42; John 8:44; John 8:47; John 8:48; John 8:50; John 8:58; John 8:59; John 9:2; John 9:4; John 9:6; John 9:7; John 9:11; John 9:14; John 9:15; John 9:16; John 9:17; John 9:21; John 9:23; John 9:24; John 9:28; John 9:29; John 9:30; John 9:33; John 9:34; John 9:35; John 10:1; John 10:3; John 10:4; John 10:8; John 10:10; John 10:25; John 10:30; John 10:31; John 10:32; John 10:33; John 10:38; John 10:40; John 11:19; John 11:24; John 11:25; John 11:26; John 11:27; John 11:28; John 11:32; John 11:33; John 11:35; John 11:39; John 11:47; John 11:48; John 11:50; John 11:51; John 11:54; John 12:7; John 12:8; John 12:10; John 12:11; John 12:12; John 12:13; John 12:14; John 12:16; John 12:17; John 12:18; John 12:19; John 12:20; John 12:22; John 12:23; John 12:26; John 12:27; John 12:31; John 12:32; John 12:34; John 12:42; John 12:43; John 12:44; John 12:45; John 12:47; John 12:48; John 12:49; John 12:50; John 13:1; John 13:4; John 13:7; John 13:8; John 13:13; John 13:16; John 13:18; John 13:19; John 13:20; John 13:21; John 13:23; John 13:24; John 13:25; John 13:28; John 13:29; John 13:31; John 14:6; John 14:10; John 14:11; John 14:12; John 14:15; John 14:16; John 14:17; John 14:19; John 14:20; John 14:21; John 14:22; John 14:23; John 14:24; John 14:27; John 14:28; John 14:30; John 15:4; John 15:5; John 15:6; John 15:7; John 15:10; John 15:13; John 15:16; John 15:20; John 15:21; John 15:22; John 15:26; John 16:1; John 16:4; John 16:5; John 16:8; John 16:10; John 16:11; John 16:13; John 16:14; John 16:15; John 16:17; John 16:23; John 16:26; John 16:30; John 16:33; John 17:1; John 17:5; John 17:10; John 17:12; John 17:14; John 17:15; John 17:16; John 17:17; John 17:19; John 17:21; John 17:23; John 17:24; John 18:1; John 18:6; John 18:10; John 18:12; John 18:13; John 18:15; John 18:16; John 18:18; John 18:19; John 18:20; John 18:24; John 18:26; John 18:27; John 18:28; John 18:30; John 18:31; John 18:32; John 18:33; John 18:34; John 18:36; John 18:37; John 18:39; John 18:40; John 19:2; John 19:5; John 19:9; John 19:12; John 19:13; John 19:15; John 19:16; John 19:17; John 19:19; John 19:20; John 19:21; John 19:22; John 19:23; John 19:26; John 19:27; John 19:28; John 19:29; John 19:30; John 19:31; John 19:36; John 19:38; John 19:39; John 19:42; John 20:1; John 20:2; John 20:3; John 20:4; John 20:8; John 20:10; John 20:11; John 20:12; John 20:15; John 20:16; John 20:17; John 20:19; John 20:22; John 20:23; John 20:27; John 20:31; John 21:2; John 21:3; John 21:5; John 21:6; John 21:7; John 21:11; John 21:15; John 21:16; John 21:17; John 21:18; John 21:20; John 21:21; John 21:22; John 21:23; John 21:24

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: John 1:24; John 1:28; John 1:44; John 2:1; John 2:9; John 2:11; John 4:1; John 5:1; John 5:9; John 5:16; John 6:1; John 6:4; John 6:6; John 6:10; John 6:17; John 6:23; John 6:59; John 6:64; John 6:71; John 7:2; John 7:5; John 7:22; John 7:39; John 7:50; John 8:20; John 8:27; John 9:7; John 9:14; John 9:22; John 10:22; John 11:1; John 11:5; John 11:13; John 11:18; John 11:19; John 11:30; John 11:38; John 11:51; John 12:6; John 12:9; John 12:14; John 12:33; John 12:37; John 13:1; John 13:11; John 13:28; John 13:30; John 18:1; John 18:5; John 18:9; John 18:14; John 18:18; John 18:28; John 18:32; John 18:40; John 19:14; John 19:23; John 19:35; John 19:36; John 19:41; John 20:9; John 21:2; John 21:7; John 21:8; John 21:19

Biblical Distance

Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man's hand.
- The **span** or handspace was the width of a man's hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man's forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **"long" cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as "furlong," which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

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

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

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as ".46 meters" or even as "46 centimeters," readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say "half a meter," "45 centimeters," or "50 centimeters."

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word "about" to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as "about ten kilometers" from Jerusalem.

When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use "about" in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

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

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal\]\]](#)

Fractions [\(UTA PDF\)](#)

Translation Strategies

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

Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The footnotes would look like:

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

The footnotes would look like:

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

”

Referenced in: [John 6:19](#); [John 11:18](#); [John 21:8](#)

Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

An **extended metaphor** is an explicit metaphor that uses multiple images and multiple ideas at the same time. This is in contrast to a **simple metaphor**, which uses only a single Image and a single Idea. The difference between an extended metaphor and a **complex metaphor** is that an extended metaphor is explicitly stated by a writer/speaker, but a complex metaphor is not.

This page answers the question: *What is an extended metaphor?*

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

Metaphor ([UTA PDF](#))

Simile ([UTA PDF](#))

Explanation of an Extended Metaphor

When using a metaphor, a writer/speaker uses a physical Image in order to express an abstract Idea about some immediate Topic, with at least one point of comparison between the Topic and the Image. In an extended metaphor, the writer/speaker explicitly states the Topic, and then describes multiple images and communicates multiple ideas.

In Isaiah 5:1b-7, the prophet Isaiah uses a vineyard (the **Image**) to express God's disappointment (the **Idea**) with the nation of Israel (the **Topic**) for their unfaithfulness to God and his covenant with them as his people. Farmers care for their gardens, and a farmer would feel disappointed if his vineyard produced bad fruit. If a vineyard produced only bad fruit for a long enough time, the farmer would eventually stop caring for it. We call this an extended metaphor because the prophet describes in detail multiple images relating to a vineyard as well as multiple aspects of God's disappointment.

1b My well beloved had a **vineyard** on a very fertile hill. 2 He **spaded it, removed the stones, and planted it** with an excellent kind of vine. He **built a tower** in the middle of it, and also **built a winepress**. He **waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced wild grapes**. 3 So now, inhabitant of Jerusalem and man of Judah; judge between me and my vineyard. 4 What more could have been done for my vineyard, that I have not done for it? **When I looked for it to produce grapes, why did it produce wild grapes?** 5 Now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will remove the hedge; I will turn it into a pasture; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled down. 6 I will lay it waste, and it will not be pruned nor hoed. Instead, briars and thorns will spring up. I will also command the clouds not to rain on it. 7 For **the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts is the house of Israel**, and the man of Judah his pleasant planting; **he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a shout for help**. (Isa 5:1b-7 ULT)

Other Examples From the Bible

In Psalm 23, the psalmist uses the physical **Image** of a shepherd to describe the way that God (the **Topic**) shows great concern and care (the **Idea**) for his people. The psalmist describes multiple aspects of what shepherds do for sheep (leads them to pasture and to water, protects them, etc.). The psalmist also describes multiple aspects of how God takes care of him (gives him life, righteousness, comfort, etc.). Shepherds give sheep what they need, take them to safe places, rescue them, guide them, and protect them. What God does for his people is like these actions.

1 Yahweh is my shepherd; I will lack nothing. 2 He **makes me** to lie down in green pastures; he **leads me** beside tranquil water. 3 He **brings back** my life; he **guides me** along right paths for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through a valley of darkest shadow, I will not fear harm since you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me. (Psalm 23:1-4 ULT)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not realize that the images represent other things.
- People may not be familiar with the things that are used as images.
- Extended metaphors are often so profound that it would be impossible for a translator to show all of the meaning generated by the metaphor.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of the extended metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning more clear to the target audience than it was to the original audience.
- When someone uses an extended metaphor, the images are an important part of what he is trying to say.
- If the target audience is not familiar with some of the images, you will need to find some way of helping them understand the images so that they can understand the whole extended metaphor.

Translation Strategies

Consider using the same extended metaphor if your readers will understand it in the same way the original readers would have understood it. If not, here are some other strategies:

- (1) If the target audience would think that the images should be understood literally, translate the metaphor as a simile by using words such as “like” or “as.” It may be enough to do this in just the first sentence or two.
- (2) If the target audience would not know the image, find a way of translating it so they can understand what the image is.
- (3) If the target audience still would not understand, then state it clearly.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the target audience would think that the images should be understood literally, translate the metaphor as a simile by using words such as “like” or “as.” It may be enough to do this in just the first sentence or two. See Psalm 23:1-2 as an example:

Yahweh is **my shepherd**; I will lack nothing. He makes **me** to lie down in green pastures; **he leads me** beside tranquil water. (ULT)

Can be translated as:

“Yahweh is **like** a shepherd to me, so I will lack nothing. **Like** a shepherd who makes his sheep lie down in green pastures and leads them by peaceful waters, Yahweh helps me to rest peacefully.”

- (2) If the target audience would not know the image, find a way of translating it so they can understand what the image is.

My well beloved had a **vineyard** on a very fertile hill. He **spaded** it, removed the stones, and planted it with **an excellent kind of vine**. He built a **tower** in the middle of it, and also built a **winepress**. He waited for it to produce grapes, but it only produced **wild grapes**. (Isaiah 5:1b-2 ULT)

May be translated as:

My well beloved had a **grapevine garden** on a very fertile hill. He **dug up the ground** and removed the stones, and planted it with **the best grapevines**. He built a **watchtower** in the middle of it, and also built a **tank where he could crush the juice out of the grapes**. He

waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced **wild grapes that were not good for making wine**.

(3) If the target audience still would not understand, then state it clearly.

Yahweh is **my shepherd**; I will lack nothing. (Psalm 23:1 ULT)

“Yahweh **cares for me** like a shepherd that cares for his sheep, so I will lack nothing.”

For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts **is** the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant planting; he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a shout for help. (Isaiah 5:7 ULT)

Can be translated as:

For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts **represents** the house of Israel, and the men of Judah **are like** his pleasant planting; he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help.

or as:

So as a farmer stops caring for a grapevine garden that produces bad fruit, Yahweh will stop protecting Israel and Judah, **because they do not do what is right**. He waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [John 4:14](#); [John 4:36](#); [John 4:37](#); [John 4:38](#); [John 6:35](#); [John 6:50](#); [John 6:51](#); [John 11:10](#); [John 15:2](#)

Biblical Money

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of money in the Bible?*

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals, such as silver and gold, and would pay a certain weight of that metal in order to buy things. Later, people started to make coins that each contained a standard amount of a certain metal. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

| Unit in OT | Metal | Weight |
|------------|----------------|--------------|
| daric | gold coin | 8.4 grams |
| shekel | various metals | 11 grams |
| talent | various metals | 33 kilograms |

| Unit in NT | Metal | Day's Wage |
|------------------|-------------|------------|
| denarius/denarii | silver coin | 1 day |
| drachma | silver coin | 1 day |
| mite | copper coin | 1/64 day |
| shekel | silver coin | 4 days |
| talent | silver | 6,000 days |

Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see [Biblical Weight](#). The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament.

- (1) Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
- (3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
- (4) Use the biblical term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.
- (5) Use the biblical term and explain it in a footnote.

Translation Strategies Applied

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

1 The one owed 500 denarii, and the other, 50. (Luke 7:41b ULT)

Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

1 "The one owed **500 denali**, and the other, **50**."

Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.

1 "The one owed **500 silver coins**, and the other, **50**."

(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.

1 "The one owed **500 days' wages**, and the other, **50**."

(4) Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

1 "The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2"

The footnotes would look like:

1 [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

1 "The one owed **500 denarii**,¹ and the other, **50**." (Luke 7:41 ULT)

[1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Translate Unknowns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [John 6:7](#); [John 12:5](#)

Biblical Volume

Description

The following terms are the most common units of volume used in the Bible to state how much a certain container could hold. The containers and measurements are given for both liquids (such as wine) and dry solids (such as grain). The metric values are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the measures of volume that are in the Bible?*

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

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal\]\]](#)

| Type | Original Measure | Liters |
|--------|------------------|--------------|
| Dry | omer | 2 liters |
| Dry | ephah | 22 liters |
| Dry | homer | 220 liters |
| Dry | cor | 220 liters |
| Dry | seah | 7.7 liters |
| Dry | lethek | 114.8 liters |
| Liquid | metrete | 40 liters |
| Liquid | bath | 22 liters |
| Liquid | hin | 3.7 liters |
| Liquid | kab | 1.23 liters |
| Liquid | log | 0.31 liters |

Translation Principles

- The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
- Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
- Whatever measures you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kinds of measures in the text or a footnote.
- If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one hin as “3.7 liters,” readers might think that the measurement is exactly 3.7 liters, not 3.6 or 3.8. It would be better to use a more approximate measure such as “three and a half liters” or “four liters.”
- When God tells people how much of something to use, and when people use those amounts in obedience to him, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much they used.

When the unit of measure is stated

Translation Strategies

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

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Isaiah 5:10 below.

For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one bath, and one homer of seed will yield only an ephah. (Isaiah 5:10 ULT)

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

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one **bat**, and one **homer** of seed will yield only an **efa**."

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

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22 liters** and **220 liters** of seed will yield only **22 liters**."

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22**, and **ten baskets** of seed will yield only **one basket**."

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **six gallons**, and **six and a half bushels** of seed will yield only **20 quarts**."

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

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **one bath (six gallons)**, and **one homer (six and a half bushels)** of seed will yield only **an ephah (20 quarts)**."

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

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only 22 liters¹, and 220 liters² of seed will yield only 22 liters³."

The footnotes would look like:

[1] one bath [2] one homer [3] one ephah

When the unit of measure is implied

Sometimes the Hebrew does not specify a particular unit of volume but only uses a number. In these cases, many English versions, including the ULT and UST, add the word “measure.”

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 measures** of wine, there were only 20. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.
- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”
- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.
- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Haggai 2:16 below.

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty measures** of wine, there were only **20**. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.

When you came to a heap of **20** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”

When you came to a heap of **20 amounts** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty amounts** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.

When you came to a heap of **20 baskets** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 jars** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

When you came to a heap for **20 liters** of grain, there were only **ten liters**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 liters** of wine, there were only **20 liters**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [John 2:6](#)

Biblical Weight

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of weight in the Bible?*

The following terms are the most common units of weight in the Bible. The term “shekel” means “weight,” and many other weights are described in terms of the shekel. Some of these weights were used for money. The metric values in the table below are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are only an attempt to give an average measurement.

| Original Measure | Shekels | Grams | Kilograms |
|------------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| shekel | 1 shekel | 11 grams | - |
| bekah | 1/2 shekel | 5.7 grams | - |
| pim | 2/3 shekel | 7.6 grams | - |
| gerah | 1/20 shekel | 0.57 grams | - |
| mina | 50 shekels | 550 grams | 1/2 kilogram |
| talent | 3,000 shekels | - | 34 kilograms |

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 gerah as “.57 grams,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a gram.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, 2 Samuel 21:16 says that Goliath’s spear weighed 300 shekels. Instead of translating this as “3300 grams” or “3.3 kilograms,” it can be translated as “about three and one half kilograms.”

When God tells people how much something should weigh, and when people use those weights, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise, it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much the thing should weigh.

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 38:29 below.

■ The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. (Exodus 38:29 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](#).)

■ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talentes and 2,400 sekeles**."

(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.

■ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **2,400 kilograms**."

(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.

■ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **5,300 pounds**."

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

■ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents (2,380 kilograms) and 2,400 shekels (26.4 kilograms)**."

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

■ "The bronze from the offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. 1"

The footnote would look like:

■ [1] This was a total of about 2,400 kilograms.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [John 12:3](#); [John 19:39](#)

Collective Nouns

Description

This page answers the question: *What are collective nouns and how can I translate them?*

A collective noun is a singular noun that refers to a group of something. Examples: a **family**, **clan**, or **tribe** is a group of people who are related to each other; a **flock** is a group of birds or sheep; a **fleet** is a group of ships; and an **army** is a group of soldiers.

Many collective nouns are used exclusively as a singular replacement for a group as in the examples above. Frequently in the Bible the name of an ancestor is used, through a process of metonymy, as a collective noun referencing the group of his descendants. In the Bible, sometimes the singular noun will take a singular verb form, other times it will take a plural verb form. This may depend on how the author is thinking about the group, or whether the action is being done as a group or as individuals.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

There are several issues that require care when translating collective nouns. Further care is needed because the language you are translating into may not use collective nouns in the same way as the language you are translating from. Issues include:

The source language may have a collective noun for a group that the target language does not and vice-versa. You may have to translate a collective noun with a plural noun in your language, or you may need to translate a plural noun with a collective noun in your language.

Subject-verb agreement. Different languages or dialects may have different rules about using singular or plural verbs with collective nouns. Examples (from Wikipedia):

a singular noun with a singular verb: The team *is* in the dressing room.

a singular noun with a plural verb which is correct in British, but not American, English: The team *are* fighting among themselves. The team *have* finished the project.

Pronoun agreement. Similar to the previous, care needs to be taken to use the correct pronoun plurality and possibly gender or noun class to agree with the number/gender/class of the noun used. See the biblical examples below.

Clarity of referent. Especially if there is a mismatch in your translation between the verb and noun or pronoun concerning any of the factors above, readers may be confused about who or what is being referenced.

Examples from the Bible

And Joab and all the **army** which was with him arrived (2 Samuel 3:23a ULT)

The word in bold is written in singular form in both Hebrew and English, but it refers to a group of warriors that fight together.

and though the **flock** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls. (Habakkuk 3:17b ULT)

The word in bold is singular and refers to a group of sheep.

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **crowd** was coming to him, and he was teaching **them**. (Mark 2:13 ULT)

Note in this example that the noun is singular but the pronoun is plural. This may or may not be allowed or natural in your language.

Do not let **your heart** be troubled. **You** believe in God; believe also in me. (John 14:1 ULT)

In this verse, the words translated “your” and “you” are plural, referring to many people. The word “heart” is singular in form, but it refers to all of their hearts as a group.

And he shall take the **hair** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **it** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. (Num 6:18b ULT)

The word **hair** is singular, but it refers to many hairs, not just one.

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go.” (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

Here, “Israel” is singular, but means “the Israelites” by metonymy.

Translation Strategies

If your language has a collective (singular) noun that refers to the same group as referenced by the collective noun in the source text, then translate the word using that term. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Translate the collective noun with a plural noun.
- (2) Add a plural word to the collective noun so that you can use a plural verb and pronouns.
- (3) Use a phrase to describe the group that the collective noun references. A useful strategy here can be to use a general collective noun that refers to a group of people or things.
- (4) If your language uses a collective noun for something that is a plural noun in the source language, you can translate the plural noun as a collective noun and, if necessary, change the form of the verb and any pronouns so that they agree with the singular noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the collective noun with a plural noun.

