



unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Revelation

Version 85

[en]

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Date: 2025-03-28

Version: 85

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Literal Text

Date: 2025-03-28

Version: 85

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

Date: 2025-03-28

Version: 85

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Hebrew Bible

Date: 2022-10-11

Version: 2.1.30

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Greek New Testament

Date: 2023-09-26

Version: 0.34

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Translation Academy

Date: 2025-03-28

Version: 85

Published by: unfoldingWord®

unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Date: 2025-03-28

Version: 85

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Translation Words Links

Date: 2025-03-28

Version: 85

Published by: unfoldingWord

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Revelation

Introduction to Revelation

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the book of Revelation

Opening (1:1–20)
Letters to the seven churches (2:1–3:22)
Vision of God and the Lamb in heaven (4:1–5:14)
The seven seals (6:1–8:1)
The seven trumpets (8:2–13:18)
Worship of the Lamb and judgment against Babylon (14:1–20)
The seven bowls (15:1–18:24)
Worship in heaven (19:1–10)
The destruction of the beast (19:11–21)
The thousand years, destruction of Satan, and final judgment (20:1–15)
The new creation and the new Jerusalem (21:1–22:5)
Closing (22:6–21)

Many interpreters believe that a phrase in 1:19, “what you have seen, and what is, and what is about to happen after these things,” describes three main divisions of the book. “What you have seen” would describe John’s vision of Jesus in chapter 1. “What is” would describe the current situation of the churches, addressed in chapters 2 and 3. “What is about to happen after these things” would describe the visions of the future in the rest of the book.

Who wrote the book of Revelation?

The author identifies himself as John. Many interpreters believe that this means he was the apostle John. However, other interpreters believe this was a different man named John, a prophet who had a ministry among the seven churches described in chapters 2 and 3. In either case, this man wrote the book while on the island of Patmos. The Romans had exiled him there for teaching people about Jesus.

What type of writing is the book of Revelation?

John used a special style of writing to describe his visions. John described what he saw by using many symbols. This style of writing is called symbolic prophecy or apocalyptic literature, and a book written in this style is called an apocalypse.

No other book of the Bible is written entirely in apocalyptic style like the book of Revelation. However, some passages in the books of Ezekiel, Zechariah, and especially Daniel are similar in content and style to Revelation. It may be beneficial to translate Revelation at the same time as Daniel since those two books have a similar style and some shared imagery. (See: **Symbolic Prophecy (p.602)**)

How should we translate the title of this book?

Translators may choose to call this book by one of its traditional titles, such as “Revelation,” “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” “The Revelation to Saint John,” or “The Apocalypse of John.” Or they may choose a different title such as “The Things that Jesus Christ Showed to John.” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

What is the book of Revelation about?

John wrote the book of Revelation to encourage believers to remain faithful even when suffering persecution. In the book, John describes visions he had of Satan and his followers fighting against and killing believers. In these visions, God causes many terrible things to happen on earth to punish wicked people. In the end, Jesus defeats Satan and his followers. Then Jesus comforts those who were faithful. Those believers will live forever with God in the new heavens and earth.

Does one need to understand the book of Revelation in order to translate it?

The book provides the reader with some idea of how to understand its symbols by interpreting a few of them at the beginning (1:20) and near the end (19:8). But one does not need to understand all of the symbols in the book of Revelation in order to translate it properly. Translators should not suggest possible meanings for the symbols in their translations. (See: **Symbolic Prophecy (p.602)**)

Are the events of Revelation past or future?

Since early Christian times, scholars have interpreted Revelation differently. Some scholars think John described events that happened during his lifetime. Other scholars think John described events that happened throughout history, from his time until the return of Jesus. Still other scholars think John described events that will happen in a short period of time just before Christ returns.

Translators do not need to decide about the time reference of the visions in this book in order to translate it, and they should be careful not to let their own beliefs influence how they translate. They should leave the prophecies in the tenses that are used in the ULT.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Angels

People in this culture recognized that God uses created spirits called angels to carry out his purposes. In the book of Revelation, John describes seeing visions of angels announcing and executing God's judgments.

In chapters 1–3 there may be some special uses of the word “angel.” That word can also mean “messenger,” and so the “angels of the seven churches” (1:20) could mean messengers whom those churches had sent to John or whom John was sending to those churches. The word might also refer symbolically to leaders of those seven churches. In 1:1, John says that either God or Jesus “sent through his angel” to make this revelation known. If John is saying that it was God who sent, the “angel” could figuratively mean Jesus as a messenger of God. If John is saying that it was Jesus who sent, the “angel” could mean the actual angel with whom John speaks in 19:10 and 22:9.

In any event, translators should use the word “angel” throughout the book, wherever it appears in the ULT, and not offer interpretations of the word in their translations. (See: **angel, archangel (p.624)**)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Language that would be figurative in other contexts

If your language does not generally use figures of speech, and if you have previously translated other books of the Bible, you may be accustomed to using literal language to translate figurative language. However, that would not be appropriate in this book, since John is describing what he actually saw and heard in his visions. For example, John says in 16:7, “I heard the altar saying.” In other contexts, this might mean that John heard someone standing at the altar saying something. But within the world of these visions, the altar itself could have spoken. In 16:14,

John speaks of “the kings of the whole world.” In other contexts, this might be a generalization for emphasis, and it might be appropriate to translate it as “kings throughout the world.” But in this book, this kind of generalization applies to everyone John saw in his vision, so it can be translated literally. In other contexts, the phrase “the throne of God” might refer figuratively to the presence of God (as it does in Hebrews 4:16, for example). But here it literally means the royal throne upon which God sits as the ruler of the universe. It would be appropriate in all such cases to retain John’s actual language and not translate it as if it were representing something else.

Verb tenses

As John describes his visions, he sometimes changes back and forth between the present and past tenses or between the present and future tenses. You can make these verb tenses consistent in your translation. For example, in 16:21, where John says, “And great hail, about a talent, comes down from heaven upon men, and men blasphemed God because of the plague of hail, because that plague is exceedingly great,” you could say, “And great hail, about a talent, came down from heaven upon men, and men blasphemed God because of the plague of hail, because that plague was exceedingly great.” In 21:24, where John says, “the nations will walk by the light of her, and the kings of the earth bring their glory into her,” you could say, “the nations will walk by the light of her, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into her.”

Singular and plural “you”

Many languages have separate forms for singular and plural “you.” In most contexts in the book of Revelation, it is clear whether one person or a group of people is being addressed and so it is obvious what form to use. Notes will specify which form of the word the book is using when this may not be clear.

Periods of time

John refers to various periods of time in Revelation. For example, there are references to three and a half days, ten days, 1,260 days, and forty-two months. Some scholars think these time periods are symbolic. Other scholars think these are actual time periods. The translator should translate these expressions as referencing actual periods of time. It is a matter of interpretation, not translation, to determine their significance or possible symbolic reference.

“Saints”

John often uses the term “saints” to describe people who believe in Jesus and obey him faithfully. John uses the term by association with the way these people are set apart as holy for God. Your language may have a term or expression of its own that would convey this meaning. In your translation you could also express the meaning plainly by using a phrase such as “disciples of Jesus” or “believers in Jesus.” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

“Amen”

John uses the word “Amen” many times in this book. This is a Hebrew word that people used to express agreement and the wish that something someone said would actually happen. John spells out the word using Greek letters so that his readers will know how it sounds. In your translation you could also spell this word the way it sounds in your language, especially if people in the churches in your area use the word and your readers are likely to understand its meaning. If the word would not be familiar, you could translate it with a phrase that expresses its meaning, as the UST does by translating “Amen” as “May it be so.” However, in 3:14, where Jesus describes himself as “the Amen,” it would probably be most appropriate to spell the word the way it sounds, rather than have Jesus call himself “the May It Be So.” (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.486)**)

“Behold”

As John describes what he saw in his visions, he frequently uses the word “behold” to focus the attention of his listeners on what he is about to say. Jesus also uses the word that way in his letters to the seven churches, and characters in the visions that John sees also use the word in the same sense. The word literally means “look!” or “see!” However, in this usage, the expression means to “see” in the figurative sense of giving notice and attention. If it would be helpful in your language, in your translation you could express the meaning plainly by using an expression such as “listen carefully!” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

“Keep”

In this book, John uses the word “keep” many times to mean “obey.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. For example, in 1:3 you could say “obeying” rather than “keeping.” However, there are two places, 3:10 and 16:15, where the word means “preserve” instead. In 3:10, Jesus actually contrasts these two meanings. He says, “Because you have kept the word of my steadfastness, I will also keep you from the hour of testing.” This means, “Because you have obeyed the word of my steadfastness, I will also preserve you from the hour of testing.” In 16:15, the phrase “the one keeping his garments” means “the one preserving his garments,” that is, keeping them in good repair, “so that he might not walk around naked.” Notes will address these specific uses; in other contexts, translators may find that “obey” is a good way to translate the term “keep.” (See: **Idiom (p. 524)**)

“Certainly not”

In many places throughout the book of Revelation, the ULT uses the expression “certainly not” to translate a double negative that John uses for emphasis. The second negative does not cancel the first to create a positive meaning. If for emphasis your language uses double negatives that do not cancel one another, it would be appropriate to use that construction in these places. (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

“the ones living on the earth”

John uses the expression “the ones living on the earth” in a specific sense in several places in the book (3:10, 6:10, 8:13, 11:10, 13:8, 13:12, 13:14, 17:2, 17:8). In these places John is not referring in general to humans who live in the world. He means specifically people who will disobey God and worship idols at the time of the events that the book of Revelation describes. You may have an expression in your language that you could use in these places with this meaning, such as “worldly people.”

Revelation 1

Revelation 1 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

This chapter explains how the book of Revelation records the vision that John received on the island of Patmos.

- Prologue (1:1-8)

Preface (1:1-3) Address and Doxology (1:4-6) Theme (1:7-8)

- John's Vision of Christ (1:9-20)

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page to make them easier to read. The ULT does this with the words quoted in verse 7.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Language that would be figurative in other contexts

To describe the way he saw Jesus in the opening vision that this chapter relates, John uses much language that would be treated as figurative in other contexts. For example, John says in verse 16 that Jesus had “a sharp, double-edged sword coming out of his mouth,” and yet Jesus was still able to speak. Since Hebrews 4:12 describes the word of God as like a double-edged sword, we might therefore think that this image actually indicates that Jesus speaks the very words of God because he is God himself. But as the General Introduction to Revelation discusses, it would not be appropriate to use literal language like that in your translation to explain the meaning of what John saw. John is describing what he actually saw and heard in his visions, and you should simply translate his descriptions rather than interpreting them.

Seven churches

John wrote this book to seven actual churches in the Roman province of Asia. That province was located in the western part of what is now the country of Turkey. The churches themselves would be found in the southwestern area of Turkey. The list of the churches in verse 11 follows a particular order. The list begins with Ephesus, the most important city at the time, and moves clockwise around the cities, ending with Laodicea, which was the southernmost city. The letters in chapters 2 and 3 follow this same order.

Revelation 1:1

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **revelation**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “The things that God revealed to Jesus Christ” or “The things that Jesus Christ revealed, which God gave him” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

The revelation of Jesus Christ

This phrase could mean: (1) that this book is a **revelation** that came to Jesus from God. Alternate translation: “The revelation to Jesus Christ” (2) that this book is a **revelation** that came from Jesus to John, the author of the book. Alternate translation: “The revelation from Jesus Christ” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

to his servants

Here, **his servants** refers to people who believe in Jesus Christ and accordingly serve him as their Lord. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternative translation: “those who believe in him” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

he signified

The word translated **signified** could mean implicitly (1) that Jesus used signs or symbols to communicate this **revelation**. Alternate translation: “he showed this by signs” (2) that Jesus made known **what must happen soon**. Alternate translation: “he made this known” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

to his servant John

John is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: “to me, John, his servant” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.500)**)

John

The word **John** is the name of a man. See the General Introduction to Revelation for a discussion of who this man may have been. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Revelation 1:2

who attested

Although John uses the past tense and says **testified**, he means that he is testifying to what **he saw** by sending this written record of his visions to the believers in the seven churches. You could indicate this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “who is testifying, by sending you this written record of his visions,” (See: **Irregular Use of Tenses (p.534)**)

the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ

These two phrases mean similar things. John is using them together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “to what God told Jesus Christ to disclose” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

the word of God

Here, John uses **word** figuratively to refer to the message that God spoke by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to the message that God spoke” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the testimony of Jesus Christ

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **testimony**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “to the things about which Jesus Christ testified” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 1:3

the one reading

In this context, the word **reading** implicitly means “reading aloud.” In John's culture, a message to a church, such as the one he is sending to the seven churches in this book, would have been read aloud to the assembled believers. You can indicate this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. (Revelation is not simply declaring a blessing upon any believer today who would read the book out loud in private.) Alternate translation: “the one reading aloud” or “the one reading for others to hear” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 457)**)

the one reading

Here, **the one reading** does not refer to a specific person. It refers to anyone who reads the words of the prophecy aloud. Express this in the way that would be most natural in your language. Alternate translation: “anyone who reads aloud” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.509)**)

keeping

See the discussion of the term “keep” in the General Introduction to Revelation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning of this expression plainly here and elsewhere throughout the book. Alternate translation: “obeying” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

the things having been written in it

If your language does not use this passive form, you could state this in active form. Alternate translation: “the things that I have written in it” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

for the time

Here, **the time** refers specifically to the appointed time when God will make the prophecies in this book come true. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “for the time for the fulfillment of what is written in this book” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 457)**)

Revelation 1:4

John

In this culture, letter writers would give their own names first, and they would refer to themselves in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the first person. If your language has a particular way of introducing the author of a letter, you could also use that. Alternate translation: “From John” or (with no comma following) “I, John, am writing this letter” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.500)**)

to the seven churches in Asia

In this culture, after giving their own names, letter writers would then say to whom they were writing, naming those people in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the second person. Alternate translation: “to you who are members of the seven churches in Asia” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.500)**)

Grace to you and peace from the one being and the one having been and the one coming and from the seven spirits who {are} before his throne

In this culture, letter writers would offer a good wish for the recipient before introducing the main business of the letter. Use a form in your language that makes it clear that this is a greeting and blessing. Alternate translation: “May the one who is and who was and who is coming and the seven spirits who are before his throne give you grace and peace” (See: **Blessings (p.474)**)

Grace to you and peace from the one being and the one having been and the one coming and from the seven spirits who {are} before his throne

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the ideas of **grace** and **peace**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: “May the one who is and who was and who is coming and the seven spirits who are before his throne treat you kindly and make you peaceful” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

to you

The word **you** is plural here because it refers to all of the believers to whom John is writing. So use the plural form here in your translation if your language marks that distinction, and use the singular or plural form in the rest of the book as the context indicates. (As the General Introduction to Revelation explains, these notes will generally only identify forms as singular or plural if that might not be clear from the context.) (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.505)**)

the one being and the one having been and the one coming

These three phrases do not describe three different people. They all refer to God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this explicitly. Alternate translation: “God, who is and who was and who is coming” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

the seven spirits

Here, the **seven spirits** could refer to: (1) the Spirit of God, that is, the Holy Spirit. The Bible can use the number **seven** as a symbol for completeness and perfection, for example, it describes the Holy Spirit with seven attributes

in [Isaiah 11:2](#). If this phrase refers to the Holy Spirit, then John is giving a Trinitarian benediction by mentioning God the Father and the Holy Spirit in this verse and Jesus Christ in the next verse. Alternate translation: “the Holy Spirit” (2) seven individual spirits who serve God. Alternate translation: “the seven spirit beings” or “the seven angelic spirits” (See: **Symbolic Language (p.600)**)

who {are} before his throne

If these are individual **spirits**, is not entirely clear who they are, but they would be seven individual spiritual beings who had important responsibilities serving God. John indicates this by association by noting that they are **before his throne**, that is, in God's presence and ready to serve him whenever needed. Some interpreters believe that they may be the “seven angels” whom John describes in [8:2](#). Alternate translation: “who are always ready to serve him in important ways” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 1:5

and from Jesus Christ

The first half of this verse continues the sentence from the previous verse. It may be helpful to indicate this by repeating some of the information from the previous verse. It may also be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “And may grace and peace also be to you from Jesus Christ” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

the faithful witness,” “the firstborn” from the dead and “the ruler of the kings of the earth

In this verse, John is alluding several times to Psalm 89. In that psalm, God speaks of King David as his “firstborn” and says that he will make him “the most exalted of the kings of the earth.” God also says that he will establish David’s throne forever like the moon, “the faithful witness” in the sky. Psalm 89 as a whole is a meditation on the promises that God gave to David in [2 Samuel 7](#). So all of these allusions indicate that Jesus Christ is the one who fulfills God’s promises to David. You may want to explain this in a footnote. You may also want to mark the phrases that are Old Testament allusions by putting them in quotation marks, as the ULT does. (See: **Quote Markings (p.584)**)

the firstborn” from the dead

John is speaking as if Jesus was literally “born” when he became alive again after he died. Since Jesus was the first person to do this, John says that he is the **firstborn**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the first person to become alive again after dying” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

from the dead

John is using the adjective **dead** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “from among people who have died” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

A new sentence begins here that continues through the rest of the next verse. This sentence praises Jesus. To make this clear for your readers, you could create a verse bridge for verses 5–6 and begin with John’s wish that would Jesus receive glory and power. A verse bridge might say something like this: “May the glory and the power forever be to Jesus because he is the one who loves us and who has released us from our sins by his blood and who has made us a kingdom, priests for his God and Father. Amen.” (See: **Verse Bridges (p.617)**)

To the one loving us

Here, **the one** refers to Jesus Christ. If this is not clear to your readers, you can say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “To Jesus Christ, who loves us” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

us & us & our

By **us** and **our**, John means both himself and his readers. So use the inclusive form of those words in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.498)**)

having released us from our sins

John is speaking of **sins** as if they were something that had held him and his readers captive and from which they needed to be **released**. He means that Jesus obtained forgiveness from God for people's sins. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the one having obtained forgiveness for us for our sins" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

by his blood

John is using the word **blood** to refer by association to the sacrificial death of Jesus, since Jesus shed his blood when he died for **our sins**. Alternate translation: "by his sacrificial death" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 1:6

he has made & his & to him

The pronouns **he**, **his**, and **him** all refer to Jesus. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “Jesus has made ... his ... to Jesus” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

a kingdom, priests to God and his Father

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of a **kingdom**, you could express the same idea in another way. The phrase **a kingdom, priests to God** is an allusion to [Exodus 19:6](#), where God tells the Israelites, “You will be to me a kingdom of priests.” This means that the Israelites will have the God as their king and that they will lead the other people of the world to worship God. Alternate translation: “people who obey God, the Father of Jesus Christ, as their king and who lead others to worship him” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

to God and his Father

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The phrase **his Father** tells who **God** is. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “to God, who is his Father” (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

Father

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.615)**)

to him {be} the glory and the power

If your language does not use abstract nouns for **glory** or **power**, you could express these ideas in other ways. Alternate translation: “may all of creation acknowledge how glorious and powerful he is” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

to the ages

This expression refers to endless future time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “forever” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Amen

See the discussion in the General Introduction to Revelation about how to represent the word **Amen** in your translation here and in its other occurrences throughout the book. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.486)**)

Revelation 1:7

Behold, he is coming with the clouds,” and “every eye will see him, even those who pierced him,” and all the tribes of the earth “will mourn because of him

Behold, he is coming with the clouds is a quotation from [Daniel 7:13](#). The phrases **every eye will see him, even those who pierced him** and **will mourn because of him** are quotations from [Zechariah 12:10](#). It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by setting off these Old Testament quotations with quotation marks, as the ULT does, or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.584)**)

Behold

As the General Introduction to Revelation discusses, here John is using the term **Behold** to focus his listeners' attention on what he is about to say. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation, in this instance and throughout the book. Alternate translation: “Listen carefully!” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

he is coming with the clouds

The pronoun **he** here refers to Jesus Christ. If this is unclear to your readers, you could express the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “Jesus is coming with the clouds” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

he is coming with the clouds

John is referring to Jesus returning from heaven through the sky by association with the **clouds** that are in the sky. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “he will return visibly in the sky” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

every eye will see him

John is using one part of a person, the **eye**, to mean all of a person in the act of seeing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “every person will see him” (See: **Synecdoche (p.605)**)

those who pierced him

John is using one thing that people did to Jesus when they killed him, they **pierced** him, to mean all that they did when they killed him. (Jesus' hands and feet were pierced with nails when he was hung on the cross, and later a soldier pierced his side with a spear to see whether he was dead.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “those who killed him” (See: **Synecdoche (p.605)**)

Yes, Amen

The terms **Yes** and **Amen** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “It will certainly be so!” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 1:8

I am the alpha and the omega,” says the Lord God, “the one being and the one having been and the one coming, the Ruler of All

Here, **says the Lord God** indicates that the clauses that come before and after this phrase are quotations. If it would be helpful in your language, you could move this phrase to the beginning or end of the verse. Alternate translation: “The Lord God says, ‘I am the alpha and the omega, the one being and the one having been and the one coming, the Ruler of All’” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.582)**)

the alpha and the omega,” says the Lord

Some versions add the phrase “the Beginning and the End” after this statement. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to follow the reading of the ULT and not include the extra phrase. (See: **Textual Variants (p. 607)**)

the alpha and the omega

The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet are **alpha** and **omega**. When God says that he is these letters, he means that he is the one who was at the beginning of all things and who will be at the end of all things. If you wish to retain this image in your translation, you could use the first and last letters of your own alphabet. Alternatively, you could use plain language. See the next two notes for further possibilities. Alternate translation: “the A and the Z” or “the one who was at the beginning of all things and who will be at the end of all things” (See: **Metaphor (p. 544)**)

the alpha and the omega

The implication of God having been at the beginning of all things may be that God created all things, and the implication of that fact that God will be at the end of all things may be that God will bring all things to their appropriate end. In other words, God may be asserting his identity as the creator of the world and the ultimate judge of the world. Alternate translation: “the creator and the ultimate judge of the world” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

the alpha and the omega

God may also be using the first and last letters of the alphabet to represent two extremes of time, the beginning and end of time, in order to mean those extremes and all of the time in between. In that case, this expression would be equivalent to what God says in the rest of the quotation in this verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “the one who has always existed” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

the one being and the one having been and the one coming

See how you translated this phrase in [1:4](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 1:9

brother

John is using the term **brother** to indicate that he has the same faith as the people to whom he is writing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “fellow believer” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

partner in the suffering and kingdom and endurance {that are} in Jesus

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **suffering**, **kingdom**, and **endurance**, you could express these ideas in another way. Alternate translation: “someone who is patiently enduring while suffering just as you are because we are loyal to Jesus as our king” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

that are} in Jesus

Alternate translation: “that people who follow Jesus experience”

the island called Patmos

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the island that people call Patmos” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the word of God

John is using the term **word** to mean the message from God that he had shared by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the message from God” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the testimony of Jesus

In this possessive form, **Jesus** is the object rather than the subject of **testimony**. This does not mean **testimony** that Jesus himself gave; it means **testimony** that John gave about Jesus. Alternate translation: “the testimony that I proclaimed about Jesus” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

Revelation 1:10

I was in the Spirit

Here, **in the Spirit** could mean: (1) God's **Spirit**, the Holy Spirit, influenced John so that he could receive divine revelation. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit influenced me" (2) God caused John's spirit to be in a state in which he could perceive revelation. Alternate translation: "God influenced my spirit" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

on the Lord's day

Here, **the Lord's day** means the first day of the week, which was the day on which believers gathered to worship because that was the day on which Jesus rose from the dead. In your translation, you could use the term in your language for the first day of the week. Alternate translation: "one Sunday" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

a loud voice like a trumpet

The point of this comparison is not that the sound of the **voice** was like the sound of a **trumpet** but that the voice was **loud** like a trumpet. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: "a voice as loud as a trumpet" (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

a loud voice

John is referring to someone speaking by association with the **voice** that the person is using to speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "someone speaking loudly" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 1:11

saying

The word **saying** introduces a quotation. What follows is what the voice that John described in the previous verse said. Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. It may be helpful to start a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “That voice said” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.582)**)

Ephesus & Smyrna & Pergamum & Thyatira & Sardis & Philadelphia & Laodicea

The words **Ephesus**, **Smyrna**, **Pergamum**, **Thyatira**, **Sardis**, **Philadelphia**, and **Laodicea** are the names of cities. See the General Notes to this chapter for more information. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Revelation 1:12

the voice that

John is referring to someone speaking by association with the **voice** that the person is using to speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "what person" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 1:13

one} like a son of man

The expression **like a son of man** is an allusion to [Daniel 7:13](#). It means “like a human being.” The point of this comparison is that the figure whom John saw looked like a human. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “a figure who was human in form” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

and a golden sash wrapped around {his} chest

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “He had wrapped a golden sash around his chest” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

a golden sash

A **sash** was a strip of cloth that someone would wrap around the chest to keep a robe closed. Your language may have a term of its own for such an article that you can use in your translation, or you could use plain language. Alternate translation: “a wide strip of golden cloth” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 1:14

his head and hair

John is not saying that both the **head** (that is, the skin of the head) and the **hair** of this person were white. Rather, this phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **head** tells where this **hair** was. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “his hair” (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

were} white as wool—white as snow

If your readers would not be familiar with **snow** or **wool**, in your translation you could use the names of things they would be familiar with, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “were white as cotton, white as egret feathers” or “were brilliantly white” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

were} white as wool—white as snow

The phrases **white as wool** and **white as snow** indicate the same thing. John is using the two phrases together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “as white as the whitest things on earth” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

his eyes {were} like a flame of fire

The point of this comparison is that the **eyes** of this person were very bright, like a **flame**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “his eyes were as bright as a flame of fire” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

a flame of fire

It might seem that the expression **a flame of fire** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: “a flame” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

Revelation 1:15

his feet {were} like bronze as having been refined in a furnace

The point of this comparison is that the **feet** of this person were shining brightly, as refined **bronze** does. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “his feet were shining brightly, as bronze does when it has been refined in a furnace” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

bronze as having been refined in a furnace

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “bronze that someone had refined in a furnace” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

his voice {was} like the sound of many waters

The point of this comparison is that the **voice** of this person was very loud, like the **sound of many waters**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “his voice was very loud, like the sound of many waters” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

of many waters

By **many waters**, John could mean a loud waterfall or raging floodwaters. Alternate translation: “of a waterfall” or “of raging floodwaters” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 1:16

and having

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could start a new sentence here and indicate the subject of **having** explicitly. Alternate translation: “This one who was like a son of man had” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.457))

coming out of his mouth

Be sure it is clear in your translation that this means that the blade of the **sword** was protruding from **his mouth**. The sword itself was not in motion. Alternate translation: “protruding from his mouth” (See: **Symbolic Language** (p.600))

his face as the sun shines

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “his face was shining as the sun shines” (See: **Ellipsis** (p.495))

his face as the sun shines

The point of this comparison is that the **face** of this person was shining as brightly as the **sun** shines. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “his face was shining as brightly as the sun shines” (See: **Simile** (p.595))

in its strength

This expression refers to the greatest brightness of the sun, which occurs at noon, when the sun is highest in the sky. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “at its greatest brightness” or “when it is highest in the sky” (See: **Idiom** (p.524))

Revelation 1:17

at his feet

This expression means that John fell to the ground in front of this person. It does not mean that he landed right on his feet. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “onto the ground in front of him” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

like a dead man

The point of this comparison is that just as a **dead man** is lifeless, John was so overcome by fear that he did not even have the energy to keep standing up. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “because I was so overcome by fear that I lost all my energy and became like a lifeless dead man” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

he placed his right hand on me

Jesus **placed his right hand** on John as a symbolic action to express comfort and assurance to him because he needed encouragement in this moment of fear. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: “he placed his right hand encouragingly on me” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.598)**)

Do not be afraid

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative verb **be afraid**. Alternate translation: “Take courage” (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

the first and the last

This expression has the same meaning as “the alpha and the omega” in 1:8. See how you translated that expression there. Alternate translation: “the one who was at the beginning of all things and who will be at the end of all things” or “the one who created everything and who will bring all things to an end” or “the one who has always existed” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

Revelation 1:18

and the one living

If you translated “I am the first and the last” in the previous verse as “I am the one who has always existed,” then the phrase “and the one living” means basically the same thing. Jesus would be using repetition for emphasis. In your translation, you could connect these phrases with a word other than **and** in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation, following a comma at the end of the previous verse: “yes, I have always been alive” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

to the ages of the ages

See how you translated the similar expression in 1:6. Alternate translation: “forever” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

I have the keys of death and of Hades

Jesus is speaking as if he possesses literal **keys** to **death and Hades**. He means that he has authority over the realm of the dead. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “I have authority over death and Hades” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

I have the keys of death and of Hades

In this context, the terms **death** and **Hades** mean the same thing. They both refer to the abode of the dead. Jesus is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “I have complete authority over the realm of the dead” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

I have the keys of death and of Hades

The implication is that Jesus is able to give life to those who have died and let them out of **Hades**. You can indicate this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “I am able to give life to people who have died and let them out of Hades” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

of death and of Hades

The word **Hades** is the Greek name for the abode of the dead. In your translation, you could spell this word the way it sounds in your language and then explain its meaning. Alternatively, you could use a word for the abode of the dead in your language. Alternate translation: “of Hades, the abode of the dead” (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.486)**)

Revelation 1:19

what you have seen, and what is, and what is about to happen after these things

See the discussion of this phrase in the General Introduction to Revelation. Jesus may be referring to the vision John is presently having of him, the letters he will tell John to write, and the visions John will later see. If that is the case, then Jesus is describing everything he wants John to write by naming its major components. Translate this phrase in such a way that this potential meaning would be clear. (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

Revelation 1:20

The mystery

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be helpful in your language. Alternate translation: "I will explain the mystery" (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

the angels of the seven churches

In chapters 2 and 3, Jesus will dictate a letter to each of the **angels of the seven churches** as if those angels were the churches themselves. So in this vision in chapter 1, these **angels**, symbolized by the **stars** in Jesus' **right hand**, seem to personify the churches. That is, the angels represent the churches as if the churches were people. These **angels** could be: (1) actual angels, that is, spiritual beings. Alternate translation: "angels who represent the seven churches" (2) leaders of the churches, whom Jesus is describing as angels. Alternate translation: "leaders of the seven churches" (3) messengers bringing news of the churches to John and carrying John's letters back to the churches. Alternate translation: "messengers of the seven churches" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 2

Revelation 2 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

- The Letter to Ephesus (2:1-7)
- The Letter to Smyrna (2:8-11)
- The Letter to Pergamum (2:12-17)
- The Letter to Thyatira (2:18-29)

You may wish to set each letter apart so that your readers can easily see that these are separate letters. You could, for example, put a blank line between these letters in your translation.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULT does this with the words in verse 27.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

“the angel of the church”

Jesus addresses each of his letters to the “angel” of the church he is writing to. As a note to [1:20](#) discusses, the word “angel” could have a literal sense, or it could mean “leader” or “messenger.” You should translate “angel” in the introduction to these letters in the same way you decided to translate it in [1:20](#).