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go.” (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **the Israelites** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **the Israelites** go.”

And he shall take the **hair** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **it** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. (Num 6:18b ULT)

And he shall take the **hairs** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **them** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

- (2) Add a plural word to the collective noun so that you can use a plural verb and pronouns.

And Joab and all the **army** which was with him arrived (2 Samuel 3:23a ULT)

And Joab and all the **army men who were** with him arrived

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **crowd** was coming to him, and he was teaching **them**. (Mark 2:13 ULT)

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **people of the crowd were** coming to him, and he was teaching **them**.

- (3) Use a phrase to describe the group that the collective noun references. A useful strategy here can be to use a general collective noun that refers to a group of people or things.

and though the **flock** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls. (Habakkuk 3:17b ULT)

and though the **group of sheep** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls.

And Pharaoh said, "Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go." (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

And Pharaoh said, "Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **the people of Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **the people of Israel** go."

(4) If your language uses a collective noun for something that is a plural noun in the source language, you can translate the plural noun as a collective noun and, if necessary, change the form of the verb and any pronouns so that they agree with the singular noun.

Now this John had his clothing from the **hairs** of a camel and a leather belt around his waist (Matthew 3:4a ULT)

Now this John had his clothing from the **hair** of a camel and a leather belt around his waist

You shall not make for yourself a carved figure nor any likeness that {is} in **the heavens** above, or that {is} in the earth beneath, or that {is} in **the waters** under the earth. (Deuteronomy 5:8 ULT)

You shall not make for yourself a carved figure nor any likeness that is in **heaven** above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in **the water** under the earth.

"

Referenced in: [John 1:17](#); [John 5:13](#); [John 6:2](#); [John 6:5](#); [John 6:22](#); [John 6:24](#); [John 7:12](#); [John 7:19](#); [John 7:20](#); [John 7:23](#); [John 7:31](#); [John 7:32](#); [John 7:40](#); [John 7:43](#); [John 7:49](#); [John 10:5](#); [John 11:42](#); [John 12:9](#); [John 12:12](#); [John 12:17](#); [John 12:29](#); [John 12:34](#); [John 12:40](#); [John 21:9](#)

Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions

Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate contrary-to-fact conditions?*

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

Contrary-to-Fact Conditions

Description

A Contrary-to-Fact Condition is a condition that sounds hypothetical, but the speaker is already certain that it is NOT true.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Usually there are no special words that indicate a Contrary-to-Fact Condition. The writer assumes that the reader knows that it is NOT a true condition. For this reason it often requires knowledge of implied information to know that it is not true. If this kind of condition is difficult for translators to communicate, they may want to consider using the same strategies that they used for [Rhetorical Questions](#) or [Implied Information](#).

Examples From OBS and the Bible

But **if Baal is God**, worship him! (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

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

Baal is not God. Elijah is not suggesting that Baal might be God, and he does not want the people to follow Baal. But Elijah used a conditional statement to show them that what they were doing was wrong. In the example above, we see two conditions that have the same construction. The first one, “If Yahweh is God,” is a Factual Condition because Elijah is certain that it is true. The second one, “if Baal is God,” is a Contrary-to-Fact Condition because Elijah is certain that it is not true. You will need to consider if people would say both of these in the same way in your language or if they would say them in different ways.

But his wife replied to him, “**If Yahweh had desired to kill us**, he would not have taken from our hand the whole burnt offering and the offering. He would not have shown us all these things, and at this time would he have not allowed us to hear about this.” (Judges 13:23 ULT)

Manoah’s wife thinks that the second part of her conditional statement is not true, therefore the first part is also not true. God received their burnt offering; therefore, He does not want to kill them.

“**If only we had died** by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt, sitting by a pot of meat and eating bread to the full.” (Exodus 16b:3 ULT)

Of course the people speaking here did not die in Egypt, and so this is a Contrary-to-Fact condition that is used to express a wish.

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **If the mighty deeds had been done** in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, **they would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

The English reader knows that these last two examples are Contrary-to-Fact conditions because of the past-tense verbs used in the first part (they are not things that might happen). The last example also has a second part that uses “would have.” These words also signal something that did not happen.

Translation Strategies

If Contrary-to-Fact conditions are clear in your language, then use them as they are.

- (1) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker believes something that is false, then restate the condition as something that others believe.
- (2) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker is suggesting that the first part is true, then restate it as a statement that it is not true.
- (3) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen but the speaker wanted it to happen, restate it as a wish.
- (4) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen, restate it as a negative statement.
- (5) Often Factual and Contrary-to-Fact conditions are used to make reasoned arguments for a change in behavior. If translators are struggling to know the best way to translate them, it could be helpful to discuss how this is done in their language community. If someone is trying to convince people to change their behavior, how do they do that? It may be possible to adapt similar strategies when translating these conditions.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker believes something that is false, then restate the condition as something that others believe.

But **if Baal is God**, worship him! (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

If you believe that Baal is God, then worship him!

- (2) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker is suggesting that the first part is true, then restate it as a statement that it is not true.

If Baal is not God, then you should not worship him!

But his wife replied to him, “**If Yahweh had desired to kill us**, he would not have taken from our hand the whole burnt offering and the offering. He would not have shown us all these things, and at this time would he have not allowed us to hear about this.” (Judges 13:23 ULT)

“**Yahweh does not want to kill us**, or he would not have received the burnt offering and the offering we gave him.”

- (3) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen but the speaker wanted it to happen, restate it as a wish.

“**If only we had died** by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt, sitting by a pot of meat and eating bread to the full.” (Exodus 16b:3 ULT)

“**I wish we had died** by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt...”

- (4) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen, restate it as a negative statement.

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **If the mighty deeds had been done** in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, **they would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! The mighty deeds which were done in you **were not done** in Tyre and Sidon. But **if they had been**

done there, those people would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.”

(5) Often Factual and Contrary-to-Fact Conditions are used to make reasoned arguments for a change in behavior. If translators are struggling to know the best way to translate them, it could be helpful to discuss how this is done in their language community. If someone is trying to convince people to change their behavior, how do they do that? It may be possible to adapt similar strategies when translating these conditions.

But **if Baal is God**, worship him! (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

Is Baal the one who is truly God? Should you worship him?

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **If the mighty deeds had been done** in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, **they would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! You think that you are better than Tyre and Sidon, but you are not! **They would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes at seeing the mighty deeds that you have seen! **You should be like them!**”

”

Referenced in: [John 4:10](#); [John 5:46](#); [John 8:19](#); [John 8:42](#); [John 9:33](#); [John 11:21](#); [John 14:28](#); [John 15:19](#); [John 15:22](#); [John 15:24](#); [John 18:30](#); [John 18:36](#)

Connect — Contrast Relationship

Logical Relationships

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

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

Contrast Relationship

Description

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From OBS and the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"

Referenced in: [John 1:10](#); [John 1:11](#); [John 1:17](#); [John 8:35](#)

Connect — Factual Conditions

Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate factual conditions?*

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

Factual Conditions

Description

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From OBS and the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

“**It is true that** Yahweh is God, so worship him!”

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

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

”

Referenced in: [John 3:12](#); [John 5:47](#); [John 7:4](#); [John 7:23](#); [John 8:46](#); [John 10:35](#); [John 10:38](#); [John 13:14](#); [John 13:17](#); [John 14:3](#); [John 14:7](#); [John 15:18](#)

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.**

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Referenced in: [John 3:15](#); [John 6:6](#); [John 6:24](#); [John 11:4](#); [John 14:31](#); [John 15:16](#); [John 17:23](#)

Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

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

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

Reason-and-Result Relationships

Description

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

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

Examples From OBS and the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

- (1) The kingdom of God belongs to you who are poor. **Therefore**, the poor are blessed.
- (2) Blessed are the poor, **because** yours is the kingdom of God.
- (3) **The reason that** the poor are blessed **is because** yours is the kingdom of God.

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

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

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

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

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Referenced in: [John 1:16](#); [John 1:50](#); [John 2:15](#); [John 2:22](#); [John 2:23](#); [John 3:16](#); [John 3:17](#); [John 3:20](#); [John 3:34](#); [John 4:6](#); [John 4:8](#); [John 4:44](#); [John 4:45](#); [John 5:13](#); [John 5:18](#); [John 5:19](#); [John 6:18](#); [John 6:24](#); [John 6:38](#); [John 6:40](#); [John](#)

7:30; John 9:18; John 9:39; John 11:4; John 11:6; John 11:51; John 11:53; John 12:25; John 13:3; John 17:2; John 18:4;
John 20:20

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: [John 1:29](#); [John 1:35](#); [John 1:43](#); [John 4:5](#); [John 4:6](#); [John 4:46](#); [John 6:5](#); [John 7:40](#); [John 10:12](#)

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.

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Referenced in: [John 8:30](#); [John 18:25](#)

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: [John 9:1](#); [John 16:2](#); [John 16:19](#)

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.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Quotes within Quotes ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [John 4:51](#); [John 4:52](#); [John 4:53](#); [John 6:10](#); [John 6:12](#); [John 11:20](#); [John 13:29](#); [John 21:12](#); [John 21:17](#)

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: [John 6:27](#); [John 11:31](#)

Double Negatives

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

This page answers the question: *What are double negatives?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

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

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

We did this **not** because we have **no** authority ... (2 Thessalonians 3:9a ULT)

And this was **not** done **without** an oath! (Hebrews 7:20a ULT)

Be sure of this—the wicked person will **not** go **un**punished. (Proverbs 11:21a ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Double negatives mean very different things in different languages.

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

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

Examples From the Bible

The Greek of John 15:5 says:

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

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

Without me, you can do **nothing**.

or:

Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

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

This means "in order to be fruitful."

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

This means "a prophet is honored."

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

This means "I want you to be knowledgeable."

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

"For we have a high priest who can feel sympathy for our weaknesses."

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

"... so that they may be fruitful."

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

χωρὶς ἐμοῦ οὐ δύνασθε ποιεῖν οὐδέν
Without me **not** you can do **nothing** (John 15:5)

Without me, you can do **nothing**.

or:

Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

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

...ἰῶτα ἓν ἢ μία κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου (Matthew 5:18)
 ...iota one or one serif **not not** may pass away from the law

...**not even** one iota or one serif may pass away from the law
 or:

...**certainly no** iota or serif may pass away from the law

Next we recommend you learn about:

Verbs ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [John 1:3](#); [John 4:48](#); [John 9:33](#); [John 10:10](#); [John 13:8](#); [John 15:24](#); [John 16:7](#); [John 18:28](#); [John 18:30](#); [John 19:11](#); [John 19:41](#); [John 20:25](#)

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: [John 1:31](#); [John 1:51](#); [John 3:3](#); [John 3:5](#); [John 3:11](#); [John 3:29](#); [John 3:31](#); [John 5:19](#); [John 5:24](#); [John 5:25](#); [John 6:26](#); [John 6:32](#); [John 6:35](#); [John 6:47](#); [John 6:53](#); [John 6:54](#); [John 6:55](#); [John 7:10](#); [John 8:34](#); [John 8:51](#); [John 8:58](#); [John 10:1](#); [John 10:7](#); [John 10:38](#); [John 11:33](#); [John 12:24](#); [John 12:49](#); [John 13:16](#); [John 13:20](#); [John 13:21](#); [John 13:38](#); [John 14:12](#); [John 14:20](#); [John 16:20](#); [John 16:23](#); [John 17:21](#); [John 20:17](#); [John 20:27](#); [John 21:18](#)

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis^[^1] occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

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: [John 1:13](#); [John 1:22](#); [John 1:38](#); [John 1:45](#); [John 1:50](#); [John 3:34](#); [John 4:2](#); [John 4:7](#); [John 4:12](#); [John 5:13](#); [John 5:30](#); [John 5:33](#); [John 5:44](#); [John 6:11](#); [John 6:23](#); [John 6:27](#); [John 6:47](#); [John 6:56](#); [John 6:58](#); [John 6:60](#); [John 6:62](#); [John 7:52](#); [John 8:15](#); [John 8:35](#); [John 8:50](#); [John 9:3](#); [John 9:8](#); [John 9:38](#); [John 10:3](#); [John 10:10](#); [John 10:16](#); [John 10:36](#); [John 11:3](#); [John 11:15](#); [John 11:40](#); [John 11:52](#); [John 11:56](#); [John 12:6](#); [John 12:7](#); [John 12:20](#); [John 13:9](#); [John 13:18](#); [John 13:19](#); [John 13:27](#); [John 14:12](#); [John 14:13](#); [John 14:27](#); [John 14:29](#); [John 15:7](#); [John 15:24](#); [John 18:5](#); [John 18:6](#); [John 18:8](#); [John 18:14](#); [John 18:40](#); [John 19:8](#); [John 19:11](#); [John 19:18](#); [John 19:24](#); [John 19:35](#); [John 20:8](#); [John 20:18](#); [John 20:21](#); [John 20:25](#); [John 20:27](#); [John 20:29](#); [John 20:31](#)

End of Story

Description

There are different types of information that may be given at the end of a story. Often this is background information. This background information is different from the actions that make up the main part of the story. A book of the Bible is often made up of many smaller stories that are part of the larger story of the book itself. For example, the story of Jesus' birth is a smaller story in the larger story of the book of Luke. Each of these stories, whether large or small, can have background information at the end of it.

This page answers the question: *What kinds of information are given at the end of a story?*

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

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Background Information ([UTA PDF](#))

The following are purposes for end of story information:

- to summarize the story
- to give a conclusion about what the story means or what is important about it
- to connect a smaller story to the larger story it is a part of
- to tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends
- to tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends
- to tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of presenting these kinds of information. If you (the translator) do not use your language's ways of doing this, readers may not know:

- that this information is ending the story
- what the purpose of the information is
- how the information is related to the story

Translation Strategies

- Translate the particular kind of information at the end of a story the way your language expresses that kind of information.
- Translate it so that people will understand how it relates to the story it is part of.
- If possible, translate the end of the story in a way that people will know where that story ends and the next begins.

Examples From the Bible

- To summarize the story

Then the rest of the men should follow, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. **In this way it happened that all of us were brought safely to the land.** (Acts 27:44 ULT)

- To give a conclusion about what the story means or what is important about it

Many of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of everyone. Then they counted the value of them, and found it was 50,000 pieces of silver. **So the word of the Lord was spreading and prevailing with power.** (Acts 19:19-20 ULT)

- To tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoiced in God my savior." **And Mary stayed with her about three months and then returned to her house.** (Luke 1:46-47, 56 ULT)

- To tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends

All who those who heard it were amazed concerning the things that were spoken to them by the shepherds. **But Mary kept all the things, pondering them in her heart.** (Luke 2:18-19 ULT)

- To tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

"Woe to you, experts in the Jewish law, because you have taken away the key of knowledge; you do not enter in yourselves, and you hinder those who are entering." **After he went from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to fiercely oppose him and argued against him about many things, lying in wait to trap him in something from his mouth.** (Luke 11:52-54 ULT)

"

Referenced in: [John 2:21](#); [John 20:30](#); [John 21:24](#)

Euphemism

Description

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private.

... they found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa.
(1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

This means that Saul and his sons “were dead.” It is a euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

This page answers the question: *What is a euphemism?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples From the Bible

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so **he did not say specifically** what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

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

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.
- (2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT) — Some languages might use euphemisms like these:

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **dig a hole**”

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **have some time alone**”

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not **slept with a man?**"

(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

They found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

"They found Saul and his sons **dead** on Mount Gilboa."

"

Referenced in: [John 10:11](#); [John 10:15](#); [John 10:17](#); [John 10:18](#); [John 11:11](#); [John 11:12](#); [John 11:34](#); [John 13:37](#); [John 15:13](#); [John 19:42](#)

Exclamations

Description

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

This page answers the question: *What are ways of translating exclamations?*

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

Sentence Types ([UTA PDF](#))

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

“You **are** such a worthless person!”

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

“Oh, the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God **are** so deep!”

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

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

“They were extremely astonished, saying, ‘**Wow!** He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.’”

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

“**Oh no**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

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

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

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

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

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

“His judgments are **so** unsearchable and his ways are **far** beyond discovering!”

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

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

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

”

Referenced in: [John 9:30](#)

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

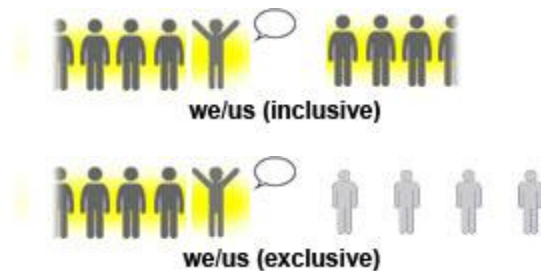
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also 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: [John 1:14](#); [John 1:16](#); [John 1:22](#); [John 3:2](#); [John 3:11](#); [John 4:22](#); [John 4:25](#); [John 4:42](#); [John 6:69](#); [John 9:4](#); [John 9:28](#); [John 14:22](#); [John 14:23](#); [John 20:2](#); [John 21:3](#); [John 21:24](#)

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: John 1:51; John 3:13; John 3:14; John 3:17; John 3:19; John 3:20; John 3:21; John 3:29; John 3:31; John 4:10; John 4:26; John 5 General Notes; John 5:19; John 5:20; John 5:21; John 5:22; John 5:23; John 5:25; John 5:26; John 5:27; John 5:28; John 5:38; John 6:27; John 6:29; John 6:46; John 6:50; John 6:53; John 6:58; John 6:62; John 8:28; John 8:36; John 9:37; John 10:34; John 10:36; John 11:4; John 12:23; John 12:35; John 13:31; John 14:13; John 17:1; John 17:2; John 17:3; John 19:35; John 20:2; John 20:3; John 20:4; John 20:5; John 20:6; John 20:8; John 21:8; John 21:24

Forms of You

Singular, Dual, and Plural

Some languages have more than one word for “you” based on how many people the word “you” refers to. The **singular** form refers to one person, and the **plural** form refers to more than one person. Some languages also have a **dual** form which refers to two people, and some languages have other forms that refer to three or four people.

This page answers the question: *What are the different forms of you?*

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

Forms of ‘You’ — Singular ([UTA PDF](#))

Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural ([UTA PDF](#))

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

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

- [Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups](#)

Formal and Informal

Some languages have more than one form of “you” based on the relationship between the speaker and the person he or she is talking to. People use the **formal** form of “you” when speaking to someone who is older, or has higher authority, or is someone they do not know very well. People use the **informal** form when speaking to someone who is not older, or does not have higher authority, or is a family member or close friend.

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

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- [Forms of “You” — Formal or Informal](#)

Masculine and Feminine

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

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

”

Referenced in: [John 1:51](#); [John 3:10](#); [John 3:11](#); [John 3:12](#); [John 3:28](#); [John 4:20](#); [John 4:22](#); [John 4:38](#); [John 4:48](#); [John 5:19](#); [John 5:24](#); [John 5:25](#); [John 5:33](#); [John 6:61](#); [John 8:14](#); [John 8:23](#); [John 8:31](#); [John 12:8](#); [John 14:1](#); [John 14:9](#); [John 14:10](#); [John 15:3](#); [John 20:31](#)

Forms of 'You' — Singular

Description

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

This page answers the question: *How do I know if the word 'you' is singular?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Forms of You ([UTA PDF](#))

Pronouns ([UTA PDF](#))

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategies for finding out how many people “you” refers to

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

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

Referenced in: [John 2:17](#); [John 7:6](#); [John 13:10](#)

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

Generic noun phrases refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things. This happens frequently in proverbs, because proverbs tell about things that are true about people in general.

This page answers the question: *What are generic noun phrases and how can I translate them?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Can **a man** walk on hot coals without scorching his feet? So is **the man who goes in to his neighbor's wife; the one who touches her** will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28-29 ULT)

The phrases in bold above do not refer to a specific man. They refer to any man who does these things.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of showing that noun phrases refer to something in general. You (the translator) should refer to these general ideas in ways that are natural in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The **righteous person** is kept away from trouble and it comes upon **the wicked** instead. (Proverbs 11:8 ULT)

The bold phrases above do not refer to a specific person but to anyone who does what is right or anyone who is wicked.

People curse **the man who refuses to sell grain**. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

This does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who refuses to sell grain.

Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

The phrase "a good man" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who is good. The phrase "a man who makes evil plans" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who makes evil plans.

Translation Strategies

If your language can use the same wording as in the ULT to refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things, consider using the same wording. If not, here are some strategies you might use.

- (1) Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.
- (2) Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.
- (3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."
- (4) Use the plural form, as in "people."
- (5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.

Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

"Yahweh gives favor to **the good man**, but he condemns **the man who makes evil plans**." (Proverbs 12:2)

(2) Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **a man** who refuses to sell grain."

(3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **any man** who refuses to sell grain."

(4) Use the plural form, as in "people" (or in this sentence, "men").

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **men** who refuse to sell grain"

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **whoever** refuses to sell grain."

Next we recommend you learn about:

When Masculine Words Include Women ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [John 2:22](#); [John 3:27](#); [John 3:33](#); [John 3:36](#); [John 5:34](#); [John 7:22](#); [John 7:23](#); [John 7:51](#); [John 8:21](#); [John 8:35](#); [John 10:10](#); [John 13:38](#); [John 16:21](#); [John 18:20](#); [John 19:31](#)

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: [John 9:7](#); [John 19:5](#); [John 20:18](#); [John 21:3](#)

Hendiadys

Description

In a hendiadys, a speaker uses two words that mean different things and that are connected with “and.” These two words work together to express a single idea. Usually one of the words is the primary idea and the other word further describes the primary one.

This page answers the question: *What is hendiadys and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

... his own **kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

Though “kingdom” and “glory” are both nouns, “glory” actually tells what kind of kingdom it is: it is a **kingdom of glory** or **a glorious kingdom**.

Two phrases connected by “and” can also be a hendiadys when they refer to a single person, thing, or event.

while we look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

Titus 2:13 contains two hendiadyses. “The blessed hope” and “appearing of the glory” refer to the same thing and serve to strengthen the idea that the return of Jesus Christ is greatly anticipated and wonderful. Also, “our great God” and “Savior Jesus Christ” refer to one person, not two.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Often a hendiadys contains an abstract noun. Some languages may not have a noun with the same meaning.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that the second word is further describing the first one.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that only one person or thing is meant, not two.

Examples From the Bible

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

“A mouth” and “wisdom” are nouns, but in this figure of speech “wisdom” describes what comes from the mouth.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

“Willing” and “obedient” are adjectives, but “willing” describes “obedient.”

Translation Strategies

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

- (1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.
- (2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.
- (3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.
- (4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the

other.

(5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

For I will give you **wise words** ...

Walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own glorious kingdom**.

(2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

for I will give you **words of wisdom**.

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own kingdom of glory**.

(3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

If you are **willingly obedient** ...

(4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the other.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

The adjective "obedient" can be substituted with the verb "obey."

if you **obey willingly** ...

(4) and (5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

We look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

The noun "glory" can be changed to the adjective "glorious" to make it clear that Jesus' appearing is what we hope for. Also, "Jesus Christ" can be moved to the front of the phrase and "great God and Savior" put into a relative clause that describes the one person, Jesus Christ.

We look forward to receiving **what we are longing for, the blessed and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, who is our great God and Savior**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Doublet ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [John 4:48](#)

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

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

Translate Unknowns ([UTA PDF](#))

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see [Borrow Words](#).
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, "For out of the water I drew him." (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words "pull out."

Saul was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.
- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
- (3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
- (4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
- (5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, "Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you." (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, "Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you."

- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, "For out of the water I drew him." (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like 'drawn out')**, and she said, "For out of the water I drew him."

- (3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?" Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?"
Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called "Saul" before Acts 13 and "Paul" after Acts 13. You could translate his name as "Paul" all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

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

... a young man named **Paul** ¹

The footnote would look like:

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

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

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

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

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

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

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The footnote would look like:

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

Copy or Borrow Words ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: Introduction to the Gospel of John; John 1:28; John 1:45; John 3:23; John 4:5; John 5:2; John 6:8; John 6:67; John 6:68; John 6:71; John 11:16; John 11:47; John 12:21; John 13:2; John 13:26; John 14:22; John 18:1; John 18:5; John 18:7; John 18:10; John 19:38; John 19:39; John 21:1; John 21:2

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.

"

Referenced in: [John 2:10](#); [John 3:26](#); [John 3:32](#); [John 4:29](#); [John 4:39](#); [John 4:45](#); [John 10:8](#); [John 11:49](#); [John 12:19](#); [John 12:32](#); [John 13:35](#); [John 14:26](#); [John 18:20](#); [John 21:25](#)

Idiom

An idiom is a figure of speech made up of a group of words that, as a whole, has a meaning that is different from what one would understand from the meanings of the individual words. Someone from outside of the culture usually cannot understand an idiom without someone inside the culture explaining its true meaning. Every language uses idioms. Some English examples are:

- You are pulling my leg. (This means, “You are teasing me by telling me something that is not true.”)
- Do not push the envelope. (This means, “Do not take a matter to its extreme.”)
- This house is under water. (This means, “The debt owed for this house is greater than its actual value.”)
- We are painting the town red. (This means, “We are going around town tonight celebrating very intensely.”)

This page answers the question: *What are idioms and how can I translate them?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

An idiom is a phrase that has a special meaning to the people of the language or culture who use it. Its meaning is different than what a person would understand from the meanings of the individual words that form the phrase.

He **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

The words “set his face” is an idiom that means “decided.”

Sometimes people may be able to understand an idiom from another culture, but it might sound like a strange way to express the meaning.

I am not worthy that you would **come under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

The phrase “come under my roof” is an idiom that means “enter my house.”

Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

This idiom means “Listen carefully and remember what I say.”

Purpose: An idiom is probably created in a culture somewhat by accident when someone describes something in an unusual way. But, when that unusual way communicates the message powerfully and people understand it clearly, other people start to use it. After a while, it becomes a normal way of talking in that language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People can easily misunderstand idioms in the original languages of the Bible if they do not know the cultures that produced the Bible.
- People can easily misunderstand idioms that are in the source language Bibles if they do not know the cultures that made those translations.
- It is useless to translate idioms literally (according to the meaning of each word) when the target language audience will not understand what they mean.

Examples From the Bible

Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Look, we are your **flesh and bone**.” (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

This means, “We and you belong to the same race, the same family.”

■ The children of Israel went out **with a high hand**. (Exodus 14:8b ASV)

This means, "The Israelites went out defiantly."

■ the one who **lifts up my head** (Psalm 3:3b ULT)

This means, "the one who helps me."

Translation Strategies

If the idiom would be clearly understood in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.
- (2) Use a different idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.

Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Look, we are your **flesh and bone**." (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

■ Look, we all **belong to the same nation**.

Then he **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

■ He started to travel to Jerusalem, **determined to reach it**.

I am not worthy that you would come **under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

■ I am not worthy that you should enter **my house**.

- (2) Use an idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

■ **Be all ears** when I say these words to you.

My **eyes grow dim** from grief. (Psalm 6:7a ULT)

■ I am crying my **eyes out**

"

Referenced in: John 1:18; John 1:43; John 3:35; John 4:35; John 5:18; John 6:5; John 6:27; John 6:39; John 6:40; John 6:44; John 6:54; John 6:66; John 7:23; John 7:30; John 7:44; John 8:12; John 8:31; John 8:37; John 8:44; John 9:24; John 10:9; John 10:24; John 10:27; John 10:38; John 11:11; John 11:23; John 11:24; John 11:41; John 11:56; John 12:1; John 12:9; John 12:25; John 12:26; John 12:36; John 13:1; John 13:2; John 13:18; John 13:27; John 14:10; John 14:11; John 14:13; John 14:14; John 14:26; John 15:7; John 15:16; John 16:23; John 16:24; John 16:26; John 16:33; John 17:1; John 17:12; John 17:26; John 18:37; John 19:7; John 19:12; John 19:30; John 20:9; John 20:19; John 20:21; John 20:26; John 21:14; John 21:19; John 21:22

Imperatives — Other Uses

Description

Imperative sentences are mainly used to express a desire or requirement that someone do something. In the Bible, sometimes imperative sentences have other uses.

This page answers the question: *What other uses are there for imperative sentences in the Bible?*

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

Sentence Types ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use an imperative sentence for some of the functions that they are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Speakers often use imperative sentences to tell or ask their listeners to do something. In Genesis 26, God spoke to Isaac and told him not to go to Egypt but to live where God would tell him to live.

Now Yahweh appeared to him and said, “**Do not go down** to Egypt; **live** in the land that I tell you to live in.” (Genesis 26:2 ULT)

Sometimes imperative sentences in the Bible have other uses.

Imperatives that make things happen

God can make things happen by commanding that they happen. Jesus healed a man by commanding that the man be healed. The man could not do anything to obey the command, but Jesus caused him to be healed by commanding it. (In this context, the command “Be clean” means to “be healed” so that others around would know that it was safe to touch the man again.)

“I am willing. **Be clean.**” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

In Genesis 1, God commanded that there should be light, and by commanding it, he caused it to exist. Some languages, such as the Hebrew of the Bible, have commands that are in the third person. English does not do that, and so it must turn the third-person command into a general, second-person command, as in the ULT:

God said, “**Let there be** light,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

Languages that have third-person commands can follow the original Hebrew, which translates into English as something like “light must be.”

Imperatives that function as blessings

In the Bible, God blesses people by using imperatives. This indicates what his will is for them.

God blessed them and said to them, “**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

Imperatives that function as conditions

An imperative sentence can also be used to tell the **condition** under which something will happen. The proverbs mainly tell about life and things that often happen. The purpose of Proverbs 4:6 below is not primarily to give a command, but to teach what people can expect to happen **if** they love wisdom.

Do not abandon wisdom and she will watch over you; **love** her and she will keep you safe.
(Proverbs 4:6 ULT)

The purpose of Proverbs 22:6, below, is to teach what people can expect to happen if they teach their children the way they should go.

Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Imperatives that function as good results

An imperative sentence can also describe a desirable result. In Proverbs 3:3-4, several imperatives give instructions, then the final imperative describes the good outcome of following those instructions.

Do not let covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness leave you; tie them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and **find favor** and good insight in the eyes of God and man!
(Proverbs 3:3-4 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.
- (2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like “so” to show that what happened was a result of what was said.
- (3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.

Be clean. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

You are now clean. I now cleanse you.

God said, “**Let there be** light,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

God said, “**There is now** light” and there was light.

God blessed them and said to them, “**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

God blessed them and said to them, “**My will for you is that you be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **I want you to have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

Do not let covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness leave you; tie them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, **and find favor** and good insight in the eyes of God and man! (Proverbs 3:3-4 ULT)

Do not let covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness leave you; tie them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, **then you will find favor** and good insight in the eyes of God and man!

(2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like “so” to show that what happened was a result of what was said.

God said, “**Let there be** light,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

God said, ‘Let there be light,’ **so** there was light. God said, “Light must be;” **as a result**, there was light.

(3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translated as:

“**If** you teach a child the way he should go, **then** when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction.”

”

Referenced in: [John 2:19](#); [John 4:7](#); [John 4:31](#); [John 4:49](#); [John 17:1](#); [John 17:5](#); [John 17:11](#); [John 17:17](#)

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: [John 1:12](#); [John 4:1](#); [John 6:10](#); [John 7:34](#); [John 7:38](#); [John 8:21](#); [John 8:26](#); [John 10:17](#); [John 12:6](#); [John 13:33](#); [John 14:12](#); [John 14:26](#); [John 15:19](#); [John 17:22](#); [John 18:18](#); [John 19:31](#); [John 19:42](#); [John 20:16](#); [John 20:21](#); [John 20:25](#)

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: [John 2:1](#); [John 2:12](#); [John 2:23](#); [John 3:1](#); [John 3:22](#); [John 4:1](#); [John 4:43](#); [John 5:1](#); [John 5:14](#); [John 6:1](#); [John 7:1](#); [John 8:12](#); [John 8:21](#); [John 12:1](#); [John 12:12](#); [John 12:44](#); [John 18:1](#); [John 19:28](#); [John 19:38](#); [John 21:1](#)

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: [John 3:1](#); [John 4:46](#); [John 5:5](#); [John 11:1](#); [John 11:49](#); [John 12:20](#)

Irony

Description

Irony is a figure of speech in which the sense that the speaker intends to communicate is actually the opposite of the literal meaning of the words. Sometimes a person does this by using someone else's words, but in a way that communicates that he does not agree with them. People do this to emphasize how different something is from what it should be, or how someone else's belief about something is wrong or foolish. It is often humorous.

This page answers the question: *What is irony and how can I translate it?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "People who are well do not have need of a physician, but those who have sickness. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
(Luke 5:31-32 ULT)

When Jesus spoke of "the righteous," he was not referring to people who were truly righteous, but to people who wrongly believed that they were righteous. By using irony, Jesus communicated that they were wrong to think that they were better than others and did not need to repent.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

If someone does not realize that a speaker is using irony, he will think that the speaker actually believes what he is saying. He will understand the passage to mean the opposite of what it was intended to mean.

Examples From the Bible

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9b ULT)

Here Jesus praises the Pharisees for doing something that is obviously wrong. Through irony, he communicates the opposite of praise: He communicates that the Pharisees, who take great pride in keeping the commandments, are so far from God that they do not even recognize that their traditions are breaking God's commandments. The use of irony makes the Pharisee's sin more obvious and startling.

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. **"Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled."** (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

People worshiped idols as if their idols had knowledge or power, and Yahweh was angry at them for doing that. So he used irony and challenged their idols to tell what would happen in the future. He knew that the idols could not do this, but by speaking as if they could, he mocked the idols, making their inability more obvious, and rebuked the people for worshiping them.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is many!** (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Job thought that he was wise. Yahweh used irony to show Job that he was not so wise. The two phrases in bold above are irony. They emphasize the opposite of what they say, because they are so obviously false. They emphasize that Job could not possibly answer God's questions about the creation of light because Job was not born until many, many years later.

Already you are satisfied! Already you have become rich! **You began to reign** apart from us, and I wish you really did reign, so that we also might reign with you. (1 Corinthians 4:8 ULT)

The Corinthians considered themselves to be very wise, self-sufficient, and not in need of any instruction from the Apostle Paul. Paul used irony, speaking as if he agreed with them, to show how proudly they were acting and how far from being wise they really were.

Translation Strategies

If the irony would be understood correctly in your language, translate it as it is stated. If not, here are some other strategies.

- (1) Translate the irony in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.
- (2) Translate the actual, intended meaning of the statement of irony. (Remember: The true meaning of the irony is **not** found in the literal words of the speaker, but instead the true meaning is found in the opposite of the literal meaning of the speaker's words.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

You think that you are doing well when you reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!

or:

You act like it is good to reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!

I did not come to call **the righteous**, but sinners to repentance. (Luke 5:32 ULT)

I did not come to call **people who think that they are righteous** to repentance, but to call people who know that they are sinners to repentance.

- (2) Translate the actual, intended meaning of the statement of irony.

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

You are doing a terrible thing when you reject the commandment of God so you may keep your tradition!

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. **"Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled."** (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

'Present your case,' says Yahweh; 'present your best arguments for your idols,' says the King of Jacob. **Can your idols bring us their own arguments or come forward to declare to us what will happen** so we may know these things well? **No!** We cannot hear them because **they cannot speak** to tell us their earlier predictive declarations, so we cannot reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is many!** (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You act like you know how light and darkness were created, as if you were there; as if you are as old as creation, but you are not!**

Next we recommend you learn about:

Litotes ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [John 9:27](#); [John 10:32](#); [John 18 General Notes](#); [John 19 General Notes](#); [John 19:3](#); [John 19:15](#)

Kinship

Description

This page answers the question: *What are kinship terms and how can I translate them?*

Kinship terms refer to those words used to describe people related to one another in familial relationships. These terms vary widely in their specificity from language to language. They range from the (Western) nuclear or immediate family (father-son, husband-wife) out to broad clan relationships in other cultures.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Depending on the language translators may need to use specific terms to designate the accurate kinship relationship. In some languages a different term may be used based on siblings' birth order. In others, the side of the family (father's or mother's), age, marital status, etc. may determine the term used. Different terms may be used based on the gender of the speaker and/or addressee. Translators may need to make sure they know the exact relationship between two related people in the Bible to find the correct term. Sometimes these terms are difficult even for native speakers to remember and translators may need to seek community help in finding the correct term. Another complicating issue is that the Bible may not give enough information about the relationship for translators to determine the correct term in the language being translated into. In this case, translators will have to use a more general term or simply pick a satisfactory term based on the limited information available.

Sometimes terms that seem like kinship terms are used for people who are not necessarily related. For instance, an older person may refer to a younger man or woman as "my son" or "my daughter."

Examples from the Bible

Then Yahweh said to Cain, "Where is Abel **your brother**?" He said, "I do not know. Am I **my brother's** keeper?" (Genesis 4:9 ULT)

Abel was Cain's younger brother.

Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flock and said to them, "I see **your father's** attitude toward me has changed, but the God of my father has been with me." (Genesis 31:4-5 ULT)

Jacob is referring here to his father-in-law. In some languages there may be a specific term for a man's father-in-law, however, in this case it is better to retain the form **your father** as Jacob may be using it to distance himself from Laban.

And Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro **his father-in-law**, the priest of Midian. (Exodus 3:1a ULT)

Unlike the previous instance, if your language has a term for a man's father-in-law this is a good place to use it.