Balaam, Balak, and Jezebel

In two of the letters in this chapter, Jesus refers to people whose stories are told in the Old Testament. In the letter to Pergamum, in [2:14](#), he refers to Balaam and Balak, and in the letter to Thyatira, in [2:20](#), he refers to Jezebel. These were all people who tried to harm the Israelites by cursing them or by making them want to stop obeying God. Notes to these verses suggest ways of indicating that Jesus is referring to people whose stories are told in the Bible.

Nicolaitans

In the letter to Ephesus, in [2:6](#), and in the letter to Pergamum, in [2:15](#), Jesus refers to the “Nicolaitans.” This name describes people who followed the teachings or practices of a man named Nicolaus. It is no longer known who he was or what he taught. It is possible that he encouraged believers in Jesus, based on a misunderstanding of what it meant to be spiritual or to have Christian freedom, to take part in feasts at the temples of idols and in the immorality that happened during these feasts. In [2:14–15](#), Jesus seems to associate the teaching of Nicolaus with the teaching of Balaam, who got the Israelites “to eat food sacrificed to idols and to be sexually immoral.” The Hebrew name Balaam has the same meaning as the Greek name Nicolas, “one who conquers the people,” so when Jesus says in [2:14](#) that some in Pergamum follow the teaching of Nicolaus “in the same way” that they follow the teaching of Balaam, he may be saying that the contemporary teaching of Nicolaus is the same as the ancient teaching of Balaam. However, none of this is certain, so it would be best in your translation simply to refer to “the works of the Nicolaitans” in [2:6](#) and to “the teaching of the Nicolaitans” in [2:15](#) without trying to explain those things any further.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Levels of quotation

The opening of each of the letters to the seven churches is a quotation within a quotation, and the main body of each letter is a quotation within a quotation within a quotation. If your language would not put one direct quotation inside another, you can translate the opening of each letter so that its main body is a simple direct quotation. You could end the quotation that begins at 1:17 at the end of 1:20, and you could then have John resume his narrative of his encounter with Jesus at the beginning of each letter. For example, for the first letter, to Ephesus, you could translate 2:1 this way: “Jesus then told me to write to the angel of the church in Ephesus that the one holding the seven stars in his right hand, the one walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, said the following things.” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.587)**)

The use of the second-person singular in letters to groups

Since each of the letters to the seven churches is addressed to an individual “angel,” the words “you” and “your” are singular and the verb forms are second-person singular. However, since the angel represents the church—Jesus is addressing the angel as if the angel were the church—“you” and “your” and the singular verbs are plural in their implied references to the believers in the churches. If singular forms would not be natural in your language in such a context, you could use plural forms in your translation. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.505)**)

In several places, Jesus switches to the second-person plural to speak more directly to the believers themselves. Notes indicate where this happens and suggest using the second-person plural in your translation if that would be natural in your language.

“The one ... says these things”

Jesus begins each of the letters to the seven churches by identifying himself with some of the symbols from the vision that John relates in chapter 1. As he does this, he speaks of himself in the third person. If this would not be natural in your language, you could use the first person in your translation. For example, you could say in 2:1, “I, Jesus, the one holding the seven stars in my right hand and walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, say these things.”

“I know”

At the beginning of each of the letters to the seven churches, Jesus uses the phrase “I know” to express his personal familiarity with what is happening in the churches. This phrase communicates an assurance that Jesus understands the current religious, social, and moral circumstances in which the Christians are living. While the phrase is usually positive, sometimes it expresses a critical assessment. Thus the phrase indicates more than just a knowledge of circumstances on the part of Jesus. It also implicitly asserts a claim to be in a position to make an authoritative judgment, critical if necessary, about how the believers are responding to these circumstances. To show this, you might consider translating “I know” at the start of each letter as “I am well aware of” or with some similar phrase. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

“I have against you”

In several of the letters, Jesus tells the believers in a given church, “I have” something “against you.” This phrase makes a negative, critical statement, even though it is typically found among other, positive statements. It means “there is something about you of which I disapprove.” You could translate this expression with a phrase such as “I disapprove of you because” or “I have a criticism to make of you, that.”

“you have this”

Conversely, in several of the letters Jesus makes a positive statement by telling the believers “you have this” and then naming something about them of which he approves. You could translate this expression with a phrase such as “this is to your credit” or “here is a good thing that you are doing.”

“Let the one who has an ear hear”

Toward the end of each letter, Jesus says, “Let the one having an ear hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.” Jesus says this to emphasize that what he has just said is important and that it may take some effort to understand and put into practice. This expression presents four translation issues that could be addressed in various ways.

- The expression uses a third-person imperative. If your language does not use that form, you could express the meaning in another way that is natural in your language. For example, you could say, “May the one having an ear hear” or “The one who has an ear should hear.” (See: **Third-Person Imperatives (p.609)**)
- The expression might seem to be speaking of a specific person, but it really means any person who fits its description. In your translation, express this in the way that would be most natural in your language. For example, you might say, “Anyone who has an ear should hear” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.509)**)
- Through this expression, Jesus is addressing his audience in the third person, even though he is speaking directly to them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the expression in the second person. You could say, for example, “If you have an ear, then hear” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.500)**)
- The phrase “having an ear” represents the willingness to understand and obey, by association with the part of the body by which people would have received the spoken teaching of Jesus. In your translation, you might say something such as, “Anyone who is willing should understand and obey” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

“to the one conquering”

At the end of each letter, Jesus makes a promise “to the one conquering.” This expression describes someone who wins a victory, such as on the battlefield or in a sports contest. In the context of the book of Revelation, it refers to a person who refuses to worship idols even at the risk of persecution and death. The expression is therefore paradoxical: The person is said to conquer or win a victory, even though it appears that his enemies have defeated him, since they have put him in prison or even killed him. In your translation, you may wish to express the meaning plainly by saying something such as “to the one who refuses to worship idols even at the risk of persecution and death.” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

The expression “to the one conquering” might seem to be speaking of a specific person, but it really means any person who fits its description. In your translation, express this in the way that would be most natural in your language. For example, you might say “to anyone who conquers” or “to anyone who refuses to worship idols even at the risk of persecution and death.” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.509)**)

Revelation 2:1

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The one holding the seven stars in his right hand, the one walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, says these things

See the General Notes to this chapter for a discussion of how you could translate this verse so that there is not a quotation within a quotation and so that the letter that follows in verses 2–7 is not a quotation within a quotation. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.587)**)

To the angel of the church in Ephesus

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, here and in verses 8, 12, and 18 you should translate the term **angel** the way you did in 1:20. Alternate translation: “To the angel who represents the church in Ephesus” or “To the leader of the church in Ephesus” or “To the messenger of the church in Ephesus” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

The one holding the seven stars in his right hand, & says these things

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, Jesus is identifying himself by referring to symbols from the vision that John describes in chapter 1. As Jesus does this, he speaks 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, Jesus, the one holding the seven stars in my right hand ... say these things” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 2:2

I know

See the discussion of the phrase **I know** in the General Notes to this chapter. Alternate translation: “I am well aware of” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

your & your & you can not & you have tested & you have found

See the discussion in the General Notes to this chapter of how Jesus is using the second-person singular to address the “angel” of this church. Throughout this letter and the other letters in chapters 2 and 3, it may be more natural in your language to use the plural form of second-person pronouns and verbs, since Jesus is actually addressing all of the believers in the churches. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.505)**)

evil ones

Jesus is using the adjective **evil** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. The word is plural, and the ULT adds the word **ones** to show this. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this adjective with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “evil people” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

Revelation 2:3

because of my name

Here, **name** represents a person by association with the way that each person has a name. Alternate translation: “because of me” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

have not grown weary

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative verb **grown weary**. Alternate translation: “have remained strong” (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

have not grown weary

Jesus is referring to giving up by association with the way that people who have **grown weary** often give up what they have been doing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “have not given up” or “have not abandoned your faith in me” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 2:4

I have against you that

See the discussion of the expression **I have against you** in the General Notes to this chapter to decide how to translate the expression here and in its other occurrences in these letters. Alternate translation: "I disapprove of you because" or "I have a criticism to make of you, that" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

you have abandoned your first love

To stop doing something is spoken of as leaving it **behind**. Here the expression **you have left behind your first love** represents **love** as an object that can be forsaken. Alternate translation: "you have stopped loving me as you did at the beginning"

Revelation 2:5

from where you have fallen

Jesus is speaking as if the believers in Ephesus have literally **fallen** from a height. He means that they are no longer devoted to him in the way they originally were. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “how much you once loved me” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

do the first works

Here the word **first** indicates earliest in time rather than chief in importance. Alternate translation: “demonstrate your devotion to me in the way you did originally” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

I will remove your lampstand from its place

Jesus is not speaking of a literal **lampstand** here; when he says that he will remove this lampstand, he means that the assembly of believers in Ephesus will no longer exist. However, since Jesus refers to the lampstands in John’s vision at the opening of this letter, it would be good to show the connection between the reference there and the reference here. In your translation, you might translate the term **lampstand** directly here but then explain its meaning. Alternate translation: “I will remove your lampstand from its place, yes, you will no longer be a church” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 2:6

you have this, that you hate

See the discussion of the expression **you have this** in the General Notes to this chapter to decide how to translate the expression here and in its other occurrences in these letters. Alternate translation: “this is to your credit, that you hate” or “here is a good thing that you are doing: you hate” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

of the Nicolaitans

The word **Nicolaitans** is the name for people who followed the teachings and practices of a man named Nicolaus. See the General Notes to this chapter for a discussion of the Nicolaitans. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Revelation 2:7

Let the one having an ear hear

See the discussion in the General Notes to this chapter of how to translate this third-person imperative, found here and towards the end of each of the letters, if your language does not use that form. Alternate translation: “May the one having an ear hear” or “The one who has an ear should hear” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.500)**)

Let the one having an ear hear

See the discussion in the General Notes to this chapter of how to translate this expression that might seem to be speaking of a specific person but which really refers to any person who fits its description. Alternate translation: “Anyone who has an ear should hear” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.509)**)

Let the one having an ear hear

Through this expression, Jesus is addressing his audience in the third person, even though he is speaking directly to them. As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, if it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the expression in the second person, here and in its other occurrences in chapters 2 and 3. Alternate translation: “If you have an ear, then hear” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.500)**)

Let the one having an ear hear

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, the phrase “having an ear” represents the willingness to understand and obey, by association with the part of the body by which people would have received the spoken teaching of Jesus. Alternate translation: “Anyone who is willing should understand and obey” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

To the one conquering

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, Jesus is speaking as if the person to whom he is making this promise will win a victory. He is actually referring to a person who refuses to worship idols even at the risk of persecution and death. In your translation, you may wish to express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “To the one who refuses to worship idols even at the risk of persecution and death” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

To the one conquering

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, while the expression “to the one conquering” might seem to be speaking of a specific person, it really means any person who fits its description. Alternate translation: “to anyone who conquers” or “to anyone who refuses to worship idols even at the risk of persecution and death” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.509)**)

the tree of life

Jesus is using this possessive form to identify this **tree** not as having life but as giving **life**. In other words, Jesus means not a living tree but a life-giving tree. Alternate translation: “the life-giving tree” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

the tree of life

This is a reference to the description in [Genesis 2:9](#) of the **tree of life** that was in the Garden of Eden. The fruit of that tree enabled anyone who ate it to live forever. So Jesus is saying by implication that he will give everlasting life

to anyone who remains faithful to him. However, since the tree of life appears in the closing vision of the book, in [22:2](#), it would be good to retain the image here rather than simply express its meaning in plain language. So you might translate the phrase **tree of life** directly but then explain its meaning. Alternate translation: “I will grant to him to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God, yes, I will grant him everlasting life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 2:8

And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who became dead but lived, says these things

If you translated the letter to Ephesus in verses 1–7 so that its main body was a simple direct quotation, you can continue to do that with each of the letters. Alternate translation: “Then Jesus told me to write to the angel of the church in Smyrna that the first and the last, who became dead but lived, said these things” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.587)**)

The first and the last, who became dead but lived, says these things

If you have decided to use the second person to translate these opening statements in which Jesus refers to himself in the third person, you can continue to do that here. Alternate translation: “I, Jesus, the first and the last, who became dead but lived, say these things” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.500)**)

The first and the last

See how you translated the phrase **The first and the last** in [1:17](#). (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

Revelation 2:9

you are rich

Jesus is speaking as if the believers in Smyrna were literally **rich**, even though he has just acknowledged their **poverty**. He means that they are spiritually rich because God will reward them for their faithfulness and suffering. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "God will reward you richly" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

but they are not

Jesus is speaking as if the people who are slandering the believers in Smyrna are literally **not** Jews. He means that they are acting as if they were not Jews, since they are persecuting people who sincerely worship the God of Israel. This makes them **not** Jews in some spiritual sense. Alternate translation: "but who are not acting in the way that Jews should" (See: **Irony (p.531)**)

are} a synagogue of Satan

Jesus is speaking as if the **synagogue** where these Jews gathered was literally devoted to the worship of **Satan** instead of the God of Israel. He means that when these Jews gather together and **slander** genuine believers, they are serving Satan's purposes rather than God's. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that plainly. Alternate translation: "their gatherings really serve Satan's purposes rather than God's" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 2:10

to throw {some} of you into prison

Jesus does not mean that the devil will literally **throw** some of the believers in Smyrna **into prison**. That is, the devil will not pick them up and heave them through the air. Alternate translation: “to have some of you put in prison” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

to throw {some} of you into prison

Jesus is speaking of **the devil** as the person who will do this action, but Jesus is using the devil to represent everyone who will be responsible for it. The Jews in Smyrna would actually have the believers put in prison, acting under the devil's influence. Alternate translation: “to influence people to put some of you in prison” (See: **Synecdoche (p.605)**)

so that you will be tested

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “so that he can test you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

so that you will be tested

The words **so that** introduce the purpose for which **the devil** will **throw** some of the believers **into prison**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Be sure that it is clear to your readers that this is a purpose that the devil is pursuing. Jesus is not saying that he is going to use the devil to test the believers to see if they will remain faithful. Alternate translation: “to try to get you to abandon your faith” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.481)**)

you & you will be tested, & you will have

The word **you** is plural in these instances. Jesus is speaking more directly to the believers in Smyrna to warn them about the suffering they are about to experience. If your language marks a distinction between singular and plural forms of “you” and if you have been using the singular forms of “you” and “your” in these letters because they are addressed to individual angels, you may consider using the plural form of “you” here if that would be natural in your language. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.505)**)

for ten days

As the General Introduction to Revelation discusses, time references such as this one may have symbolic significance. In this case, by allusion to [Daniel 1:14](#), **ten days** may represent a short or limited amount of time for testing. However, as the Introduction explains, it would be appropriate to translate this as a literal period of time rather than offering an interpretation of the phrase such as “for a short time of testing.” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

the crown of life

Jesus is speaking he will literally give these believers **life** as a crown to wear. He is using the word **crown** to mean “reward.” If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “everlasting life as your reward” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 2:11

Let the one having an ear hear & The one conquering

See how you translated these phrases in [2:7](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

The one conquering will certainly not be hurt by the second death

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "The second death will certainly not hurt anyone who conquers" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

certainly not

As the General Introduction to Revelation discusses, John frequently uses a double negative for emphasis that the ULT translates with the expression "certainly not," as in this case. The second negative does not cancel the first to create a positive meaning. If for emphasis your language uses double negatives that do not cancel one another, it would be appropriate to use that construction here and in the other instances of this double negative throughout the book. (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

the second death

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "death number two" or "the next death" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

will certainly not be hurt by the second death

Jesus is speaking as if people who had died would die a **second** time. By **the second death**, he means separation from God. That is spiritual death, just as physical death involves the separation of the human soul and spirit from the human body. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "will certainly not experience separation from God after he dies physically" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 2:12

the sharp, double-edged sword

See how you translated this phrase in [1:16](#). (See: **Symbolic Language (p.600)**)

Revelation 2:13

where the throne of Satan {is

Jesus is speaking as if **Satan** literally had a **throne** in the city of Pergamum. He means that Satan has great influence in that city. (This could be a reference to a giant altar to the god Zeus that existed in Pergamum at this time.) Alternate translation: “in a city where Satan has great influence” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

you hold my name

Here, **name** represents a person by association with the way that each person has a name. Alternate translation: “you hold on to me” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

you hold my name

Jesus is speaking as if the believers in Pergamum were literally holding on to him. He means that they are continuing to trust him despite the suffering they are experiencing. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you continue to trust me” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

you did not deny my faith

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative verb **deny**. Alternate translation: “you continued to believe in me” (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

my faith

In this possessive form, **Jesus** is the object rather than the subject of **faith**. That is, this does not mean faith that Jesus has, it means the faith that these believers have in Jesus. Alternate translation: “your faith in me” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

in the days of Antipas

Jesus is using the term **days** to refer to a specific time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “during the time of Antipas” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

of Antipas

The word **Antipas** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

my faithful one

Jesus is using the adjective **faithful** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “who was faithful to me” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

who was killed

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: “whom your enemies killed” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

you

The word **you** is plural in this instance. Jesus is speaking more directly to the believers in Pergamum because of the suffering they all experienced when Antipas was killed. If your language marks a distinction between singular and plural forms of “you” and if you have been using the singular forms of “you” and “your” in these letters, you may consider using the plural form of “you” here if that would be natural in your language. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.505)**)

where Satan lives

Jesus is speaking as if **Satan** literally lived in Pergamum. He means that Satan has great influence in that city. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “where Satan has such great influence” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 2:14

I have a few things against you

See how you translated the similar phrase in [2:4](#). (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

ones holding the teaching of Balaam

Jesus is speaking as if the believers in Pergamum were literally **holding** the **teaching of Balaam**. He means that they are doing what this teaching instructs them to do. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “people who are obeying the teaching of Balaam” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

ones holding the teaching of Balaam

Jesus is referring to teaching that condones practicing sexual immorality and eating food sacrificed to idols by association with the way that **Balaam** advised **Balak** to get the Israelites to do those things. (See the discussion in the General Notes to this chapter.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “people who teach the same things that Balaam did” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

of Balaam, & Balak

The words **Balaam** and **Balak** are the names of men. Their story is told in [Numbers 22:1-24:45](#). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could identify them further in your translation. Alternate translation: “of the ancient prophet Balaam ... Balak, the king of Moab,” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

to throw a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat idol-offerings and to be sexually immoral

Jesus is speaking as if **Balak** had literally thrown a **stumbling block**, something that would make people trip and fall, in front of the Israelites. He means that Balaam tempted them and got them to sin. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “how to tempt the sons of Israel into sinning by eating food sacrificed to idols and being sexually immoral” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

the sons of Israel

Here, **sons** figuratively means “descendants.” Jesus is identifying the Israelites as descendants of their ancestor Israel (who was also known as Jacob). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the people of Israel” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

idol-offerings

The word translated **idol-food** describes food that was offered to idols. People then often ate this food as a way of worshipping the idols. Alternate translation: “food sacrificed to idols” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 2:15

ones holding the teaching

See how you translated the similar phrase in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “people who are obeying the teaching” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

of the Nicolaitans

See how you translated the word **Nicolaitans** in [2:6](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Revelation 2:16

But if not

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from earlier in the sentence if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “But if you do not repent” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

them

The pronoun **them** refers to the “ones holding the teaching of the Nicolaitans,” whom Jesus describes in the previous verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “these people who obey the teachings of the Nicolaitans” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

wage war against them with the sword of my mouth

Jesus is speaking as if he will literally **wage war** against the disobedient believers in Pergamum with the **sword** in his **mouth**. He likely means that he will announce a punishment against them that will become effective as soon as he speaks it. You could say that in your translation. The UST models one way to do that. However, since the symbol of the sword comes from the opening vision in the book, and since Jesus uses it to identify himself at the beginning of this letter, and since the symbol also appears in one of the last visions in the book, in [19:15-21](#), you may wish to retain the symbol in your translation rather than state the meaning plainly here. (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 2:17

of the hidden manna

If your language does not use the passive form in this way for the word **hidden manna**, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “some manna that I have hidden” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

a new name written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way for the word **written**, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “a new name that I have written” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

no one knows except the one receiving it

If it would appear in your language that Jesus is contradicting himself by saying that **no one knows** the new name but then saying that **the one receiving it** knows this name, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: “only the person receiving it knows” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.479)**)

Revelation 2:18

The Son of God

Son is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.615)**)

the one having his eyes like a flame of fire and his feet like bronze

See how you translated these phrases in [1:14](#) and [1:15](#). (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 2:19

love and faith and service and your endurance

If your language would not use an abstract nouns for the ideas of **love**, **faith**, **service**, and **endurance**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. Alternate translation: "how you have loved and trusted and served me and how you have endured" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

your last works {are} greater than the first

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: "your last works are greater than the first works you did" (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

Revelation 2:20

Jezebel

The word **Jezebel** is the name of a woman. It is not clear whether this is the actual name of this woman or whether Jesus is calling her by this name because she is like the wicked Queen Jezebel whose story is told in the Old Testament. The UST models one way of indicating that this may be an allusion to the Old Testament rather than the actual name of this woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

she teaches and deceives

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **deceives** tells what the result is of what Jezebel **teaches**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “she deceptively teaches” (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

Revelation 2:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 2:22

I will throw her onto a bed

Jesus is referring to punishing Jezebel with sickness by association with the **bed** that she would have to lie on because she was sick. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I will punish her by making her gravely ill" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the ones committing adultery with her into great tribulation

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: "I will throw the ones committing adultery with her into great tribulation" (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

the ones committing adultery with her into great tribulation

Jesus does not mean that he will literally **throw** the disobedient believers in Thyatira into **tribulation**. That is, he will not pick them up and heave them through the air. Alternate translation: "I will cause the ones committing adultery with her to experience great tribulation" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 2:23

her children

The word **children** could mean: (1) literal children of Jezebel and the men who, as verse 22 describes, have been “committing adultery” with her. Alternate translation: “the children she has had with her adulterous lovers” (2) the disciples of Jezebel. (However, since Jesus says in the previous verse that he will cause these disciples to experience tribulation if they do not repent, it appears that Jesus is giving them the opportunity to repent, so it seems unlikely that he would immediately pronounce a death sentence against them here.) Alternate translation: “her disciples” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

I am the one searching kidneys and hearts

Here, **kidneys** represent people’s thoughts and **hearts** represent their emotions. Alternate translation: “I am able to determine exactly what each person is thinking and feeling” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

of you & your

The word **you** is plural in these instances. Jesus is speaking more directly to the believers in Thyatira in order to warn them that he is going to judge them imminently. You may consider using the plural form of “you” here if that would be natural in your language. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.505)**)

Revelation 2:24

to you, & you

The word **you** is plural in these instances. Jesus is speaking more directly to the faithful believers in Thyatira in order to encourage them. You may consider using the plural form of “you” here if that would be natural in your language. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.505)**)

the deep things of Satan, as they call them

The people Jesus is quoting have been using the adjective **deep** as a noun to mean a certain kind of thing. The adjective is plural, and the ULT adds the word **things** to show this. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “the things pertaining to Satan that they call deep” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

as they call them

The pronoun **they** is an indefinite pronoun that does not have a specific referent in the immediate context. Jesus is using this indefinite construction to focus on what is being said rather than on who is saying it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this with a different expression that does not use an indefinite pronoun. Alternate translation: “as the people who do hold this teaching call them” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

I do not put another burden on you

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: “that I do not put another burden on you” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.587)**)

I do not put another burden on you

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this as a positive statement. Alternate translation: “I put only this one burden on you” (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

I do not put another burden on you

Jesus is speaking as if he might literally put a **burden** on the believers in Thyatira. He is referring to something he might require of them. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “I do not require anything else of you” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

another burden

By **another burden**, Jesus means implicitly no burden other than the one he is about to mention. You can indicate this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “any burden on you other than the following:” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 2:25

only hold what you have until I come

If you translated the beginning of this quotation in the previous verse as an indirect quotation so that there would not be a quotation within a quotation, you can also translate the end of the quotation here as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “except to hold on to what you have until I come” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p. 587)**)

hold what you have

By **what you have**, Jesus means implicitly the good things that the faithful believers in Thyatira have been doing. (See the discussion of the phrase “you have” in the General Notes to this chapter.) Alternate translation: “continue to do the good things that you are doing” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

hold what you have

Jesus is speaking as if he wants the believers in Pergamum literally to **hold** on to the good things that they have been doing. He means that he wants the believers to continue doing these things. Alternate translation: “continue to do the good things that you have been doing” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

hold & you have

Jesus is continuing to use the plural form of **you** as he speaks to the faithful believers in Thyatira in order to encourage them. You may consider using the plural form of “you” here if that would be natural in your language. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.505)**)

Revelation 2:26

the one conquering and the one keeping

Here Jesus is expressing a single idea by using two phrases connected with **and**. The phrase **the one keeping** tells how **the one conquering** is able to conquer. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “the one conquering by keeping” (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

the one conquering and the one keeping

Jesus is not referring to a specific person who is **conquering** in this way. He means any person who conquers in this way. Express this in the way that would be most natural in your language. Alternate translation: “anyone conquering by keeping” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.509)**)

the one keeping my works

See the discussion in the General Introduction to Revelation of the word “keep.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning of this expression plainly. Alternate translation: “the one obediently doing what I command” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

the one keeping my works

The possessive form **my works** describes not what Jesus does but what Jesus commands believers to do. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the one doing the works that I command” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

Revelation 2:27

And he will rule them with an iron sceptre, as clay jars are shattered

This verse is a quotation of [Psalm 2:9](#). You may wish to indicate this in your translation by putting the words of this verse within quotation marks or by using some other punctuation or convention that your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.584)**)

he will rule them

The pronoun **he** refers to “the one conquering” and the pronoun **them** refers “the nations” in the previous verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the one conquering will rule the nations” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

with an iron sceptre

Jesus is speaking as if the one conquering will literally use **an iron scepter** to **rule** the nations. He means that he will rule with great strength, by association with the way that **iron** is very strong. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. However, since Jesus is quoting this image from Psalm 2, and since the image recurs in [12:5](#) and [19:15](#), you may wish to retain the image in your translation. Alternate translation: “with great strength” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

as clay jars are shattered

The point of this comparison is that the one conquering will defeat his enemies as easily as **clay jars are shattered**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “defeating his enemies as easily as clay jars are shattered” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

as clay jars are shattered

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “as one shatters clay jars” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 2:28

as I also have received

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “as I also have received authority” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

my Father

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.615)**)

the morning star

Jesus is speaking as if he will literally give the faithful believers in Thyatira **the morning star**. This could mean: (1) confident hope about the future, just as the appearance of the morning star (that is, the planet Venus) shows that a new day is about to begin. (2) a deep and meaningful relationship with Jesus, who says in [22:16](#), “I am ... the bright morning star.” You could say either of these things in your translation. The UST models one way to express the first possibility. However, since this image recurs later in the book, you may wish to retain it here by translating the phrase **the morning star** directly. (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 2:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 3

Revelation 3 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

- The Letter to Sardis (3:1-6)
- The Letter to Philadelphia (3:7-13)
- The Letter to Laodicea (3:14-22)

You may wish to set each letter apart so that your readers can easily see that these are separate letters. You could, for example, put a blank line between these letters in your translation.

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 verse 7.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

“The angel of the church”

See the discussion of this concept in the General Notes to chapter 2.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

See the discussion in the General Notes to chapter 2 of the translation issues in the letters to the seven churches.

Revelation 3:1

you have a name that you are alive

Here, **name** represents the reputation of a person or group. Alternate translation: “you have a reputation for being alive” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

that you are alive, but you are dead

When Jesus says that the believers in Sardis have a reputation for being **alive**, he does not mean literally alive, but spiritually vibrant, that is, obeying and honoring God and experiencing God’s presence and power. Similarly, when Jesus speaks as if the believers in Sardis were literally **dead**, he means that they are not spiritually vibrant. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “for being spiritually vibrant, but actually you are not” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 3:2

Becoming waking

Jesus is speaking as if the believers in Pergamum were asleep and needed to wake up. He means that they are complacent and need to become concerned about their spiritual state. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Become concerned about your spiritual state" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

strengthen the remainder that is about to die

When Jesus says that there are some remaining things in Sardis that are **about to die**, as in the previous verse, he is speaking of the absence of spiritual vibrancy as if it were literally death. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "strengthen the few things about you that are still spiritually vibrant" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

for I have not found your works completed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "I have not found that you have completed your works" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

before my God

Here the expression **before my God** means "in front of my God," that is, "where my God can see them." Sight, in turn, represents attention, perspective, and judgment. Alternate translation: "from my God's perspective" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 3:3

how you have received and heard

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **heard** tells by what means the believers in Sardis learned the things about Jesus that they **received** (that is, believed). If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “how you received the things that you heard” (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

how you have received and heard

Jesus means implicitly the things that the believers in Sardis **heard** and **received** (believed) about him. You can indicate this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “how you believed the teaching about me when you heard it” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

be keeping and repent

The believers in Sardis first need to **repent** before they can be **keeping** (that is, obeying) the things that they **received** when they first **heard** about Jesus, so it might be more natural to put the word “repent” before the word “keeping.” Alternate translation: “repent and be obedient” (See: **Information Structure (p.529)**)

if you should not be awake

As in the previous verse, Jesus is speaking as if the believers in Pergamum were asleep and needed to wake up. Once again he means that they are complacent and need to become concerned about their spiritual state. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “if you do not become concerned about your spiritual state” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

I will come like a thief

The point of this comparison is that just as a thief comes unexpectedly, so Jesus will come unexpectedly. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “I will come unexpectedly like a thief” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 3:4

But you have

See the discussion of the phrase “you have” in the General Notes to chapter 2. Alternate translation: “But this is to your credit, that there are” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

names

Here, **names** represent people by association with the way that each person has a name. Alternate translation: “people” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

have not stained their clothes

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative verb **stained**. Alternate translation: “have kept their clothes clean” (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

have not stained their clothes

Jesus is speaking as if the disobedient believers in Sardis had literally **stained their clothes** while the obedient ones had not. He means that the obedient believers have not compromised their character by sinning. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. However, since Jesus continues the clothing image in the next phrase, you may wish to retain it here by translating the phrase **stained their clothes** directly. Alternate translation: “have not compromised their character by sinning” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

they will walk with me

In this context, the word **walk** refers to how people live and behave. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “they will live in relationship with me” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

in white

Jesus is using the adjective **white** as a noun to mean a certain kind of clothing. He specifies in the next verse that he means “white garments.” Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “in white garments” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

in white

Jesus may mean that faithful and obedient believers actually will wear **white** clothing when they live with him as their everlasting reward, since this is depicted several times in the course of the book. If so, wearing this white clothing would be a symbolic action indicating the purity of their lives and their devotion to Jesus. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: “in white clothing that is symbolic of their purity” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.598)**)

Revelation 3:5

will be clothed thus in white garments

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “will wear white garments in this way” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 452)**)

I will certainly not wipe out his name

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative verb **wipe out**. Alternate translation: “I will certainly keep his name in the Book of Life” (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

I will confess his name

Here, **name** represents a person by association with the way that each person has a name. Alternate translation: “I will acknowledge him” or “I will acknowledge that he belongs to me” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

before my Father and before his angels

Here the word **before** means “in front of” or “in the presence of” another person. Alternate translation: “in the presence of my Father and in the presence of his angels” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Father

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.615)**)

his angels

See how you translated **angel** in [1:20](#). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 3:6

Let the one having an ear hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches

You can translate this statement in its three occurrences in this chapter the same way you translated it in its four occurrences in chapter 2. (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 3:7

The Holy One, the True One

Jesus is using the adjectives **Holy** and **True** as nouns to describe himself as a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate these words with equivalent phrases, as the ULT does by adding the word **One** in each case. (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

the one having the key of David

Jesus is not referring to a literal **key**. Rather, he is quoting from Isaiah 22:22, where God says that he will make a man named Eliakim the administrator of the royal palace in Jerusalem and give him the “key of the house of David,” symbolizing authority over the kingdom that the dynasty of David rules. As the Messiah, Jesus now has David’s royal authority. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the one having royal authority as the Messiah” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

the one opening and no one will shut and shutting and no one opens

This is a continuation of the quotation and the image of the key from Isaiah 22:22. These two phrases say the same thing in opposite ways. God, speaking through Isaiah, was using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express, that he would give this new palace administrator authority that no one could defy. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine the phrases or express their meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “who decides definitively whether to open a door or to lock it shut” or “whose authority no one can defy” (See: **Parallelism (p. 562)**)

Revelation 3:8

behold, I have put before you an opened door that no one is able to shut it

In order to keep what Jesus says he knows about the believers in Philadelphia together with the phrase **I know your works**, you may wish to move this statement to the end of the verse and make it a separate sentence. (See: **Information Structure (p.529)**)

I have put before you an opened door

This **opened door** could symbolize: (1) an opportunity to proclaim the gospel or (2) entrance into everlasting life with Jesus. However, since the image of the **door** continues the image of the key from the previous verse, you may wish to retain the image by translating the phrase **I have put before you an opened door** directly. (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

I have put before you an opened door

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "I have opened a door before you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

I have put before you an opened door

Here the word **before** means "in front of." The implication is that the believers in Philadelphia can go through this door, since it is open right in front of them. Alternate translation: "I have opened a door in front of you that you can go through" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

that no one is able to shut it

It might seem that this expression contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: "that no one is able to shut" (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

you have kept my word

Jesus is using the term **word** to mean the commandments he has given by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "you have obeyed my commandments" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

you have not denied my name

Here, **name** represents a person by association with the way that each person has a name. Alternate translation: "you have not denied me" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

you have not denied my name

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative verb **denied**. Alternate translation: "you have acknowledged me" or "you have acknowledged that you believe in me" (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

Revelation 3:9

Behold, I will give {those} of the synagogue of Satan, the ones saying themselves to be Jews, but they are not, rather, they are lying, behold, I will make them so that they will come

It might seem that this sentence contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it by saying **behold** just once and by saying only **I will make** and not also **I will give**. Alternate translation: “Behold, those of the synagogue of Satan, the ones saying themselves to be Jews, but they are not, rather, they are lying, I will make them so that they will come” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

those} of the synagogue of Satan

See how you translated the expression **synagogue of Satan** in 2:9. Alternate translation: “those whose gatherings really serve Satan’s purposes rather than God’s” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

but they are not, rather, they are lying

See how you translated the similar expression in 2:9. Alternate translation: “but who are not acting in the way that Jews should” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

bow down before your feet

The enemies of the believers in Philadelphia would **come and bown down** at **their feet** as a symbolic action to show that they honored and respected these believers. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: “to bow down before your feet as a gesture of honor and respect” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.598)**)

before your feet

Jesus is using one part of the believers in Philadelphia, their **feet**, to mean their entire beings. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “before you” or “in front of you” (See: **Synecdoche (p.605)**)

I have loved you

For emphasis, Jesus is stating the pronoun **I**, whose meaning is already present in the verb **have loved**. If your language can state implied pronouns explicitly for emphasis, you may want to use that construction here in your translation. Other languages may have other ways of expressing this emphasis. Alternate translation: “I have certainly loved you” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

Revelation 3:10

you have kept my word of endurance

Jesus is using the term **word** to a command he has given by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you have kept my command of endurance” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

you have kept my word of endurance

Jesus is using this possessive form to describe a **word** or statement that commands **endurance**, not a statement characterized by endurance (that is, one that endures). Alternate translation: “you have obeyed my command to endure” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

my word of endurance

If your language would not use an abstract noun for the idea of **steadfastness**, you could express it with the verb “to endure.” See how you translated this word in [1:9](#) and in [2:2](#). Alternate translation: “my admonition to suffer patiently” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

you have kept & I will also keep you

See the discussion in the General Introduction to Revelation of the various ways in which the word **keep** is used in this book. Alternate translation: “you have obeyed ... I also will protect you” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

the hour of testing

Jesus is using the term **hour** to refer to a specific time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the time of testing” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

the ones living on the earth

See the discussion in the General Introduction to Revelation of how to translate this phrase. Alternate translation: “worldly people” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 3:11

I am coming quickly

The implication is that Jesus is **coming quickly** to judge people for whether or not they have remained faithful to him. You can indicate this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “I am coming quickly to judge” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Hold what you have

Alternate translation: “Continue doing the things that are to your credit” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

so that no one may take your crown

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the verb that is negative in this context, **take**. Alternate translation: “so that you will indeed have your crown” (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

crown

See how you translated **crown** in [2:10](#). Alternate translation: “your reward” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 3:12

I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God

Jesus is speaking as if he would literally make a faithful and victorious believer a **pillar** in God's temple. This likely symbolizes that the believer will always be in God's temple, just as a pillar is a permanent fixture. (Indeed, Jesus says specifically that this believer will not leave the temple anymore.) If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I will have him remain always in the temple of my God" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Jerusalem

The word **Jerusalem** is the name of a city. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Revelation 3:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 3:14

The Amen

See how you translated the word **Amen** in [1:5](#), and see the discussion in the General Introduction to Revelation of how to translate this word. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.486)**)

faithful and true

The terms **faithful** and **true** mean similar things. Jesus is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “entirely faithful” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

the beginning of the creation of God

Jesus is most likely using this possessive form to describe himself as the one who began the creation of God, that is, the one through whom God created all things. Jesus is likely using this phrase to mean the same thing as he does when he describes himself as “the alpha” or “the first.” Jesus is not saying that he was the first creature God created. Jesus is not a created being, he is the eternally begotten Son of God. Alternate translation: “the one through whom God created all things” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

Revelation 3:15

cold nor hot. & cold or hot

Jesus is speaking as if the believers in Laodicea were literally water that was a certain temperature. He is using the word **hot** to mean diligently obedient to God and the word **cold** to mean stubbornly resistant to God, so he means that the Laodiceans are complacent and indifferent. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “disobedient nor obedient ... disobedient or obedient” (See: **Metaphor (p. 544)**)

Revelation 3:16

lukewarm and neither hot nor cold

In this verse, Jesus continues to develop the image of water temperature that he introduced in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “complacent and neither obedient nor disobedient” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

I am about to spew you out of my mouth

In the context of this image, when Jesus that says he will **spew** or spit the Laodiceans out of his mouth, he means that he will reject them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “I am about to reject you as I would spit out lukewarm water” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 3:17

For you say, 'I am rich and have become wealthy and have no need

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: "For you say that you are rich and have become wealthy and have no need" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.587)**)

the miserable and pitiable and poor and blind and naked one

Jesus is using the adjectives **miserable**, **pitiable**, **poor**, **blind** and **naked** as nouns to describe a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. Other languages may have other ways of showing this meaning, such as the ULT does by adding the word **one**. Alternate translation: "a person who is miserable, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

the miserable and pitiable and poor and blind and naked one

Jesus is speaking as if the Laodiceans were literally **miserable**, **pitiable**, **poor**, **blind** and **naked**. He means that this is what they are like spiritually. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "spiritually very needy and unhealthy" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

the miserable and pitiable and poor and blind and naked one

The words **miserable**, **pitiable**, and **poor** mean similar things. Jesus is using these terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: "extremely poor as well as blind and naked" (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 3:18

to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you might become rich

Jesus is speaking as if he wants the believers in Laodicea literally to buy **gold** from him. He is using gold to symbolize spiritual riches, meaning things such as a profound knowledge of God and a life transformed into the image of Christ. When Jesus says that this gold is **refined by fire**, he means that it is pure gold, that is, genuine wealth; by contrast, the riches that the Laodiceans have are not true riches. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to seek genuine spiritual riches from me so that you will be truly wealthy” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

gold refined by fire

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “gold that fire has refined” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

white garments so that you might clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness might not be shown

Jesus is speaking as if he wants the believers in Pergamum literally to buy **white garments** from him. As in 3:4, white clothing symbolizes purity of life and devotion to Jesus. Accordingly, **nakedness** symbolizes a sinful life and indifference towards Jesus. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to seek my help in being devoted to me so that you will live a pure life and not be shamefully disobedient” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

might not be shown

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “might not appear” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

salve to anoint your eyes so that you might see

Jesus is speaking as if he wants the believers in Pergamum literally to buy **salve** from him to **anoint** their **eyes**. He said in the previous verse that they were “blind,” and this likely symbolized their lack of spiritual discernment. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to seek my help in becoming spiritually discerning” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 3:19

I, as many as I love, rebuke and discipline

For emphasis, Jesus is stating the pronoun **I**, whose meaning is already present in the verbs **rebuke** and **discipline**. If your language can state implied pronouns explicitly for emphasis, you may want to use that construction here in your translation. Other languages may have other ways of expressing this emphasis. Alternate translation: “I certainly rebuke and discipline as many as I love” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

rebuke and discipline

The terms **rebuke** and **discipline** mean similar things. Jesus is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “diligently correct” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

be zealous and repent

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The verb **be zealous** tells how Jesus wants the Laodiceans to **repent**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “repent zealously” (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

Revelation 3:20

I stand at the door and knock. If anyone should hear my voice and open the door, I will indeed enter to him and will eat with him, and he with me

Jesus is speaking as if he were literally standing outside a **door** and seeking entrance to a house. He means that he is seeking to have personal fellowship with each of the Laodiceans to whom he is writing. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I am seeking personal fellowship with each one of you. If anyone recognizes this and wants to have fellowship with me as well, I will certainly enter into a relationship with him of the most intimate kind" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

knock

To **knock** at a **door** means to hit it a few times to let a person inside the house know you are standing outside. You could translate this expression with the way people in your culture show that they have arrived at a house, such as "call out" or "cough" or "clap." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

my voice

The word **voice** could mean: (1) by implication, that in addition to knocking on the door, Jesus is also calling out to the person inside the house. Alternate translation: "me calling as I knock" (2) the sound of the knocking. Alternate translation: "the sound of me knocking" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

will eat with him, and he with me

Jesus is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: "I will eat with him and he will eat with me" (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

will eat with him, and he with me

Since people share table fellowship with others in their homes only if they have a close relationship, Jesus is using eating together to symbolize that he will become a good friend of the person who welcomes him. You can indicate this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "I will eat with him and he will eat with me, as good friends do" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 3:21

to sit with me on my throne

Jesus is speaking as if a victorious believer would literally **sit with** him on his **throne**. He means that the believer will share his ruling authority. He means the same thing when he says that he has **sat** with his **Father** on his **throne**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I will share my ruling authority with him, as I also ... have come to share my Father's ruling authority" (See: **Metaphor (p. 544)**)

Father

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.615)**)

Revelation 3:22

Let the one having an ear hear

See how you translated this phrase in [2:7](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Let the one having an ear hear

See how you translated this phrase in [2:7](#). (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.500)**)

the Spirit

Here, **the Spirit** most likely refers to God's Spirit, or simply the Holy Spirit of God's triune nature, in contrast to the spirit of the writer or author which one finds in [1:10](#). In other words, the Holy Spirit addresses the messages and contents of each letter written to each of the seven churches which are addressed in chapters two and three (See: Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). See the chapter introductions for chapter 2 and for chapter 3 to read this same explanatory note. (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 4

Revelation 4 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

At this point in the book of Revelation, John has finished describing the letters to the churches. In this chapter he begins to describe a vision of heaven that God showed him.

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 verses 8 and 11.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Jasper, carnelian, and emerald

These words refer to special stones that the people in John's culture valued for their beauty. If the people in your culture do not consider stones to be valuable, in your translation you can emphasize that it was the beauty of the stones that made such an impression on John.

Twenty-four elders

John does not explain who or what he means by "elders" when he describes seeing them in the vision he relates in this chapter. These 24 elders may be symbolic of the whole people of God through the ages. There were 12 tribes of Israel in the Old Testament Israel and 12 apostles of Jesus in the New Testament church. In chapter 21, John describes seeing the names of the 12 tribes of Israel on the gates of the New Jerusalem and the names of the 12 apostles on the foundations of that city. However, it is not necessary to offer an explanation in your translation of who these elders might be. If your language has a word for a distinguished older person who is a leader in the society, it would be appropriate to use it without any further explanation.

Giving glory to God

God's glory is the great beauty and radiant majesty that God has because he is God. Other Bible writers describe it as if it were a light so bright that no one can look at it. No one can give God this kind of glory, because it is already his. When people give glory to God or when God receives glory, people say that God has the glory that is his, that it is right for God to have that glory, and that people should worship God because he has that glory. In your translation, be sure that it is clear that when people "give glory" to God, they are not giving God something that he does not already have. Instead, people are acknowledging that God is already glorious. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/glory\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/worthy\]\]](#) and **prostrate, bow down, worship (p.637)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Difficult images

Such things as bolts of lightning coming from the throne, lamps that are spirits, and a sea in front of the throne may be difficult to imagine. However, John is describing what he actually saw and heard in his visions, so you can translate his descriptions directly. See the discussion of this in the General Introduction to Revelation. (See:

Symbolic Prophecy (p.602))

Revelation 4:1

a door opened in heaven and the first voice

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: "I saw a door opened in heaven and I heard the first voice" (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

a door opened in heaven

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "an open door in heaven" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

a door opened in heaven

John is speaking as if there were literally a **door** leading into heaven through which he could see. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I could see through an opening into heaven" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

like a trumpet

The point of this comparison is not that the sound of the **voice** was like the sound of a **trumpet** but that the voice was **loud** like a trumpet. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: "that had been loud like the sound of a trumpet" (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 4:2

I was in the Spirit

See how you translated this expression in [1:10](#). Alternate translation: “the Holy Spirit influenced me” (See: **Idiom (p. 524)**)

on the throne one sitting

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “on the throne there was one sitting” or “someone was sitting on the throne” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

Revelation 4:3

was} like in appearance to a jasper stone and to a carnelian, & like in appearance to an emerald

The point of these comparisons is that the **one sitting** on the throne and the **rainbow** were dazzling in their **appearance**, like the gemstones John describes. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “was dazzling in appearance, like a jasper stone and a carnelian ... dazzling in appearance like an emerald” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

to a jasper stone and to a carnelian, & to an emerald

The terms **jasper**, **carnelian**, and **emerald** describe gemstones. Jasper is often red, carnelian is often orange, and emerald is usually brilliant green. If your readers would not be familiar with these precious stones, in your translation you could use the name of comparable gems that they would recognize, or you could use general expressions. Alternate translation: “to a red or orange gemstone ... to a brilliant green gemstone” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 4:4

dressed in white garments

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "wearing white garments" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 4:5

sounds and thunders

The word translated **sounds** could mean: (1) noises, in which case **sounds and thunders** might be a phrase that expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **thunders** would tell what kind of noises these are. Alternate translation: “rumblings of thunder” (2) voices. Alternate translation: “voices and thunders”

lamps of fire

This possessive form does not mean that the **lamps** were made **of fire** but that they burned with fire. Alternate translation: “flaming lamps” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

the seven spirits

See how you translated this expression in [1:4](#). (See: **Symbolic Language (p.600)**)

Revelation 4:6

was} as a glass sea, like crystal

The point of these comparisons could be that the **sea** was (1) clear or (2) sparkling, like **glass** and **crystal**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “was a sea that was as clear as glass or crystal” or “was a sea that was sparkling like glass or crystal” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

before and behind

John is using two sides of the body, the front and the back (what is **before** and **behind** a being), to mean the whole body. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “over their whole bodies” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

Revelation 4:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 4:8

around and underneath

John is using two sides of the body, the top and the bottom (what is **around** and **underneath** a being), to mean the whole body. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language.

Alternate translation: "over their whole bodies" (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

do not have & night and day, saying

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the verb **rest**, which in this context means to "stop." Alternate translation: "saying continuously night and day" (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

night and day

The living creatures are using the two main components of time, **night** and **day**, to mean all the time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "at any time" (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

Revelation 4:9

will give glory and honor and thanks to the one sitting

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **glory**, **honor**, and **thanks**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: “glorify and honor and thank the one sitting” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

to the ages of the ages

See how you translated the same expression in [1:18](#). (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

the living creatures

See how you translated **living creatures** in [4:6](#). (See: **Symbolic Language (p.600)**)

Revelation 4:10

will fall

Be sure that it is clear in your translation that the elders do not fall down accidentally. They bow down in front of the throne as a gesture to honor God. Alternate translation: “will bow down respectfully” (See: **Symbolic Action (p. 598)**)

they will lay their crowns before the throne

The elders respectfully place their **crowns** on the ground to show that they are submitting to God’s authority over them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: “they will lay their crowns on the ground in front of God’s throne to show that they are submitting to him” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.598)**)

Revelation 4:11

Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the idea of **glory**, **honor**, and **power**, you could express the same ideas in another way. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

you have created

For emphasis, the elders are stating the pronoun **you**, whose meaning is already present in the verb **have created**. If your language can state implied pronouns explicitly for emphasis, you may want to use that construction here in your translation. Other languages may have other ways of expressing this emphasis. Alternate translation: “it was you who created” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

they existed and were created

The expressions **existed** and **were created** mean similar things. The elders are using the two expressions together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “they came into being” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 5

Revelation 5 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

In this chapter, John continues to describe a vision of heaven that God showed him.

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 in verses 9-13.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Sealed scroll

Kings and important people in John's time wrote important documents on large pieces of paper or animal skin. They then rolled them up and sealed them with wax so they would stay closed. Only the person to whom the document was written had the authority to open it by breaking the seal. In this chapter, "the one who was seated on the throne" had written the scroll. Only the person called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," "the Root of David" and "the Lamb" had the authority to open it. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/other/scroll\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/authority\]\]](#))

Twenty-four elders

The 24 elders whom John introduced in chapter 4 appear in this chapter as well. In your translation, you can use the same term for them here as you did there.

Revelation 5:1

written on the inside and on the back

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “with writing on the front and the back” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 452)**)

having been sealed with seven seals

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “God had sealed the scroll with seven seals” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 5:2

I saw

It may be more natural in your language to say “heard” rather than **saw** in this context. Alternate translation: “I heard”

to open the scroll and to break its seals

Since someone would need to break the **seals** in order to **open the scroll**, in your translation you may wish to relate these events in the order in which they would have to happen. Alternate translation: “to break the seals and open the scroll” (See: **Order of Events (p.557)**)

Revelation 5:3

in heaven or on the earth or under the earth

John is using the main components of creation—**heaven**, **earth**, and the underworld—to mean all of creation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “anywhere in creation” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

or to read it

The word **or** introduces the purpose for which someone would **open the scroll**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: “in order to read it” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.481)**)

Revelation 5:4

I was weeping much because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to read it

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to read it, I was weeping much” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.484)**)

no one was found

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the angel did not find anyone” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

no one was found

Here the expression **no one was found** could simply mean “there was no one.” You could say that as an alternate translation. (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 5:5

the Lion from the tribe of Judah

This elder is alluding to the prophecy in [Genesis 49:8-10](#) in which Jacob says that a ruler for Israel will come from the **tribe of Judah** and in which Jacob compares that ruler to a strong **Lion**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the promised ruler from the tribe of Judah” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

the Root of David

This elder is also alluding to the prophecy in [Isaiah 11:1](#) that speaks of the Messiah as if he were a “shoot” from the “stump of Jesse” (the father of King David), a “branch from his roots.” In that prophecy Isaiah then refers to this “shoot” as the “root of Jesse” itself. The elder is speaking similarly here. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the Descendant of David” or “the Messiah descended from David” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

has conquered to open

The words **has conquered** introduce the reason for the result that the words **to open** describe. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a result clause. Alternate translation: “has conquered so as to be worthy to open” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.484)**)

Revelation 5:6

as having been

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. The meaning is that the Lamb, although he was alive, had marks or cuts that indicated that at one point others had killed him with violence. Alternate translation: “who had marks that showed that others had once killed him violently” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

of God sent

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “whom God has sent” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 5:7

he came

The pronoun **he** refers to the Lamb, not to the elder who was speaking with John. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the Lamb came” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

Revelation 5:8

fell before

Be sure that it is clear in your translation that the living creatures and elders did not fall down accidentally. They bowed down in front of the Lamb as a gesture to honor him. Alternate translation: “bowed down respectfully to” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.598)**)

each one having

It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. This could mean: (1) that each of the **elders** had a harp and golden bowls of incense. Alternate translation: “Each of the elders had” (2) that each of the **living creatures** and **elders** had a harp and golden bowls of incense. Alternate translation: “Each of the living creatures and elders had” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

which are the prayers of the saints

When John says that these **golden bowls** are the **prayers of the saints**, he likely means by association that the incense in the bowls represents the prayers, since prayers ascend to God in heaven similarly to the way that incense rises through the air and pleasantly attracts attention. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this by using a singular verb that would refer to the **incense** rather than a plural verb that would refer to the **bowls**. Alternate translation: “which is the prayers of the saints” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

of the saints

As the General Introduction to Revelation discusses, John often uses the term **saints** to describe people who believe in Jesus and obey him faithfully. John uses the term by association with the way these people are set apart as holy for God. Your language may have a term or expression of its own that would convey this meaning that you could use throughout the book. You could also use plain language. Alternate translation: “of the disciples of Jesus” or “of believers in Jesus” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 5:9

you were slaughtered and with your blood you bought {people} for God

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “you allowed people to slaughter you so that with your blood you could buy people for God” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

with your blood

This could mean: (1) the actual **blood** that Jesus offered as a sacrifice for sin. In that case, you could use the word for “blood” in your language with literal meaning and say “with your blood” as the ULT does. (2) the sacrificial death of Jesus, by association with the blood that Jesus shed when he died. Alternate translation: “through your sacrificial death” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

you bought {people}

The living creatures and elders are speaking as if the Lamb literally **bought** people for God. They mean that through his sacrificial death, the Lamb saved them by setting them free from the guilt and power of sin. Your language may have a term that you can use in your translation that describes someone paying a price or making a sacrifice to set someone else free. Alternate translation: “you redeemed people” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

from every tribe and language and people and nation

The terms **tribe**, **language**, **people**, and **nation** mean similar things. John is using the four terms together to make a comprehensive statement. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “from every different people group” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 5:10

a kingdom and priests

See how you translated the similar phrase in [1:6](#).

on the earth

John is using the term **earth** to mean by association the people who live on the earth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “over the people of the earth” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 5:11

myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands

Since **myriads** are larger than **thousands** and John wants to convey what a great number of angels he saw and heard, it might be more natural to put the smaller number first and build up to the larger number. Alternate translation: “thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads” (See: **Information Structure (p.529)**)

myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands

John may be using these multiples of large numbers to indicate implicitly that the number of angels was too great to count. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “too great to count” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

myriads of myriads

A myriad is a hundred hundred or ten thousand. Your language may have its own term for this number. You could also use a general expression. Alternate translation: “tens of thousands of tens of thousands” or “hundreds of millions” (See: **Numbers (p.554)**)

Revelation 5:12

having been slaughtered

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “who allowed others to slaughter him” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 452)**)

to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **power, wealth, wisdom**, strength, honor, glory, and praise**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. See how you translated the similar expression in [4:11](#). (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 5:13

every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and everything in them

The phrase **everything in them** means basically the same thing as the phrase **every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea**. The second phrase emphasizes the meaning of the first phrase by repeating the same idea with different words. John is describing his vision in a way reminiscent of Hebrew poetry, which was based on this kind of repetition. It would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if the repetition might be confusing, you could connect the phrases with a word other than **and** in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: “every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, yes, everything in them” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

in heaven and on earth and under the earth

John is using the main components of creation—**heaven**, **earth**, the underworld, and the **sea**—to mean all of creation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. See how you translated the similar expression in [5:3](#). Alternate translation: “everywhere in creation” (See: **Merism (p. 542)**)

To the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb {be} praise and honor and glory and power

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the idea of **praise**, **honor**, **glory**, and **power**, you could express the same ideas in another way. See how you translated the similar expressions in [4:11](#) and [5:12](#). (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

to the ages of the ages

See how you translated the same expression in [1:18](#). Alternate translation: “forever” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 5:14

the elders fell down and worshiped

Some ancient manuscripts read **the elders fell down and worshiped**. ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts add “the one who lives to the ages of the ages.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it has. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.607)**)

Amen

See how you translated **Amen** in [1:6](#). (See: **Symbolic Language (p.600)**)

fell down

Alternate translation: “bowed down respectfully” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.598)**)

Revelation 6

Revelation 6 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

This chapter describes what John saw happen when the Lamb opened each of the first six seals on the scroll that God gave him. (The Lamb does not open the seventh seal until chapter 8.)

- The first seal (6:1–2)
- The second seal (6:3–4)
- The third seal (6:5–6)
- The fourth seal (6:7–8)
- The fifth seal (6:9–11)
- The sixth seal (6:12–16)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Seven seals

See the discussion in the General Notes to chapter 5 of the seals that kept important documents secure in this culture.

Four horsemen

As the Lamb opens each of the first four seals, John describes seeing horsemen riding differently colored horses. The colors of the horses may symbolize how each rider will affect the earth. However, it is not necessary to suggest the meaning of these colors in your translation. (See: **Symbolic Prophecy (p.602)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Ordinal numbers

John uses the ordinal numbers “second” through “sixth” in verses 3, 5, 7, 9, and 12. If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers or equivalent expressions in your translation. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

Similes

In verses 12–14, John makes several comparisons in order to describe the images he saw in his vision. He compares these images to everyday things. Notes to these verses suggest ways you might indicate the points of these comparisons in your translation. (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 6:1

as with a voice of thunder

The point of this comparison is that just as **thunder** is loud, so the **voice** of this living creature was loud. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “in a voice that was as loud as thunder” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 6:2

a crown was given to him

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “he received a crown” or “God gave him a crown” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

he went out conquering and that he might conquer

John may mean that the rider on the white horse went out “as a conquering one,” that is, with all the capacity of a conqueror. In that case, for emphasis he would be using a construction in which a subject and its verb come from the same root. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to express the meaning here.