And **his sister** stationed herself at a distance to know what would be done to him. (Exodus 2:4 ULT)

From context we know that this was Miriam, Moses's older sister. In some languages this may require a specific term. In others, the term for older sister may be only used when the younger sibling is addressing and/or referring to his or her sister.

Then she and **her daughters-in-law** arose to return from the fields of Moab (Ruth 1:6a ULT)

Ruth & Orpah are Naomi's daughters-in-law.

Then she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has turned back to her people and to her gods." (Ruth 1:15 ULT)

Orpah had been the wife of Ruth's husband's brother. This may be a different term in your language than if she had been Ruth's husband's sister.

Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Will you not listen to me, **my daughter**?" (Ruth 2:8a ULT)

Boaz is not Ruth's father; he is simply using the term to address a younger woman.

And behold, **your relative** Elizabeth—she also has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren. (Luke 1:36 ULT)

While the KJV translated this as **cousin**, the term simply means a related woman.

Translation Strategies

(1) Find out the exact relationship specified and translate using the term your language uses.

(2) If the text does not specify the relationship as clearly as your language would, either:

(a) settle on a more general term.

(b) use a specific term if required by your language, choosing the one that is most likely to be correct.

Translation Strategies Applied

This is not an issue in English, so the following illustrations draw on other languages.

In Korean, there are several terms for brother and sister; the use of them depends on the speaker's (or referent's) sex and birth order. Examples are from the Korean Living Bible, found on biblegateway.com

Genesis 30:1 Rachel is jealous of her "eonni," which is the term a woman uses for her older sister.

Genesis 34:31 Simeon and Levi refer to Dinah as "nui," a general term for sister.

Genesis 37:16 Joseph refers to his brothers as "hyeong," which is the term a man uses for his older brother(s).

Genesis 45:12 Joseph refers to Benjamin as "dongsaeng," which roughly means sibling, usually younger.

In Russian, in-law terms are complex. For instance, "nevěstka" is the term for a brother's (or brother-in-law's) wife; a woman uses the same term for her daughter-in-law but her husband would call the same daughter-in-law "snoxá." Examples from the Russian Synodal Version.

Genesis 38:25 Tamar sends a message to her father-in-law, Judah. The term used is "svekor." This is used for a woman's husband's father.

Exodus 3:1 Moses is watching his father-in-law's herd. The term used is "test'." This is used for a man's wife's father.

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Referenced in: [John 7:3](#); [John 7:5](#); [John 7:10](#); [John 11:1](#); [John 11:2](#); [John 11:5](#); [John 11:19](#); [John 11:21](#); [John 11:23](#); [John 11:28](#); [John 11:39](#)

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: [John 1:47](#); [John 3:34](#); [John 6:35](#); [John 6:37](#); [John 6:39](#); [John 11:26](#)

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: [John 1 General Notes](#); [John 1:4](#); [John 1:5](#); [John 1:7](#); [John 1:8](#); [John 1:9](#); [John 1:12](#); [John 1:13](#); [John 1:14](#); [John 1:23](#); [John 1:27](#); [John 1:29](#); [John 1:33](#); [John 1:36](#); [John 1:47](#); [John 2:17](#); [John 3:2](#); [John 3:3](#); [John 3:5](#); [John 3:8](#); [John 3:19](#); [John 3:20](#); [John 3:21](#); [John 3:26](#); [John 3:29](#); [John 3:30](#); [John 3:31](#); [John 3:36](#); [John 4:19](#); [John 4:34](#); [John 4:35](#); [John 5:14](#); [John 5:19](#); [John 5:20](#); [John 5:24](#); [John 5:35](#); [John 5:38](#); [John 6:18](#); [John 6:31](#); [John 6:40](#); [John 6:41](#); [John 6:48](#); [John 6:49](#); [John 6:50](#); [John 6:51](#); [John 6:58](#); [John 6:66](#); [John 7 General Notes](#); [John 7:12](#); [John 7:37](#); [John 7:38](#); [John 8:12](#); [John 8:15](#); [John 8:29](#); [John 8:34](#); [John 8:36](#); [John 8:39](#); [John 8:43](#); [John 8:44](#); [John 8:47](#); [John 8:51](#); [John 8:52](#); [John 8:53](#); [John 8:56](#); [John 9 General Notes](#); [John 9:4](#); [John 9:5](#); [John 9:22](#); [John 9:31](#); [John 9:34](#); [John 9:35](#); [John 9:39](#); [John 9:40](#); [John 9:41](#); [John 10:3](#); [John 10:7](#); [John 10:8](#); [John 10:9](#); [John 10:10](#); [John 10:11](#); [John 10:12](#); [John 10:13](#); [John 10:14](#); [John 10:15](#); [John 10:16](#); [John 10:17](#); [John 10:18](#); [John 10:26](#); [John 10:27](#); [John 10:35](#); [John 11:3](#); [John 11:9](#); [John 11:52](#); [John 11:54](#); [John 12:24](#); [John 12:28](#); [John 12:35](#); [John 12:36](#); [John 12:38](#); [John 12:40](#); [John 12:42](#); [John 12:46](#); [John 13:10](#); [John 13:11](#); [John 13:16](#); [John 13:33](#); [John 14:1](#); [John 14:2](#); [John 14:6](#); [John 14:18](#); [John 14:21](#); [John 14:27](#); [John 15 General Notes](#); [John 15:1](#); [John 15:3](#); [John 15:5](#); [John 15:6](#); [John 15:8](#); [John 15:9](#); [John 15:10](#); [John 15:16](#); [John 15:22](#); [John 15:24](#); [John 16:2](#); [John 16:6](#); [John 16:22](#); [John 16:33](#); [John 17:12](#); [John 17:26](#); [John 18:11](#); [John 18:21](#); [John 18:37](#); [John 18:38](#); [John 19:4](#); [John 19:6](#); [John 19:11](#); [John 19:26](#); [John 19:27](#); [John 21 General Notes](#); [John 21:5](#); [John 21:15](#); [John 21:16](#); [John 21:17](#); [John 21:23](#)

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: John 1:10; John 1:12; John 1:13; John 1:23; John 1:29; John 1:31; John 2:4; John 2:23; John 3:6; John 3:16; John 3:17; John 3:18; John 3:27; John 3:31; John 4:21; John 4:23; John 4:41; John 4:42; John 4:50; John 5:24; John 5:25; John 5:28; John 5:35; John 5:38; John 5:43; John 5:45; John 5:47; John 6:33; John 6:51; John 6:52; John 6:60; John 6:63; John 6:68; John 7:4; John 7:6; John 7:7; John 7:30; John 7:36; John 7:38; John 7:40; John 8:12; John 8:20; John 8:23; John 8:26; John 8:35; John 8:37; John 8:43; John 8:47; John 8:51; John 8:55; John 8:56; John 9:5; John 9:10; John 9:14; John 9:17; John 9:26; John 9:30; John 9:32; John 10:19; John 10:21; John 10:25; John 10:28; John 10:29; John 10:35; John 10:39; John 11:37; John 12:13; John 12:15; John 12:19; John 12:23; John 12:27; John 12:28; John 12:30; John 12:31; John 12:38; John 12:46; John 12:47; John 13:1; John 13:3; John 13:38; John 14:10; John 14:17; John 14:19; John 14:22; John 14:23; John 14:24; John 14:27; John 14:31; John 15:3; John 15:18; John 15:19; John 15:20; John 15:21; John 15:25; John 15:27; John 16:2; John 16:4; John 16:8; John 16:20; John 16:21; John 16:25; John 16:28; John 16:32; John 16:33; John 17:1; John 17:2; John 17:4; John 17:6; John 17:8; John 17:9; John 17:11; John 17:12; John 17:13; John 17:14; John 17:15; John 17:17; John 17:18; John 17:20; John 17:21; John 17:23; John 17:24; John 17:25; John 17:26; John 18:9; John 18:20; John 18:28; John 18:35; John 18:36; John 19:8; John 19:13; John 19:27; John 20:20; John 20:25; John 20:27; John 21:18; John 21:23; John 21:25

Nominal Adjectives

Description

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

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

The adjective “rich” comes before the word “man” and describes “man.”

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

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

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

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

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

This page answers the question: *How do I translate adjectives that act like nouns?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

Blessed are **people who are meek**.

"

Referenced in: [John 6:67](#); [John 6:70](#); [John 6:71](#); [John 12:5](#); [John 12:6](#); [John 12:8](#); [John 20:24](#)

Order of Events

Description

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

This page answers the question: *Why are some events not listed in the order they happened, and how do I translate them?*

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

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Verbs ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

Background Information ([UTA PDF](#))

Connecting Words and Phrases ([UTA PDF](#))

Introduction of a New Event ([UTA PDF](#))

Verse Bridges ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [John 11:2](#); [John 11:56](#); [John 11:57](#)

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: [John 20:1](#); [John 20:19](#); [John 21:14](#); [John 21:16](#); [John 21:17](#)

Parables

A parable is a short story that teaches something(s) that is true, and delivers the lesson in a way that is easy to understand and hard to forget.

This page answers the question: *What is a parable?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

A parable is a short story that is told to teach something that is true. The events in a parable are usually things that could or often do happen, but they are not specific events that actually did happen. They are told only to teach the lesson that the listener is meant to learn. Parables rarely contain the names of specific people. (This may help you to identify what is a parable and what is an account of a real event.) Parables often use figures of speech such as [simile](#) and [metaphor](#). Sometimes the person telling the parable explains the lesson afterward, but often the person does not.

Then he also told them a parable. "A blind man is not able to guide a blind man, is he? Would not both fall into a pit?" (Luke 6:39 ULT)

This parable teaches that if a person does not have spiritual understanding, he cannot help someone else to understand spiritual things.

Examples From the Bible

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket but, rather, on the lampstand, and it shines for everyone in the house. Let your light shine before people in such a way that they see your good deeds and praise your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:15-16 ULT)

This parable teaches us not to hide the way we live for God from other people.

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all other seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

This parable teaches that the kingdom of God may seem small at first, but it will grow and spread throughout the world.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If a parable is hard to understand because it has unknown objects in it, you can replace the unknown objects with objects that people in your culture know. However, be careful to keep the lesson the same.
- (2) If the teaching of the parable is unclear, consider telling a little about what it teaches in the introduction, such as "Jesus told this story about being generous."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If a parable is hard to understand because it has unknown objects in it, you can replace the unknown objects with objects that people in your culture know. However, be careful to keep the lesson the same.

Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the **lampstand**?" (Mark 4:21 ULT)

If people do not know what a lampstand is, you could substitute something else that people put a light on so it can give light to the house.

Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on **a high shelf?**"

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and **sowed** in his field. It is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

To sow seeds means to toss them so that they scatter on the ground. If people are not familiar with sowing, you can substitute planting.

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and **planted** in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

(2) If the teaching of the parable is unclear, consider telling a little about what it teaches in the introduction, such as "Jesus told this story about being generous."

Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the lampstand?" (Mark 4:21 ULT)

Jesus told them a parable about why they should witness openly. Jesus also said to them, "The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the lampstand?" (Mark 4:21 ULT)

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

Then Jesus presented another parable to them about how the kingdom of God grows. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

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Referenced in: [John 10:1](#); [John 10:6](#); [John 16:25](#); [John 16:29](#)

Parallelism

Description

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

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "doublet" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and raises it above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULT)

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

Yahweh sees everything a person does
and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

This page answers the question: *What is parallelism?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

The 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: [John 3:17](#); [John 18:37](#)

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: [John 5:36](#); [John 5:39](#); [John 7:38](#); [John 7:42](#); [John 7:51](#); [John 8:32](#); [John 10:25](#); [John 10:35](#); [John 12:35](#); [John 12:48](#)

Possession

Description

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

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

This page answers the question: *What is possession and how can I translate phrases that show it?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

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

- Ownership — Someone owns something.
- The clothes of me - my clothes — The clothes that I own
- Social Relationship — Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.
- The mother of John — John's mother - the woman who gave birth to John, or the woman who cared for John
- A teacher of Israel - Israel's teacher — a person who teaches Israel
- Association — A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.
- The sickness of David - David's sickness — the sickness that David is experiencing
- the fear of the Lord — the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord
- Contents — Something has something in it.
- a bag of clothes — a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes
- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.
- my head — the head that is part of my body
- the roof of a house — the roof that is part of a house

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Events and Possession

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategies for learning what the relationship is between the two nouns

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

"On their heads were **gold crowns**"

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

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

Whoever gives you a **cup that has water in it** to drink ... will not lose his reward.

Wealth is worthless on **the day of wrath**. (Proverbs 11:4a ULT)

Wealth is worthless on **the day when God shows his wrath**.

or:

Wealth is worthless on the **day when God punishes people because of his wrath**.

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

Notice that I am not speaking to your children, who have not known or seen **the punishment of Yahweh your God**. (Deuteronomy 11:2a ULT)

Notice that I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen **how Yahweh, the God whom you worship, punished the people of Egypt**.

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

You will only observe and see **how Yahweh punishes the wicked**.

You will receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. (Acts 2:38b ULT)

You will receive the **Holy Spirit, whom God will give to you**.

"

Referenced in: John 1:4; John 4:10; John 5:29; John 5:42; John 6:33; John 6:35; John 6:68; John 6:69; John 7:13; John 7:35; John 8:12; John 8:39; John 9:3; John 9:4; John 9:7; John 10:2; John 10:7; John 10:23; John 10:37; John 11:13; John 11:40; John 12:3; John 12:43; John 14:17; John 14:24; John 18:1; John 19:25; John 19:38; John 20:19; John 20:25

Predictive Past

Description

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

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

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

This page answers the question: *What is the predictive past?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Verbs ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"

Referenced in: John 1:15; John 1:21; John 1:29; John 1:36; John 1:38; John 1:39; John 1:41; John 1:43; John 1:45; John 1:46; John 1:47; John 1:48; John 1:51; John 2:3; John 2:4; John 2:5; John 2:7; John 2:8; John 2:9; John 3:4; John 4:5; John 4:7; John 4:9; John 4:11; John 4:15; John 4:16; John 4:17; John 4:19; John 4:21; John 4:25; John 4:26; John 4:28; John 4:34; John 4:49; John 4:50; John 5:6; John 5:8; John 5:14; John 6:5; John 6:8; John 6:12; John 6:19; John 6:20; John 6:24; John 7:6; John 7:50; John 8:39; John 9:13; John 9:17; John 11:7; John 11:11; John 11:13; John 11:23; John 11:24; John 11:27; John 11:39; John 11:40; John 11:44; John 12:4; John 12:9; John 12:22; John 13:4; John 13:5; John 13:6; John 13:8; John 13:9; John 13:10; John 13:25; John 13:27; John 13:29; John 13:31; John 13:36; John 13:37; John 14:5; John 14:6; John 14:8; John 14:9; John 14:18; John 14:19; John 14:22; John 15:8; John 16:11; John 16:16; John 16:29; John 16:32; John 17:11; John 17:12; John 17:24; John 18:3; John 18:5; John 18:17; John 18:26; John 18:38; John 19:4; John 19:5; John 19:6; John 19:9; John 19:14; John 19:15; John 19:26; John 19:27; John 19:28; John 20:1; John 20:2; John 20:5; John 20:6; John 20:12; John 20:13; John 20:15; John 20:16; John 20:17; John 20:18; John 20:22; John 20:26; John 20:27; John 20:29; John 21:3; John 21:4; John 21:5; John 21:7; John 21:9; John 21:10; John 21:12; John 21:13; John 21:15; John 21:16; John 21:17; John 21:19; John 21:20; John 21:21; John 21:22; John 21:23

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: [John 1:2](#); [John 1:3](#); [John 1:5](#); [John 1:7](#); [John 1:8](#); [John 1:10](#); [John 1:16](#); [John 1:18](#); [John 1:21](#); [John 1:22](#); [John 1:25](#); [John 1:31](#); [John 1:32](#); [John 1:37](#); [John 1:38](#); [John 1:41](#); [John 1:42](#); [John 1:46](#); [John 2:7](#); [John 2:8](#); [John 2:15](#);

John 2:21; John 3:2; John 3:17; John 3:18; John 3:26; John 3:28; John 3:30; John 3:32; John 3:33; John 3:34; John 4:25;
John 4:30; John 4:40; John 4:42; John 4:47; John 4:51; John 4:52; John 5:12; John 5:14; John 5:19; John 5:20; John 5:27;
John 5:35; John 5:39; John 6:6; John 6:29; John 6:31; John 6:39; John 6:65; John 7:7; John 7:30; John 7:38; John 7:44;
John 8:25; John 8:42; John 8:44; John 9:3; John 9:25; John 10:3; John 10:6; John 10:10; John 10:41; John 11:13; John
11:56; John 13:32; John 15:6; John 16:8; John 16:14; John 18:28; John 19:4; John 19:16; John 20:2; John 20:3; John 20:7;
John 21:20; John 21:22; John 21:23

Quotations and Quote Margins

Description

This page answers the question: *What are quote margins and where should I put them?*

When saying that someone said something, we often tell who spoke, whom they spoke to, and what they said. The information about who spoke and whom they spoke to is called the quote margin. What the person said is the quotation. (This is also called a quote.) In some languages the quote margin may come first, last, or even in between two parts of the quotation.

The quote margins are bolded below.

- **She said**, “The food is ready. Come and eat.”
- “The food is ready. Come and eat,” **she said**.
- “The food is ready,” **she said**. “Come and eat.”

Also in some languages, the quote margin may have more than one verb meaning “said.”

But his mother **answered** and **said**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.” (Luke 1:60 ULT)

When writing that someone said something, some languages put the quote (what was said) in quotation marks called inverted commas (“ ”). Some languages use other symbols around the quotation, such as these angle quote marks (« »), or something else.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to put the quote margin where it is most clear and natural in their language.
- Translators need to decide whether they want the quote margin to have one or two verbs meaning “said.”
- Translators need to decide which marks to use around the quotation.

Examples From the Bible

Quote margin before the quote

Then Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in her days.” (Luke 1:18 ULT)

Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and **they said to him**, “Teacher, what should we do?” (Luke 3:12 ULT)

So **he said to them**, “Collect nothing more than what you have been ordered.” (Luke 3:13 ULT)

Quote margin after the quote

Yahweh relented concerning this. “It will not happen,” **he said**. (Amos 7:3 ULT)

Quote margin between two parts of the quote

“I will hide my face from them,” **he said**, “and I will see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful.” (Deuteronomy 32:20 ULT)

For look, days are coming—**this is Yahweh’s declaration**—when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah. (Jeremiah 30:3a ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.
- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.

He said, "Therefore, those among you who are leaders should go down with us. If there is something wrong with the man, let them accuse him." (Acts 25:5 ULT)

"Therefore, those who can should go there with us," **he said**. "If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."

"Therefore, those who can should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him," **he said**.

"Therefore, those who can," **he said**, "should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."

- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

But his mother **answered and said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John." (Luke 1:60 ULT)

But his mother **replied**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."

But his mother **said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."