Alternatively, your language may have another way of showing the emphasis. Alternate translation: “he went out as a conqueror who was going to conquer” (See: **Poetry (p.567)**)

Revelation 6:3

he opened

The pronoun **he** refers to the Lamb. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers, here and in verses 5, 7, 9, and 12. Alternate translation: “the Lamb opened” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

the second seal, & the second living creature

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, if your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers or equivalent expressions in these instances. Alternate translation: “seal number two ... living creature number two” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

Revelation 6:4

to the one sitting on it, it was granted to him

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God allowed the one sitting on it" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

to take peace from the earth

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: "to keep the earth from being peaceful" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

to take peace from the earth

John is using the term **earth** to mean by association the people who live on the earth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to keep the people living on the earth from being peaceful" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

they will slaughter

The pronoun **they** refers generally to the people living on the earth. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: "people will slaughter" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

a great sword was given to him

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God gave him a great sword" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 6:5

a balance

The word **balance** describes an instrument for determining the weight of an object or comparing the weight of two objects. It consists of a central post with a crossbar from which two pans are hung. An object may be placed in one pan and known weights placed in the other pan until the crossbar remains level, meaning that both pans contain an equal weight. Or one object may be placed in one pan and a different object in the other pan; the pan that hangs lower contains the heavier object. Since John is describing what he saw, it would be appropriate to use the name or a description of the ancient tool rather than use the name of a modern device for weighing things. Alternate translation: “a balancing scale” or “a weighing instrument” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 6:6

saying

This **voice** is giving instructions to the rider on the black horse. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “saying to the rider on the black horse” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

A choenix of wheat for a denarius and three choenices of barley for a denarius

The implication is that there would be famine, so that **wheat** and **barley**, the staple crops in this culture, would become scarce and very expensive. (The balance that John describes the third rider holding in the previous verse may symbolize weighing grain for sale.) You could indicate this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “Create famine that will cause grain to become so scarce that a choenix of wheat will cost a denarius and three choenices of barley will cost a denarius” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

A choenix of wheat & three choenices of barley

A **choenix** was a measure equivalent to about one liter or one quart. The plural of choenix is **choenices**. Alternate translation: “one liter of wheat ... three liters of barley” or “one quart of wheat ... three quarts of barley” (See: **Biblical Volume (p.469)**)

for a denarius & for a denarius

The **denarius** was a silver coin that was worth a day’s wages for a laborer. You could try to express this amount in terms of current monetary values, but that might cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate, since those values can change over time. So instead you could use a general expression or give the equivalent in wages. Alternate translation, in each instance: “for one silver coin” or “for the pay for one day of work” (See: **Biblical Money (p.467)**)

do not harm

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative verb **harm**. Alternate translation: “be careful to preserve” (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

Revelation 6:7

I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying

John is using one part of the **fourth living creature**, its **voice**, to mean all of it in the act of speaking. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I heard the fourth living creature saying" (See: **Synecdoche (p.605)**)

Revelation 6:8

Hades

See how you translated the term **Hades** in [1:18](#). (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.486)**)

authority was given to them

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God gave authority to them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

one fourth of the earth

Here, **the earth** represents the people of the earth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "one fourth of the people on the earth" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

one fourth of the earth

Here, **one fourth** means one part out of four equal parts. Alternate translation: "one out of every four people on the earth" (See: **Fractions (p.507)**)

the sword

John is using the term **sword** to mean warfare by association with the way the people of his time used swords as weapons in warfare. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "warfare" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

death

John is likely using the general term **death** to mean one specific cause of death, disease. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "disease" (See: **Synecdoche (p.605)**)

Revelation 6:9

the altar

John mentions an **altar** here without having described it previously while relating what he saw in this vision. He seems to mean a golden altar that was in front of God's throne, as he later describes in [8:3](#) and [9:13](#). You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "a golden altar that was in front of God's throne" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

of the ones having been slaughtered

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the ones whom people had slaughtered" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

because of the word of God and because of the testimony that they were having

These two phrases mean similar things. John is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: "because they testified to the word of God" (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

because of the word of God

John is using the term **word** to mean the message that God communicated to believers by using words and that God wants believers to share by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "because they shared the message from God" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

because of the testimony that they were having

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **testimony**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "because they testified about Jesus" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 6:10

Until when, holy and true Ruler, do you not judge and avenge our blood from the ones living on the earth

The souls are using the question form for emphasis. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: “Holy and true Ruler, we want you to judge and avenge our blood from the ones living on the earth without any further delay!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.591)**)

do you not judge and avenge our blood from the ones living on the earth

Since the souls actually want God to **judge** the **ones living on the earth** and **avenge** their **blood**, it may be more natural to present the phrases in that order. Alternate translation: “do you not judge the ones living on the earth and avenge our blood from them” (See: **Information Structure (p.529)**)

avenge our blood from the ones living on the earth

The souls are using the term **blood** by association to mean their deaths. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “punish the ones living on the earth to avenge our deaths” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the ones living on the earth

The souls are implicitly saying that they want God to judge and punish the **ones living on the earth** who killed them. See how you translated this expression in [3:10](#). Alternate translation: “the worldly people who killed us” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 6:11

a white robe was given to each of them, and it was said to them

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God gave each of them a white robe and told them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

should be completed both

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "people had killed all of" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

both their fellow servants and their brothers

The terms **fellow servants** and **brothers** mean similar things. The two terms are being used together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: "all of those who believed in Jesus as they did" (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

brothers

Here the term **brothers** describes people who share the same faith. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "fellow believers" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

brothers

Although the term **brothers** is masculine, here the word has a generic sense that includes both men and women. If you wish to retain the expression in your translation, you could word it in a way that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

Revelation 6:12

a great earthquake

An **earthquake** is a natural disaster in which the ground shakes, often destroying buildings, bridges, and other structures. Your language and culture may have a term for an **earthquake** that you can use in your translation. You could also use a general expression. Alternate translation: “a great shaking of the ground” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

like sackcloth {made} of hair

The word **sackcloth** describes clothing for mourning that in this culture was woven from black goat hair. In this culture, the color black was associated with death. Alternate translation: “like mourning clothing” or “like the feathers of a raven” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

the full moon became like blood

The point of this comparison is that just as **blood** is red, the **full moon** turned red. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “the full moon became red like blood” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 6:13

the stars of the sky

It might seem that the expression **the stars of the sky** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: “the stars” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

fell

The point of this comparison is that just as all the **fruit** on a **fig tree** might fall at once if a **great wind** shook the tree, so John saw all of the **stars** fall at once. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “all fell at once” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

being shaken by a great wind

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation, with no comma preceding: “when a great wind shakes it” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

as a fig tree drops its unseasonable fruit

If your readers would not be familiar with a **fig tree**, you could use the name of a fruit tree that they would recognize or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “as a fruit tree drops its late-ripening fruit” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

unseasonable fruit

The term **unripe** describes **fruit** that normally remains on a tree and ripens later. Alternate translation: “later-ripening fruit” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 6:14

the sky was split like a scroll being rolled up

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the sky rolled up as a scroll does when it splits” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the sky was split like a scroll being rolled up

The point of this comparison is that the sky went away, just as a scroll would roll away to the two sides of a surface if it split while someone had it spread out on that surface. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “the sky rolled away and disappeared, just as a scroll rolls up in two pieces if it splits” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

were removed from their places

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “moved from their places” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

were removed from their places

The implication is that the **mountains** and **islands** disappeared when they **were removed from their places**. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “moved from their places and disappeared” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 6:15

chiliarchs

The word **chiliarchs** describes officers in the Roman army who were in charge of groups of 1,000 soldiers. If your readers would not recognize this term, in your translation you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “military officers” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

the rich and the powerful

John is using the adjectives **rich** and **powerful** as nouns to mean certain kinds of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate these words with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: “rich people and powerful people” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

and every slave and free {person}

John may not be mentioning people who were **slave** and **free** in addition to all of the preceding people on this list. Instead, he may be using the two main civil statuses in his culture, **slave** and **free**, to mean all people. So this would be a summary of everyone on the list. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this in plain language. Alternate translation, preceded by a comma: “indeed, all people, regardless of their status,” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

Revelation 6:16

they say to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us

The people are addressing things that they know cannot hear them, the **mountains** and the **rocks**, in order to express in a strong way what they are feeling. If your readers might not recognize what the people are doing, you could translate this in a way that would make that clear. Alternate translation: “they were saying that they wished the mountains and rocks would fall on them and hide them” (See: **Apostrophe (p.455)**)

the face

The people are using the word **face** to mean by association the area in front of **the one sitting on the throne** where he can see people and things. Alternate translation: “the view” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 6:17

the great day of their anger

While this was happening on a certain **day**, the people may be using the word **day** to mean a specific time, the time when God had chosen to judge the world. Alternate translation: “the momentous time when they will punish sin” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

who is able to stand

The people are using the question form for emphasis. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: “no one is able to stand!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.591)**)

who is able to stand

Here the word **stand** means to be declared innocent when judged, as in [Psalm 130:3](#), “If you, Yahweh, would mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?” which means, “If you, Yahweh, kept a record of sins, no one would be declared innocent.” Alternate translation: “and everyone will be punished, because no one is innocent!” (See: **Metonymy (p. 550)**)

Revelation 7

Revelation 7 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

The events of this chapter take place after the Lamb opens the sixth seal but before he opens the seventh seal. John describes a vision of 144,000 servants of God whom angels mark with a seal. John then describes a second vision about a great multitude praising God.

- The 144,000 servants (7:1–8)
- The great multitude (7:9–17)

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 verses 5–8 and 15–17.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Large numbers

Translate the large numbers in verses 5–8 in the way that would be most natural in your language. Some languages may need to supply a noun after the number to express the meaning. For example, in verse 5 you might say “144,000” or “one hundred forty-four thousand people.” In verses 6–8 you might say “12,000” or “twelve thousand people.”

The order of the tribes

Translators should be aware that the tribes of the people of Israel are not listed in this chapter in the same order as they are generally listed in the Old Testament. This seems to be intentional, and scholars have offered various interpretations for it. In your translation, it would be appropriate to list the tribes in the order in which John presents them here, rather than listing them in the usual Old Testament order.

Revelation 7:1

standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth

John is speaking as if the **earth** had **four corners**. He is referring from his own standpoint to locations to the north, south, east, and west of him. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly, using your own language's words for these primary directions. Alternate translation: "at places on the earth where they could hold back the north, south, east, and west winds" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

on the land or on the sea or on any tree

After John says that the wind would not blow **on the land or on the sea**, he may add **or on any tree** for emphasis, perhaps alluding to his reference in [6:13](#) to a great wind shaking a tree. In that case the two phrases would mean similar things, as the next two notes explain. John would be using the repetition for emphasis. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine the two phrases. Alternate translation: "on any place on the land or in the sea" (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

on the land or on the sea

John seems to be using the two main components of the world, the **land** and the **sea**, to mean everywhere in the world. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "anywhere in the world" (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

or on any tree

John may be using one place where the wind might blow, against a **tree**, to mean every place where the wind might blow. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation, preceded by a comma: "no, not anywhere at all" (See: **Synecdoche (p.605)**)

Revelation 7:2

the rising of the sun

This expression refers to a specific direction. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly, using your own language's term for that direction. Alternate translation: "the east" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

the seal of the living God

In this case the word **seal** refers to a tool that a person would use to compress and mark wax in order to create a "seal" in the sense in which John uses that word in chapters 5 and 6. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: "the sealing tool that belongs to the living God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

to whom it was given to them

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "whom God had allowed" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

to harm the earth and the sea

The implication is that these angels would **harm the earth and the sea** by not allowing any winds to blow on them. This would, for example, prevent any rainstorms from forming and watering crops. You could indicate this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "to harm the earth and the sea by holding back the winds" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 7:3

Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative verb **harm**. Alternate translation: “allow the winds to blow on the earth and the sea and the trees” (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

Revelation 7:4

of the ones having been sealed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the ones whom the angels sealed” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

144 thousands

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, you may translate the large number here and the large numbers in verses 6–8 in the way that would be most natural in your language. Some languages may need to supply a noun after the number to express the meaning. Alternate translation: “144,000” or “one hundred forty-four thousand people” (See: **Numbers (p.554)**)

having been sealed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “The angels had sealed them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

of the sons of Israel

Here the word **sons** could mean: (1) the literal sons of Israel (that is, Jacob) who were the ancestors of the 12 tribes. If this is the meaning, it would be appropriate to retain the term “sons” in your translation. (2) the descendants of Israel (Jacob), who formed 12 tribes. Alternate translation: “of the descendants of Israel” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 7:5

of Judah, & of Reuben, & of Gad

The words **Judah**, **Reuben**, and **Gad** are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

12 thousands

Alternate translation: “12,000” or “twelve thousand people” (See: **Numbers (p.554)**)

12 thousands having been sealed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the angels sealed 12 thousands” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 7:6

of Asher, & of Naphtali, & of Manasseh

The words **Asher**, **Naphtali**, and **Manasseh** are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Revelation 7:7

of Simeon, & of Levi, & of Issachar

The words **Simeon**, **Levi**, and **Issachar** are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Revelation 7:8

of Zebulun, & of Joseph, & of Benjamin

The words **Zebulun**, **Joseph**, and **Benjamin** are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

12 thousands been sealed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the angels sealed 12 thousands” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 7:9

that, to number it, no one was able

It might seem that this expression contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: “that no one was able to number” (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit** (p.621))

from every nation and tribe and people and language

See how you translated the similar expression in [5:9](#). Alternate translation: “from every different people group” (See: **Doublet** (p.493))

having been clothed in white robes

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “wearing white robes” (See: **Active or Passive** (p.452))

in white robes

See how you translated the similar expression in [3:4](#).. Alternate translation: “white robes symbolic of their purity” (See: **Symbolic Action** (p.598))

palm branches

In this culture, people would wave **palm branches** on special occasions, especially to celebrate a victory. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: “palm branches for a victory celebration” (See: **Symbolic Action** (p.598))

Revelation 7:10

Salvation {is} to our God, the one sitting on the throne, and to the Lamb

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: "Our God, who is the one sitting on the throne, and the Lamb are the ones who have saved us" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

the one sitting on the throne

The people in the great multitude are describing God's supreme ruling power and authority by association with the way he is **sitting on the throne**, a symbol of that power and authority. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the ruler of all" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 7:11

they fell on their faces

Be sure that it is clear in your translation that the **angels** and **elders** and **living creatures** did not fall down accidentally. They bowed down in front of the throne as a gesture to honor God. Alternate translation: “they bowed down with their faces to the ground” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 7:12

Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength {be} to our God

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **Praise, glory, wisdom**, thanks, honor, power, **and** strength**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. See how you translated the similar expression in [4:11](#). Alternate translation: “May everyone praise, glorify, thank, and honor our God and acknowledge how wise, powerful, and strong he is”

to the ages of the ages

See how you translated the same expression in [1:18](#). Alternate translation: “forever” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 7:13

responded, saying to me

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **responded** indicates that this elder was **saying** these things to John in response to what John was seeing in this vision. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “asked me” (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

These, the ones having been clothed in white robes, who are they, and where have they come from

This elder is using the question form to introduce something he wants to make sure John understands. Since John answers the question in the next verse, it would be appropriate to retain the question form in your translation, but if it would be helpful to your readers, you could word the question in a way that would show its purpose. Alternate translation: “Do you know who these people are who are wearing white robes and where they have come from” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.591)**)

the ones having been clothed in white robes

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the ones wearing white robes” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 7:14

My lord, you know

John is answering the elder politely. You may translate this the way someone would respond politely in your language to a question whose answer they did not know. Alternate translation: "I do not know, please tell me" (See: **Politeness (p.571)**)

the great tribulation

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **tribulation**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "the time when believers in Jesus will be greatly persecuted" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb

As in [3:4](#) and other passages in the book, **robes** that are **white** represent purity of life and devotion to Jesus. The **blood of the Lamb** is the blood that Jesus shed when he died on the cross as the Savior. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 7:15

day and night

The elder is using the two main components of time, **day** and **night**, to mean all the time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "constantly" (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

Revelation 7:16

They will not hunger anymore, nor will they thirst anymore

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate these double negatives that consist of the negative particle **not** and the negative verbs **hunger** and **thirst**. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

nor will the sun fall on them at all, nor any heat

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **or**. The word **sun** tells where this **heat** comes from. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “or.” Alternate translation: “nor will the heat of the sun fall on them at all” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

nor will the sun fall on them at all, nor any heat

By referring to the **sun** and its **heat**, this elder may mean by association that these people will never again have to work hard in the hot sun to make a living. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “and they will no longer have to work hard in the hot sun to make a living” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 7:17

will shepherd them

The elder is speaking as if Jesus would literally **shepherd** these believers. He means that Jesus will care for them, as a shepherd cares for sheep. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “will take care of them” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

guide them to springs of the waters of life, & God will wipe away every tear from their eyes

These are quotations from the Old Testament, from [Isaiah 49:10](#) and [Isaiah 25:8](#). Since they occur within John’s quotation of what this elder told him, they are second-level quotations. You may be able to indicate this by using second-level quotation marks or some other punctuation or convention of your language. You may also wish to use special formatting to set off these quotations, as the ULT does. (See: **Quote Markings (p.584)**)

guide them to springs of the waters of life

The elder is speaking as if Jesus would literally **guide** these believers to **springs** of water. He is using water to represent the everlasting **life** that Jesus gives believers. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “will give them everlasting life” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes

The elder is using the word **tear** to mean by association the sorrow that people feel that leads them to shed tears. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “God will comfort their every sorrow” or “God will comfort them for every sorrow that they have experienced” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 8

Revelation 8 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

This chapter begins to show what happens when the Lamb opens the seventh seal. God uses the prayers of all believers to cause dramatic things to happen on earth. John then describes what happens when angels sound the first four of seven trumpets.

- The Lamb opens the seventh seal (8:1–5)
- The first trumpet (8:6–7)
- The second trumpet (8:8–9)
- The third trumpet (8:10–11)
- The fourth trumpet (8:12–13)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Ordinal numbers

John uses the ordinal numbers “first” through “fourth” in verses 7, 8, 10, and 12. If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers or equivalent expressions in your translation. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

The fraction “one third”

Many times in this chapter John uses the expression “one third.” This means one part out of three equal parts. Translate this in the way that would be most natural in your language. (See: **Fractions (p.507)**)

Revelation 8:1

he opened

The pronoun **he** refers to the Lamb. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the Lamb opened” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

the seventh seal

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “seal number seven” or “the last seal” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

for about half an hour

An **hour** was the shortest interval of time that this culture measured. So **half an hour** may implicitly mean just a short time. You could indicate this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “for a moment” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 8:2

stand before

In this context, while these angels may indeed position themselves in front of God's throne, the phrase **stand before** means to stay in the presence of another person in order to serve that person whenever and however needed. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "who remain ready to serve" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

seven trumpets were given to them

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God gave each of them a trumpet" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 8:3

was stationed & much incense was given to him

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “stationed himself ... God gave him much incense” (See:

Active or Passive (p.452))

Revelation 8:4

from the hand of the angel

Here, **hand** refers to the censer in the angel's hand. Alternate translation: "from the censer that the angel was holding" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 8:5

filled it from the fire of the altar

This is probably a reference to coals that were on **fire** on the altar. Alternate translation: “filled it with burning coals from the fire on the altar” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

threw {it

While the pronoun **it** refers to the **censer** in its first instance, in its second instance it refers to the **fire from the altar**. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “threw the fire” or “threw the burning coals” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

Revelation 8:6

trumpets & they might trumpet

John is using a construction in which a verb and its object come from the same root. The verb translated **trumpet** has the same root as the word translated **trumpets**. The repetition of the sounds may be intended to have a musical effect. You may be able to use the same construction in your translation if your language has similar words for this kind of instrument and for the action of playing it. (See: **Poetry (p.567)**)

Revelation 8:7

the first trumpeted

The word **first** implicitly means the first angel, and the word **sounded** implicitly means that he sounded his trumpet. You could indicate this in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “the first angel sounded his trumpet” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

the first

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, if your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers or equivalent expressions here and in verses 8, 10, and 12. Alternate translation: “angel number one” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

it was thrown & was burned up, & were burned up, & was burned up

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the angel threw it ... burned up ... burned up ... burned up” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up

If your language does not use this passive form, you could state this in active form. Alternate translation: “it burned up a third of the earth, a third of the trees, and all the green grass” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

and a third of the earth was burned up

Some ancient manuscripts include the phrase **and a third of the earth was burned up**. The ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts do not include that phrase. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.607)**)

Revelation 8:8

something} like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the angel threw something like a great mountain burning with fire” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

a third of the sea became blood

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, the expression **one third** means one part out of three equal parts. Here and throughout the chapter, translate the expression in the way that would be most natural in your language. (See: **Fractions (p.507)**)

Revelation 8:9

a third of the ships were destroyed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the bloody water destroyed a third of the ships" (See: **Active or Passive** (p.452))

Revelation 8:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 8:11

the name of the star is called Wormwood

It might seem that this expression contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: “the name of the star is Wormwood” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

Wormwood

Wormwood is a woody shrub that tastes bitter. Because of its bitter taste, people in this culture believed that the shrub was poisonous. Your language may have a term for this shrub or for a similar one that you can use in your translation. You could also use a general expression. Alternate translation: “Bitter Shrub” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

became wormwood

John means by association that the water became bitter and poisonous, as if it were the bitter **wormwood** shrub that people in his culture believed was poisonous. Alternate translation: “became poisonous like wormwood” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

many of the men

John is not referring to a specific group of **men**. He means people in general. Express this in the way that would be most natural in your language. Alternate translation: “many people” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.509)**)

Revelation 8:12

a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon and a third of the stars

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God struck a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars so that a third of them turned dark” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

a third of them were darkened

The phrase **a third of them were darkened** could mean: (1) one third of the time, the sun, moon, and stars were dark, or (2) one third of the sun, one third of the moon, and one third of the stars became dark. You could say either of these things as an alternate translation. (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

the day, a third of it did not shine

When John says of **a third** of the **day** that **it did not shine**, he means by association that the sun did not shine during a third of the day. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the sun did not shine during one third of the day” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

and likewise the night

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “and likewise a third of the night did not shine” or “and likewise the moon and the stars did not shine during one third of the night” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

Revelation 8:13

eagle

Some ancient manuscripts read **eagle**. ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “angel.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.607)**)

Woe, woe, woe

The eagle may be repeating the word **woe** for emphasis. If it would not be natural in your language to repeat a word in that way, you could express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “What great woe the ones living on the earth will experience” or see the next note for another possibility. (See: **Reduplication (p.590)**)

Woe, woe, woe

Since [9:12](#) and [11:14](#) speak of a first, second, and third “woe,” the eagle may be announcing implicitly that three terrible events are about to occur. The UST models a way to express this possible meaning of the phrase **woe, woe, woe**. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

the remaining sounds of the trumpet of the three angels who are going to trumpet

This does not mean that the **three angels** only have one **trumpet** among them. Alternate translation: “the blasts that the remaining three angels will make on their trumpets when they blow them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 9

Revelation 9 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

In this chapter, John continues to describe what happens when angels sound seven trumpets. (See: **Symbolic Prophecy (p.602)**)

- The Fifth Trumpet (9:1-12)
- The Sixth Trumpet (9:13-21)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Woe

John describes several “woes” in the book of Revelation. This chapter begins to describe the three “woes” announced at the end of Chapter 8. Woes signify calamity, disaster, or terrible events.

Animal imagery

This chapter includes several animals: locusts, scorpions, horses, lions, and snakes. Animals convey different qualities or traits. For example, a lion is powerful and dangerous. Translators should use the same animals in their translation if possible. If the animal is unknown, use a familiar one with similar qualities or traits.

Abaddon and Apollyon

“Abaddon” is a Hebrew word. “Apollyon” is a Greek word. Both words mean “Destroyer.” John used the sounds of the Hebrew word and wrote them with Greek letters. The ULT and UST write the sounds of both words with English letters. Translators are encouraged to transliterate these words using the letters of their own language. The original Greek readers would have understood “Apollyon” to mean “Destroyer.” So translators may also indicate this meaning in the text or in a footnote. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.486)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Simile

John uses many similes in this chapter. They help to describe the images that he sees in his vision. (See: **Simile (p. 595)**)

Generic Sense

Several times in this chapter John uses the masculine word “men” in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women such as “people” or “humanity.” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

Revelation 9:1

the fifth angel

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “angel number five” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

the key of the shaft of the abyss was given to it

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the star received the key to the shaft of the abyss” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 9:2

smoke went up from the shaft like the smoke of a great furnace

The point of this comparison is that a large quantity of **smoke** came from the **shaft**, just as a **great furnace** would give off a large quantity of smoke. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “a large quantity of smoke went up from the shaft, as does from a huge furnace” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

the sun and the air were darkened from the smoke of the shaft

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the smoke from the shaft darkened the sun and the air” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 9:3

power was given to them

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God gave them power" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

power was given to them as scorpions of the earth have power

The point of this comparison is that just as **scorpions of the earth** have the power to hurt people by stinging them, so these **locusts** from the abyss had the power to hurt people in that same way. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: "to hurt people by stinging them, just as scorpions on earth do" (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

scorpions

A **scorpion** is an insect with a poisonous stinger at the end of its long tail. The sting can cause severe pain or even death. If your readers would not be familiar with what a **scorpion** is, in your translation you could use the name of a comparable insect or animal in your area. Alternate translation: "deadly stinging insects" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 9:4

it was told to them

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God commanded them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

it was told to them that they should not harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, if not the men who did not have the seal of God on {their} foreheads

It may be more natural in your language to have a direct quotation here. Alternate translation: "And they were told, 'Do not harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads'" (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.488)**)

the men

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, here and in several other places in this chapter John uses the masculine word **men** in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: "the people" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

Revelation 9:5

it was given to them that they should not kill them, but that they would be tormented

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: Alternate translation: "God did not allow the locusts to kill these people but to torment them for five months" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

it was given to them that they should not kill them

The **them** refers in its first instance to the locusts John describes in [9:3](#) and in its second instance the people John describes in [9:4](#) who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: "it was given to the locusts that they should not kill these people" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

their torment {would be} like the torment of a scorpion when it might strike a man

The point of this comparison is that just as the sting of a **scorpion** is very painful, the **torment** that people would experience after these locusts stung them would be very painful. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: "their torment when the locusts stung them would be very painful, as the sting of a scorpion is very painful for a person" (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 9:6

in those days

John is using the term **days** to refer to a specific time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “at that time” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

men will seek death, but they will certainly not find it, and they will long to die, but death flees from them

These two phrases mean similar things. John is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine the phrases. Alternate translation: “even though people will want very much to die, they will not be able to die” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

death

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **death**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “to die” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

death flees from them

John is speaking figuratively of **death** as if it were a living thing that could run away or flee. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “they will not be able to die” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

Revelation 9:7

prepared for war

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "wearing armor for war" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 9:8

hair like the hair of women

In this culture women typically wore their hair long. So the point of this comparison is that the locusts had long **hair**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “hair that was long like the hair of women” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

their teeth were as of lions

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “their teeth were as the teeth of lions” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

their teeth were as of lions

The point of this comparison is that the locusts had **teeth** that were sharp, large, and strong, like the teeth of **lions**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “their teeth were sharp, large, and strong like lions’ teeth” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 9:9

they had breastplates like iron breastplates

John is speaking as if these locusts literally had **breastplates**. He probably means that the skin on the front of their bodies was very hard. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the hard skin on the front of their bodies was like iron breastplates” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

they had breastplates like iron breastplates

The point of this comparison is that the skin on the front of the locusts’ bodies was very strong, as if it were made of **iron**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “the hard skin on the front of their bodies was very strong, like an iron breastplate” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

iron breastplates

A **breastplate** was a piece of armor that covered and protected the chest. If your readers would not be familiar with what a breastplate is, in your translation you could use the name of a comparable object in your culture, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “pieces of armor made of iron to protect a soldier’s chest” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

the sound of their wings {was} like the sound of many chariots of horses

The point of this comparison is that the **wings** of all the locusts flying around made a very loud **sound**, like **the sound of chariots**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “the sound of their wings was very loud, like the sound of many chariots of horses” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

of & chariots of horses

John is using this possessive form to describe **chariots** that **horses** pull into battle. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning without using a possessive form. Alternate translation: “horse-drawn chariots” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

running into battle

John is speaking as if these **chariots** were themselves literally **running into battle**, though it is the **horses** pulling the chariots which would be running and the drivers of the chariots who would be hurrying to get into the **battle**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “whose drivers are hurrying them into battle” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 9:10

scorpions

See how you translated the term “scorpion” in [9:3](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

for five months

This could mean implicitly: (1) that the locusts had power for five months to harm people. Alternate translation: “over a period of five months” (2) that the locusts could sting people and the people would be in pain for five months. Alternate translation: “with a sting that will cause them pain for five months” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 9:11

of the abyss

See how you translated the term **abyss** in [9:1](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

the angel of the abyss. His name in Hebrew {is} Abaddon, and in Greek he has the name Apollyon

The word **Abaddon** is a Hebrew name that John spells out using Greek letters so that his readers will know how it sounds. John then tells his readers a Greek name, **Apollyon**, with the same meaning, so that his readers will know what it means. Both names mean Destroyer. In your translation you can spell both names the way they sound in your language and then explain their meaning. Alternate translation: “His Hebrew name is Abaddon and his Greek name is Apollyon; both names mean Destroyer” (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.486)**)

Revelation 9:12

The first woe has passed

See how you translated the term **woe** in 8:13. Alternate translation: "One terrible event is over" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

The first woe

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "woe number one" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

woe

See how you translated the term **woe** in 8:13. Alternate translation: "terrible event" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 9:13

the sixth angel

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “angel number six” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

a voice

John is using one part of a person, his **voice**, to represent all of the person in the act of speaking. John does not say who the speaker was, but it may have been God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “someone speaking” (See: **Synecdoche (p.605)**)

horns

John is referring to the horn-shaped extensions that were at each of the four corners of the top of the altar. He calls them **horns** by association with their shape. If it would be clearer for your readers, in your translation you could just refer to the “corners” of the altar, as UST does. (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

before God

Here the word **before** means “in front of” or “in the presence of” another person. The Jews believed that God was especially present at his **altar**. Alternate translation: “that is in the presence of God” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 9:14

to the sixth angel

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression.
Alternate translation: “to angel number six” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

having been bound

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. The text does not say who **bound** these **four angels**, but it implies that God did it or commanded his own angels to do it. Alternate translation: “whom God had bound” or “whom God had commanded his own angels to bind” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Euphrates

The word **Euphrates** is the name of a river. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Revelation 9:15

the four angels having been prepared for the hour and day and month and year were released

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the sixth angel released the four angels whom God had prepared for the hour and day and month and year” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the hour and day and month and year

These words all refer to specific periods of time. John is using them together to emphasize that this is a very specific time. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “that specific time” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

a third of men

A **third** means one part out of three equal parts. Alternate translation: “one out of every three men” (See: **Fractions (p.507)**)

Revelation 9:16

the number of the horse soldiers {was} two myriads of myriads; I heard their number

John typically says **I heard** or “I saw” before describing what he heard or saw, so it might be more natural to put that information first. Alternate translation: “I heard the number of the horse soldiers; it was two myriads of myriads” (See: **Information Structure (p.529)**)

was} two myriads of myriads

A myriad is a hundred hundreds, or ten thousand. Express this number in the way that would be most natural in your language. See how you translated a similar large number in [5:11](#). Alternate translation: “200,000,000” or see next note for another possibility. (See: **Numbers (p.554)**)

Revelation 9:17

fiery and hyacinth and sulfurous breastplates

John is describing the colors of the **breastplates** by association with other things that are those colors. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use objects from your own culture that are these colors or express the meaning plainly. See, for example, how you translated the word “fiery” in [6:3](#). Alternate translation: “breastplates that were fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow” or “bright red, dark blue, and brilliant yellow breastplates” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

hyacinth

A **hyacinth** is a plant in the lily family that has dark blue flowers on spikes. If your readers would not be familiar with what a hyacinth is, in your translation you could use the name of a plant or other object in your culture that is the same color as hyacinth flowers, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “dark blue” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 9:18

By these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the sulfur coming out from their mouths, a third of men were killed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "These three plagues of fire and of smoke and of sulfur coming out from their mouths killed a third of men" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 9:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 9:20

the ones not killed in these plagues

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the ones whom these plagues did not kill” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

of the works of their hands

John is using one part of these people, their **hands**, to represent all of each person in the act of doing **works**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “of the works they were doing” (See: **Synecdoche (p.605)**)

which are able neither to see nor to hear nor to walk

The terms **see** and **hear** and **walk** all describe things that living beings are able to do. John is using the three terms together to emphasize that **idols** are not alive and cannot do anything for those who **worship** them. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “which are not alive at all” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 9:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 10

Revelation 10 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

In this chapter John begins to describe a vision he had of a mighty angel holding a scroll. John is viewing what is happening from the perspective of earth, which is why he speaks of this angel “coming down from heaven.” This vision takes place between the blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpets.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Seven thunders

In this chapter John describes seven thunders making sounds that he could understand as words. However, translators should use their normal word for “thunder” when translating these verses. (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-personification\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/writing-apocalyptic\]\]](#))