But his mother **answered** like this. "No. Rather, he will be called John," she **said**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Direct and Indirect Quotations ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: John 1:15; John 1:26; John 1:32; John 1:42; John 2:17; John 4:31; John 6:31; John 6:45; John 6:52; John 7:15; John 7:28; John 7:37; John 8:12; John 9:2; John 9:19; John 10:34; John 11:3; John 11:32; John 12:13; John 12:14; John 12:21; John 12:23; John 12:38; John 12:39; John 13:18; John 15:25; John 18:22; John 18:40; John 19:6; John 19:12; John 19:24; John 19:28; John 19:36; John 19:37

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: [John 1:23](#); [John 2:17](#); [John 12:13](#); [John 12:15](#); [John 12:38](#); [John 12:40](#); [John 13:18](#); [John 15:25](#); [John 19:24](#); [John 19:36](#); [John 19:37](#)

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: [John 1:15](#); [John 1:23](#); [John 3:28](#); [John 4:10](#); [John 4:17](#); [John 5:11](#); [John 5:12](#); [John 6:31](#); [John 6:42](#); [John 6:45](#); [John 7:36](#); [John 7:38](#); [John 8:22](#); [John 8:33](#); [John 8:52](#); [John 8:54](#); [John 9:41](#); [John 10:34](#); [John 10:36](#); [John 14:28](#); [John 16:5](#); [John 16:17](#); [John 19:21](#); [John 20:17](#)

Reflexive Pronouns

Description

All languages have ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. English does this by using reflexive pronouns. These are pronouns that refer to someone or something that has already been mentioned in a sentence. In English the reflexive pronouns are: "myself," "yourself," "himself," "herself," "itself," "ourselves," "yourselves," and "themselves." In English, these pronouns can also be used to emphasize the person to whom they refer. Other languages may have other ways to do both of these things.

This page answers the question: *What are reflexive pronouns?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. For those languages, translators will need to know how to translate the English reflexive pronouns.
- The reflexive pronouns in English also have other functions.

Uses of Reflexive Pronouns

- To show that the same person or things fills two different roles in a sentence
- To emphasize a person or thing in the sentence
- To show that someone or something did something alone or was alone

Examples From the Bible

To show that the same person or thing fills two different roles in a sentence

If **I** testify about **myself**, my testimony is not true. (John 5:31 ULT)

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and **many** went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to purify **themselves**. (John 11:55 ULT)

To emphasize a person or thing in the sentence

Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2 ULT)

So they left the crowd, taking Jesus with them, just as he was, in the boat. There also were other boats with him. Then a violent windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already full of water. But **Jesus himself** was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. (Mark 4:36-38a ULT)

Then Festus answered that Paul was being held at Caesarea but that **he himself** was about to depart soon. (Acts 25:4 ULT)

To show that someone did something alone, or that something was alone

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15 ULT)

He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. **It** was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If a reflexive pronoun would have the same function in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other strategies.

- (1) In some languages people put something on the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.
- (2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.
- (3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it.
- (4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like “alone.”
- (5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) In some languages people modify the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.

If I testify about **myself**, my testimony is not true. (John 5:31)

“If I **self-testify**, my testimony is not true.”

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to **purify themselves**. (John 11:55)

“Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out from country before the Passover in order to **self-purify**.”

- (2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.

He himself took our sickness and bore our diseases. (Matthew 8:17 ULT)

“**The one who** took our sickness and bore our diseases **was Jesus**.”

Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2)

“**It was not Jesus who** was baptizing, but his disciples.”

- (3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it.

But Jesus said this to test Philip, for he **himself** knew what he was going to do. (John 6:6)

But Jesus said this to test Philip, for, **as for him, he** knew what he was going to do.

Then Festus answered that Paul was being held at Caesarea but that **he himself** was about to depart soon. (Acts 25:4 ULT)

Then Festus answered that Paul was being held at Caesarea but that, **for his part, he** was about to depart soon.

- (4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like “alone.”

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15)

“When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again **alone** up the mountain.”

(5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)

“He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up and lying **in it’s own place**.”

”

Referenced in: [John 4:2](#); [John 4:44](#); [John 4:53](#); [John 5:37](#); [John 6:6](#); [John 6:15](#); [John 7:4](#); [John 10:18](#); [John 13:32](#)

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: John 1:46; John 1:50; John 2:4; John 2:20; John 3:4; John 3:9; John 3:10; John 3:12; John 4:9; John 4:12; John 4:35; John 5:44; John 5:47; John 6:9; John 6:42; John 6:52; John 6:60; John 6:68; John 6:70; John 7:15; John 7:19; John 7:20; John 7:23; John 7:25; John 7:31; John 7:35; John 7:41; John 7:42; John 7:48; John 7:51; John 7:52; John 8:25; John 8:33; John 8:43; John 8:46; John 8:48; John 8:53; John 8:57; John 9:8; John 9:16; John 9:27; John 9:34; John 9:40; John 10:20; John 10:21; John 10:34; John 10:36; John 11:8; John 11:9; John 11:37; John 11:40; John 11:56; John 12:5; John 12:27; John 12:38; John 13:6; John 13:12; John 13:38; John 14:5; John 14:9; John 14:10; John 16:19; John 16:31; John 18:11; John 18:17; John 18:21; John 18:22; John 18:23; John 18:25; John 18:26; John 18:35; John 18:38; John 19:10; John 21:22

Simile

Description

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. The simile focuses on a particular trait the two items have in common, and it includes the words “like,” “as,” or “than.”

This page answers the question: *What is a simile?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were troubled and discouraged, **like sheep not having a shepherd**. (Matthew 9:36)

Jesus compared the crowds of people to sheep without a shepherd. Sheep grow frightened when they do not have a good shepherd to lead them in safe places. The crowds were like that because they did not have good religious leaders.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, so be as wise **as the serpents** and harmless **as the doves**. (Matthew 10:16 ULT)

Jesus compared his disciples to sheep and their enemies to wolves. Wolves attack sheep; Jesus' enemies would attack his disciples.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

God's word is compared to a two-edged sword. A two-edged sword is a weapon that can easily cut through a person's flesh. God's word is very effective in showing what is in a person's heart and thoughts.

Purposes of Simile

- A simile can teach about something that is unknown by showing how it is similar to something that is known.
- A simile can emphasize a particular trait, sometimes in a way that gets people's attention.
- Similes help form a picture in the mind or help the reader experience what he is reading about more fully.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not know how the two items are similar.
- People may not be familiar with both of the items being compared.

Examples From the Bible

Suffer hardship with me, **as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3 ULT)

In this simile, Paul compares suffering with what soldiers endure, and he encourages Timothy to follow their example.

Just as the lightning flashing from a place under the sky shines to another place under the sky, so will the Son of Man be. (Luke 17:24b ULT)

This verse does not tell how the Son of Man will be like the lightning. But in context we can understand from the verses before it that just as lighting flashes suddenly and everyone can see it, the Son of Man will come suddenly and everyone will be able to see him. No one will have to be told about it.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the correct meaning of a simile, consider using it. If they would not, here are some strategies you can use:

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience. (2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote. (3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — This compares the danger that Jesus' disciples would be in with the danger that sheep are in when they are surrounded by wolves.

See, I send **you out among wicked people** and you will be in danger from them **as sheep are in danger when they are among wolves**.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

For the word of God is living and active and **more powerful than a very sharp two-edged sword**.

(2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — If people do not know what sheep and wolves are, or that wolves kill and eat sheep, you could use some other animal that kills another.

See, I send you out **as chickens in the midst of wild dogs**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to gather your children together, **as a mother closely watches over her infants**, but you refused!

If you have faith **as a grain of mustard** ... (Matthew 17:20)

If you have faith even as small **as a tiny seed**,

(3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT)

See, I send you out among **people who will want to harm you**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to **protect you**, but you refused!

Next we recommend you learn about:

Metaphor ([UTA PDF](#))

Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [John 1:32](#); [John 3:14](#); [John 16 General Notes](#)

Statements — Other Uses

Description

Normally statements are used to give information. Sometimes they are used in the Bible for other functions.

This page answers the question: *What other uses are there for statements?*

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

Sentence Types ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use a statement for some of the functions that statements are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Statements are normally used to give **information**. All of the sentences in John 1:6-8 below are statements, and their function is to give information.

There was a man who was sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness in order to testify about the light, that all might believe through him. John was not the light, but came that he might testify about the light. (John 1:6-8 ULT)

A statement can also be used as a **command** to tell someone what to do. In the examples below, the high priest used statements with the verb “will” to tell people what to do.

He commanded them, saying, “This is what you **must** do. A third of you who come on the Sabbath **will** keep watch over the king’s house, and a third **will** be at the Sur Gate, and a third at the gate behind the guardhouse.” (2 Kings 11:5 ULT)

A statement can also be used to give **instructions**. The speaker below was not just telling Joseph about something Joseph would do in the future; he was telling Joseph what he needed to do.

She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

A statement can also be used to make a **request**. The man with leprosy was not just saying what Jesus was able to do. He was also asking Jesus to heal him.

Behold, a leper came to him and bowed before him, saying, “Lord, if you are willing, **you are able to make me clean**.” (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

A statement can also be used to **perform** something. By telling Adam that the ground was cursed because of him, God actually cursed it.

... **cursed is the ground** because of you; (Genesis 3:17b ULT)

By telling a man that his sins were forgiven, **Jesus forgave** the man’s sins.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “**Son, your sins are forgiven**.” (Mark 2:5 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a sentence type** that would express that function.
- (2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **add a sentence type** that would express that function.

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a verb form** that would express that function.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a sentence type that would express that function.

She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

The phrase “you will call his name Jesus” is an instruction. It can be translated using the sentence type of a normal instruction.

She will give birth to a son. **Name him Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins.

(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, add a sentence type that would express that function.

Lord, if you are willing, **you are able to make me clean**. (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

The function of “you are able” is to make a request. In addition to the statement, a request can be added.

Lord, you are able to make me clean. If you are willing, **please do so**.
OR:
Lord, if you are willing, **please heal me**. I know that you are able to do so.

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a verb form that would express that function.

She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

She will give birth to a son, and **you must call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins.

Son, your sins are forgiven. (Mark 2:5 ULT)

Son, I forgive your sins.
OR:
Son, God hereby forgives your sins.

”

Referenced in: [John 2:3](#); [John 11:3](#); [John 12:21](#); [John 13:15](#); [John 13:34](#); [John 14:1](#)

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: [John 13 General Notes](#); [John 20:22](#)

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: [John 1:14](#); [John 1:19](#); [John 5:10](#); [John 5:15](#); [John 5:16](#); [John 5:18](#); [John 6:11](#); [John 6:31](#); [John 6:32](#); [John 6:34](#); [John 6:41](#); [John 6:52](#); [John 7:1](#); [John 7:11](#); [John 7:13](#); [John 7:14](#); [John 7:15](#); [John 7:28](#); [John 7:35](#); [John 8:22](#); [John 8:31](#); [John 8:48](#); [John 8:52](#); [John 8:57](#); [John 8:59](#); [John 9:18](#); [John 9:22](#); [John 10:19](#); [John 10:23](#); [John 10:24](#); [John 10:31](#); [John 10:33](#); [John 10:34](#); [John 11:8](#); [John 11:48](#); [John 11:50](#); [John 11:51](#); [John 11:52](#); [John 11:54](#); [John 11:56](#); [John 12:9](#); [John 12:34](#); [John 13:33](#); [John 15:25](#); [John 18:12](#); [John 18:14](#); [John 18:31](#); [John 18:36](#); [John 18:37](#); [John 18:38](#); [John 19:1](#); [John 19:2](#); [John 19:7](#); [John 19:12](#); [John 19:14](#); [John 19:31](#); [John 19:38](#); [John 20:2](#); [John 20:13](#); [John 20:15](#); [John 20:19](#); [John 20:31](#)

Textual Variants

Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However, people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, or some mistook one word for another that looked like it. Occasionally, they added words or even whole sentences, either by accident or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles include some of these sentences that were added. In the ULT, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

This page answers the question: *Why does the ULT have missing or added verses, and should I translate them?*

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

Choosing a Source Text ([UTA PDF](#))

Original Manuscripts ([UTA PDF](#))

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

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

Examples From the Bible

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

¹⁰ See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ ^[1]

^[1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

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

53 [Then everyone went to his own house ... 11 She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."] ^[2]

^[2] Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

Translation Strategies

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

- (1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.
- (2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." ¹⁶ [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

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

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." ¹⁶ [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

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

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

[1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Chapter and Verse Numbers ([UTA PDF](#))

Original Manuscripts ([UTA PDF](#))

Terms to Know ([UTA PDF](#))

The Original and Source Languages ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Introduction to the Gospel of John](#); [John 1:34](#); [John 7 General Notes](#); [John 7:53](#); [John 8 General Notes](#); [John 8:1](#); [John 13:32](#)

Translate Unknowns

While working to translate the Bible, you (the translator) might find yourself asking: “How do I translate words like lion, fig tree, mountain, priest, or temple when people in my culture have never seen these things and we do not have a word for them?”

This page answers the question: *How can I translate ideas that my readers are not familiar with?*

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

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

Unknowns are things that occur in the source text that are not known to the people of your culture. The unfoldingWord® Translation Words pages and the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes will help you understand what they are. After you understand them, you will need to find ways to refer to those things so that people who read your translation will understand what they are.

They said to him, “We have nothing here except five loaves of **bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread and do not know what it is.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God’s commands and historical facts accurately.

Examples From the Bible

So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals**. (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

They offered him wine mixed with **myrrh**, but he did not drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
- (4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.
- (5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but **inwardly they are very hungry and dangerous animals**.

"Ravenous wolves" is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See [Translating Metaphors](#).)

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked grain seeds** and two fish.

- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.

Your sins ... will be white like **milk**.

Your sins ... will be white like **the moon**.

- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **myrrh**. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT) — People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word "medicine."

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **a medicine called myrrh**. But he refused to drink it.

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT) —
People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made
of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).

We have nothing here except five loaves of **baked crushed seed bread**
and two fish.

(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **wild dogs**

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked food** and two fish.

(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

to him who made **the sun and the moon**

Next we recommend you learn about:

Copy or Borrow Words ([UTA PDF](#))

How to Translate Names ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [John 3:33](#); [John 6:9](#); [John 6:11](#); [John 6:13](#); [John 6:19](#); [John 8:20](#); [John 10:1](#); [John 10:3](#); [John 10:12](#); [John 10:22](#); [John 10:23](#); [John 11:44](#); [John 12:2](#); [John 12:3](#); [John 13:23](#); [John 13:38](#); [John 15:1](#); [John 18:27](#); [John 19:24](#); [John 19:29](#); [John 19:39](#); [John 19:40](#); [John 20:5](#); [John 20:6](#); [John 20:7](#)

Translating Son and Father

Door43 supports Bible translations that represent these concepts when they refer to God.

Biblical Witness

“Father” and “Son” are names that God calls himself in the Bible.

The Bible shows that God called Jesus his Son:

After he was baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and ... a voice came out of the heavens saying, **“This is my beloved Son.** I am very pleased with him.” (Matthew 3:16-17 ULT)

The Bible shows that Jesus called God his Father:

Jesus ... said, “I praise you **Father**, Lord of heaven and earth ... no one knows the **Son** except the **Father**, and no one knows the **Father** except the **Son.**” (Matthew 11:25a, 27b ULT) (See also: John 6:26-57)

Christians have found that “Father” and “Son” are the ideas that most essentially describe the eternal relationship of the First and Second Persons of the Trinity to each other. The Bible indeed refers to them in various ways, but no other terms reflect the eternal love and intimacy between these Persons, nor the interdependent eternal relationship between them.

Jesus referred to God in the following terms:

Baptize them into **the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.** (Matthew 28:19b ULT)

The intimate, loving relationship between the Father and the Son is eternal, just as they are eternal. The Father **loves** the Son. (See John 3:35-36; 5:19-20 ULT)

I love the Father, and just as the Father commanded me, thus I do. (John 14:31 ULT)

No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son. (Luke 10:22b ULT)

The terms “Father” and “Son” also communicate that the Father and the Son are of the same essence; they are both eternal God.

Jesus said, “Father, ... glorify your Son so that the Son will glorify you ... I glorified you on the earth ... Now Father, glorify me ... with the glory that **I had with you before the world was made.**” (John 17:1, 4a, 5 ULT)

But in these last days, {God the Father} has spoken to us through a Son, whom he appointed to be the heir of all things. Through him, he also made the universe. He is the brightness of God’s glory and **the very exact representation of his being.** He holds everything together by the word of his power. (Hebrews 1:2-3a ULT)

Jesus said to him, “I have been with you for so long and you still do not know me, Philip? **Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.** How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:9 ULT)

This page answers the question: *Why are these concepts important in referring to God?*

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

Create Faithful Translations ([UTA PDF](#))

Son of God and God the Father ([UTA PDF](#))

Human Relationships

Human fathers and sons are not perfect, but the Bible still uses those terms for the Father and Son, who are perfect.

Just as today, human father-son relationships during Bible times were never as loving or perfect as the relationship between Jesus and his Father. But this does not mean that the translator should avoid the concepts of father and son. The Scriptures use these terms to refer to God, the perfect Father and Son, as well as to sinful human fathers and sons. In referring to God as Father and Son, choose words in your language that are widely used to refer to a human “father” and “son.” In this way you will communicate that God the Father and God the Son are of the same divine essence (they are both God), just as a human father and son are of the same human essence (they are both human and share the same human characteristics).

Translation Strategies

- (1) Think through all the possibilities within your language to translate the words “son” and “father.” Determine which words in your language best represent the divine “Son” and “Father.”
- (2) If your language has more than one word for “son,” use the word that has the closest meaning to “only son” (or “first son” if necessary).
- (3) If your language has more than one word for “father,” use the word that has the closest meaning to “birth father,” rather than “adoptive father.”

(See *God the Father and Son of God* pages in [unfoldingWord® Translation Words](#) for help translating “Father” and “Son.”)

“

Referenced in: John 1:14; John 1:18; John 1:34; John 1:49; John 2:16; John 3:16; John 3:17; John 3:18; John 3:35; John 3:36; John 4:21; John 4:23; John 5:17; John 5:18; John 5:19; John 5:20; John 5:21; John 5:22; John 5:23; John 5:25; John 5:26; John 5:36; John 5:43; John 6:27; John 6:32; John 6:37; John 6:40; John 6:44; John 6:45; John 6:46; John 6:57; John 6:65; John 8:16; John 8:18; John 8:19; John 8:27; John 8:28; John 8:36; John 8:38; John 8:54; John 10:15; John 10:17; John 10:18; John 10:25; John 10:29; John 10:30; John 10:32; John 10:36; John 10:37; John 11:4; John 11:27; John 11:41; John 12:26; John 12:27; John 12:28; John 12:49; John 13:1; John 13:3; John 14:2; John 14:6; John 14:8; John 14:9; John 14:10; John 14:12; John 14:13; John 14:20; John 14:21; John 14:23; John 14:24; John 14:26; John 14:28; John 14:31; John 15:1; John 15:8; John 15:9; John 15:10; John 15:15; John 15:16; John 15:23; John 15:24; John 15:26; John 16:3; John 16:10; John 16:15; John 16:17; John 16:23; John 16:25; John 16:26; John 16:27; John 16:28; John 16:32; John 17:1; John 17:5; John 17:11; John 17:21; John 17:24; John 17:25; John 18:11; John 19:7; John 20:17; John 20:21; John 20:31

Verbs

Description

Verbs are words that refer to an action or event or that is used in describing or identifying things. An “action” is something you do. “Event” is more general than “action.” “Events” are things that happen, such as death. A linking verb (“is”) describes a condition of being.

This page answers the question: *What are verbs and what kinds of things are associated with them?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Examples The verbs in the examples below are bolded.

- John **ran**. (“Run” is an action.)
- John **ate** a banana. (“Eat” is an action.)
- John **saw** Mark. (“See” is an event.)
- John **died**. (“Die” is an event.)
- John **is** tall. (The phrase “is tall” describes John. The word “is” is a verb that links “John” with “tall.”)
- John **looks** handsome. (The phrase “is handsome” describes John. The word “looks” here is a verb that links “John” with “handsome.”)
- John **is** my brother. (The phrase “is my brother” identifies John.)

People or Things Associated With a Verb

A verb usually says something about someone or something. All of the example sentences above say something about John. “John” is the **subject** of those sentences. In English the subject usually comes before the verb.

Sometimes there is another person or thing associated with the verb. In the examples below, the bolded word is the verb, and the quoted phrase is the **object**. In English the object usually comes after the verb.

- He **ate** “lunch.”
- He **sang** “a song.”
- He **read** “a book.”
- He **saw** “the book.”

Some verbs never have an object.

- The sun **rose** at six o’clock.
- John **slept** well.
- John **fell** yesterday.

For many verbs in English, where the object is not important in the sentence, the object may not be stated.

- He never **eats** at night.
- He **sings** all the time.
- He **reads** well.
- He cannot **see**.

In some languages, a verb that needs an object must always take one, even if the object is not very important. People who speak those languages might restate the sentences above like this.

- He never **eats food** at night.
- He **sings songs** all the time.
- He **reads words** well.
- He cannot **see anything**.

Subject and Object Marking on Verbs

In some languages, the form of the verb may vary depending on the persons or things associated with it. For example, English speakers sometimes put “s” at the end of the verb when the subject is just one person. In other languages, marking on the verb may show whether the subject is “I,” “you,” or “he”; singular, dual, or plural; male or female, or human or non-human.

- They **eat** bananas every day. (The subject “they” is more than one person.)
- John **eats** bananas every day. (The subject “John” is one person.)

Time and Tense

When we tell about an event, we usually tell whether it is in the past, the present, or the future. Sometimes we do this with words like “yesterday,” “now,” or “tomorrow.”

In some languages the verb may be a little bit different depending on the time associated with it. This kind of marking on a verb is called “tense.” English speakers sometimes put “ed” at the end of the verb when the event happened in the past.

- Sometimes Mary **cooks** meat.
- Yesterday Mary **cooked** meat. (She did this in the past.)

In some languages speakers might add a word to tell something about the time. English speakers use the word “will” when the verb refers to something in the future.

- Tomorrow Mary **will cook** meat.

Aspect

When we tell about an event, sometimes we want to show how the event progressed over a period of time or how the event relates to another event. This is called “aspect.” English speakers sometimes use the verbs “is” or “has” then add “s,” “ing,” or “ed” to the end of the verb in order to show how the event relates to another event or to the present time.

- Mary **cooks** meat every day. (This tells about something Mary often does.)
- Mary **is cooking** the meat. (This tells about something Mary is in the process of doing right now.)
- Mary **cooked** the meat, and John **came** home. (This simply tells about things that Mary and John did.)
- While Mary **was cooking** the meat, John came home. (This tells about something Mary was in the process of doing when John came home)
- Mary **has cooked** the meat, and she wants us to come eat it. (This tells about something Mary did that is still relevant now.)
- Mary **had cooked** the meat by the time John came home. (This tells about something that Mary completed in the past before something else happened.)

Next we recommend you learn about:

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

Active or Passive ([UTA PDF](#))

Predictive Past ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [John 20:3](#)

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: [John 1:4](#); [John 1:9](#); [John 2:10](#); [John 2:24](#); [John 2:25](#); [John 3:19](#); [John 4:28](#); [John 5:41](#); [John 6:10](#); [John 6:14](#); [John 6:44](#); [John 8:47](#); [John 12:43](#); [John 21:23](#)

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.

"

Referenced in: [John 2:19](#); [John 3:3](#); [John 3:7](#); [John 4:10](#); [John 4:32](#); [John 6:27](#); [John 6:32](#); [John 6:33](#); [John 6:51](#); [John 6:53](#); [John 6:54](#); [John 6:55](#); [John 6:56](#); [John 6:57](#); [John 6:58](#); [John 7:33](#); [John 7:38](#); [John 8:21](#); [John 8:26](#); [John 8:38](#); [John 8:41](#); [John 8:51](#); [John 9:35](#); [John 14:4](#); [John 18:37](#); [John 21:24](#)



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 85

believe, believer, belief, unbeliever, unbelief

Definition:

The terms “believe” and “believe in” are closely related, but have slightly different meanings:

1. believe

- To believe something is to accept or trust that it is true.
- To believe someone is to acknowledge that what that person has said is true.

2. believe in

- To “believe in” someone means to “trust in” that person. It means to trust that the person is who he says he is, that he always speaks the truth, and that he will do what he has promised to do.
- When a person truly believes in something, he will act in such a way that shows that belief.
- The phrase “have faith in” usually has the same meaning as “believe in.”
- To “believe in Jesus” means to believe that he is the Son of God, that he is God himself who also became human and who died as a sacrifice to pay for our sins. It means to trust him as Savior and live in a way that honors him.

3. believer

In the Bible, the term “believer” refers to someone who believes in and relies on Jesus Christ as Savior.

- The term “believer” literally means “person who believes.”
- The term “Christian” eventually came to be the main title for believers because it indicates that they believe in Christ and obey his teachings.

4. unbelief

The term “unbelief” refers to not believing something or someone.

- In the Bible, “unbelief” refers to not believing in or not trusting in Jesus as one’s Savior.
- A person who does not believe in Jesus is called an “unbeliever.”

Translation Suggestions:

- To “believe” could be translated as to “know to be true” or “know to be right.”
- To “believe in” could be translated as “trust completely” or “trust and obey” or “completely rely on and follow.”
- Some translations may prefer to say “believer in Jesus” or “believer in Christ.”
- This term could also be translated by a word or phrase that means “person who trusts in Jesus” or “someone who knows Jesus and lives for him.”
- Other ways to translate “believer” could be “follower of Jesus” or “person who knows and obeys Jesus.”
- The term “believer” is a general term for any believer in Christ, while “disciple” and “apostle” were used more specifically for people who knew Jesus while he was alive. It is best to translate these terms in different ways, in order to keep them distinct.
- Other ways to translate “unbelief” could include “lack of faith” or “not believing.”
- The term “unbeliever” could be translated as “person who does not believe in Jesus” or “someone who does not trust in Jesus as Savior.”

(See also: [believe](#), [apostle](#), [Christian](#), [disciple](#), [faith](#), [trust](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 15:6
- Genesis 45:26
- Job 9:16-18
- Habakkuk 1:5-7
- Mark 6:4-6
- Mark 1:14-15
- Luke 9:41
- John 1:12
- Acts 6:5
- Acts 9:42
- Acts 28:23-24
- Romans 3:3
- 1 Corinthians 6:1
- 1 Corinthians 9:5
- 2 Corinthians 6:15
- Hebrews 3:12
- 1 John 3:23

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:4** Noah warned the people about the coming flood and told them to turn to God, but they did not **believe** him.
- **4:8** Abram **believed** God's promise. God declared that Abram was righteous because he **believed** God's promise.
- **11:2** God provided a way to save the firstborn of anyone who **believed in** him.
- **11:6** But the Egyptians did not **believe** God or obey his commands.
- **37:5** Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever **believes in** me will live, even though he dies. Everyone who **believes in** me will never die. Do you **believe** this?"
- **43:1** After Jesus returned to heaven, the disciples stayed in Jerusalem as Jesus had commanded them to do. The **believers** there constantly gathered together to pray.
- **43:3** While the **believers** were all together, suddenly the house where they were was filled with a sound like a strong wind. Then something that looked like flames of fire appeared over the heads of all the **believers**.
- **43:13** Every day, more people became **believers**.
- **46:6** That day many people in Jerusalem started persecuting the followers of Jesus, so the **believers** fled to other places. But in spite of this, they preached about Jesus everywhere they went.
- **46:1** Saul was the young man who guarded the robes of the men who killed Stephen. He did not believe in Jesus, so he persecuted the **believers**.
- **46:9** Some **believers** who fled from the persecution in Jerusalem went far away to the city of Antioch and preached about Jesus.
- **46:9** It was at Antioch that **believers** in Jesus were first called "Christians."
- **47:14** They also wrote many letters to encourage and teach the **believers** in the churches.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0539, H0540, G05430, G05440, G05690, G05700, G05710, G39820, G41000, G41020, G41030, G41350

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Referenced in: [John 1 General Notes](#); [John 4 General Notes](#); [John 7 General Notes](#)

born again, born of God, new birth

Definition:

The term “born again” was first used by Jesus to describe what it means for God to change a person from being dead spiritually to being alive spiritually. The terms “born of God” and “born of the Spirit” also refer to a person being given new spiritual life.

- All humans are born spiritually dead and are given a “new birth” when they accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- At the moment of the spiritual new birth, God’s Holy Spirit begins to live in the new believer and empowers him to produce good spiritual fruit in his life.
- It is God’s work to cause a person to be born again and become his child.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “born again” could include “born anew” or “born spiritually.”
- It is best to translate this term literally and use the normal word in the language that would be used for being born.
- The term “new birth” might be translated as “spiritual birth.”
- The phrase “born of God” could be translated as “caused by God to have new life like a newborn baby” or “given new life by God.”
- In the same way, “born of the Spirit” could be translated as “given new life by the Holy Spirit” or “empowered by the Holy Spirit to become God’s child” or “caused by the Spirit to have new life like a newborn baby.”

(See also: [Holy Spirit](#), [save](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:9
- 1 Peter 1:3
- 1 Peter 1:23
- John 3:4
- John 3:7
- Titus 3:5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G03130, G05090, G10800, G38240

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Referenced in: [John 1:13](#); [John 3 General Notes](#); [John 3:6](#)

council

Definition:

A council is a group of people who meet to discuss, give advice, and make decisions about important matters.

- A council is usually organized in an official and somewhat permanent way for a specific purpose, such as making decisions about legal matters.
- The “Jewish Council” in Jerusalem, also known as the “Sanhedrin,” had 70 members, which included Jewish leaders such as chief priests, elders, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees who met regularly to decide matters of Jewish law. It was this council of religious leaders who put Jesus on trial and decided that he should be killed.
- There were also smaller Jewish councils in other cities.
- The apostle Paul was brought before a Roman council when he was arrested for teaching the gospel.
- Depending on the context, the word “council” could also be translated as “legal assembly” or “political assembly.”
- To be “in council” means to be in a special meeting to decide something.
- Note that this is a different word than “counsel,” which means “wise advice.”

(See also: [assembly](#), [counsel](#), [Pharisee](#), [law](#), [priest](#), [Sadducee](#), [scribe](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 7:57-58
- Acts 24:20
- John 3:2
- Luke 22:68
- Mark 13:9
- Matthew 5:22
- Matthew 26:59

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4186, H5475, G10100, G48240, G48920

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Referenced in: [John 3:1](#); [John 7:26](#)

day of the Lord, day of Yahweh

Description:

The Old Testament term “day of Yahweh” is used to refer to a future time when God will punish people for their sin.

- The Old Testament term “day of Yahweh” is an expression that many of the prophets use.
- The New Testament term “day of the Lord” usually refers to the day or time when the Lord Jesus will come back to judge people at the end of time.
- This final, future time of judgment and resurrection is also sometimes referred to as the “last day.” This time will begin when the Lord Jesus comes back to judge sinners and will permanently establish his rule.
- The word “day” in these phrases may sometimes refer to a literal day or it may refer to a “time” or “occasion” that is longer than a day.
- Sometimes the punishment is referred to as a “pouring out of God’s wrath” upon those who do not believe.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate “day of Yahweh” could include “time of Yahweh” or “time when Yahweh will punish his enemies” or “time of Yahweh’s wrath.”
- Other ways to translate “day of the Lord” could include “time of the Lord’s judgment” or “time when the Lord Jesus will return to judge people.”

(See also: [day](#), [judgment day](#), [Lord](#), [resurrection](#), [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:5
- 1 Thessalonians 5:2
- 2 Peter 3:10
- 2 Thessalonians 2:2
- Acts 2:20-21
- Philippians 1:9-11

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3068, H3117, G22500, G29620

”

Referenced in: [John 6:39](#); [John 6:40](#); [John 6:44](#); [John 6:54](#); [John 11:24](#)

ewe, ram, sheep, sheepfold, sheepshearers, sheepskins

Definition:

A “sheep” is a medium-sized animal with four legs that has wool all over its body. A male sheep is called a “ram.” A female sheep is called a “ewe.” The plural of “sheep” is also “sheep.”

- A baby sheep is called a “lamb.”
- The Israelites often used sheep for sacrifices, especially male sheep and young sheep.
- People eat meat from sheep and use their wool to make clothing and other things.
- Sheep are very trusting, weak, and timid. They are easily influenced to wander away. They need a shepherd to lead them, protect them, and provide them with food, water, and shelter.
- In the Bible, people are compared to sheep who have God as their shepherd.

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: [Israel](#), [lamb](#), [sacrifice](#), [shepherd](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 8:32
- Genesis 30:32
- John 2:14
- Luke 15:5
- Mark 6:34
- Matthew 9:36
- Matthew 10:6
- Matthew 12:12
- Matthew 25:33

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:12** One day while Moses was taking care of his **sheep**, he saw a bush that was on fire.
- **17:2** David was a shepherd from the town of Bethlehem. At different times while he was watching his father's **sheep**, David had killed both a lion and a bear that had attacked the **sheep**.
- **30:3** To Jesus, these people were like **sheep** without a shepherd.
- **38:8** Jesus said, “All of you will all abandon me tonight. It is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd and all the **sheep** will be scattered.’”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0352, H1494, H1798, H2169, H3104, H3532, H3535, H3733, H3775, H5739, H5763, H6260, H6629, H6792, H7353, H7462, H7716, G41650, G42620, G42630

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Referenced in: [John 10 General Notes](#)

faith

Definition:

In general, the term "faith" refers to a belief, trust or confidence in someone or something.

- To "have faith" in someone is to believe that what he says and does is true and trustworthy.
- To "have faith in Jesus" means to believe all of God's teachings about Jesus. It especially means that people trust in Jesus and his sacrifice to cleanse them from their sin and to rescue them from the punishment they deserve because of their sin.
- True faith or belief in Jesus will cause a person to produce good spiritual fruits or behaviors because the Holy Spirit is living in him.
- Sometimes "faith" refers generally to all the teachings about Jesus, as in the expression "the truths of the faith."
- In contexts such as "keep the faith" or "abandon the faith," the term "faith" refers to the state or condition of believing all the teachings about Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, "faith" can be translated as "belief" or "conviction" or "confidence" or "trust."
- For some languages these terms will be translated using forms of the verb "believe." (See: [abstractnouns](#))
- The expression "keep the faith" could be translated by "keep believing in Jesus" or "continue to believe in Jesus."
- The sentence "they must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith" could be translated by "they must keep believing all the true things about Jesus that they have been taught."
- The expression "my true son in the faith" could be translated by something like "who is like a son to me because I taught him to believe in Jesus" or "my true spiritual son, who believes in Jesus."

(See also: [believe](#), [faithful](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:7
- Acts 6:7
- Galatians 2:20-21
- James 2:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:6** When Isaac was a young man, God tested Abraham's **faith** by saying, "Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a sacrifice to me."
- **31:7** Then he (Jesus) said to Peter, "You man of little **faith**, why did you doubt?"
- **32:16** Jesus said to her, "Your **faith** has healed you. Go in peace."
- **38:9** Then Jesus said to Peter, "Satan wants to have all of you, but I have prayed for you, Peter, that your **faith** will not fail."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0529, H0530, G16800, G36400, G41020, G60660

"

Referenced in: [John 4 General Notes](#)

glory, glorious, glorify

Definition:

The term “glory” is a general term for a family of concepts including value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, or majesty. The term “glorify” means to ascribe glory to someone or something, or to show or tell how glorious something or someone is.

- In the Bible, the term “glory” is especially used to describe God, who is more valuable, more worthy, more important, more honorable, more splendid, and more majestic than anyone or anything in the universe. Everything about his character reveals his glory.
- People can glorify God by telling about the wonderful things he has done. They can also glorify God by living in accordance with God’s character, because doing so shows to others his value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, and majesty.
- The expression to “glory in” means to boast about or take pride in something.

Old Testament

- The specific phrase “the glory of Yahweh” in the Old Testament usually refers to some perceptible manifestation of Yahweh’s presence in a particular location.

New Testament

- God the Father will glorify God the Son by revealing to all people the full extent of how glorious Jesus is.
- Everyone who believes in Christ will be glorified with him. This use of the term “glorify” carries a unique meaning. It means that when people who believe in Christ are raised to life, they will be changed physically to be like Jesus as he appeared after his resurrection.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “glory” could include “splendor” or “majesty” or “awesome greatness” or “extreme value.”
- The term “glorious” could be translated as “full of glory” or “extremely valuable” or “brightly shining” or “awesomely majestic.”
- The expression “give glory to God” could be translated as “honor God’s greatness” or “praise God because of his splendor” or “tell others how great God is.”
- The expression “glory in” could also be translated as “praise” or “take pride in” or “boast about” or “take pleasure in.”
- “Glorify” could also be translated as “give glory to” or “bring glory to” or “cause to appear great.”
- The phrase “glorify God” could also be translated as “praise God” or “talk about God’s greatness” or “show how great God is” or “honor God (by obeying him).”
- The term “be glorified” could also be translated as “be shown to be very great” or “be praised” or “be exalted.”