“The mystery of God”

This refers to some aspect of the hidden plan of God. It is not necessary to know what this mystery is when translating this phrase. (See: [\[\[rc:///*/tw/dict/bible/kt/reveal\]\]](#))

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Simile

In this chapter John uses similes to help him describe the face, legs, and voice of a mighty angel. Translators should represent other objects in this chapter, such as the rainbow and the cloud, with their normal meanings. (See: **Simile** (p.595))

Revelation 10:1

clothed in a cloud

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “whose clothing was a cloud” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

clothed in a cloud

John speaks of the angel as if he were wearing **a cloud** as his clothing. This expression could be understood as figurative. However, because very unusual things were often seen in visions, it could also be understood as a literally true statement in its context. Alternate translation: “in the midst of a cloud” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

and his face like the sun and his feet like pillars of fire

The point of these comparisons is that the angel's **face** was very bright, like the **sun**, and that the angel's **feet** were glowing like **fire**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make these points explicitly. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “The angel's face was very bright, like the sun, and his feet were glowing as if they were on fire” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

his feet

Since John compares the **feet** of the angel to **pillars**, it is likely that by **feet** he means “legs” by association. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “his legs” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 10:2

an opened little scroll

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “a little scroll that he had opened” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

and {his} left

John is using the adjective **left** as a noun to mean a certain one of the angel's feet. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “and his left foot” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

Revelation 10:3

in a loud voice, as a lion roars

The point of this comparison is probably that the **loud voice** of the angel commanded attention like the roar of a **lion**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “in a loud voice that commanded attention as does a lion’s roar” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

the seven thunders spoke

John speaks of these **seven thunders** as if he assumes that his readers will know what or who they are, but he has not introduced or explained them earlier in the book and interpreters are not certain of their identity. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could introduce them in such a way as to indicate that John has not identified them previously. Alternate translation: “seven thunders spoke” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

the seven thunders spoke

This expression could mean that thunder **spoke** or sounded **seven** times, rather than that **seven** different **thunders spoke**. You could say that in your translation or indicate this possibility in a footnote. Alternate translation: “thunder spoke seven times” or “thunder sounded seven times” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

spoke their own voices

It might seem that the expression **spoke their own voices** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could shorten it. Alternate translation: “spoke” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

Revelation 10:4

I was going to write

The implication is that John was going to write down what the seven thunders had said. You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "I was going to write down what they had said" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Seal what the seven thunders said and do not write it

The voice spoke as if John should literally **seal** what the thunders said. However, since the voice then specified that John was not to write anything down, the voice meant that John should keep secret what the thunders said. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Keep secret what the seven thunders said by not writing it down" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 10:5

raised his right hand to heaven

The angel **raised his right hand to heaven** as a symbolic action to show that he was swearing an oath by God. If this would not be clear to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: “raised his right hand to heaven to show that he swearing an oath by God” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.598)**)

Revelation 10:6

by the one living to the ages of the ages

John assumes that his readers will understand that the angel is referring to God with this expression. You can indicate that explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “by the eternal God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

to the ages of the ages

This expression refers to endless future time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “for all eternity” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

heaven and the {things} in it and the earth and the {things} in it and the sea and the {things} in it

The angel is using the three parts of creation to mean all of creation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “the entire creation” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

no more time

In this context, the word **time** means a delay. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “no further delay” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 10:7

but in the days of the sound of the seventh angel, when he is going to trumpet

These two phrases mean similar things. The angel is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “but in the days when the seventh angel is going to sound a trumpet” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

of the sound of the seventh angel

This possessive form does not describe what the **seventh angel** sounds like. Instead, it describes a **sound** that the seventh angel will make. Alternate translation: “when the seventh angel makes a sound” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

in the days of the sound

The angel is using the term **days** idiomatically to refer to a specific time. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “at the time of the sound” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

the mystery of God will be accomplished

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God will accomplish his mystery” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 10:8

the opened scroll in the hand of the angel standing on the sea and on the land

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the scroll that the angel standing on the sea and on the land has opened and is holding in his hand” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 10:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 10:10

my stomach was made bitter

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "it made my stomach bitter" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 10:11

they said to me

The pronoun **they** is an indefinite pronoun that does not have a specific referent in the immediate context. John is using this indefinite construction to focus on what he was told rather than on who told it to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this with a different expression that does not use an indefinite pronoun. Alternate translation: “I was told” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

many peoples and nations and languages and kings

In this context, the terms **peoples**, **nations**, **languages**, and **kings** mean similar things. John is using the four terms together to make a comprehensive statement. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “every different people group” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

many peoples and nations and languages and kings

The angel is referring to speakers of various languages by association with the **languages** themselves, and John is referring to the subjects of various kingdoms by association with their **kings**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “many peoples and nations and speakers of many languages and subjects of many kingdoms” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 11

Revelation 11 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verses 15 and 17–18.

Woes

In [8:13](#), an angel announced three “woes” that the people living on the earth would suffer. Chapter 9 described the first woe. This chapter describes a second one.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Gentiles

The word “Gentiles” here refers to ungodly people groups and not Gentile Christians. (See: **godly, godliness, ungodly, godless, ungodliness, godlessness (p.630)**)

Two witnesses

This chapter describes two witnesses. Scholars have many different ideas about who they are. Translators do not need to understand their exact identities in order to translate this chapter accurately. (See: **prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess (p.635)**)

Revelation 11:1

a reed like a measuring rod was given to me, saying

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was Jesus, since the same person speaks of “my two witnesses” in verse 3. Alternate translation: “Jesus gave me a reed like a measuring rod and said” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

a reed like a measuring rod

The point of this comparison is that this **reed** was long and straight and John could use it to mark off distances as he could with a **measuring rod**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “a reed that was long and straight so that I could use it to mark off distances, as I could with a measuring rod” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 11:2

cast out the courtyard outside the temple and do not measure it

These two phrases mean similar things. John is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “do not include the courtyard outside the temple in your measurements” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

cast out the courtyard outside the temple

The person who is giving John these instructions is speaking as if John should literally **cast out** the courtyard, that is, fling it away through the air. He means that John should exclude the courtyard from his measurements. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “exclude the courtyard outside the temple” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

it has been given to the Gentiles

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: “God has given it to the Gentiles” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

holy city

The person speaking with John assumes that he will understand that by **the holy city** he means Jerusalem. You could say that explicitly if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “the city of Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 11:3

I will grant

The person speaking with John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language.

Alternate translation: "I will grant authority" (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

clothed in sackcloth

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "wearing sackcloth" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

in sackcloth

See how you translated the word **sackcloth** in [6:12](#). These **witnesses** wore sackcloth while prophesying in order to show their sorrow and grief over the sins that people were committing against God. If this would not be clear to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: "sackcloth to show their grief and sorrow over sin" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.598)**)

Revelation 11:4

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth

The **two olive trees** and the **two lampstands** symbolize these witnesses, but they are not literally the witnesses. Alternate translation: "The two olive trees and the two lampstands that stood before the Lord of the earth represent these witnesses" (See: **Symbolic Language (p.600)**)

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth

John assumes that his readers will understand that he is alluding to the vision had by the prophet Zechariah, who saw **two olive trees** and **two lampstands** in [Zechariah 4:2-6](#). In that vision, the trees and lampstands represented the governor, Zerubbabel, and the high priest, Joshua, who led the rebuilding of the temple despite opposition. In the same way, the two witnesses in John's vision will faithfully call people to obey God despite opposition. You could indicate that explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "These two witnesses will serve God faithfully despite opposition just as Zerubbabel and Joshua did, whom the prophet Zechariah saw depicted as two olive trees and two lampstands in a vision that God gave him" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

that stand before

In this context, the phrase **stand before** means to stay in the presence of another person in order to serve them whenever needed. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "who faithfully serve" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 11:5

fire comes out from their mouth

In a context such as this, your language might say “goes” instead of **comes**. Alternate translation: “fire goes out from their mouth” (See: **Go and Come (p.511)**)

their mouth

Since John is referring to two people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **mouth** or the dual form if your language has it. Alternate translation: “their mouths” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.476)**)

devours their enemies

John is speaking as if **fire** literally **devours** or eats up anyone who would **wish to harm** these witnesses. He means that the fire destroys them completely. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “destroys their enemies completely” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

and if anyone should wish to harm them, he must be killed in this way

This clause is essentially a repetition of the first clause in the verse. John is speaking in something like Hebrew poetry, which was based on this kind of repetition. It would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if such repetition would not be natural in your language, you could connect the clauses with a word other than **and** in order to show that the second clause is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “Yes, if anyone should wish to harm them, he must be killed in this way” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

he must be killed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “he must die” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 11:6

to close up the sky so that no rain might fall

John is speaking as if these witnesses could literally **close up** the sky. As he goes on to say, he means that they will be able to prevent it from raining. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly.

Alternate translation: "to keep any rain from falling from the sky" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

during the days

John is using the term **days** to refer to a specific time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "during the time" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 11:7

the beast coming up from the abyss

John describes this **beast** starting in [13:1](#), so you do not need to explain anything about it here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit** (p.621))

Revelation 11:8

of the great city

John assumes that his readers will understand that by **the great city** he means Jerusalem. You could say that explicitly if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

which is spiritually called

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “which we may spiritually call” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt

The point of these comparisons is that God once destroyed Jerusalem because its people were so wicked, like **Sodom**, and that Jerusalem oppressed people who belonged to God, like **Egypt**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “which God destroyed for wickedness as he destroyed Sodom and which oppressed God’s people as did Egypt” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

their Lord

John is referring to Jesus by a respectful title. Use a form for addressing someone respectfully in your language. Alternate translation: “their Lord Jesus” (See: **Politeness (p.571)**)

was crucified

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “suffered crucifixion” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 11:9

those from people and tribe and language and nation look at

The terms **people**, **tribe**, **language**, and **nation** mean similar things. John is using the four terms together to make a comprehensive statement. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “those from many different people groups look at” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

those from people and tribe and language and nation look at

John is referring to speakers of various languages by association with the **language** that each one speaks. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “those from different people groups and tribes, speakers of various languages, and those from other nations look at” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

they do not permit their corpses to be placed in a tomb

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “they do not permit anyone to place their corpses in a tomb” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

they do not permit their corpses to be placed in a tomb

Leaving the **corpses** of the witnesses in the street, rather than burying them, is a symbolic action by which the people of Jerusalem show how much they hated the witnesses. If this would not be clear to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: “out of hatred they do not permit anyone to place their corpses in a tomb” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.598)**)

Revelation 11:10

And the ones living on the earth rejoice over them and celebrate and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented the ones living on the earth

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “Because these two prophets tormented the ones living on the earth, the ones living on the earth rejoice over them and celebrate and send gifts to one another” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.484)**)

rejoice over them and celebrate

The implication is that people **rejoice over** these witnesses because they are dead. You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “rejoice that they are dead, and they celebrate” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

send gifts to one another

The people will **send gifts to one another** as a symbolic action to show how happy they are that the witnesses are dead. If this would not be clear to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: “send gifts to one another to show how happy they are that the witnesses are dead” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.598)**)

Revelation 11:11

a breath of life from God entered into them

John is speaking of this **breath** as if it were a living thing that **entered into** the bodies of these witnesses on its own. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “God enabled them to live and breathe again” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

they stood on their feet

It might seem that this expression contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could shorten it. Alternate translation: “they stood up” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

great fear fell on the ones seeing them

John is speaking figuratively of **fear** as if it were a living thing that actively **fell** on people who saw the witnesses alive again. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the ones seeing them became greatly afraid” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

Revelation 11:12

they heard & to them, “& they went up & their & them

The pronouns **they**, **their** and **them** all refer to the witnesses, not to the people who were seeing them alive again. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the witnesses heard ... to them ... the witnesses went up ... their ... them” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

Come up here

Since the voice is speaking to two people, the implied “you” in the imperative **Come up** would be dual if your language uses that form. Otherwise, it would be plural. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.503)**)

Revelation 11:13

at that hour

John is using the term **hour** to refer to a specific time. He does not mean that the earthquake lasted for a full hour. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “at that time” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

a tenth of the city fell

John is not speaking of this **tenth of the city** as if it were a living thing that could fall down accidentally. He means that one **tenth** of the buildings in the city collapsed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “one tenth of the buildings in the city collapsed” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

in the earthquake, the names of 7,000 men were killed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the earthquake killed the names of seven thousand men” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the names of 7,000 men

Here, **names** represents people by association with the way that each person has a name. Alternate translation: “seven thousand men” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

of & men

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: “of people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

gave glory to the God of heaven

This expression does not imply that God lacks glory in any way or that people have glory that they can give to God. It means the people in the city honored God, acknowledging that God was just to punish them with the earthquake for killing the two witnesses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “honored the God of heaven” or “acknowledged that the God of heaven had done the right thing” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 11:14

The second woe has passed

See how you translated “The first woe is past” in [9:12](#). Alternate translation: “The second terrible event is over” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 11:15

the seventh angel

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “angel number seven” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

The kingdom of the world has become {the kingdom} of our Lord and of his Christ

The kingdom of the world could mean: (1) the system of sinful interests and institutions all over the **world** that is opposed to God. Alternate translation: “The kingdom of our Lord and his Christ will now replace the world-wide system that formerly opposed them” (2) the right to rule the people of the world. Alternate translation: “The kingdom of our Lord and his Christ will now include all the people in the world” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

The kingdom of the world has become {the kingdom} of our Lord and of his Christ

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of a **kingdom**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: (1) “Our Lord and his Christ will now rule in place of the world-wide system that formerly opposed them” or (2) “Our Lord and his Christ will now rule over all the people of the world” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

to the ages of the ages

This expression refers to endless future time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “for all eternity” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 11:16

before God

Here the word **before** means “in front of” or “in the presence of” another person. Alternate translation: “in the presence of God” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

fell upon their faces

This expression means that the elders lay down facing the ground. See how you translated the similar expression in [7:11](#). Alternate translation: “bowed down to the ground” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 11:17

the one being and the one having been

Some ancient manuscripts read **the one being and the one having been**. ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts add “and who is to come.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.607)**)

Revelation 11:18

the nations were enraged

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the nations were furious” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

your wrath has come and the time for the dead to be judged

John is speaking of God’s **wrath** as if it were a living thing that **has come** to the **nations**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you are now punishing them and judging the dead” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

your wrath has come and the time

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “your wrath has come and the time has come” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

for the dead to be judged

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “for you to judge the dead” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

for the dead

John is using the adjective **dead** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “people who have died” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

to the ones fearing your name

Here, **name** represents a person by association with the way that each person has a name. Alternate translation: “the ones fearing you” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the small and the great

The elders are speaking as if unimportant people were literally **small** and as if important people were literally large or **great**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the unimportant and the important” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

the small and the great

The elders are using the adjectives **small** and **great** as nouns to mean certain kinds of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate these words with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: “both unimportant people and important people” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

the small and the great

The elders are using two extremes of people, **small** and **great**, to mean them and everyone in between. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "whatever their status" (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

Revelation 11:19

the temple of God in heaven was opened and the ark of the covenant of the Lord was seen in his temple

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God opened his temple in heaven and I could see the ark of the covenant of the Lord in his temple" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the temple of God in heaven was opened

By this expression, John likely means by association that in his vision, God created some opening that allowed him to see into **the temple of God in heaven**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "God allowed me to look into his temple in heaven" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 12

Revelation 12 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verses 10–12.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Serpent

The book of Revelation uses imagery from the Old Testament. In this chapter, John refers to Satan as the serpent. This image comes from the account of the Garden of Eden when Satan tempted Eve. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 12:1

a great sign was seen in heaven

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "people saw a great sign in heaven" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

clothed with the sun

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "whom the sun was clothing" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 12:2

having in the womb

This expression means that the woman had a child in her **womb**, that is, she was pregnant. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “being pregnant” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

she cries out

To call attention to a development in the story, here John uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you could use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “she cried out” (See: **Irregular Use of Tenses (p.534)**)

suffering birth pains and being tormented to give birth

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “suffering birth pains that tormented her as she gave birth” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

suffering birth pains and being tormented

These two phrases mean similar things. John is using them together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “suffering terrible birth pains” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 12:3

another sign was seen

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "people saw another sign" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

a large red dragon

A **dragon** is a mythical monster that looks like a giant reptile. As [12:9](#) explains, in this book the dragon represents the devil. If your readers would not be familiar with what a dragon is, you could use a general expression in your translation. Alternate translation: "a large red monster" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 12:4

sweeps away

To call attention to a development in the story, here John uses the present tense in past narration. If it would not be natural to do that in your language, you could use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: “swept” (See: **Irregular Use of Tenses (p.534)**)

a third

See how you translated this in [8:7](#). Alternate translation: “one third” (See: **Fractions (p.507)**)

Revelation 12:5

a son, a male

The terms **son** and **male** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “a boy” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

a male

John is using the adjective **male** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “a male child” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

with an iron scepter

John is speaking as if this child will literally use **an iron scepter** to **rule all the nations**. He means that the child will rule with great strength by association with the way that **iron** is very strong. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. See how you translated the similar phrase in [2:27](#). Alternate translation: “with great strength” or “with irresistible power” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

an iron scepter

A **scepter** was an ornamental staff or wand that rulers carried or held as a symbol of their authority. If your readers would not be familiar with what a scepter is, in your translation you could use the name of a comparable object in your culture or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “a royal staff made of iron” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

her child was snatched away to God and to his throne

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God snatched away her child to his throne” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

to God and to his throne

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **God** tells whose **throne** this is. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “to God’s throne” (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

Revelation 12:6

where she has a place prepared by God there

It might seem that this expression, which says both **where** and **there**, contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could shorten it. Alternate translation: “where she has a place prepared by God” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

where she has a place prepared by God there

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “where God has prepared a place for her” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

they might nourish her

The pronoun **they** is an indefinite pronoun that does not refer to anyone in the immediate context. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this with a different expression that does not use an indefinite pronoun. Alternate translation: “she might receive nourishment” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

Revelation 12:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 12:8

he was not strong enough

The pronoun **he** refers to the dragon, not to Michael. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the dragon was not strong enough” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

he was not strong enough

John means by association that the dragon was **not strong enough** to prevail against Michael and his army. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “he was not able to prevail” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

was a place found for them

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “could anyone find a place for them” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 452)**)

Revelation 12:9

the great dragon was thrown down

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. This could mean: (1) that God threw the dragon down after his angels defeated him. Alternate translation: “God threw down the dragon” (2) that Michael threw the dragon down to earth after defeating him in the war that they fought. Alternate translation: “Michael threw down the dragon” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the ancient serpent called

John assumes that his readers will understand that he is alluding to the way the devil appeared in the form of a **serpent** when he tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. This story is told in [Genesis 3:1-15](#). You can include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “who tempted Adam and Eve in the form of a serpent, who is called” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

the ancient serpent

A **serpent** is the same animal that is also called a “snake.” It is a reptile that has no legs and so slithers along the ground. If your readers would not be familiar with what a serpent or snake is, you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “that ancient slithering reptile” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

called

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “whom people call” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Diabolos

The word **Diabolos** is a name for the devil. Diabolos means “accuser” in Greek. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Satan

The word **Satan** is a Hebrew name that means “accuser.” So his readers will know how it sounds, John spells it out using Greek letters after giving the Greek equivalent, **Diabolos**, so that his readers will know what it means. In your translation you could spell **Satan** the way it sounds in your language and use the word for “accuser” in your own language in place of **Diabolos** so that your readers will know what it means. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.486)**)

the whole world

Here the term **world** refers to the people who live in the world. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “all the people of the world” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

He was thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. This could mean: (1) that God threw the dragon down after his angels defeated him. Alternate translation: “God threw the dragon down to the earth and he threw his angels down with him” (2) that

Michael threw the dragon and his angels down to earth after defeating them in the war that they fought. Alternate translation: "Michael threw the dragon down to the earth and he threw his angels down with him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 12:10

I heard a loud voice in heaven saying

John is referring to someone speaking by association with the **voice** that the person is using to speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I heard someone saying loudly from heaven" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **salvation**, **power**, **kingdom**, and **authority**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. It may be helpful to make this more than one sentence. Alternate translation: "Now our God has begun to save people. He has acted powerfully to establish his reign. His Christ is reigning with him" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

our & our & our

This **voice** is addressing believers, since he refers to **our brothers**, so by **our** in each instance, the person speaking means himself and his addressees. So use the exclusive form of that word in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.498)**)

the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: "God has thrown down the accuser of our brothers" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

of our brothers

John is using the term **brothers** figuratively to mean people who share the same faith. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation, as in UST: "of our fellow believers" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

of our brothers

Although the term **brothers** is masculine, here the word has a generic sense that includes both men and women. If you wish to retain the figurative expression in your translation, you could word it in a way that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: "our brothers and sisters" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

day and night

The voice is using the two parts of a full day, **day** and **night**, to mean all the time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "all the time" (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

Revelation 12:11

the blood

This could mean: (1) the actual **blood** that Jesus offered as a sacrifice for sin. In that case, you could use the word for “blood” in your language with literal meaning. (2) the sacrificial death of Jesus by association with the **blood** that Jesus shed when he died. Alternate translation: “the sacrificial death” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the word of their testimony

The voice is using the term **word** to indicate that these believers gave their **testimony** to Jesus by speaking words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the testimony that they spoke” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the word of their testimony

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **word**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “by what they said when they testified to others about Jesus” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 450)**)

they did not love their lives unto death

This expression means that these believers did not **love their lives** so much they would refuse **death** even if they needed to die in order to remain faithful to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “they did not love their lives so much that they would not die for Jesus” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 12:12

rejoice, heavens, and the ones dwelling in them

The voice is speaking to the **heavens** as if they were a living thing that could **rejoice**. This may be something that readers could understand literally within the world of this vision. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning differently. Alternate translation: “all of you who live in the heavens, rejoice in a way that can be heard throughout the heavens” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

Woe to the earth and the sea

The voice is speaking of the **earth** and the **sea** as if they were living things that could suffer **Woe**. This may be something that readers could understand literally within the world of this vision. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning differently. Alternate translation: “Woe to all the creatures who live on the earth and in the sea” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

he has little time

The voice implicitly means that the devil knows that God will soon judge and punish him, and so he has **little time** left in which to resist God and try to turn people away from God. You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “he has little time left in which to keep resisting God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 12:13

he had been thrown down

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: "God had thrown him down" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the male

John is using the adjective **male** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "the male child" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

Revelation 12:14

two wings of a great eagle were given to the woman

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: "God gave two wings of a great eagle to the woman" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

where she is nourished there

It might seem that this expression, which says both **where** and **there**, contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could shorten it. Alternate translation: "where she is nourished" (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

for a time and times and half a time

Since the vision describes the approximate number of days in three and a half years (1,260) in [12:6](#) and the number of months in three and a half years (42) in [13:5](#), it is probable that this number is also three and a half, so **times** means "two times." If your language uses the dual form, you could use that form for the word **times**. Otherwise, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "for a time and two times and half a time" (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.503)**)

for a time and times and half a time

Since this length of time during which the woman is **nourished** seems to be the same as in [12:6](#), it seems that three and a half years is intended. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "for a year and two years and half a year" or "for three and a half years" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

the face of the serpent

Here the word **face** represents the presence of a person by association with the way people can see the face of someone who is present. Alternate translation: "the presence of the serpent" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 12:15

water like a river

John says that this **water** was **like a river** to emphasize how much water there was. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "a very large volume of water" (See: **Simile** (p. 595))

so that he might make her stream-borne

Alternate translation: "in order to create a flood that would carry her away"

Revelation 12:16

the earth helped the woman

John is speaking of **the earth** as if it were a living thing that **helped** this **woman**. This may be something that readers could understand literally within the world of this vision. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning differently. Alternate translation: “something happened on the earth that helped the woman” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

the earth opened its mouth

John is speaking as if the earth literally had a **mouth** and **swallowed** this **river**. He means that some kind of chasm opened up in the earth and the river flowed down into it. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “a chasm opened up in the earth and the river flowed down into it” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 12:17

the dragon was enraged

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “this put the dragon in a rage” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

of her seed

Here the term **seed** means offspring. It is a word picture. Just as plants produce seeds that grow into many more plants, so people can have many offspring. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “of her descendants” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

keeping

See how you translated the word **keeping** in [1:3](#) and in [2:26](#). Alternate translation: “obeying” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

having the testimony of Jesus

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **testimony**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “testifying to their faith in Jesus” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 13

Revelation 13 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the words of verse 10, which are from the Old Testament.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Similes

John uses many similes in this chapter. They help to describe the images that he sees in his vision. (See: **Simile (p. 595)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Leopard, bear, and lion

The book of Revelation uses imagery from the Old Testament. In this chapter, John describes a beast that looked like a leopard, a bear, and a lion. This image comes from the book of Daniel. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Unknown animals

John uses different animals to try to describe what he saw. Some of these animals may not be known in the target language. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 13:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 13:2

a leopard & of a bear & of a lion

A **leopard** is a large, fierce cat that lives in the jungle. A **bear** is a large, heavy, powerful mammal that can be very dangerous if it feels threatened. A **lion** is a large, fierce cat that often lives on the plains. If your readers would not be familiar with these animals, in your translation you could use the names of comparable animals that they would recognize, or you could use general descriptions. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

his power and his throne

John is referring to the dragon's right to rule by association with the **throne** on which a ruler would sit. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "his power and his right to rule" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

his power and his throne

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **throne** tells what kind of **power** the dragon gave to this beast. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use "and." Alternate translation: "his ruling power" or "his power to rule" (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

Revelation 13:3

it had been slain unto death

It might seem that the expression **slain unto death** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could shorten it. Alternate translation: “it had been slain” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

it had been slain unto death

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “someone had slain it” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

its wound of death had been healed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “it had recovered from its wound of death” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

wound of death

John is using a possessive form to describe a **wound** that led to **death**. Alternate translation: “deadly wound” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

the whole earth was astonished

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “this astonished the whole earth” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the whole earth

Here the term **earth** refers to the people who live on the earth. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “all the people on earth” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

after the beast

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “and they followed after the beast” or, if you retain the term **earth**, “and it followed after the beast” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

after the beast

This expression, which is short for “followed after the beast,” means that the people on earth accepted the beast as their ruler. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “and they accepted the beast as their ruler” or, if you retain the term **earth**, “and it accepted the beast as its ruler” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 13:4

Who {is} like the beast, and who is able to war with it

The people of the earth are using the question form for emphasis. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: “No one is like the beast, and no one is able to war with it!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.591)**)

Who {is} like the beast, and who is able to war with it

These two phrases mean similar things. The people are using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “Who is strong enough to war with the beast?” or “No one is strong enough to war with the beast!” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

Revelation 13:5

to it was given

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was the dragon.

Alternate translation: "the dragon gave it" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

a mouth speaking

John is referring to the capacity to speak by association with the **mouth** that people use to speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the capacity to speak, and it spoke" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

great {things

The implication is that the beast spoke **great things** about itself. You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "great things about itself" or "boasts" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

authority was given to it

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was the dragon.

Alternate translation: "the dragon gave it authority" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 13:6

it opened its mouth unto

John is referring to the beast speaking by association with **it opened its mouth** in order to speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “it spoke” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

his name

Here the word **name** stands for the reputation of a person. Alternate translation: “his reputation” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 13:7

to it was granted

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. This could mean: (1) that the dragon enabled the beast to do this. Alternate translation: "the dragon enabled it" (2) that God allowed the beast to do this. Alternate translation: "God allowed it" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

authority was given to it

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was the dragon. Alternate translation: "the dragon gave it authority" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

every tribe and people and language and nation

The terms **tribe**, **people**, **language**, and **nation** mean similar things. John is using the four terms together to make a comprehensive statement. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: "every different people group" (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

every tribe and people and language and nation

John is referring to speakers of various languages by association with the **languages** themselves. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "every tribe and people and speakers of every language and every nation" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 13:8

of whom his name has not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb having been slain from the foundation of the world

This could mean implicitly: (1) that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world, that is, God's purpose from before all time was for Jesus to give his life as a sacrifice. Alternate translation: "all whose names are not written in the Book of Life that belongs to the Lamb whom God appointed from the foundation of the world to die as a sacrifice" (2) that if a person worships the beast, this means that his name was not written in the Book of Life ... from the foundation of the world. Alternate translation: "all whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb having been slain from the foundation of the world" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

of whom his name has not been written

Since John is referring to a group of people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **name**. Alternate translation: "those whose names have not been written" (See: **Collective Nouns (p.476)**)

of whom his name has not been written

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: "those whose names God has not written" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

having been slain

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "whom God appointed to die as a sacrifice" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

from the foundation of the world

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **foundation**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "since God founded the world" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 13:9

If anyone has an ear, let him hear

John is addressing his listeners in the third person. It may be clearer in your language to use the second person. Alternate translation: "If any of you has an ear, you should hear" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.500)**)

If anyone has an ear

John is referring to the ability to hear by association with the way having an **ear** enables people to hear. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "If anyone is able to hear" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

let him hear

If your language does not use the third-person imperative in this way, you could state this in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "may he hear" or "he should hear" (See: **Third-Person Imperatives (p.609)**)

Revelation 13:10

If anyone {is} for captivity

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **captivity**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "If anyone's enemies are going to take him captive" (See: **Abstract Nouns** (p. 450))

if anyone will be killed by the sword, it is necessary for him to be killed by the sword

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "if anyone's enemies will kill him by the sword, it is necessary for them to kill him by the sword" (See: **Active or Passive** (p.452))

if anyone will be killed by the sword, it is necessary for him to be killed by the sword

John is referring to execution by association with the way the Romans used a **sword** to execute people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "if anyone will be executed, it is necessary for him to be executed" or "if anyone's enemies will execute him, it is necessary for them to execute him" (See: **Metonymy** (p.550))

Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints

The expression **Here is** introduces something that the speaker is calling for. Alternate translation: "This calls for endurance and faith on the part of the saints" (See: **Idiom** (p.524))

Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **endurance** and **faith**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. Alternate translation: "This calls for the saints to endure and to be faithful" (See: **Abstract Nouns** (p.450))

Revelation 13:11

it was speaking like a dragon

The point of this comparison is that this beast was **speaking** in a way that showed it was evil, like the dragon that is a symbol of evil in this book. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: "it was speaking in a way that showed it was evil, like a dragon" (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 13:12

before it

Here the word **before** means “in front of” or “in the presence of” another person. Alternate translation: “in its presence” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

of whom his wound of death had been healed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “who had recovered from his wound of death” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

wound of death

John is using a possessive form to describe a **wound** that led to **death**. Alternate translation: “deadly wound” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

Revelation 13:13

signs

John is not using the word **signs** here and in the next verse to mean the same thing that he does when he speaks of signs in [12:1](#) and [12:3](#). Here he does not mean significant sights, but miracles. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “miracles” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

before men

The term **before** here means “in front of.” Alternate translation: “in front of men” or “where men could see them” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

men

Although the term **man** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: “people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

Revelation 13:14

the signs that have been granted to it to do

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was the dragon.

Alternate translation: "the signs that the dragon has granted it to do" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

before the beast

Here the word **before** means "in front of" or "in the presence of" another person. Alternate translation: "in the presence of the beast" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

to the beast

While John says in the next verse that this was an image "of the beast," that is, an image that looked like the beast, here the expression **to the beast** means "in honor of the beast." You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "in honor of the beast" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 13:15

it was granted to it

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was the dragon.

Alternate translation: "the dragon enabled it" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

to give breath to the image of the beast

John is referring to the **image of the beast** coming alive by association with the **breath** that creatures breathe when they are alive. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to make the image of the beast come alive" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

might cause whoever does not worship the image of the beast to be killed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "might cause people to kill whoever does not worship the image of the beast" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 13:16

it causes

The pronoun **it** refers to the second beast, not to the image of the first beast. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the second beast causes” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

the small and the great and the rich and the poor and the free and the slave

John is using the adjectives **small**, **great**, **rich**, **poor**, **free**, and **slave** as nouns to mean certain kinds of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate these words with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: “small people and great people and rich people and poor people and free people and slaves” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

the small and the great and the rich and the poor and the free and the slave

John is using two extremes of importance, **small** and **great**, to mean people across the entire range of importance. John is using two extremes of wealth, **rich** and **poor**, to mean people across the entire range of wealth. John is using two extremes of status, **free** and **slave**, to mean people across the entire range of status. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use equivalent expressions or plain language. Alternate translation: “no matter what their importance and no matter what their wealth and no matter what their status” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

the small and the great and the rich and the poor and the free and the slave

These three phrases mean similar things. John is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “people of every different kind” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

the small and the great

John is speaking as if unimportant people were literally **small** and as if important people were literally large or **great**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the unimportant and the important” or “unimportant people and important people” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

they might give to them

The pronoun **they** is an indefinite pronoun that does not refer to anyone in the immediate context. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this with a different expression that does not use an indefinite pronoun. Alternate translation: “they might have to receive” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

Revelation 13:17

the number of its name

In this culture, people used the letters of the alphabet as symbols for numbers as well. As a result, it was possible to add up the values of the letters in someone's name to get the **number** of that **name**. That is what John means implicitly here. If your readers would not be familiar with this practice, you could explain it in your translation. Alternate translation: "the sum of the numerical values of the letters in its name" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 13:18

Here is wisdom

The expression **Here is** introduces something that the speaker is calling for. Alternate translation: “This calls for wisdom” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

let him calculate

If your language does not use the third-person imperative in this way, you could state this in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “may he calculate” or “he should calculate” (See: **Third-Person Imperatives (p.609)**)

the number of the beast

See the note about “the number of its name” in [13:17](#). Here John means implicitly that this number is the sum of the numerical values of the letters in the name of a certain man. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the sum of the numerical values of the letters in the name of a certain man” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 14

Revelation 14 General Notes

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Harvest

Harvest is when people go out to gather ripe food from plants. Jesus used this as a metaphor to teach his followers that they need to go and tell other people about him so those people can be part of God's kingdom. This chapter speaks symbolically of two harvests. The first is a harvest of grain. This may mean the time when Jesus gathers in his people from the whole earth. The second harvest is of grapes. This may mean the time when God gathers in wicked people to punish them. (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/faith\]\]](#))

Revelation 14:1

Mount Zion

The word **Zion** is the name of the mountain on which the city of Jerusalem is located. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

were} 144 thousands

See how you translated this in Revelation 7:4. Alternate translation: “one hundred forty-four thousand” (See: **Numbers (p.554)**)

having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “His name and the name of his Father appeared in writing on their foreheads” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

of & Father

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between God and Jesus. Be sure to retain this title in your translation. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.615)**)

Revelation 14:2

like the sound of many waters and like the sound of great thunder

The point of these comparisons is that the **sound** John **heard** was loud and powerful. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “that was loud and powerful, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of booming thunder” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

of many waters

By **sound of many waters**, John could mean a loud waterfall or raging floodwaters. See how you translated the similar expression in [1:15](#). Alternate translation: “of a waterfall” or “of raging floodwaters” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

was} like harpists harping on their harps

The point of this comparison is that the **sound** that John **heard** was also beautiful and melodious. (John explains in the next verse that it was the sound of a great number of people singing.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “beautiful and melodious, like harpists harping on their harps” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

was} like harpists harping on their harps

John's repetitive use of three words with the root “harp” seems to imitate the sound of music. You may wish to use three similar words in your translation if that is possible in your language. (See: **Poetry (p.567)**)

Revelation 14:3

they sing

The pronoun **they** refers to the **144 thousands** whom John describes in [14:1](#) and later in this verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the 144 thousands sing” or “the 144,000 people sing” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

no one was able to learn the song except the 144 thousands

If it would appear in your language that John was contradicting himself by saying that **no one** could learn the song and then naming people who could learn the song, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: “the only ones who were able to learn the song were the 144 thousands” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.479)**)

having been bought

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, [5:9](#) indicates that it was the Lamb. Alternate translation: “whom the Lamb bought” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

having been bought

John is speaking as if the Lamb literally **bought** these people. He means that through his sacrificial death, the Lamb saved them by setting them free from the guilt and power of sin. Your language may have a term that you can use in your translation that describes someone paying a price or making a sacrifice to set someone else free. See what you did in [5:9](#). Alternate translation: “whom the Lamb redeemed” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

from the earth

John is referring to the inhabitants of the earth by association with the **earth** on which they live. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “from among the inhabitants of the earth” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 14:4

These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins

John is speaking as if the people who are singing have literally never had sexual relations. In context, he most likely means that they have not worshiped idols. Having sexual relations outside of marriage, or not waiting until marriage to have sexual relations, is a common Old Testament image for idol worship. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "These are they who have not worshiped idols, for they are faithful to God" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

have not been defiled with women

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. John is not saying that women make men **defiled**. He is saying that sexual relations outside of marriage are sinful. In your translation, be sure that this is clear to your readers. Alternate translation: "have not committed immoral acts with women" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the ones following the Lamb wherever he goes

This statement may be one that readers could understand literally within the world of this vision. However, in the New Testament, **following** someone often means being that person's disciple and obeying his teaching. That could be what John means here. Alternate translation: "the ones who obey the Lamb no matter what he asks" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

These have been bought

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. See what you did in [14:3](#). Alternate translation: "The Lamb bought them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

οἱ ἡγορασμένοι

See how you translated this in [14:3](#). Alternate translation: "whom the Lamb redeemed" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

from among men

Although the term **man** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: "from among humanity" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

as first fruits for God and for the Lamb

John is speaking as if these people were literally the **first fruits** of a harvest. He means that they are the first of many people who will eventually believe in Jesus. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "as the first of many people who will believe in God and Jesus" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 14:5

no lie has been found in their mouth

Since John is referring to a group of people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **mouth**. Alternate translation: “no lie has been found in their mouths” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.476)**)

no lie has been found in their mouth

Here the expression **has been found** means “could be found” or “was there.” Alternate translation: “there was no lie in their mouths” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

no lie has been found in their mouth

John is referring to people speaking by association with the way that a person speaks with his **mouth**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “they have told no lies” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

no lie has been found in their mouth

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **no** and the negative word **lies**. Alternate translation: “they have always told the truth” (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

no lie has been found in their mouth

The implication is that these people have told **no lie** about who Jesus is, despite the pressure they have been facing to deny that he is Lord and Savior. You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “they have always told the truth about who Jesus is” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

for they are blameless

Some ancient manuscripts read **for they are blameless**. ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts add “before the throne of God.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.607)**)

Revelation 14:6

to every nation and tribe and language and people

The terms **nation**, **tribe**, **language**, and **people** mean similar things. John is using the four terms together to make a comprehensive statement. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “every different people group” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 14:7

the hour of his judgment has come

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **judgment**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “the hour has come when he will judge” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

the hour of his judgment has come

The angel is using the word **hour** by association to mean a specific time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the time of his judgment has come” or “the time has come when he will judge” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the heaven and the earth and the sea and the springs of water

The angel is using four main components of creation to mean all of creation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “everything that exists” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

Revelation 14:8

Fallen, fallen has Babylon the Great

This second angel is speaking as if Babylon has literally **fallen** down. He means that the city has been destroyed. The repetition of the word **fallen** is emphatic and indicates complete destruction. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Babylon the Great has been completely destroyed” or “God has completely destroyed Babylon the Great” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Babylon the Great

The word **Babylon** is the name of an ancient city that founded an empire whose armies destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 586 B.C. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Babylon the Great

Since the ancient city of Babylon was destroyed centuries earlier, the angel is not speaking literally of that city. The angel is using **Babylon** to symbolize some other city or empire. The specific identity of that city or empire is a matter of interpretation rather than translation. Alternate translation: “the great city that is like Babylon” or “the great empire that is like Babylon” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

who caused all the nations to drink

The angel is speaking of the city of **Babylon** as if it were a living thing that **caused** the nations **to drink** from a certain cup. The angel means that the rulers of the city did this, symbolically (See: next note). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “whose rulers caused all the nations to drink” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

all the nations

The angel says **all** here as a generalization for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: “nations throughout the world” (See: **Hyperbole (p.520)**)

caused all the nations to drink from the wine of the passion of her immorality

This second angel is speaking as if Babylon has literally caused the nations to **drink** a certain kind of **wine**. This means, in the first instance, that Babylon led the nations to commit sexual immorality with her. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “caused all the nations to give in to passions that led them to commit sexual immorality with her” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

from the wine of the passion of her immorality

In the second instance, as in [14:3](#), having immoral sexual relations is a symbolic image for worshiping idols. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to worship idols as she did” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 14:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 14:10

he will also drink from the wine of the wrath of God having been poured undiluted into the cup of his anger

The angel is speaking as if anyone who worships the beast will literally **drink** a certain kind of **wine** from a certain **cup**. He means symbolically that God will make such a person experience the just consequences of his actions. Within this image, the fact that the wine is **undiluted** means that God will not show him mercy as he judges him. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "God will make him experience the just consequences of his actions and in his anger God will not show him any mercy" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

of God having been poured

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "that God has poured" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

he will be tormented

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will torment him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

fire and sulfur

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **fire** describes the state of the **sulfur**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use "and." Alternate translation: "fiery sulfur" (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

before the holy angels and before the Lamb

Here the word **before** means "in front of" or "in the presence of" another person. Alternate translation: "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 14:11

of their torment

The third angel is referring to the burning sulfur with which God is tormenting these people by association with the **torment** itself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “of the burning sulfur with which God is tormenting them” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

to the ages of the ages

This expression refers to endless future time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “for all eternity” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

day and night

The angel is using the two parts of a full day, **day** and **night**, to mean all the time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “at any time” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

if anyone receives

The angel is using a characteristic expression of the Greek language. Alternate translation: “anyone who receives” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 14:12

Here is the endurance of the saints

The expression **Here is** introduces something that the speaker is calling for. Alternate translation: “This calls for endurance on the part of the saints” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus

See how you translated the word **keeping** in [1:3](#) and in [2:26](#). Alternate translation: “obeying the commandments of God and maintaining their faith in Jesus” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

the faith of Jesus

In this possessive form, **Jesus** is the object rather than the subject of **faith**. That is, this does not mean the faith that Jesus has, it means the faith that people have in Jesus. Alternate translation: “faith in Jesus” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

Revelation 14:13

a voice from heaven saying

John is referring to someone speaking by association with the **voice** that the person is using to speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation, as in UST: "I heard someone speaking from heaven and saying" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

saying, "Write, 'Blessed {are} the dead dying in the Lord from now on

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: "that told me to write, 'Blessed are the dead dying in the Lord from now on'" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.587)**)

the dead dying

The person speaking is using the adjective **dead** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "people who die if they die" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

dying in the Lord from now on

The expression **dying in the Lord** means to die while still maintaining faith in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "who die from now on while still maintaining their faith in Jesus" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

in the Lord

The person speaking is referring to Jesus by a respectful title. Use a form for addressing someone respectfully in your language. Alternate translation: "in the Lord Jesus" (See: **Politeness (p.571)**)

so

The word translated **so** introduces a result of the action that the previous sentence describes. If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer back to that action. Alternate translation: "because they are blessed as a result of dying in the Lord," (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.484)**)

their deeds follow with them

John is speaking of the **deeds** of these people who have died **in the Lord** as if those deeds could **follow** the people as they come into the presence of God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "God will acknowledge as they come into his presence that they have served him diligently" (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

Revelation 14:14

one like

John is using the adjective **like** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. ULT adds the word **one** to show that. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “a person who looked like a son of man” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

a son of man

This could mean: (1) a human being, in a characteristic Hebrew expression that John would be borrowing. Alternate translation, as in UST: “a human being” (2) the Messiah, since “the Son of Man” is a title for the Messiah. Alternate translation: “the Messiah, the Son of Man” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

a sharp sickle

A **sickle** is a tool with a curved blade that agricultural workers use to cut down standing crops in order to harvest them. If your readers would not be familiar with what a **sickle** is, you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “a sharp harvesting tool” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 14:15

has been ripened

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "has ripened" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 14:16

the earth was harvested

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "he harvested the earth" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 14:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 14:18

the & the one having authority over & fire

John is referring implicitly to the **fire** that burned up sacrifices on the altar. You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “the one responsible for maintaining the altar fire” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 14:19

winepress

A **winepress** a large basin made of stone or wood. Workers put grapes in this basin and, with bare feet, trample on the grapes to extract their juice. If your readers would not be familiar with what a **winepress** is, you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: "large basin" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 14:20

the winepress was trampled

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “workers trampled the winepress” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the winepress was trampled

John is referring to the grapes in the winepress by association with the **winepress** itself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “workers trampled the grapes in the winepress” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

blood

John is referring to a stream of blood by association with the **blood** that ran out of the winepress. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “a stream of blood” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

up to the bridles of the horses

The word **bridles** describes sets of headgear that riders use to control horses. If your readers would not be familiar with what **bridles** are, you could use an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “as high as horses’ heads” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

1,600 stadia

The word **stadia** is the plural form of “stadium,” which was a distance of about 185 meters. If it would be helpful in your language, you could give the equivalent in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “about 300 kilometers” or “about 200 miles” (See: **Biblical Distance (p.464)**)

Revelation 15

Revelation 15 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

In this chapter, John describes events and pictures that occur in heaven.

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 verses 3–4.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

“Victorious over the beast”

These people are spiritually victorious. While most spiritual battles cannot be seen, the book of Revelation pictures spiritual battles as occurring openly. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/spirit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/writing-apocalyptic\]\]](#))

“The temple having the tent of witness was open in heaven”

Scripture elsewhere indicates the earthly temple copied God’s perfect dwelling place in heaven. Here John seems to refer to God’s heavenly dwelling place or temple. (See: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/heaven\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/writing-apocalyptic\]\]](#))

Songs

The book of Revelation often describes heaven as a place where people sing. People there worship God with songs. This illustrates that heaven is a place where God is always worshiped.

Revelation 15:1

great and marvelous

The terms **great** and **marvelous** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “amazing” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

having seven final plagues

John is speaking of these **plagues** as if they were something that the **seven angels** had in their possession. He means that God had made these angels responsible for administering the plagues. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “who would be responsible for administering seven final plagues” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the wrath of God was finished

John is referring to God’s punishments for sin by association with the **wrath** that God feels because of sin. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the punishments of God were finished” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the wrath of God was finished

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God finished punishing all wrongdoing” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 452)**)

Revelation 15:2

as it were a sea of glass

The point of this comparison is that the large object made of **glass** looked like a **sea**. That is, it was wide and spacious and level. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. See how you translated the similar expression in [4:6](#). Alternate translation: “a large glass surface” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

having been mixed with fire

The point of this further comparison seems to be that the glass sea was sparkling with light or reflecting the flashes of light that came from the nearby throne, as John describes in [4:5](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “that looked as if it was flashing with fire” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

the ones being victorious over the beast and over his image and over the number of his name

John means implicitly that these people were **victorious** because they did not worship **the beast and his image** and did not accept **the number of his name** on their right hands or foreheads. You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “who had not worshiped the beast or his image and who had not accepted the number of his name as a mark on their right hands or foreheads” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 15:3

they sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb

This could mean implicitly: (1) that these victorious believers sing one song. Alternate translation: “they sing a song that Moses, the servant of God, sang and that the Lamb now sings” (2) that these victorious believers sing two songs. Alternate translation: “they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and they also sing the song of the Lamb” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

Great and marvelous {are} your deeds

The terms **Great** and **marvelous** mean similar things. The victorious believers are using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “Your deeds are amazing” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Righteous and true {are} your ways

The terms **Righteous** and **true** mean similar things. The victorious believers are using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “Your ways are completely righteous” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

are} your ways

The victorious believers are singing about God’s actions as if they were **ways** or paths that God was walking on. Alternate translation: “are your actions” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

King of the Ages

The believers are using a possessive form to describe not what God rules over but for how long God will rule. Alternate translation: “you who will be king for all eternity” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

King of the Ages

Some ancient manuscripts read **King of the Ages**. ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “King of the Nations.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.607)**)

Revelation 15:4

Who will certainly not fear {you}, Lord, and glorify your name

The victorious believers are using the question form for emphasis. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: "Everyone should fear you, Lord, and glorify your name" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.591)**)

glorify your name

Here, **name** represents the character and reputation of person by association with the way that each person has a name. Alternate translation: "praise you for your excellent character" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

before you

Here the word **before** means "in front of" or "in the presence of" another person. Alternate translation: "in your presence" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

your righteous deeds have been manifested

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "you have manifested your righteous deeds" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 15:5

the temple of the dwelling of the testimony in heaven had been opened

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: “God had opened the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the temple

When John says that the **temple** had been opened, he means by association that the doors of the temple had been opened and he could see inside. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the doors of the temple” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the temple of the dwelling of the testimony

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **testimony**, you could express the same idea in another way. The phrase “the tabernacle of the testimony” is a common Old Testament description of the tent that held the ark of the covenant. John describes in [11:19](#) how the ark was now in the temple in heaven. Alternate translation: “the temple, that is, the tent holding the ark of the covenant” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 15:6

having the seven plagues

See how you translated the similar expression in [15:1](#). Alternate translation: “who would be responsible for administering the seven plagues” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

having been clothed with clean, bright linen and with golden sashes having been wrapped around {their} chests

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “They were wearing clean, bright linen clothes and they had wrapped golden sashes around their chests” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

linen

John is referring to linen clothes by association with the **linen** from which this clothing is made. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “linen clothes” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

linen

The word **linen** is the name for a fine, expensive cloth that people make from the strong fibers of the inner bark of the flax plant. If your readers would not be familiar with what linen is, you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “clothes made from fine, expensive fabric” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 15:7

being full of the wrath of the God

John is referring to God's punishments for sin by association with the **wrath** that God feels because of sin. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly.

Alternate translation: "being full of punishments from God" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

living to the ages of the ages

This expression refers to endless future time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "who lives for all eternity" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 15:8

the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "smoke from the glory of God and from his power filled the temple" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

from the glory of God and from his power

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **glory** and **power**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. Alternate translation: "because God was so glorious and powerful" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the seven angels had completed their seven plagues" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 16

Revelation 16 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

This chapter continues the vision that John began to describe in chapter 15. Together these two chapters describe the seven plagues that complete the wrath of God. (See: **wrath, fury (p.638)**)

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 verses 5–7.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Seven bowls of God's wrath

This chapter reveals severe judgments. John pictures the execution of these judgments as angels pouring out seven bowls of God's wrath. (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- When John says that an angel "poured out his bowl," he means that the angel poured out what was in his bowl. You can say that in your translation each time. (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)
- In this chapter, John uses adjectives "first" through "seventh" as nouns to identify the angels who pour out the bowls of God's wrath. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate these words with equivalent phrases, for example, "the first angel," "the second angel," and so forth. (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)
- If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use cardinal numbers for these angels, for example, "angel number one," "angel number two," and so forth. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

Revelation 16:1

a loud voice from the temple saying

John is referring to someone speaking by association with the **voice** that the person is using to speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “someone speaking loudly from the temple and saying” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

of the wrath of God

John is referring to God’s punishments for sin by association with the **wrath** that God feels because of sin. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “that hold the punishments from God” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 16:2

the first

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, John is using the adjective **first** as a noun to identify this particular angel. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase, and you could do the same with the similar expressions that describe the other six angels. Alternate translation: “the first angel” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

the first

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, if your language does not use ordinal numbers, here and for the other six angels you could use a cardinal number or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “angel number one” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

a bad and harmful sore

Since John is referring to what happened to each person in a group of people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **sore**. Alternate translation: “bad and harmful sores” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.476)**)

bad and harmful

The terms **bad** and **harmful** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “very severe” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

the men

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: “the people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

Revelation 16:3

as of a corpse

The point of this comparison is that the sea turned into **blood** that was foul and smelled bad, like the blood of a **corpse**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “that was foul and smelled bad” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

every living soul

John is referring to living creatures by association with the **soul** or vital breath that keeps them alive. (Sea creatures do not breathe air, but they circulate water comparably to the way land creatures circulate air.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “every living creature” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 16:4

it became

The pronoun **it** refers to the **water** in the **rivers** and **springs**. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers.
Alternate translation: “the water in them became” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

Revelation 16:5

the angel of the waters

John is using this possessive form to indicate that God had given this **angel** authority over the **waters** (the rivers and springs) and responsibility for maintaining them. The angel is affirming that God has done the right thing even though this has damaged the waters. Alternate translation: “the angel who was responsible for the waters” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

the one being and the one who was, the Holy One

Even though the angel is addressing God, the angel is speaking about God in the third person. You could make this clear by using the word “you” in your translation. Alternate translation: “you who are and who were, you who are holy” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.500)**)

the one being and the one who was, the Holy One

Some ancient manuscripts read **the one being and the one who was, the Holy One**. ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “O Lord, the one being and the one who was and who is to be.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.607)**)

the Holy One

The angel is using the adjective **Holy** as a noun. He is referring to God by one of his essential attributes. ULT adds the word **One** to show that. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “the Holy God” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

these

The pronoun **these** refers to the people who have killed the saints and prophets, as the angel describes in the next verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “these people” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

Revelation 16:6

they poured out the blood of the saints and prophets

The angel is referring to the fact that these people killed **the saints and prophets** by association with the way they shed their **blood* when they killed them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “they shed the blood of the saints and prophets when they killed them” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

they are worthy

The angel of the waters means implicitly that the people who killed the saints and prophets are **worthy** of this punishment, that is, they deserve it. You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “They deserve this punishment” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 16:7

I heard the altar saying

John is describing the **altar** as a living thing that can speak. As the General Introduction to Revelation discusses, within the world of this vision, this is not a figure of speech and so you can translate it literally even if your language does not use figures of speech. (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

are} true and righteous

The terms **true** and **righteous** mean similar things. The altar is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “entirely righteous” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 16:8

it was granted to it

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: "God permitted it" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

it was granted to it

John is speaking of the **sun** as if it were a living thing that could receive permission to do something. As the General Introduction to Revelation discusses, within the world of this vision, this may not be a figure of speech, and so you could translate it literally even if your language does not use figures of speech. However, if it would be clearer in your language, you could consider it a figure of speech and provide an equivalent translation. Alternate translation: "God caused it" (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

men

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: "people" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

fire

John is speaking as if the sun were literally scorching people with **fire**. He means that the sun's rays became so hot that they burned people just as badly as fire burns people. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the heat of its rays" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

οἱ ἄνθρωποι

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: "people" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

Revelation 16:9

men were scorched a great scorch

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the sun scorched men greatly” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

they blasphemed the name of the God

Here, **name** represents the character and reputation of person by association with the way that each person has a name. Alternate translation: “they maligned the character of the God” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

they did not repent to give him glory

In the Bible, a person giving God **glory** often means that person acknowledging that he has sinned and that God is justly punishing him. Alternate translation: “they did not repent of their sin and acknowledge that God was punishing them for it justly” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

to give him glory

If you wish to retain the biblical idiom in your translation but your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “and glorify him” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 16:10

its kingdom became darkened

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: “God darkened its kingdom” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

its kingdom became darkened

John does not say specifically how God **darkened** the entire area where the beast ruled and so you may not wish to offer any explicit explanation in your translation. However, if your language would not describe something like this without saying how it happened, you could suggest an explanation. Alternate translation: “God made thick clouds cover the sun in order to darken its kingdom” or “God caused an eclipse of the sun in order to darken its kingdom” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

its kingdom

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of a **kingdom**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “the area that the beast ruled as king” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

they were chewing their tongues

The pronoun **they** refers to the people whom God afflicted with painful sores, as John describes in [16:2](#) and as he makes clear in the next verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the people whom God had punished with sores were chewing their tongues” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

Revelation 16:11

because of their pain and because of their sores

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **pain** tells what kind of **sores** these were. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “because of their painful sores” (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

Revelation 16:12

the Euphrates

The word **Euphrates** is the name of a river. See how you translated it in [9:14](#). (See: **How to Translate Names** (p. 516))

its water was dried up so that the way of the kings from the rising of the sun might be prepared

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: “God dried up its water in order to prepare the way for the kings from the rising of the sun” (See: **Active or Passive** (p.452))

from the rising of the sun

This expression refers to a particular direction from the perspective of the speaker. Your language may have its own way of referring to this direction. Alternate translation: “from the east” (See: **Idiom** (p.524))

Revelation 16:13

like frogs

John does not seem to be drawing a comparison between these **unclean spirits** and **frogs** in order to indicate something about the character of the spirits. Rather, he seems to be describing the appearance of the spirits. This appearance may have some symbolic significance, but that is a matter of interpretation rather than translation. Alternate translation: “that looked like frogs” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 16:14

signs

John is using the word **signs** here in the same sense as in [13:13](#). See how you translated the word there. Alternate translation: “miracles” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 16:15

In this verse, Jesus breaks into John's narrative of his vision to address the believers who are listening to it or reading it. ULT puts the verse in parentheses to show this. There may be a comparable convention in your language that you can use in your translation. You can also state explicitly that the Lord Jesus said this, as UST does. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

I am coming like a thief

The point of this comparison is that Jesus **is coming** at a time when people will not be expecting him, just as a **thief** comes when people are not expecting him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: "I am coming at a time when you are not expecting me" (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

keeping his garments so that he might not walk around naked and they see his indecency

As the General Introduction to Revelation discusses, here the term "keeping" means "preserving," that is, maintaining the **garments** in good repair. This represents living in a way that pleases God. Walking around **naked** similarly stands for living in a way that displeases God, that is, committing sins. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "continuing to live in a way that pleases God and not committing sins that others can see" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

keeping his garments

This expression means to keep one's **garments** on, that is, to continue to wear clothes. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "continuing to wear clothes" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

and they see his indecency

The pronoun **they** is an indefinite pronoun that does not refer to anyone in the immediate context. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this with a different expression that does not use an indefinite pronoun. Alternate translation: "so that people can see his indecency" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

indecency

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **indecency**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "indecent behavior" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 16:16

they brought them together

The pronoun **they** refers to the spirits of demons that John describes in [16:14](#) and the pronoun **them** refer to the kings John describes in that same verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the spirits of demons brought the kings together” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

called

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “that people call” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Armageddon

The word **Armageddon** is a Hebrew word that John spells out using Greek letters so his readers will know how it sounds. In your translation you can spell it the way it sounds in your language. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p. 486)**)

Armageddon

The word **Armageddon** is the name of a valley. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Revelation 16:17

a loud voice came out from the temple from the throne, saying

John is referring to someone speaking by association with the **voice** that the person is using to speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I heard the one who was sitting on the throne in the temple say loudly" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

It has happened

This expression means that the speaker has accomplished what he intended to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly, indicating that God is the one sitting on the **throne** in the **temple**. Alternate translation: "I, God, have accomplished what I intended to do" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 16:18

sounds and thunder

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **sounds** describes what the **thunder** produced. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “crashes of thunder” (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

man

Although the term **man** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: “humanity” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

Revelation 16:19

the great city

John assumes that his readers will understand that by **the great city** he means **Babylon the Great**, as he says later in the verse. You can use the name here as well if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "Babylon the Great" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

the cities

John is using these **cities** as a whole to mean the individual parts of them, that is, their buildings. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the buildings in the cities" (See: **Synecdoche (p.605)**)

fell

John is not speaking of these **cities** or their buildings as if they were living things that could fall down accidentally. He means that the buildings in the cities collapsed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "collapsed" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Babylon the Great was remembered before God to give to her

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God remembered Babylon the Great to give to her" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Babylon the Great was remembered before God to give to her

John is not suggesting that God had forgotten about Babylon the Great but now **remembered** the city. He is using a common biblical expression that means that God took action with regard to a person or entity of which he was already aware, either to help or to punish. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "God punished Babylon the Great by giving her" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Babylon the Great was remembered

John is referring to the people who live in the city of **Babylon** by association with that city itself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the people who lived in the great city of Babylon were remembered" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

to give to her the cup of the wine of the wrath of his anger

John is alluding to what the angel said in [14:10](#) about the "wine of the wrath" of God's "anger" that was in his "cup." It is likely that he is therefore referring symbolically, as the angel was, to God making people and entities experience the just consequences of their actions. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to make her experience the just consequences of her actions that have made God so angry" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 16:20

And every island fled, and the mountains were not found

John means implicitly that these things also happened as a result of the earthquake. You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. UST models one way to do that. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

fled

John is speaking of each **island** as if it were a living thing that **fled**. He means that the islands disappeared beneath the surface of the ocean. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "sank into the ocean" (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

the mountains were not found

Here the expression **were not found** means "could not be found" or "were not there." Alternate translation: "there were no mountains anymore" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 16:21

great hail, about a talent in weight

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “great hail, in hailstones weighing about a talent each” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

about a talent in weight

A talent was a weight of about 33 kilograms or about 70 pounds. If it would be helpful in your language, you could give the equivalent in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “in hailstones weighing about 33 kilograms each” or “in hailstones weighing about 70 pounds each” (See: **Biblical Weight (p.472)**)

men, & men

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: “people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

Revelation 17

Revelation 17 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

This chapter begins to describe how God will destroy the entity that the book of Revelation calls Babylon.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

The great prostitute

Those who have sex with prostitutes are unfaithful to God's purposes for sexual relations to take place within marriage. The "great prostitute" in this chapter may therefore represent some person or entity that leads people to be unfaithful to God spiritually. But it is not necessary to try to identify this person or entity in your translation. (See: **Symbolic Prophecy (p.602)**)

Seven hills

An angel tells John in 17:9, "The seven heads are seven hills where the woman is sitting." This could mean that the woman represents the city of Rome, which is known as the City of Seven Hills. However, since this is a matter of interpretation rather than translation, it would not be appropriate to say explicitly in your translation that the seven hills indicate the city of Rome. br>

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Metaphors

John uses many different metaphors in this chapter. He explains some of their meanings, but allows them to remain relatively unclear. The translator should do the same. (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

"The beast that you saw was and is not but is about to come up"

This and similar phrases in this chapter contrast the beast with Jesus. Jesus is called "the one who is and who was and who is to come" elsewhere in the book of Revelation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 457)**)

Paradox

A paradox is a statement that asserts as true two things that seemingly cannot both be true at the same time. This sentence in 17:11 is a paradox: "the beast ... is itself also an eighth, but it is from the seven." The translator should not attempt to explain how both of these things can be true; that should remain a paradox.