(See also: [honor](#), [majesty](#), [exalt](#), obey, [praise](#))

Bible References:

- Exodus 24:17
- Numbers 14:9-10
- Isaiah 35:2
- Luke 18:43

- Luke 2:9
- John 12:28
- Acts 3:13-14
- Acts 7:1-3
- Romans 8:17
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- Philippians 2:14-16
- Philippians 4:19
- Colossians 3:1-4
- 1 Thessalonians 2:5
- James 2:1-4
- 1 Peter 4:15-16
- Revelation 15:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “**Glory** to God in heaven and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- **25:6** Then Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and all their **glory** and said, “I will give you all this if you bow down and worship me.”
- **37:1** When Jesus heard this news, he said, “This sickness will not end in death, but it is for the **glory** of God.”
- **37:8** Jesus responded, “Did I not tell you that you would see God’s **glory** if you believe in me?”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0117, H0142, H0155, H0215, H1342, H1921, H1926, H1935, H1984, H3367, H3513, H3519, H3520, H6286, H6643, H7623, H8597, G13910, G13920, G17400, G17410, G27440, G48880

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Referenced in: [John 17 General Notes](#)

Greek, Grecian, Hellenist

Facts:

The term "Greek" refers to the language spoken in the country of Greece, it is also a person from the country of Greece. Greek was also spoken throughout the Roman Empire. The adjective "Grecian" means "Greek-speaking."

- Since most non-Jewish people in the Roman Empire spoke Greek, Gentiles are often referred to as "Greeks" in the New Testament, especially when contrasted with Jews.
- The phrase "Grecian Jews" or "Hellenists" referred to Jews who spoke Greek in contrast to the "Hebraic Jews" who spoke only Hebrew, or perhaps Aramaic. The term "Hellenists" comes from the pronunciation of the Greek word for a Greek-speaker.
- Other ways to translate "Grecian" could include, "Greek-speaking" or "culturally Greek" or "Greek."
- When referring to non-Jews, "Greek" could be translated as "Gentile."

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [Aram](#), [Gentile](#), [Greece](#), [Hebrew](#), [Rome](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 6:1
- Acts 9:29
- Acts 11:20
- Acts 14:1-2
- Colossians 3:11
- Galatians 2:3-5
- John 7:35

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3125, G16720, G16730, G16740, G16750, G16760

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Referenced in: [John 12:20](#)

heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly

Definition:

The term that is translated as “heaven” usually refers to where God lives. The same word can also mean “sky,” depending on the context.

- The term “heavens” refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars. It also includes the heavenly bodies, such as far-off planets, that we can’t directly see from the earth.
- The term “sky” refers to the blue expanse above the earth that has clouds and the air we breathe. Often the sun and moon are also said to be “up in the sky.”
- In some contexts in the Bible, the word “heaven” could refer to either the sky or the place where God lives.

Translation Suggestions:

- For “kingdom of heaven” in the book of Matthew, it is best to keep the word “heaven” since this is distinctive to Matthew’s gospel.
- The terms “heavens” or “heavenly bodies” could also be translated as “sun, moon, and stars” or “all the stars in the universe.”
- The phrase, “stars of heaven” could be translated as “stars in the sky” or “stars in the galaxy” or “stars in the universe.”

(See also: [kingdom of God](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 8:22-24
- 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Deuteronomy 9:1
- Ephesians 6:9
- Genesis 1:1
- Genesis 7:11
- John 3:12
- John 3:27
- Matthew 5:18
- Matthew 5:46-48

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:2** They even began building a tall tower to reach **heaven**.
- **14:11** He (God) gave them bread from **heaven**, called “manna.”
- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “Glory to God in **heaven** and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- **29:9** Then Jesus said, “This is what my **heavenly** Father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”
- **37:9** Then Jesus looked up to **heaven** and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me.”
- **42:11** Then Jesus went up to **heaven**, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1534, H6160, H6183, H7834, H8064, H8065, G09320, G20320, G33210, G37700, G37710, G37720

"

Referenced in: [John 14 General Notes](#)

Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of the Lord, Spirit

Facts:

These terms all refer to the Holy Spirit, who is God. The one true God exists eternally as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit is also referred to as “the Spirit” and “Spirit of Yahweh” and “Spirit of truth.”
- Because the Holy Spirit is God, he is absolutely holy, infinitely pure, and morally perfect in all his nature and in everything he does.
- Along with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit was active in creating the world.
- When God’s Son, Jesus, returned to heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit to his people to lead them, teach them, comfort them, and enable them to do God’s will.
- The Holy Spirit guided Jesus and he guides those who believe in Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could simply be translated with the words used to translate “holy” and “spirit.”
- Ways to translate this term could also include “Pure Spirit” or “Spirit who is Holy” or “God the Spirit.”

(See also: [holy](#), [spirit](#), [God](#), [Lord](#), [God the Father](#), [Son of God](#), gift)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 10:10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8
- Acts 8:17
- Galatians 5:25
- Genesis 1:1-2
- Isaiah 63:10
- Job 33:4
- Matthew 12:31
- Matthew 28:18-19
- Psalms 51:10-11

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:1** But **God’s Spirit** was there over the water.
- **24:8** When Jesus came up out of the water after being baptized, **the Spirit of God** appeared in the form of a dove and came down and rested on him.
- **26:1** After overcoming Satan’s temptations, Jesus returned in the power of **the Holy Spirit** to the region of Galilee where he lived.
- **26:3** Jesus read, “God has given me **his Spirit** so that I can proclaim good news to the poor, freedom to captives, recovery of sight for the blind, and release to the oppressed.”
- **42:10** “So go, make disciples of all people groups by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and **the Holy Spirit** and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”
- **43:3** They were all filled with the **Holy Spirit** and they began to speak in other languages.
- **43:8** “And Jesus has sent the **Holy Spirit** just as he promised he would do. The **Holy Spirit** is causing the things that you are now seeing and hearing.”
- **43:11** Peter answered them, “Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your sins. Then he will also give you the gift of the **Holy Spirit.**”
- **45:1** He (Stephen) had a good reputation and was full of the **Holy Spirit** and of wisdom.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3068, H6944, H7307, G00400, G41510

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Referenced in: [John 14 General Notes](#); [John 16 General Notes](#)

John (the Baptist)

Facts:

John was the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Since “John” was a common name, he is often called “John the Baptist” to distinguish him from the other people named John, such as the Apostle John.

- John was the prophet whom God sent to prepare people to believe in and follow the Messiah.
- John told people to confess their sins, turn to God, and stop sinning, so that they would be ready to receive the Messiah.
- John baptized many people in water as a sign that they were sorry for their sins and were turning away from them.
- John was called “John the Baptist” because he baptized many people.

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [baptize](#), [Zechariah \(NT\)](#))

Bible References:

- John 3:22-24
- Luke 1:11-13
- Luke 1:62-63
- Luke 3:7
- Luke 3:15-16
- Luke 7:27-28
- Matthew 3:13
- Matthew 11:14

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **22:2** The angel said to Zechariah, “Your wife will have a son. You will name him **John**. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, and will prepare the people for Messiah!”
- **22:7** After Elizabeth gave birth to her baby boy, Zechariah and Elizabeth named the baby **John**, as the angel had commanded.
- **24:1 John**, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, grew up and became a prophet. He lived in the wilderness, ate wild honey and locusts, and wore clothes made from camel hair.
- **24:2** Many people came out to the wilderness to listen to **John**. He preached to them, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is near!”
- **24:6** The next day, Jesus came to be baptized by **John**. When **John** saw him, he said, “Look! There is the Lamb of God who will take away the sin of the world.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: G09100 G24910

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Referenced in: [John 1:6](#); [John 1:19](#); [John 1:26](#); [John 1:28](#); [John 1:40](#); [John 3:23](#); [John 3:25](#); [John 5:33](#); [John 5:35](#)

kingdom of God, kingdom of heaven

Definition:

The terms “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” both refer to God’s rule and authority over his people and over all creation.

- The Jews often used the term “heaven” to refer to God, to avoid saying his name directly. (See: [metonymy](#))
- In the New Testament book that Matthew wrote, he referred to God’s kingdom as “the kingdom of heaven,” probably because he was writing primarily for a Jewish audience.
- The kingdom of God refers to God ruling people spiritually as well as ruling over the physical world.
- The Old Testament prophets said that God would send the Messiah to rule with righteousness. Jesus, the Son of God, is the Messiah who will rule over God’s kingdom forever.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “kingdom of God” can be translated as “God’s rule (as king)” or “when God reigns as king” or “God’s rule over everything.”
- Depending on the context, the term “kingdom of heaven” could also be translated as “God’s rule from heaven as king” or “God in heaven reigning” or “heaven’s reign” or “heaven ruling over everything.” If it is not possible to translate this simply and clearly, the phrase “kingdom of God” could be translated instead.
- Some translators may prefer to capitalize “Heaven” to show that it refers to God. Others may include a note in the text, such as “kingdom of heaven (that is, ‘kingdom of God’).”
- A footnote at the bottom of the page of a printed Bible may also be used to explain the meaning of “heaven” in this expression.

(See also: [God](#), [heaven](#), [king](#), [kingdom](#), [King of the Jews](#), [reign](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Thessalonians 1:5
- Acts 8:12-13
- Acts 28:23
- Colossians 4:11
- John 3:3
- Luke 7:28
- Luke 10:9
- Luke 12:31-32
- Matthew 3:2
- Matthew 4:17
- Matthew 5:10
- Romans 14:17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **24:2** He (John) preached to them, saying, “Repent, for the **kingdom of God** is near!”
- **28:6** Then Jesus said to his disciples, “It is extremely hard for rich people to enter into the **kingdom of God**! Yes, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the **kingdom of God**.”
- **29:2** Jesus said, “The **kingdom of God** is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.”
- **34:1** Jesus told many other stories about the **kingdom of God**. For example, he said, “The **kingdom of God** is like a mustard seed that someone planted in his field.”

- **34:3** Jesus told another story, "The **kingdom of God** is like yeast that a woman mixes into some bread dough until it spreads throughout the dough."
- **34:4** "The **kingdom of God** is also like hidden treasure that someone hid in a field.. Another man found the treasure and then buried it again."
- **34:5** "The **kingdom of God** is also like a perfect pearl of great value."
- **42:9** He proved to his disciples in many ways that he was alive, and he taught them about the **kingdom of God**.
- **49:5** Jesus said that the **kingdom of God** is more valuable than anything else in the world.
- **50:2** When Jesus was living on earth he said, "My disciples will preach the good news about the **kingdom of God** to people everywhere in the world, and then the end will come."

Word Data:

- Strong's: G09320, G23160, G37720

"

Referenced in: [John 3 General Notes](#)

lord, Lord, master, sir

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “lord” generally refers to someone who has ownership or authority over other people. In the Bible, however, the term is used to address many different kinds of people, including God.

- This word is sometimes translated as “master” when addressing Jesus or when referring to someone who owns slaves.
- Some English versions translate this as “sir” in contexts where someone is politely addressing someone of higher status.

When “Lord” is capitalized, it is a title that refers to God. (Note, however, that when it is used as a form of addressing someone or it occurs at the beginning of a sentence it may be capitalized and have the meaning of “sir” or “master.”)

- In the Old Testament, this term is also used in expressions such as “Lord God Almighty” or “Lord Yahweh” or “Yahweh our Lord.”
- In the New Testament, the apostles used this term in expressions such as “Lord Jesus” and “Lord Jesus Christ,” which communicate that Jesus is God.
- The term “Lord” in the New Testament is also used alone as a direct reference to God, especially in quotations from the Old Testament. For example, the Old Testament text has “Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh” and the New Testament text has “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”
- In the ULT and UST, the title “Lord” is only used to translate the actual Hebrew and Greek words that mean “Lord.” It is never used as a translation of God’s name (Yahweh), as is done in many translations.
- Some languages translate “Lord” as “Master” or “Ruler” or some other term that communicates ownership or supreme rule.
- In the appropriate contexts, many translations capitalize the first letter of this term to make it clear to the reader that this is a title referring to God.
- For places in the New Testament where there is a quote from the Old Testament, the term “Lord God” could be used to make it clear that this is a reference to God.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term can be translated with the equivalent of “master” when it refers to a person who owns slaves. It can also be used by a servant to address the person he works for.
- When it refers to Jesus, if the context shows that the speaker sees him as a religious teacher, it can be translated with a respectful address for a religious teacher, such as “master.”
- If the person addressing Jesus does not know him, “lord” could be translated with a respectful form of address such as “sir.” This translation would also be used for other contexts in which a polite form of address to a man is called for.
- When referring to God the Father or to Jesus, this term is considered a title, written as “Lord” (capitalized) in English.

(See also: [God](#), [Jesus](#), [ruler](#), [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 39:2
- Joshua 3:9-11
- Psalms 86:15-17
- Jeremiah 27:4
- Lamentations 2:2

- Ezekiel 18:29
- Daniel 9:9
- Daniel 9:17-19
- Malachi 3:1
- Matthew 7:21-23
- Luke 1:30-33
- Luke 16:13
- Romans 6:23
- Ephesians 6:9
- Philippians 2:9-11
- Colossians 3:23
- Hebrews 12:14
- James 2:1
- 1 Peter 1:3
- Jude 1:5
- Revelation 15:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **25:5** But Jesus replied to Satan by quoting from the Scriptures. He said, "In God's word, he commands his people, 'Do not test the **Lord** your God.'"
- **25:7** Jesus replied, "Get away from me, Satan! In God's word he commands his people, 'Worship only the **Lord** your God and only serve him.'"
- **26:3** This is the year of the **Lord's** favor.
- **27:2** The law expert replied that God's law says, "Love the **Lord** your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind."
- **31:5** Then Peter said to Jesus, "**Master**, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water"
- **43:9** "But know for certain that God has caused Jesus to become both **Lord** and Messiah!"
- **47:3** By means of this demon she predicted the future for people, she made a lot of money for her **masters** as a fortuneteller.
- **47:11** Paul answered, "Believe in Jesus, the **Master**, and you and your family will be saved."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0113, H0136, H1167, H1376, H4756, H7980, H8323, G02030, G06340, G09620, G12030, G29620

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Referenced in: [John 4:11](#); [John 4:15](#); [John 4:19](#); [John 4:49](#); [John 5:7](#); [John 6:34](#); [John 9:36](#); [John 9:38](#); [John 12:21](#)

manna

Definition:

Manna was a white, grain-like food that God provided for the Israelites to eat during the 40 years of living in the wilderness after they left Egypt.

- Manna looked like white flakes which appeared each morning on the ground under the dew. It tasted sweet, like honey.
- The Israelites gathered the manna flakes every day except on the Sabbath.
- On the day before the Sabbath, God told the Israelites to gather twice the amount of manna so they wouldn't have to gather it on their day of rest.
- The word "manna" means "what is it?"
- In the Bible, manna is also referred to as "bread from heaven" and "grain from heaven."

Translation Suggestions

- Other ways to translate this term could include "thin white flakes of food" or "food from heaven."
- Also consider how this term is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: [bread](#), [desert](#), [grain](#), [heaven](#), [Sabbath](#))

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 8:3
- Exodus 16:27
- Hebrews 9:3-5
- John 6:30-31
- Joshua 5:12

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4478, G31310

"

Referenced in: [John 6:31](#)

Passover

Facts:

The "Passover" is the name of a religious festival that the Jews celebrate every year, to remember how God rescued their ancestors, the Israelites, from slavery in Egypt.

- The name of this festival comes from the fact that God "passed over" the houses of the Israelites and did not kill their sons when he killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians.
- The Passover celebration includes a special meal of a perfect lamb that they have killed and roasted, as well as bread made without yeast. These foods remind them of the meal that the Israelites ate the night before they escaped from Egypt.
- God told the Israelites to eat this meal every year in order to remember and celebrate how God "passed over" their houses and how he set them free from slavery in Egypt.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "Passover" could be translated by combining the words "pass" and "over" or another combination of words that has this meaning.
- It is helpful if the name of this festival has a clear connection to the words used to explain what the angel of the Lord did in passing by the houses of the Israelites and sparing their sons.

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:7
- 2 Chronicles 30:13-15
- 2 Kings 23:23
- Deuteronomy 16:2
- Exodus 12:26-28
- Ezra 6:21-22
- John 13:1
- Joshua 5:10-11
- Leviticus 23:4-6
- Numbers 9:3

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:14** God commanded the Israelites to remember his victory over the Egyptians and their deliverance from slavery by celebrating the **Passover** every year.
- **38:1** Every year, the Jews celebrated the **Passover**. This was a celebration of how God had saved their ancestors from slavery in Egypt many centuries earlier.
- **38:4** Jesus celebrated the **Passover** with his disciples.
- **48:9** When God saw the blood, he passed over their houses and did not kill their firstborn sons. This event is called the **Passover**.
- **48:10** Jesus is our **Passover** Lamb. He was perfect and sinless and was killed at the time of the **Passover** celebration.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6453, G39570

Referenced in: [John 11 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: [John 16 General Notes](#)

righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness

Definition:

The term “righteousness” refers to God’s absolute goodness, justice, faithfulness, and love. Having these qualities makes God “righteous.” Because God is righteous, he must condemn sin.

- These terms are also often used to describe a person who obeys God and is morally good. However, because all people have sinned, no one except God is completely righteous.
- Examples of people the Bible who were called “righteous” include Noah, Job, Abraham, Zachariah, and Elisabeth.
- When people trust in Jesus to save them, God cleanses them from their sins and declares them to be righteous because of Jesus’ righteousness.

The term “unrighteous” means to be sinful and morally corrupt. “Unrighteousness” refers to sin or the condition of being sinful.

- These terms especially refer to living in a way that disobeys God’s teachings and commands.
- Unrighteous people are immoral in their thoughts and actions.
- Sometimes “the unrighteous” refers specifically to people who do not believe in Jesus.

The terms “upright” and “uprightness” refer to acting in a way that follows God’s laws.

- The meaning of these words includes the idea of standing up straight and looking directly ahead.
- A person who is “upright” is someone who obeys God’s rules and does not do things that are against his will.
- Terms such as “integrity” and “righteous” have similar meanings and are sometimes used in parallelism constructions, such as “integrity and uprightness.” (See: [parallelism](#))

Translation Suggestions:

- When it describes God, the term “righteous” could be translated as “perfectly good and just” or “always acting rightly.”
- God’s “righteousness” could also be translated as “perfect faithfulness and goodness.”
- When it describes people who are obedient to God, the term “righteous” could also be translated as “morally good” or “just” or “living a God-pleasing life.”
- The phrase “the righteous” could also be translated as “righteous people” or “God-fearing people.”
- Depending on the context, “righteousness” could also be translated with a word or phrase that means “goodness” or “being perfect before God” or “acting in a right way by obeying God” or “doing perfectly good.”
- The term “unrighteous” could simply be translated as “not righteous.”
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this could include “wicked” or “immoral” or “people who rebel against God” or “sinful.”
- The phrase “the unrighteous” could be translated as “unrighteous people.”
- The term “unrighteousness” could be translated as “sin” or “evil thoughts and actions” or “wickedness.”
- If possible, it is best to translate this in a way that shows its relationship to “righteous, righteousness.”
- Ways to translate “upright” could include “acting rightly” or “one who acts rightly” or “following God’s laws” or “obedient to God” or “behaving in a way that is right.”
- The term “uprightness” could be translated as “moral purity” or “good moral conduct” or “rightness.”
- The phrase “the upright” could be translated as “people who are upright” or “upright people.”