Revelation 17:1

the judgment of the great prostitute

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: “how God will judge the great prostitute” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

of the great prostitute sitting on many waters

Since the angel explains the meaning of the **great prostitute** in verse 18 and the meaning of the **waters** in verse 15, you do not need to say anything in your translation about their meaning here. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.621)**)

sitting on many waters

The angel is using the word **waters** to mean a specific body of water by association. The phrase **sitting on many waters** is an allusion to [Jeremiah 51:13](#), where the same phrase describes the ancient city of Babylon and its location on the great Euphrates River. (The Hebrew word that Jeremiah uses can mean both “sit” and “dwell.”) If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “who lives next to a great river” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 17:2

with whom the kings of the earth committed sexual immorality

The angel is speaking as if the **kings of the earth** had literally **committed sexual immorality** with this prostitute. But that is not literally the case even within the world of this vision, since the angel explains in verse 18 that the prostitute symbolizes a city. So the sexual immorality likely symbolizes idolatry and, in light of chapter 18, greed. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "The kings of the earth joined her in being idolatrous and greedy" (See: **Metaphor (p. 544)**)

the ones living {on} the earth were intoxicated from the wine of her sexual immorality

The angel is speaking as if the **sexual immorality** of the prostitute had been **wine** and that the **ones inhabiting the earth** had literally been **intoxicated** by that wine. But once again these things are not literally the case even within the world of this vision. The sexual immorality likely represents idolatry and greed and the intoxication likely represents deception. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "she deceived the ones inhabiting the earth to make them indulge in idolatry and greed" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

the ones living {on} the earth were intoxicated from the wine of her sexual immorality

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the wine of her sexual immorality intoxicated the ones inhabiting the earth" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 17:3

he carried me away in the Spirit to a wilderness

See how you translated the expression **in the Spirit** in [1:10](#) and [4:2](#). Alternate translation: “as he carried me away to a wilderness, the Holy Spirit inspired me so that I could receive further revelation” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

being full of blasphemous names

This expression means that **blasphemous names** were written all over this **beast**. Your language may have its own way of stating this. Alternate translation: “covered with blasphemous names” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 17:4

the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stone and pearls

John is referring to the clothing and jewelry that the **woman** was wearing by association with the materials out of which they were made. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet robes and adorned with gold jewelry in which precious stones and pearls were set” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stone and pearls

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the woman was wearing purple and scarlet clothing and she had adorned herself with gold jewelry in which precious stones and pearls were set” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 452)**)

precious stone

The term **precious stone** refers to a beautiful and valuable piece of mineral or rock, such as is often used in jewelry. It may be more natural in your language to use a plural form here. Alternate translation: “gemstones” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

pearls

The word **pearls** describes beautiful and valuable white beads that form inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

of abominations and the impurities

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **abominations** describes the **impurities** of the woman’s conduct. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “the abominable impurities” (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

Revelation 17:5

on her forehead had been written

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "someone had written on her forehead" (See: **Active or Passive (p. 452)**)

a name, a mystery

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words together. The word **mystery** tells what kind of **name** was written on the woman's forehead. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "a mysterious name" or "a name that had a symbolic meaning" (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

a name, a mystery

Some interpreters consider the word **mystery** to be part of the name of this woman. Alternate translation: "a name: Mystery," (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Revelation 17:6

from the blood of the saints and from the blood of the witnesses of Jesus

These two phrases mean similar things. John is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “from the blood of the saints who had borne witness to Jesus” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

I wondered a great wonder

John is using a construction in which a verb and its object come from the same root. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to express the meaning here. Alternatively, your language may have its own way of expressing the same meaning. Alternate translation: “I wondered greatly” (See: **Poetry (p.567)**)

Revelation 17:7

Why are you wondering

The angel is using the question form for emphasis. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: “You do not need to wonder!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.591)**)

Revelation 17:8

it is going to destruction

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **destruction**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "is going to be destroyed" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

have not been written

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: "God has not written" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

from the foundation of the world

See how you translated this expression in [13:8](#). Alternate translation: "since God founded the world" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 17:9

Here {is} the mind having wisdom

The expression **Here is** introduces something that the speaker is calling for. Alternate translation: “This calls for a mind that has wisdom” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Here {is} the mind having wisdom

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **wisdom**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “This calls for a wise mind” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

where the woman is sitting on them

It might seem that this expression contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could shorten it. Alternate translation: “where the woman is sitting” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

Revelation 17:10

the five & the one & the other

John is using the adjectives **five**, **one**, and **other** as nouns to mean these kings. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate these words with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: “the first five kings ... one more of the kings ... the other king” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

have fallen

The angel is speaking of these **five** kings as if they have literally **fallen**. He means that they have died. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “have died” (See: **Metaphor (p. 544)**)

a little

The angel is using the adjective **little** as a noun to mean a certain length of time. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “for a little while” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

Revelation 17:11

an eighth, & the seven

The angel is using the adjectives **eighth** and **seven** as nouns to mean these kings. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "an eighth king ... the seven kings" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

an eighth

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "king number eight" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

is going to destruction

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **destruction**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "is going to be destroyed" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 17:12

a kingdom

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of a **kingdom**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “authority to rule as kings” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

for one hour

In the ancient world, an **hour** was the shortest time span that people envisioned. In this context, the term does not mean a literal hour of 60 minutes. It means the shortest time imaginable. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “for just a little while” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 17:13

These have one mind

This expression means to be in complete agreement. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "These kings are in complete agreement" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

their power and authority

The terms **power** and **authority** mean similar things. The angel is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: "all of their authority" (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 17:14

the ones with him {are} called and chosen and faithful

The words **called** and **chosen** are not passive verbal forms, they are adjectives. However, if your language does not use passive forms, it might be clearer for your readers to use expressions that do not seem to be passive verbal forms. Alternate translation: "God has called and chosen the ones with him and they are faithful" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 17:15

are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages

The terms **peoples**, **multitudes**, **nations**, and **languages** mean similar things. John is using the four terms together to make a comprehensive statement. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “every different people group” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

languages

The angel is referring to speakers of various languages by association with the **languages** themselves. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “speakers of various languages” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 17:16

they will make her desolated and naked

The terms **desolated** and **naked** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “they will take away everything she has” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

desolated

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “desolate” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

they will consume her flesh

The angel is speaking as if these **horns** (that is, these kings) and the **beast** will literally **consume** the **flesh** of the **prostitute**. But even within the world of this vision, that is not literally true. This is a common biblical image for destroying someone. If it would be clearer in your language, and especially if it would be helpful to your readers to know that cannibalism has no part in God’s judgments against evil, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “they will destroy her” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

they will burn her completely with fire

It might seem that this expression contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could shorten it. Alternate translation: “they will burn her up completely” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

Revelation 17:17

God has put into their hearts

Here the **heart** represents the desires. Alternate translation: "God has put into their desires" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

God has put into their hearts

The angel is speaking as if God has literally **put** something into the **hearts** of these kings. He means that God has led them to want to do something. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "God has led them to have the desire" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

to do his purpose and to do one purpose and

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two shorter phrases connected with **and**. The phrase **to do one purpose** tells how the kings will **do his purpose**, that is, God's purpose. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use "and." Alternate translation: "to do God's purpose by agreeing" (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

to do one purpose

This expression means to be in complete agreement. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to be in complete agreement" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

their kingdom

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of a **kingdom**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "their authority to rule as kings" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

their kingdom

Since the angel is referring to things that belong to several people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **kingdom**. Alternate translation: "their kingdoms" (See: **Collective Nouns (p.476)**)

until the words of God will be fulfilled

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "until God has fulfilled his words" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

until the words of God will be fulfilled

The angel is using the term **words** to mean things that God has spoken by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "until God has fulfilled what he has spoken" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 17:18

the great city having a kingdom over

The angel is referring to the king who rules from the **great city** by association with that city itself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the great city whose king has a kingdom over” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the great city having a kingdom over

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **kingdom**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “the great city that rules over” or “the great city whose king rules over” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 18

Revelation 18 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with all or part of verses 1–8, 10, 16–17, and 19–24.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“in one hour”

Characters in the narrative use the expression “in one hour” in verses 10, 17, 19. In the ancient world, an “hour” was the shortest time span that people envisioned. In this context, the term does not mean a literal hour of 60 minutes. It means the shortest time imaginable. You may wish to translate this phrase with a comparable phrase in your language such as “in such a short time.” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

“woe, woe”

In verses 10, 16, and 19, kings and merchants repeat the word “woe” for emphasis. If it would not be natural in your language to repeat a word like that, you could express the emphasis in another way, for example, by using a different expression and including the word “very,” as the UST does.

“she,” “her”

People in this culture conventionally referred to cities by using feminine pronouns. Accordingly, throughout this chapter, various speakers refer to the city of Babylon as “she” and “her.” Your language may use a different gender, so you might say “it” and “its” in your translation. You could also use a noun and say “that city.” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

“will not be see/heard/found anymore”

In verses 21, 22, and 23, an angel speaks a series of similar phrases describing what will not be “found” or “heard” or “seen” in Babylon “anymore.” The repetition of such phrases is a figure of speech for emphasis. The angel is emphasizing how thoroughly God will destroy Babylon. If possible, use similar statements in your own translation. You may also wish to make each of these verses a separate paragraph, as ULT does, or use formatting in some other way to highlight the repeated phrases. (See: **Litany (p.538)**)

Revelation 18:1

the earth was illuminated by his glory

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "his glory illuminated the earth" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 18:2

Babylon the Great has fallen

See how you translated the similar expression in [14:8](#). Alternate translation: “Babylon the Great has been destroyed” or “God has destroyed Babylon the Great” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Babylon the Great has fallen

Some ancient manuscripts read, **Babylon the Great has fallen**. ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.607)**)

she has become

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, the pronoun **she** refers to the city of Babylon. People in this culture conventionally referred to cities with feminine pronouns. Your language may use a different gender. You could also use a noun. Alternate translation: “it has become” or “that city has become” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

a habitation of demons and a hold of every unclean spirit

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. The angel is speaking in a Hebrew style of poetry, and Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition. It would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if such repetition would not be natural in your language, you could connect the phrases with a word other than **and** in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: “an abode of demons, yes, a hold of every unclean spirit” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

a hold of every unclean spirit and a hold of every unclean and detested bird

The angel says **every** here as a generalization for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: “she has become overrun with unclean spirits and with unclean and detested birds” (See: **Hyperbole (p.520)**)

a hold of every unclean spirit and a hold of every unclean and detested bird

The angel is speaking as if these spirits and birds were literally in a **hold**, that is, a prison or other place where they were watched or guarded and could not leave. He means that the spirits and birds are now able to linger in the ruins of Babylon. Your language may have terms for places where animals and birds stay. Alternate translation: “a den of every unclean spirit and a roost of every unclean and detested bird” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

of & unclean and detested bird

The terms **unclean** and **detested** mean similar things. The angel is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “loathsome bird” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

of & unclean and detested bird

The angel assumes that his listeners will understand that these birds are **unclean** and **detested** according to the law of Moses because they eat dead animals. You can say that explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “unclean and detested bird that eats dead animals” or “loathsome bird that eats dead animals” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

detested

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “detestable” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 18:3

all the nations have drunk from the wine of her immoral passion

See how you translated the similar expression in [17:2](#). Here, as there, this statement is not intended literally even within the world of this vision. Alternate translation: “all the nations have indulged in idolatry and greed with her” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

all the nations

The angel says **all** here as a generalization for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: “nations throughout the world” (See: **Hyperbole (p. 520)**)

the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality with her

See how you translated the similar expression in [17:2](#). This statement too is not intended literally. Alternate translation: Alternate translation: “the kings of the earth have joined her in being idolatrous and greedy” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 18:4

I heard another voice from heaven saying

John is referring to someone speaking by association with the **voice** that the person is using to speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "I heard someone speaking from heaven and saying" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 18:5

her sins have been heaped as far as heaven

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. This could mean: (1) Alternate translation: “the heap of her sins is as high as heaven” (2) Alternate translation: “the heap of her sins is as high as the sky” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

her sins have been heaped as far as heaven

The voice is speaking as if the **sins** of Babylon were literally in a very high pile. He means that Babylon has committed very many sins. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “she has committed very many sins” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

God has remembered her offenses

The voice is not suggesting that God had forgotten about Babylon but has now **remembered** the city's **offenses**. The angel is using a common biblical expression that means that God has taken action with regard to a person or entity of which he was already aware, either to help or to punish. See how you translated the similar expression in [16:19](#). Alternate translation: “God has punished her for her offenses” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 18:6

Give back to her even as she has given, and double doubles {to her} according to her deeds

The voice from heaven is using a characteristic form of Hebrew speech. The voice is naming a number and then, for emphasis, naming the next higher number. An example of this is in [Amos 1:3](#), “For three sins of Damascus, even for four, I will not turn away punishment.” If it might seem to your readers that the voice from heaven was contradicting itself, first saying to punish Babylon one way (just as much as the city hurt others) and then saying to punish Babylon a different way (twice as much as the city hurt others), you could show in your translation that this is actually a progression for emphasis. UST models one way to do this. (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

Give back & double & to her} & mix

All of these imperatives are plural. (They seem to address the angels whom God has appointed to punish Babylon, as UST indicates.) So use plural imperatives in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.505)**)

double doubles {to her} according to her deeds; in the cup that she mixed, mix double for her

These two phrases mean similar things. The voice from heaven is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. The first phrase expresses it literally and the second phrase expresses it figuratively. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine the two phrases. UST models one way of doing this. (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

double doubles {to her

The voice is using a construction in which a verb and its object come from the same root. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to express the meaning here. Alternatively, your language may have its own way of expressing the same meaning. Alternate translation: “repay her double” (See: **Poetry (p.567)**)

in the cup that she mixed, mix double for her

The voice is speaking as if Babylon had literally **mixed** a **cup** of wine for others to drink. This is a reprise of the image in [14:8](#). However, the emphasis here is on how drinking too much wine makes a person stagger. This is an image of how Babylon will stagger from God’s punishments. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “punish her in a way that will make her stagger twice as much as she made others stagger” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 18:7

she says in her heart, I sit {as} a queen and I am not a widow and I will certainly not see mourning

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: “she says in her heart that she sits as a queen and that she is not a widow and that she will not see mourning at all” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.587)**)

she says in her heart

Here the **heart** figuratively represents the thoughts and motives. Alternate translation: “she thinks to herself” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

I sit {as} a queen

Here the word **sit** means “to be.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “I am a queen” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

I am not a widow

Babylon is referring to herself as not being dependent on anyone by association with the way that a **widow** in this culture likely would be dependent on others. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “I am not dependent on anyone” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

I will certainly not see mourning

Here the word **see** means “to experience.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “I will not experience any mourning at all” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 18:8

in one day

The voice is using the term **day** to mean a short time. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “in just a short time” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

she will be consumed by fire

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “fire will consume her” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 18:9

Some versions continue the quotation of the voice from heaven that begins in verse 4 through to the end of this chapter. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to punctuate the quotation the way it does. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to punctuate the quotation the way ULT does and end it with verse 8. (See: **Quote Markings (p.584)**)

the & ones having committed sexual immorality

Here as in [14:3](#), committing **sexual immorality** is a symbolic image for worshiping idols. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the ones having worshiped idols” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

will weep and wail

The terms **weep** and **wail** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “will weep bitterly” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

the smoke of her burning

John is referring to the fire that will burn Babylon by association with the **burning** itself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the smoke from the fire that is burning her” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 18:10

because of the fear of her torment

John is referring to the fire that is burning up and tormenting Babylon by association with the **torment** itself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “because they are afraid of the fire that is tormenting her” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Woe, woe

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, the speakers are repeating the word **woe** for emphasis. If it would not be natural in your language to repeat a word like that, you could express the emphasis in another way, for example, by using a different expression and including the word “very,” as the UST does. (See: **Reduplication (p.590)**)

For in one hour your judgment has come

The kings are speaking directly to the city of Babylon even though they know that the city cannot hear them. They are doing this to show in a very strong way to the people who can hear them, their fellow kings, how they feel about what is happening to Babylon. If someone speaking your language would not do this, you could translate this as the merchants speaking to one another about Babylon rather than to Babylon. Alternate translation: “For in one hour her judgment has come” (See: **Apostrophe (p.455)**)

in one hour

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, in the ancient world, an **hour** was the shortest time span that people envisioned. In contexts such as this one, the term does not mean a literal hour of sixty minutes. It means the shortest time imaginable. Alternate translation: “in such a short time” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

your judgment has come

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: “God has judged you” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 18:11

weep and mourn

The terms **weep** and **mourn** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “weep bitterly” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 18:12

precious stone

See how you translated the term **precious stone** in 17:4. Alternate translation: “gemstones” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

fine linen and purple cloth and silk and scarlet cloth

See how you translated **fine linen**, the term for an expensive cloth made from flax, in 15:6; **purple cloth** is a dark red-blue cloth that was very expensive at this time; **silk** is a soft, strong cloth made from the fine string that silkworms make when they form their cocoons; **scarlet cloth** was an expensive red cloth. If some or all of these terms might be unfamiliar to your readers, you could use a general expression in your translation. Alternate translation: “many kinds of expensive cloth” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

every citron wood and every ivory vessel and every vessel from the costliest wood and bronze and iron and marble

John says **every** in these cases as a generalization for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: “many kinds of fragrant wood and many kinds of ivory vessels and many kinds of vessels made from precious wood and bronze and iron and marble” (See: **Hyperbole (p.520)**)

every citron wood

The wood of the **citron** tree is desirable because it is fragrant. If your readers would not be familiar with **citron wood**, you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “every fragrant wood” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

every citron wood

Since there is only one kind of **citron** tree, by **every citron wood**, John means by association many kinds of wood that are fragrant like citron wood. Alternate translation: “every fragrant wood” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

ivory vessel

The word **ivory** describes a beautiful, hard, white material that people get from the tusks or teeth of very large animals such as elephants and walruses. Alternate translation: “beautiful containers made from tusks” or “containers made from valuable animal teeth” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

marble

The word **marble** describes a beautiful, valuable stone that people use in buildings and to make statues, furniture, and many other things. If your readers might not be familiar with marble, you could use a general expression in your translation. Alternate translation: “beautiful stone” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 18:13

cinnamon and spice

Since **cinnamon** is one kind of **spice**, John means implicitly that cinnamon was one example of the spices that the merchants sold. You can indicate this your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “cinnamon and other spices” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

cinnamon and spice

The word **cinnamon** describes a fragrant spice that people make from the bark of a certain tree. If your readers would not be familiar with what cinnamon is, you could use a general term. Alternate translation: “spice from tree bark and other spices” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

incense and myrrh and frankincense

Since **myrrh** and **frankincense** are two kinds of **incense**, John means implicitly that these are two examples of the incense that the merchants sold. You can indicate this your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “myrrh and frankincense and other kinds of incense” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

bodies and souls of men

In this context, the expressions **bodies** and **souls of men** mean the same thing. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. He is first stating how things look on the outside: The bodies of the slaves whom the merchants are trading appear to be just another physical cargo. But John is then stating the real truth: This traffic in slaves is a traffic in human souls. You could indicate this in your translation. Alternate translation: “slaves, that is, the souls of men” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

souls of men

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: “human souls” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

Revelation 18:14

your autumn fruit of the desire of {your} soul has gone away from you, and all the luxurious and the splendid has perished from you

As John relates this vision, here he addresses something that he knows cannot hear him, the city of Babylon in the vision, in order to show his readers in a strong way how he feels about it. If someone speaking your language would not do this, you could translate this as John speaking about Babylon rather than to Babylon. Alternate translation: “her autumn fruit, the desire of her soul, has gone away from her, and all the luxurious and the splendid has perished from her” (See: **Apostrophe (p.455)**)

your autumn fruit of the desire of {your} soul

In this possessive form, **fruit** is the object of **desire** rather than the result of **desire**. That is, this does not mean fruit that the soul's desire has borne, but it means fruit that the soul desires to have. Alternate translation: “the autumn fruit that your soul desires to have” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

your autumn fruit of the desire of {your} soul has gone away

Here the term **soul** represents the whole person by association with the way that each person has a soul. Alternate translation: “the autumn fruit that you desired has gone away” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

autumn fruit

John is referring to ripe fruit by association with the way fruit ripens in the **autumn**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “ripe fruit” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

autumn fruit & has gone away

John is using **autumn fruit** to represent the rich pleasures that Babylon desired. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “rich pleasures ... have gone away” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

all the luxurious and the splendid has perished from you, and they will certainly not be found any longer

These two phrases mean similar things. John is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “all the luxurious and the splendid has perished from you forever” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

all the luxurious and the splendid

John is using the adjectives **luxurious** and **splendid** as nouns to mean certain kinds of goods. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this phrase with an equivalent one. Alternate translation: “all the luxurious and splendid goods” or “everything that is luxurious and splendid” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

all the luxurious and the splendid

The terms **luxurious** and **splendid** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “all the very luxurious goods” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

they will certainly not be found any longer

Here the expression **will not be found** means “will not be able to be found” or “will not be there.” Alternate translation: “they will not be there any longer” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

they will certainly not be found any longer

The merchants are actually using a double negative here, “they will not be found at all no longer.” The second negative does not cancel the first to create a positive meaning. If for emphasis your language uses double negatives that do not cancel one another, it would be appropriate to use that construction here in your translation. (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

they will certainly not be found

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “certainly no one will find them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 18:15

because of the fear of her torment

See how you translated this same expression in [18:10](#). Alternate translation: “because they are afraid of the fire that is tormenting her” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

weeping and mourning

The terms **weeping** and **mourning** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “weeping bitterly” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 18:16

having been dressed in fine linen and purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls

The merchants are speaking as if the city of Babylon had literally been **dressed** in expensive clothing and **adorned** with jewels. They mean that the people of the city lived in luxury. Even if your language does not ordinarily use figures of speech, you may wish to preserve this figure of speech in your translation so that your readers can see how the merchants were speaking about Babylon. One way to do that would be to translate it as a simile, as UST does. (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

having been dressed in fine linen and purple and scarlet and adorned

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “that dressed in fine linen and purple and scarlet and adorned herself” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

fine linen and purple and scarlet & gold and precious stones and pearls

See how you translated each of these terms in [18:12](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 18:17

so much wealth has been destroyed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: "God has destroyed so much wealth" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

shipmaster

The word **shipmaster** refers to a particular member of a ship's crew. In this context, this could mean: (1) the captain of a ship. Alternate translation, as in UST: "ship captain" (2) the person who steers a ship. Alternate translation: "navigator" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

as many as work the sea

John is using this general expression to mean anyone else who, like the previous three kinds of people he mentions in this verse, earns a living from the sea in some way. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "as many others as earn their living from the sea" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 18:18

the smoke of her burning

See how you translated the same expression in [18:9](#). Alternate translation: “the smoke from the fire that is burning her” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

What {is} like the great city

The sea workers are using the question form for emphasis. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: “Nothing is like the great city!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.591)**)

What

By **What**, the sea workers implicitly mean “What city.” You can say this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “What city” or, in an exclamation, “No other city” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 18:19

they threw dust on their heads

The sea workers **threw dust on their heads** as a symbolic action to show how distressed they were that Babylon had been destroyed. If this would not be clear to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: “they threw dust on their heads to show how distressed they were” (See: **Symbolic Action (p. 598)**)

weeping and mourning

The terms **weeping** and **mourning** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “weeping bitterly” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

ships in the sea

It might seem that the expression **ships in the sea** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could shorten it. Alternate translation: “ships” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

she has been destroyed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: “God has destroyed her” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 18:20

Rejoice

The sea workers finish speaking at the end of verse 19. Someone else begins speaking here. It would be appropriate to show this in your translation by using whatever punctuation or convention your language uses to show the end of one quotation and the beginning of another. (See: **Quote Markings (p.584)**)

Rejoice

In this verse, someone breaks into John's narrative of his vision to speak directly to the audience in heaven and on earth. ULT puts the verse in parentheses to show this. There may be a comparable convention in your language that you can use in your translation. You can also state explicitly who is speaking, as UST does. That speaker could be: (1) the voice from heaven that spoke in [18:4-8](#) or another voice from heaven. (2) Jesus, as in [16:15](#). (3) John himself. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Rejoice

The implied "you" in the imperative **Rejoice** is singular here because this imperative addresses **heaven**. The pronoun **you** is plural because it addresses the **saints and apostles and prophets**. So use a singular imperative and a plural pronoun in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.505)**)

heaven

The speaker is referring to everyone who lives in heaven by association with **heaven** itself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "all of you who live in heaven" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

God has judged your judgment against her

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: "God has judged her for what she did to you" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

God has judged your judgment against her

The speaker is using a construction in which a verb and its object come from the same root. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to express the meaning here. Alternatively, your language may have its own way of describing this. Alternate translation: "she deserved to be judged for what she did to you, and God has indeed judged her" (See: **Poetry (p.567)**)

Revelation 18:21

a stone like a great millstone

The point of this comparison is that the **stone** that the **angel took up** was very large and heavy and so it made a tremendous, dramatic splash when it hit the **sea**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “a stone that was very large and heavy like a great millstone” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

a & millstone

A **millstone** is a large, flat, round stone that people use to crush kernels of grain against a second **millstone**, processing the grain into food for humans. If your readers would not be familiar with what a millstone is, in your translation you could use the name of a comparable object in your culture or you could use a general expression. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Thus Babylon, the great city, will be thrown down with violence

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: “God will throw down Babylon, the great city” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Thus Babylon, the great city, will be thrown down with violence

The angel is speaking as if Babylon will literally be **thrown down** as if from a height. He means that the city will be completely destroyed. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “God will completely destroy Babylon, the great city” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

with violence

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **violence**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “violently” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

she will certainly not be seen anymore

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “no one at all will see her anymore” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 18:22

and the sound of harpists and musicians and flutists and trumpeters will certainly not be heard

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "and no one at all will hear the sound of harpists and musicians and flutists and trumpeters" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

in you & in you & in you

The angel is speaking directly to the city of Babylon even though he knows that the city cannot hear him. He is doing this to show in a very strong way to the people who can hear them, probably "heaven" and the "saints and apostles and prophets" from verse 20, how he feels about what is happening to Babylon. If someone speaking your language would not do this, you could translate this as the angel speaking about Babylon rather than to Babylon. Alternate translation: "in her ... in her ... in her" (See: **Apostrophe (p.455)**)

every craftsman will certainly not be found

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "no one at all will find a craftsman" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

every craftsman will certainly not be found

Here the expression **will not be found** means "will not be able to be found" or "will not be there." Alternate translation: "no craftsman will be there" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

the sound of a mill will certainly not be heard

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "no one at all will hear the sound of a mill" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 18:23

in you & in you

As in verse 22, for emphasis the angel is speaking directly to the city of Babylon even though he knows that the city cannot hear him. If someone speaking your language would not do this, you could translate this as the angel speaking about Babylon rather than to Babylon. Alternate translation: “in her ... in her” (See: **Apostrophe (p.455)**)

the voice of a bridegroom and a bride will certainly not be heard

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “no one at all will hear the voice of a bridegroom and a bride” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the voice

Since the angel is referring to two people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **voice** or the dual form if your language marks that distinction. Alternate translation: “the voices” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.476)**)

all the nations were deceived by your sorcery

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “you deceived all the nations by your sorcery” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

all the nations were deceived by your sorcery

The angel is speaking as if these Babylon had literally used **sorcery** to deceive the nations. He likely means that Babylon made living in excessive luxury seem attractive and acceptable. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you influenced all the nations to try to live in luxury” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

all the nations

The angel says **all** here as a generalization for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: “nations throughout the world” (See: **Hyperbole (p.520)**)

Revelation 18:24

was found

Here the expression **was found** means “could be found” or “was there.” Alternate translation: “was” (See: **Idiom (p. 524)**)

ἐν αὐτῇ αἷμα & εὐρέθη προφητῶν

The implication is that this **blood** is evidence that Babylon is guilty of killing the **prophets and saints**. You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “she was clearly guilty of killing prophets” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

of all the ones having been slain on the earth

This could mean: (1) that the angel is saying **all** here as a generalization for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: “of ones having been slain throughout the earth” (2) that the angel is using a passive verbal form (See: next note) to refer to all the other **ones**, besides **prophets** and **saints**, whom Babylon slew. Alternate translation: “of all the other ones she slew on the earth” (See: **Hyperbole (p.520)**)

of all the ones having been slain

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “of all the ones she slew” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 19

Revelation 19 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

- Verses 1–4 conclude the topic of the destruction of Babylon.
- Verses 5–10 introduce the topic of the wedding of the Lamb.
- Verses 11–21 describe the destruction of the beast and the false prophet.