(See also: [evil](#), [faithful](#), [good](#), [holy](#), [integrity](#), [just](#), [law](#), [law](#), [obey](#), [pure](#), [righteous](#), [sin](#), [unlawful](#))

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 19:16
- Job 1:8
- Psalms 37:30
- Psalms 49:14
- Psalms 107:42
- Ecclesiastes 12:10-11
- Isaiah 48:1-2
- Ezekiel 33:13
- Malachi 2:6
- Matthew 6:1
- Acts 3:13-14
- Romans 1:29-31
- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- Galatians 3:7
- Colossians 3:25
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 1 Peter 3:18-20
- 1 John 1:9
- 1 John 5:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a **righteous** man, living among wicked people.
- **4:8** God declared that Abram was **righteous** because he believed in God's promise.
- **17:2** David was a humble and **righteous** man who trusted and obeyed God.
- **23:1** Joseph, the man Mary was engaged to, was a **righteous** man.
- **50:10** Then the **righteous** ones will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God their Father.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H1368, H2555, H3072, H3474, H3476, H3477, H3483, H4334, H4339, H4749, H5228, H5229, H5324, H5765, H5766, H5767, H5977, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6665, H6666, H6968, H8535, H8537, H8549, H8552, G00930, G00940, G04580, G13410, G13420, G13430, G13440, G13450, G13460, G21180, G37160, G37170

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Referenced in: [John 1 General Notes](#); [John 3 General Notes](#); [John 9 General Notes](#); [John 12 General Notes](#)

Sabbath

Definition:

The term “Sabbath” refers to the seventh day of the week, which God commanded the Israelites to set apart as a day of rest and doing no work.

- After God finished creating the world in six days, he rested on the seventh day. In the same way, God commanded the Israelites to set aside the seventh day as a special day to rest and worship him.
- The command to “keep the Sabbath holy” is one of the ten commandments that God wrote on the stone tablets that he gave Moses for the Israelites.
- Following the Jewish system of counting days, the Sabbath begins on Friday at sundown and lasts until Saturday at sundown.
- Sometimes in the Bible the Sabbath is called “Sabbath day” rather than only the Sabbath.

Translation Suggestions:

- This could also be translated as “resting day” or “day for resting” or “day of not working” or “God’s day of rest.”
- Some translations capitalize this term to show that it is a special day, as in “Sabbath Day” or “Resting Day.”
- Consider how this term is translated in a local or national language.

(See also: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: rest)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 31:2-3
- Acts 13:26-27
- Exodus 31:14
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Lamentations 2:6
- Leviticus 19:3
- Luke 13:14
- Mark 2:27
- Matthew 12:2
- Nehemiah 10:32-33

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:5** “Always be sure to keep the **Sabbath day** holy. That is, do all your work in six days, for the seventh day is a day for you to rest and to honor me.”
- **26:2** Jesus went to the town of Nazareth where he had lived during his childhood. On the **Sabbath**, he went to the place of worship.
- **41:3** The day after Jesus was buried was a **Sabbath** day, and the Jews were not permitted to go to the tomb on that day.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4868, H7676, H7677, G43150, G45210

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Referenced in: [John 5:10](#); [John 9 General Notes](#); [John 9:14](#)

Samaria, Samaritan

Facts:

Samaria was the name of a city and its surrounding region in the northern part of Israel. The region was located between the Plain of Sharon on its west and the Jordan River on its east.

- In the Old Testament, Samaria was the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel. Later the region surrounding it was also called Samaria.
- When the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, they captured the city of Samaria and forced most of the northern Israelites to leave the region, moving them far away to different cities in Assyria.
- The Assyrians also brought many foreigners into the region of Samaria to replace the Israelites who had been moved.
- Some of the Israelites who remained in that region married the foreigners who had moved there, and their descendants were called Samaritans.
- The Jews despised the Samaritans because they were only partly Jewish and because their ancestors had worshiped pagan gods.
- In New Testament times, the region of Samaria was bordered by the region of Galilee on its north and the region of Judea on its south.

(See also: [Assyria](#), [Galilee](#), [Judea](#), [Sharon](#), [kingdom of Israel](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 8:1-3
- Acts 8:5
- John 4:4-5
- Luke 9:51-53
- Luke 10:33

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **20:4** Then the Assyrians brought foreigners to live in the land where the kingdom of Israel had been. The foreigners rebuilt the destroyed cities and married the Israelites who were left there. The descendants of the Israelites who married foreigners were called **Samaritans**.
- **27:8** "The next person to walk down that road was a **Samaritan**. (**Samaritans** were the descendants of Jews who had married people from other nations. **Samaritans** and Jews hated each other.)"
- **27:9** "The **Samaritan** then lifted the man onto his own donkey and took him to a roadside inn where he took care of him."
- **45:7** He (Philip) went to **Samaria** where he preached about Jesus and many people were saved.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H8111, H8115, H8118, G45400, G45410, G45420

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Referenced in: [John 4 General Notes](#)

Sea of Galilee, Sea of Kinnereth, lake of Gennesaret, Sea of Tiberias

Facts:

The "Sea of Galilee" is a lake in eastern Israel. In the Old Testament it was called the "Sea of Kinnereth."

- The water of this lake flows south through the Jordan River down to the Salt Sea.
- Capernaum, Bethsaida, Gennesaret, and Tiberias were some of the towns located on the Sea of Galilee during New Testament times.
- Many events of Jesus' life took place on or near the Sea of Galilee.
- The Sea of Galilee was also referred to as the "Sea of Tiberias" and the "lake of Gennesaret."
- This term could also be translated as "lake in the region of Galilee" or "Lake Galilee" or "lake near Tiberias (Gennesaret)."

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [Capernaum](#), [Galilee](#), [Jordan River](#), [Salt Sea](#))

Bible References:

- John 6:1-3
- Luke 5:1
- Mark 1:16-18
- Matthew 4:12-13
- Matthew 4:18-20
- Matthew 8:18-20
- Matthew 13:1-2
- Matthew 15:29-31

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3220, H3672, G10560, G10820, G22810, G30410, G50850

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Referenced in: [John 6:1](#)

seal, sealed, unsealed

Definition:

When referring to an action, the term “seal” means to close an object with something (usually called a “seal”) that makes the object impossible to open without breaking the seal. When referring to an object, the term “seal” refers to something that was made of wood or metal or stone that was formed into a design so that it could be used to stamp something (make an imprint on it).

- A seal was marked with a design to show who it belonged to.
- Seals were used to mark different objects for the purpose of showing that the thing belonged to the owner or had come from the owner or was approved by the owner.
- Seals were used to indicate the authenticity of something as deriving from the owner or being approved by the owner or belonging to the owner in some way.
- Sometimes a seal was put on the top of a ring so that the owner of the ring could press the seal down into something and make an imprint on it.
- Sometimes seals were attached to a string or cord and worn around the neck.
- Melted wax was used to seal letters or other documents that needed to be protected. When the wax cooled and hardened, the letter could not be opened without breaking the wax seal. The person who received the letter would see the unbroken seal and know that no one had opened it.
- A seal was put on the stone in front of Jesus’ grave in order to keep anyone from moving the stone.

(See also: [Holy Spirit](#), [tomb](#))

Bible References:

- Exodus 2:3
- Isaiah 29:11
- John 6:27
- Matthew 27:66
- Revelation 5:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2368, H2560, H2856, H2857, H2858, H5640, G26960, G49720, G49730

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Referenced in: [John 3:33](#)

sign, proof, reminder

Definition:

The term “sign” usually refers an object, event, or action that communicates a special meaning.

- In the Bible, signs are sometimes given in connection to a promise or covenant that God has made:
 - The book of Genesis describes the rainbow God created in the sky as a sign (or reminder) to himself that he has promised he will never again destroy all life with a worldwide flood.
 - In the book of Genesis, God commanded the Israelites to circumcise their sons as a sign (or indicator) of the fact that he had made his covenant with them.
- Signs can reveal or point to something:
 - The book of Luke describes that an angel gave shepherds a sign that would help them know which baby in Bethlehem was the newborn Messiah.
 - Judas kissed Jesus as a sign to the religious leaders that Jesus was the one they should arrest.
- Signs can prove that something is true:
 - The book of Exodus describes the plagues that destroyed Egypt as signs that showed who Yahweh was and proved that he was greater than Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods.
 - The book of Acts describes the miracles performed by the prophets and apostles as signs that proved they were speaking God’s message.
 - The book of John describes the miracles that Jesus performed as signs that proved he was truly the Messiah.

Translation Suggestions:

- The frequent expression “signs and wonders” could be translated as “proofs and miracles” or “miraculous works that prove God’s power” or “amazing miracles that show how great God is.”
- Depending on its context, “sign” could also be translated as “signal” or “symbol” or “mark” or “evidence” or “proof” or “gesture.”
- To “make signs with the hands” could also be translated as “motion with the hands” or “gesture with the hands” or “make gestures.”
- In some languages, there may be one word for a “sign” that proves something and a different word for a “sign” that is a miracle.

(See also: [miracle](#), [apostle](#), [Christ](#), [covenant](#), [circumcise](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 2:18-19
- Exodus 4:8-9
- Exodus 31:12-15
- Genesis 1:14
- Genesis 9:12
- John 2:18
- Luke 2:12
- Mark 8:12
- Psalms 89:5-6

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0226, H0852, H2368, H2858, H4150, H4159, H4864, H5251, H5824, H6161, H6725, H6734, H7560, G03640, G08800, G12130, G12290, G17180, G17300, G17320, G17700, G39020, G41020, G45910, G45920, G49530, G49730, G52800

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Referenced in: [Introduction to the Gospel of John](#)

sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

The term “sin” refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God’s will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people don’t know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God’s will are called “sinful.”
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a “sinful nature,” a nature that controls them and causes them to sin.
- A “sinner” is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word “sinners” was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who didn’t keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term “sinner” was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- To “sin” could also be translated as to “disobey God” or to “do wrong.”
- Depending on the context “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebellious against God.”
- Depending on the context the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people don’t see or know about.
- The term “sin” should be general, and different from the terms for “wickedness” and “evil.”

(See also: disobey, [evil](#), flesh, [tax collector](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3
- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31

- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, "I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children."
- **13:12** God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- **20:1** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- **21:13** The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no **sin**. He would die to receive the punishment for other people's **sin**.
- **35:1** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinner**s who had gathered to hear him.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**."
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**."
- **48:8** We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- **49:17** Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

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Referenced in: [Introduction to the Gospel of John](#)

Son of Man, son of man

Definition:

The title “Son of Man” was used by Jesus to refer to himself. He often used this term instead of saying “I” or “me.”

- In the Bible, “son of man” could be a way of referring to or addressing a man. It could also mean “human being.”
- Throughout the Old Testament book of Ezekiel, God frequently addressed Ezekiel as “son of man.” For example he said, “You, son of man, must prophesy.”
- The prophet Daniel saw a vision of a “son of man” coming with the clouds, which is a reference to the coming Messiah.
- Jesus also said that the Son of Man will be coming back someday on the clouds.
- These references to the Son of Man coming on the clouds reveal that Jesus the Messiah is God.

Translation Suggestions:

- When Jesus uses the term “Son of Man” it could be translated as “the One who became a human being” or “the Man from heaven.”
- Some translators occasionally include “I” or “me” with this title (as in “I, the Son of Man”) to make it clear that Jesus was talking about himself.
- Check to make sure that the translation of this term does not give a wrong meaning (such as referring to an illegitimate son or giving the wrong impression that Jesus was only a human being).
- When used to refer to a person, “son of man” could also be translated as “you, a human being” or “you, man” or “human being” or “man.”

(See also: [heaven](#), son, [Son of God](#), [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 7:56
- Daniel 7:14
- Ezekiel 43:6-8
- John 3:12-13
- Luke 6:5
- Mark 2:10
- Matthew 13:37
- Psalms 80:17-18
- Revelation 14:14

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0120, H0606, H1121, H1247, G04440, G52070

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Referenced in: [Introduction to the Gospel of John](#)

stone, stoning

Definition:

A stone is a small rock. To “stone” someone is to throw stones and larger rocks at that person with the intention of killing him. A “stoning” is an event in which someone was stoned.

- In ancient times, stoning was a common method of executing people as punishment for crimes they had committed.
- God commanded the Israelite leaders to stone people for certain sins, such as adultery.
- In the New Testament, Jesus forgave a woman caught in adultery and stopped people from stoning her.
- Stephen, who was the first person in the Bible to be killed for testifying about Jesus, was stoned to death.
- In the city of Lystra, the apostle Paul was stoned, but he did not die from his wounds.

(See also: [adultery](#), [commit](#), crime, death, [Lystra](#), [testimony](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 7:57-58
- Acts 7:59-60
- Acts 14:5
- Acts 14:19-20
- John 8:4-6
- Luke 13:34
- Luke 20:6
- Matthew 23:37-39

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0068, H0069, H0810, H1382, H1496, H1530, H2106, H2672, H2687, H2789, H4676, H4678, H5553, H5601, H5619, H6344, H6443, H6697, H6864, H6872, H7275, H7671, H8068, G26420, G29910, G30340, G30350, G30360, G30370, G40740, G43480, G55860

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Referenced in: [John 8:59](#)

word of God, word of Yahweh, word of the Lord, word of truth, scripture

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “word of God” refers to anything that God has communicated to people. This includes spoken and written messages. Jesus is also called “the Word of God.”

- The term “scriptures” means “writings.” It is only used in the New Testament and refers to the Hebrew scriptures, which is the Old Testament. These writings were God’s message that he had told people to write down so that many years in the future people could still read it.
- The related terms “word of Yahweh” and “word of the Lord” often refer to a specific message from God that was given to a prophet or other person in the Bible.
- Sometimes this term occurs as simply “the word” or “my word” or “your word” (when talking about God’s word).
- In the New Testament, Jesus is called “the Word” and “the Word of God.” These titles mean that Jesus fully reveals who God is, because he is God himself.

The term “word of truth” is another way of referring to “God’s word,” which is his message or teaching. It does not refer to just one word.

- God’s word of truth includes everything that God has taught people about himself, his creation, and his plan of salvation through Jesus.
- This term emphasizes the fact that what God has told us is true, faithful, and real.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this term could include “the message of Yahweh” or “God’s message” or “the teachings from God.”
- It may be more natural in some languages to make this term plural and say “God’s words” or “the words of Yahweh.”
- The expression “the word of Yahweh came” is often used to introduce something that God told his prophets or his people. This could be translated as “Yahweh spoke this message” or “Yahweh spoke these words.”
- The term “scripture” or “scriptures” could be translated as “the writings” or “the written message from God.” This term should be translated differently from the translation of the term “word.”
- When “word” occurs alone and it refers to God’s word, it could be translated as “the message” or “God’s word” or “the teachings.” Also consider the alternate translations suggested above.
- When the Bible refers to Jesus as “the Word,” this term could be translated as “the Message” or “the Truth.”
- “Word of truth” could be translated as “God’s true message” or “God’s word, which is true.”
- It is important for the translation of this term to include the meaning of being true.

(See also: [prophet](#), true, [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 15:1
- 1 Kings 13:1
- Jeremiah 36:1-3
- Luke 8:11
- John 5:39
- Acts 6:2
- Acts 12:24
- Romans 1:2
- 2 Corinthians 6:7

- Ephesians 1:13
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- James 1:18
- James 2:8-9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **25:7** In **God's word** he commands his people, "Worship only the Lord your God and only serve him."
- **33:6** So Jesus explained, "The seed is the **word of God**."
- **42:3** Then Jesus explained to them what **God's word** says about the Messiah.
- **42:7** Jesus said, "I told you that everything written about me in **God's word** must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds so they could understand **God's word**.
- **45:10** Philip also used other **scriptures** to tell him the good news of Jesus.
- **48:12** But Jesus is the greatest prophet of all. He is the **Word of God**.
- **49:18** God tells you to pray, to study his **word**, to worship him with other Christians, and to tell others what he has done for you.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0561, H0565, H1697, H3068, G30560, G44870

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Referenced in: [John 1 General Notes](#)

Yahweh

Facts:

The term “Yahweh” is God’s personal name in the Old Testament. The specific origin of this name is unknown, but it is probably derived from the Hebrew verb meaning, “to be.”

- Following tradition, many Bible versions use the term “LORD” or “the LORD” to represent “Yahweh.” This tradition resulted from the fact that historically, the Jewish people became afraid of mispronouncing Yahweh’s name and started saying “Lord” every time the term “Yahweh” appeared in the text. Modern Bibles write “LORD” with all capital letters to show respect for God’s personal name and to distinguish it from “Lord” which is a different Hebrew word.
- The ULT and UST texts always translate this term as, “Yahweh,” in agreement with the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.
- The term “Yahweh” never occurs in the original text of the New Testament; only the Greek term for “Lord” is used, even when quoting the Old Testament.
- In the Old Testament, when God spoke about himself, he would often use his name instead of a pronoun.
- “Yah” is a shortened form of the name Yahweh that occurs in poetry and praise (e.g. Hallelujah = “Praise Yah”), and in some Hebrew names (e.g. Zechariah = “Yah remembers”).

Translation Suggestions:

- “Yahweh” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “I am” or “existing one” or “the one who is” or “he who is present.”
- This term could also be written in a way that is similar to how “Yahweh” is spelled.
- Some church denominations prefer not to use the term “Yahweh” and instead use the traditional rendering, “LORD.” An important consideration is that this may be confusing when read aloud because it will sound the same as the title “Lord.” Some languages may have an affix or other grammatical marker that could be added to distinguish “LORD” as a name (Yahweh) from “Lord” as a title.
- It is best if possible to keep the name Yahweh where it literally occurs in the text, but some translations may decide to use only a pronoun in some places, to make the text more natural and clear.
- Introduce the quote with something like, “This is what Yahweh says.”

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [God](#), [Lord](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 21:20
- 1 Samuel 16:7
- Daniel 9:3
- Ezekiel 17:24
- Genesis 2:4
- Genesis 4:3-5
- Genesis 28:13
- Hosea 11:12
- Isaiah 10:4
- Isaiah 38:8
- Job 12:10
- Joshua 1:9
- Lamentations 1:5
- Leviticus 25:35

- Malachi 3:4
- Micah 2:5
- Micah 6:5
- Numbers 8:11
- Psalm 124:3
- Ruth 1:21
- Zechariah 14:5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:14** God said, "I AM WHO I AM. Tell them, 'I AM has sent me to you.' Also tell them, 'I am **Yahweh**, the God of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is my name forever.'"
- **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."
- **13:5** "Do not make idols or worship them, for I, **Yahweh**, am a jealous God."
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of **Yahweh**, the true God.
- **19:10** Then Elijah prayed, "O **Yahweh**, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, show us today that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3050, H3068, H3069

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Referenced in: [John 8 General Notes](#); [John 13 General Notes](#)

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