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 verses 1-8.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Songs

The book of Revelation often describes heaven as a place where people sing. They worship God with songs. This illustrates that heaven is a place where God is always worshiped. (See: **heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly (p.632)**)

Wedding celebration

The wedding celebration or feast is an important image in Scripture. Jewish culture often pictured paradise, or life with God after death, as a feast. Here, the wedding feast is for the Lamb, who is Jesus, and his bride, meaning all his people.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“Hallelujah”

The word **Hallelujah** occurs in verses 1, 3, 4, and 6. This is a Hebrew word that John spells out using Greek letters so that his readers will know how it sounds. The word is a plural imperative that means, “Praise Yahweh!” In your translation, you could spell this word the way it sounds in your language, or you could translate its meaning by using a phrase such as, “Praise God.” (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.486)**)

“us/our”

In verses 1, 5, and 6, speakers say “our,” and in verse 7 a speaker says “us.” In each case the speaker is referring to himself and to his addressees, so use the inclusive form of those words in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.498)**)

Revelation 19:1

Salvation and glory and power to our God

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **salvation**, **glory**, and **power**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "Worship God as the one who saves us and who is glorious and powerful" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

our

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, here and throughout the chapter it would be appropriate to use the inclusive form of **our** and "us" in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.498)**)

Revelation 19:2

are} true and righteous

The terms **true** and **righteous** mean similar things. John may be using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “entirely righteous” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

the blood

John is referring to the death of God’s **servants** by association with the **blood* that they shed when they were killed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the death” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

of his servants from her hand

John is using one part of the **great prostitute**, her **hand**, to represent all of her in the act of killing or shedding the **blood** of God’s **servants**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “of his servants, whom she killed” (See: **Synecdoche (p. 605)**)

Revelation 19:3

a second {time

John is using the adjective **second** as a noun to mean a certain time. ULT adds the word **time** to show that. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase.

Alternate translation: “again” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

the smoke of her

See how you translated the similar expression in [18:9](#). Alternate translation: “the smoke from the fire that is burning her” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

to the ages of the ages

This expression refers to endless future time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “for all eternity” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 19:4

fell down and worshiped God

Be sure that it is clear in your translation that the **elders** and **living creatures** did not fall down accidentally. Rather, bowing or lying down in front of God was a sign of humility and respect. Alternate translation: “bowed down in front of God to worship him” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.598)**)

Revelation 19:5

all his servants and the ones fearing him

The voice is actually not speaking in the third person about the people whom he wants to **Praise ... God**. The voice is using a vocative form. However, if your language does not have a vocative form and it might appear as if the voice is using the third person for people whom he is addressing, you could use the second person in your translation. Alternate translation: “you his servants and you who fear him” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p. 500)**)

the ones fearing him

In this context, the word **fearing** does not mean to be afraid but to show respect and reverence. Alternate translation: “the ones who revere him” or “you who revere him” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

the small and the great

The voice is speaking as if unimportant people were literally **small** and as if important people were literally large or **great**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the unimportant and the important” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

the small and the great

The voice is using the adjectives **small** and **great** as nouns to mean certain kinds of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate these words with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: “both unimportant people and important people” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

the small and the great

The voice is using two extremes of people, **small** and **great**, to mean them and everyone in between. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “whatever your status” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

Revelation 19:6

as it were the sound of a great crowd and as it were the sound of many waters and as it were the sound of powerful thunder

The point of this comparison is that the **sound** was very loud. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “a sound that was very loud, like the sound of a great crowd or many waters or powerful thunder” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

of many waters

By **many waters**, John could mean a loud waterfall or raging floodwaters. See how you translated the similar expression in [1:15](#). Alternate translation: “of a waterfall” or “of raging floodwaters” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

our

The person speaking here is likely continuing to address those who serve and fear God. So by **our**, the speaker means himself and them, so use the inclusive form of that word in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.498)**)

Revelation 19:7

Let us rejoice and exult

The terms **rejoice** and **exult** mean similar things. The sound is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: "Let us rejoice greatly" (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

give glory to him

The expression **give glory to him** does not mean that God lacks glory in any way or that people have glory that they can give to God. It means to honor God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "honor him" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

the wedding of the Lamb has come

If you would not speak in your language of an event as if it **has come**, you could express this in the way that is most natural in your language. Alternate translation: "it is time for the wedding of the Lamb" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 19:8

it has been granted to her that she might be dressed

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who has done the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: “God has granted to her that she might dress” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

For fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints

Here John provides some background information about the symbolism in his vision in order to help his readers understand what he is describing. ULT shows that this is background information by putting it in parentheses. This information is helpful for understanding the symbolic significance of **fine linen** and for understanding the symbolism of the book generally. See what you did with the similar background information in [1:20](#). Alternate translation: “The bride in my vision dressed in fine linen because that bright, clean fabric symbolically represents the righteous acts of the saints” (See: **Background Information (p.461)**)

Revelation 19:9

he says

The pronoun **he** probably refers to the same angel who began to speak to John in [17:1](#). It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: "The angel who told me he would show me the judgment of the great prostitute said" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

Write, 'Blessed {are} the ones having been called to the supper of the wedding of the Lamb

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: "Write that the ones having been invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb are blessed" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.587)**)

the ones having been called

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: "the ones whom God has called" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

These are true words of God

The angel is using the term **words** to mean the saying that he told John to **Write** by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "This is something that God has truly said" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 19:10

I fell before his feet

Be sure that it is clear in your translation that John did not fall down accidentally. Rather, bowing or lying down in front of this angel was a sign of humility and respect. Alternate translation: “I bowed down at his feet” or “I bowed down to the ground in front of him” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.598)**)

See not

The angel is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “See that you do not do that” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

See not

The angel is using the term **See** to mean by association that John should give careful attention to what he is doing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Watch out! Do not do that!” or “Be careful not to do that” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

your brothers

The angel is using the term **brothers** figuratively to mean people who share the same faith. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “your fellow believers” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

your brothers

Although the term **brothers** is masculine, here the word has a generic sense that includes both men and women. If you wish to retain the figurative expression in your translation, you could word it in a way that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: “your brothers and sisters” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

having the testimony of Jesus

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **testimony**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “who testify to their faith in Jesus” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

having the testimony of Jesus

In this possessive form, **Jesus** is the object rather than the subject of **testimony**. That is, this does not mean testimony that Jesus himself gives; it means testimony that believers give about their faith in Jesus. Alternate translation: “who testify to their faith in Jesus” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy

The angel is speaking of **prophecy** as if it were a living thing that had a **spirit**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the impulse to testify to Jesus is what inspires prophecy” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

Revelation 19:11

I saw heaven having been opened

When John says that **heaven** had been opened, he likely means by association that in his vision, God created some opening that allowed him to see into heaven. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “God allowed me to look into heaven” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

heaven having been opened

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: “that God had opened heaven” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the one riding on it, being called Faithful and True

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the one whom people call Faithful and True riding on it” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the one riding on it, being called Faithful and True

This could mean: (1) that **Faithful** and **True** are two names by which people call Jesus. Alternate translation: “the one riding on it, two of whose names are Faithful and True” (2) that “faithful” and “true” are two qualities that people ascribe to Jesus. Alternate translation: “the one riding on it, whom people acknowledge to be faithful and true” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Faithful and True

The terms **Faithful** and **True** mean similar things. John is mentioning the two names together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “Supremely Faithful” or “Entirely True” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

in righteousness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **righteousness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “righteously” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 19:12

his eyes also {being} a flame of fire

John is speaking as if the **eyes** of the one riding on the white horse were actually a **flame of fire**. This is something that could be taken literally within the world of the vision, but it is more likely that John means this as a comparison, as in 1:14 and 2:18. In that case, the point of the comparison would be that Jesus has eyes that are so bright and lively that they resemble a burning flame. See how you translated this earlier in the book. Alternate translation: “whose eyes also glow like a flame of fire” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

being} a flame of fire

It might seem that the expression **a flame of fire** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could shorten it. Alternate translation: “flames” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

written

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “in writing” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

that no one knows except himself

If it would appear in your language that John was contradicting himself by saying that **no one** knows this **name** and then saying that someone does know this name, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: “that only he knows” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.479)**)

that no one knows except himself

It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. This could mean: (1) that no one except Jesus **knows** the meaning of the **name**. Alternate translation: “Only he knows the meaning of that name” (2) that no one except Jesus **knows** what the **name** is. Alternate translation: “Only he knows what that name is” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 19:13

having been clothed with a robe dipped in blood

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “wearing a robe that he had dipped in blood” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

his name is called

It might seem that the expression **his name is called** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could shorten it. Alternate translation: “his name is” or “he is called” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

his name is called

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “people call him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 19:14

having been clothed in fine linen

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "wearing fine linen" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 19:15

from his mouth goes out a sharp sword

Be sure it is clear in your translation, here and for the similar expression in verse 21, that this means that the blade of the **sword** was sticking out of **his mouth**. The sword itself was not in motion. See how you translated the similar phrase in [1:16](#). (See: **Symbolic Language (p.600)**)

with an iron scepter

See how you translated the similar phrase in [2:27](#) and [12:5](#). Alternate translation: “with great strength” or “with irresistible power” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

he tramples the winepress of the wine

John is referring to the grapes in the winepress by association with the **winepress** itself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “he tramples the grapes in the winepress to make the wine” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

of the wrath of the fury

The terms **wrath** and **fury** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “of the great wrath” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 19:16

he has a name written

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “he has written a name” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

on {his} robe and on his thigh

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two phrases connected with **and**. The phrase **on his thigh** tells where **on his robe** this name is written. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “on his robe at his thigh” (See: **Hendiadys (p. 513)**)

Revelation 19:17

in the sun

John is referring to the light of the sun by association with **the sun** itself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "in bright sunlight" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

be gathered together

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "gather together" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 19:18

of chiliarchs

The word **chiliarchs** describes officers in the Roman army who were in charge of groups of 1,000 soldiers. Alternate translation: “commanders” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

of the mighty & of free & of small & of great

John is using these adjectives as nouns to mean a certain kinds of persons. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. (All of these adjectives are plural.) If not, you could translate these words with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: “of mighty people ... of free people ... of small people ... of great people” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

of all, both of free and of slaves and of small and of great

John is using two extremes of status, whether people are **free** or **slaves**, to mean people across the entire range of status. John is using two extremes of importance, whether people are **small** or **great**, to mean people across the entire range of importance. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use equivalent expressions or plain language. Alternate translation: “of all people, no matter what their status and no matter what their importance” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

of all, both of free and of slaves and of small and of great

These two phrases mean similar things. John is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “of people of every different kind” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

of small and of great

John is speaking as if unimportant people were literally **small** and as if important people were literally large or **great**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “of the unimportant and of the important” or “of unimportant people and of important people” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 19:19

I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies having been gathered

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "I saw that the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies had gathered" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 19:20

the beast was captured

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the army of the one sitting on the horse captured the beast” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

before him

Here the word **before** means “in front of” or “in the presence of” another person. Alternate translation: “in his presence” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

The two were thrown

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the one riding on the horse threw the two” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

The two

John is using the adjective **two** as a noun to mean two particular beings. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “The beast and the false prophet” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

Revelation 19:21

the rest were killed by the sword of the one sitting on the horse, coming out from his mouth

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the one sitting on the horse killed the rest with the sword coming out from his mouth” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the rest

By **the rest**, John implicitly means the rest of the beast’s soldiers. You can provide this information in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “the rest of the beast’s soldiers” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

were gorged with their flesh

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “gorged themselves on their flesh” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 20

Revelation 20 General Notes

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

The thousand-year reign of Christ

In this chapter, Jesus is said to reign for a thousand years, at the same time when Satan is bound. Some scholars believe that this refers to a future period of time, while others believe that it refers to Jesus reigning now from heaven. It is not necessary to decide between these options in order to translate this passage accurately. (See: **prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess (p.635)**)

Final rebellion

This chapter also describes what happens after the thousand years. At that time, Satan and many people will attempt to rebel against Jesus. This will result in God's ultimate and final victory over sin and evil. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/evil\]\]](#) and **eternity, everlasting, eternal, forever (p.626)**)

Great white throne

This chapter ends with a vision of God sitting on a "great white throne" and judging all the people who have ever lived. God separates people who believe in Jesus from those who do not believe in him. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/judge\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/heaven\]\]](#) and **faith (p.628)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

The Book of Life

This symbolically represents eternal life. Those possessing eternal life are said to have their names written in this Book of Life. However, since this is something that John actually saw in his vision, it would be appropriate to preserve this image in your translation. (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Hades and the lake of fire

These appear to be two distinct places. Hades appears to be the place where souls go after physical death, while the lake of fire appears to be the place where people experience spiritual death. The translator should be careful to choose appropriate language to describe each place, showing that these are not both the same place. (See: **hell, lake of fire (p.634)**)

Revelation 20:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 20:2

the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan

John assumes that his readers will understand that the phrase **the ancient serpent** is an allusion to the way **the devil** appeared in the form of a serpent to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, as [Genesis 3:1–15](#) describes. You can indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “who appeared in the form of a serpent to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, who is the devil and Satan” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan

It may be easier for your readers to recognize the allusion that John is making if you put the information that the dragon represents **the devil and Satan** before the information that this is also **the ancient serpent**. Alternate translation: “who is the devil and Satan, who appeared in the form of a serpent to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden” (See: **Information Structure (p.529)**)

the devil and Satan

The word **devil** and the name **Satan** refer to the same person. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “the devil himself” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 20:3

until the thousand years were ended

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “until the thousand years had ended” (See: **Active or Passive (p. 452)**)

it is necessary for him to be released

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who will do the action, the context suggests that it may be the angel who has “the key to the abyss,” as [20:1](#) describes. Alternate translation: “God will command the angel to release him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 20:4

they sat on them and judgment was given to them

The pronouns **they** and **them** refer to people whom John describes in the rest of the verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “and these are the ones who sat on them and to whom judgment was given.” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

judgment was given to them

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: “God gave judgment to them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

judgment was given to them

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: “God gave them authority to judge” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

of the ones having been beheaded

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “of the ones whom the Roman government had beheaded” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God

These two phrases mean similar things. John is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “for proclaiming the message from God about Jesus” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

the testimony of Jesus

In this possessive form, **Jesus** is the object rather than the subject of **testimony**. That is, this does not mean testimony that Jesus gives; it means testimony that people give about their faith in Jesus. Alternate translation: “testifying to Jesus” (See: **Possession (p.575)**)

the word of God

John is using the term **word** to mean the message that these believers had shared by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “sharing the message from God” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

on the forehead or on their hand

In this verse, the words **forehead** and **hand** are singular in form, but they refer to all of them as a group. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this plainly. Alternate translation: “on their foreheads or on their hands” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.476)**)

Revelation 20:5

The rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were ended

With this sentence, John is providing background information that will help readers understand what happens next in the story. ULT puts the sentence in parentheses to show that. In your translation, present this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.461)**)

The rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were ended

It may be more natural in your language to state this positively. Alternate translation: "The rest of the dead only lived again once the thousand years had ended"

of the dead

John is using the adjective **dead** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "the people who had died" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

until the thousand years were ended

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "until the thousand years had ended" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the first resurrection

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "resurrection number one" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy {is} the one having a part in the first resurrection

Here, **the one having a part in the first resurrection** does not refer to a specific person. It refers to anyone whom God restores to life at this time. Express this in the way that would be most natural in your language. Since John says **these** in the next sentence, it may be helpful to use a plural form in this sentence as well. Alternate translation: "Blessed and holy are all those who have a part in the first resurrection" (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.509)**)

Over these the second death has no power

John is speaking of **the second death** as if it were a living thing which could have **power** over someone, that is, as if it could make someone do what it wanted that person to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "These people will not experience the second death" (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

the second death

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "death number two" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

Revelation 20:7

when the thousand years are ended

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "at the end of the thousand years" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Satan will be released

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. See how you translated the similar expression in [20:3](#). Alternate translation: "God will command the angel who has the key to the abyss to release Satan" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 20:8

at the four corners of the earth

John is speaking as if the **earth** literally had **four corners**. He means the most distant places on the earth. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “at the most distant places on the earth” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

at the four corners of the earth

John is using the most distant places on the earth to mean those places and everything between them and his location. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “everywhere in the world” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

Gog and Magog

The word **Gog** is the name of a ruler whom the prophet Ezekiel addresses in [Ezekiel 38:1–39:20](#). The word **Magog** is the name of the land that he ruled. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.516)**)

Gog and Magog

John is using the ruler named **Gog** and his land of **Magog** symbolically to represent the **nations** whom the devil will deceive. He means that these nations will form a great army together and attack the people of God, just as Ezekiel described Gog gathering a great coalition of peoples against Israel. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “forming a great coalition of peoples” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

of whom their number

It might seem that the expression **of whom their number** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could shorten it. Alternate translation: “whose number” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.540)**)

will be} like the sand of the sea

The point of this comparison is that the **number** of soldiers in this army will be very large, just as the number of grains of **sand** on the shore of the **sea** is very large. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “will be very large, like the number of grains of sand on the seashore” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 20:9

the beloved city

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation, as in UST: “the city that God loves” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the beloved city

John assumes that his readers will understand that by **the beloved city** he means Jerusalem. You can use that name in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “the city of Jerusalem” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

fire came down from heaven and devoured them

John is speaking of this **fire** as if it were a living thing that **came down from heaven** and **devoured** this army by itself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “God sent fire down from heaven, and it devoured them” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

devoured them

John is speaking as if this **fire** literally **devoured** or ate up the nations that attacked the **saints**. He means that the fire destroyed them completely. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “destroyed them completely” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 20:10

the devil deceiving them was thrown

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: "God threw the devil who was deceiving them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

of fire and sulfur

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **fire** describes the state of the **sulfur**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use "and." Alternate translation: "of fiery sulfur" (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

them

The pronoun **them** refers to the nations whom **the devil** deceived. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: "the nations" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

they will be tormented

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who will do the action, the context suggests that it will be God. Alternate translation: "God will torment them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

day and night

John is using the two parts of a full day, **day** and **night**, to mean all the time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "all the time" (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

to the ages of the ages

This expression refers to endless future time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "for all eternity" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 20:11

from whose face

Here the word **face** represents the presence of a person by association with the way people can see the face of someone who is present. Alternate translation: “from whose presence” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

earth and heaven fled, and no place was found for them

These two phrases mean similar things. John is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “earth and heaven vanished entirely” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

earth and heaven fled

John is speaking of **earth and heaven** as if they were living things that **fled**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “earth and heaven disappeared” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

no place was found for them

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “no one found a place for them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

no place was found for them

This expression means “no place could be found for them” or “they were no longer there.” Alternate translation: “they were no longer there” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 20:12

the dead, & the dead

John is using the adjective **dead** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “the people who had died ... the people who had died” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

both the great and the small

The voice is speaking as if important people were literally large or **great** and as if unimportant people were literally **small**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “both the important and the unimportant” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

both the great and the small

The voice is using the adjectives **great** and **small** as nouns to mean certain kinds of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate these words with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: “both important people and unimportant people” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

both the great and the small

The voice is using two kinds of people, **great** and **small**, to mean all kinds of people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “people of every status” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

books were opened, and another book was opened

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: “God opened books, and God opened another book” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the dead were judged from the {things} written in the books

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: “God judged the dead from the things he had written in the books” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

the dead, & the dead

John is using the adjective **dead** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “the people who had died ... the people who had died” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

Revelation 20:13

the sea gave up the dead in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead in them

John is speaking of the **sea** and of **Death** and **Hades** as if these were living things that actively **gave up** the people who had died and who were in them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the people who had died who were in the sea and in Death and Hades were not able to hide in those places” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

the dead in it, & the dead in them

John is using the adjective **dead** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “the people who had died who were in it ... the people who had died who were in them” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

Death and Hades gave up the dead in them

In this context, **Death** and **Hades** are two names for the same place. John is using the names together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “the underworld gave up every single person who had died who was in it” or “not a single person who had died who was in the underworld was able to hide there” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

they were judged

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: “God judged them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 20:14

Death and Hades were thrown

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: "God threw Death and Hades" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Death and Hades were thrown

In this context, **Death** and **Hades** are two names for the same place. John is using the names together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: "the entire underworld was thrown" or "God threw the entire underworld" (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

the second death

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "death number two" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

Revelation 20:15

And if anyone was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that in each case it was God. Alternate translation: “if God did not find that he had written someone in the Book of Life, he threw him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

anyone

John is using the term **anyone** by association to mean “anyone’s name.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “anyone’s name” or “someone’s name” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 21

Revelation 21 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

This chapter gives a detailed picture of the new Jerusalem.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Second death

Death is a type of separation. The first death is physically dying, when the soul is separated from the body. The second death is being eternally separated from God. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/other/death\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/soul\]\]](#) and **eternity, everlasting, eternal, forever** (p.626))

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Book of Life

This is a metaphor for eternal life. Those possessing eternal life are said to have their names written in this Book of Life. (See: **Metaphor** (p.544))

Translation Issues in This Chapter

New heaven and new earth

It is unclear whether this is an entirely new heaven and earth or something remade out of the present heaven and earth. The same is also true of the new Jerusalem. It is possible that this will affect translation in some languages.

“her”

People in this culture conventionally referred to cities by using feminine pronouns. John says “her” throughout his description of the new Jerusalem in order to mean that city. Your language may use a different gender, for example, you might say “it” and “its” instead of “her.” You could also use a noun and say “that city.” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them** (p.579))

“every precious stone”

In verses 19 and 20, John lists the precious stones that were the foundations of the city. In some cases, it is not certain exactly which precious stones these names describe. When the reference of a name is uncertain, ULT spells out the name using English letters. If your readers would not be familiar with some of the precious stones listed here, or if you are not certain what stone a name describes, in your translation you can spell the names the way they sound in your language. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words** (p.486))

Revelation 21:1

the first heaven and the first earth

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use cardinal numbers here or equivalent expressions. Alternate translation: “heaven number one and earth number one” or “the former heaven and the former earth” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

had gone away

John is speaking of **the first heaven and the first earth** as if they were living things that **had gone away** on their own. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “no longer existed” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

Revelation 21:2

prepared like a bride adorned for her husband

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "God had prepared the city the way a bride adorns herself for her husband" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

prepared like a bride adorned for her husband

The point of this comparison is that the city looked beautiful, just as a bride makes herself beautiful to please her husband on their wedding day. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "God had made the city beautiful, just as a bride makes herself beautiful for her husband on their wedding day" (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 21:3

The dwelling of God {is} with men, and he will dwell with them

These two phrases mean similar things. John is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “God will now tabernacle right in the midst of men” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

The dwelling of God {is} with men, and he will dwell with them

John is using a noun and a verb from the same root together for emphasis. You may be able to do the same thing in your own language. Alternate translation: “The house of God is with men, and he will house with them” (See: **Poetry (p.567)**)

men

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: “people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

God himself will be with them

Some ancient manuscripts read, **God himself will be with them**. ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts add “as their God.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.607)**)

Revelation 21:4

he will wipe away every tear from their eyes

By using one thing that a person might do to console another person, John is representing all that someone might do to console someone else. If it would be helpful in your language, you could name something that someone might do similarly in your culture, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “God will console them” (See: **Synecdoche (p.605)**)

death will not be any longer, nor grieving, nor crying, nor pain

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “death will not be any longer, and grieving will not be any longer, and crying will not be any longer, and pain will not be any longer” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

the first {things

John is using the adjective **first** as a noun to mean a certain kind of thing. ULT adds the word **things** to show that. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “the things that existed first” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

the first {things

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “the former things” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

have gone away

John is speaking of **the first things** as if they were living things that **have gone away** on their own. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “no longer exist” (See: **Personification (p.565)**)

Revelation 21:5

these words are

God is using the term **word** to mean the statement that he has just made by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "what I have just said is" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

trustworthy and true

The terms **trustworthy** and **true** mean similar things. God on the throne is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: "entirely trustworthy" (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 21:6

the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end

These two phrases mean similar things. John is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “the very beginning and the very end” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end

God is using two pairs of extremes, the **Alpha** and the **Omega** and the **beginning** and the **end**, to mean those extremes and everything in between. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “the one who began everything and who will finish everything” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

the Alpha and the Omega

God is speaking as if he were literally two letters of the alphabet. **Alpha** is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and **Omega** is the last letter, so God means that he has existed from all eternity and will exist to all eternity. If your language uses figures of speech, you could use the first and last letters of your own alphabet. Alternatively, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the A and the Z” or “the First and the Last” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

To the one thirsting I will give freely from the spring of the water of life

God is speaking as if he would literally give **water** to someone who was **thirsting**. He is using thirst to represent a person's desire for everlasting life and he is using drinking life-giving water to represent that person receiving everlasting life. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “I will give everlasting life to the one who eagerly desires to have it” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 21:7

The one conquering

The one conquering does not refer to a specific person. It refers to anyone who conquers in the sense that Jesus uses that term in the letters to the seven churches and as John uses it in [20:11](#). Express this in the way that would be most natural in your language. Alternate translation: “Everyone who conquers” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p. 509)**)

I will be his God, and he will be my son

Although the term **son** is masculine, God is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a term in your language that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: “I will be the God of that person, and that person will be my child” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

Revelation 21:8

But for the cowardly and the unbelieving

John is using the adjectives **cowardly** and **unbelieving** as nouns to mean certain kinds of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate these words with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: “for cowardly people and unbelieving people” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

the abhorred

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “those who do things that make God abhor them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

with fire and sulfur

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **fire** describes the state of the **sulfur**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “with fiery sulfur” (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

the second death

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use a cardinal number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “death number two” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

Revelation 21:9

the bride, the wife of the Lamb

The angel is speaking as if the new Jerusalem were literally a **bride** who was going to marry the **Lamb**. He means that God's people will now be united forever with Jesus their Savior. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "how the people of God will be united forever with Jesus" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 21:10

he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain

See how you translated the expression **in the Spirit** in [1:10](#) and [4:2](#). Alternate translation: “as he carried me away to a great and high mountain, the Holy Spirit inspired me so that I could receive further revelation” (See: **Idiom (p. 524)**)

great and high

The terms **great** and **high** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation, as in UST: “very high” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 21:11

its brilliance {being} like a most precious stone

The point of this comparison is that the **brilliance** or luster of the city was bright and beautiful. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: “its brilliance was bright and beautiful, like that of a most precious stone” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

being} like a most precious stone, like a stone of jasper

These two phrases mean the same thing. The first is a general statement and the second is a specific example. John is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “like a very precious jasper stone” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

of jasper shining like crystal

See how you translated the word **jasper** in 4:3 and the word **crystal** in 4:6. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.612)**)

Revelation 21:12

having a great and high wall

The terms **great** and **high** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "The city had a very high wall" (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

names having been written that are the 12 tribes

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: "names having been written on the gates that are the names of the 12 tribes" (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

names having been written

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: "names that God had written" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

of the sons of Israel

Here, **sons** figuratively means "descendants." John is identifying the Israelites as descendants of their ancestor Israel (who was also known as Jacob). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "of the people of Israel" (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 21:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 21:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Revelation 21:15

her gates and her wall

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, people in this culture conventionally referred to cities by using feminine pronouns. Your language may use a different gender. You could also use a noun and say “that city.” Alternate translation: “its gates and its wall” or “the gates and wall of that city” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

Revelation 21:16

12,000 stadia

The word **stadia** is the plural form of “stadium,” which was a distance of about 185 meters. If it would be helpful in your language, you could give the equivalent in modern measurements. However, you might also wish to retain the ancient measurement, since there may be some symbolic significance to the number 12,000. Alternate translation: “about 2,200 kilometers” or “about 1,300 miles” (See: **Biblical Distance (p.464)**)

Revelation 21:17

he measured her wall, 144 cubits

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “he measured her wall and found it to be 144 cubits” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

144 cubits

This could be the measurement: (1) of the height of the wall. Alternate translation: “144 cubits high” (2) of the thickness of the wall. Alternate translation: “144 cubits thick” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

144 cubits

A **cubit** was the measurement of the distance from a person’s elbow to his longest fingertip, typically about half a meter or about 18 inches. If it would be helpful in your language, you could give the equivalent in modern measurements. However, you might also wish to retain the ancient measurement, since there may be some symbolic significance to the number 144. Alternate translation: “about 70 meters” or “about 200 feet” (See: **Biblical Distance (p.464)**)

by the measurement of a man, which is of an angel

Since **cubits** were the distance from an elbow to a fingertip, John needs to specify from what size person the angel determined this measurement. This could mean: (1) that the angel appeared to John in human form and so the distance from his elbow to his fingertip was the same as that of a human. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “The angel appeared in human form, and so he used an ordinary human cubit to measure” (2) that the angel may have been a giant compared with humans, but the angel still used a human-sized cubit. Alternate translation: “The angel used the cubit measure that people ordinarily use” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 21:18

is} pure gold, like pure glass

The point of this comparison is that the **gold** from which the city was made was clear and bright, just as **pure glass** has no imperfections that keep it from reflecting light or letting light through. Alternate translation: “is gold that is as clear and bright as pure glass” (See: **Simile (p.595)**)

Revelation 21:19

The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: "God had adorned the foundations of the wall of the city" (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

with every precious stone

John says **every** here as a generalization for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: "with many different precious stones" (See: **Hyperbole (p.520)**)

the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: "the second foundation was sapphire, the third foundation was chalcedony, the fourth foundation was emerald" (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

The first foundation {was} jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use cardinal numbers here or equivalent expressions. Alternate translation: "Foundation number one was jasper, foundation number two was sapphire, foundation number three was chalcedony, foundation number four was emerald" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

was} jasper, & sapphire, & chalcedony, & emerald

As the General Notes to this chapter discuss, in some cases it is not certain what precious stones the names in this verse and the next verse describe. When the reference of a name is uncertain, ULT spells out the name using English letters. If your readers would not be familiar with some of the precious stones listed here, in your translation you can spell their names the way they sound in your language. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.486)**)

Revelation 21:20

the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “the fifth foundation was sardonyx, the sixth foundation was carnelian, the seventh foundation was chrysolite, the eighth foundation was beryl, the ninth foundation was topaz, the tenth foundation was chrysoprase, the eleventh foundation was jacinth, the twelfth foundation was amethyst” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use cardinal numbers here or equivalent expressions. Alternate translation: “foundation number five was sardonyx, foundation number six was carnelian, foundation number seven was chrysolite, foundation number eight was beryl, foundation number nine was topaz, foundation number ten was chrysoprase, foundation number eleven was jacinth, foundation number twelve was amethyst” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.559)**)

Revelation 21:21

each one of the gates individually

It might seem that this phrase contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could shorten it. Alternate translation: “each of the gates” (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit** (p.540))

was} pure gold, like transparent glass

See how you translated the similar expression in [21:18](#). Alternate translation: “was gold that was as clear and bright as transparent glass” (See: **Simile** (p.595))

Revelation 21:22

the Lord God, the Ruler of All, is her temple, and the Lamb

It may be more natural to put the information about the **Lamb** with the information about the **Lord God**. Alternate translation: “the Lord God, the Ruler of All, and the Lamb are her temple” (See: **Information Structure (p.529)**)

the Lord God, the Ruler of All, is her temple, and the Lamb

Since John has just said that there is **no temple** in the city, he does not mean that the **Lord God** and the **Lamb** are literally a temple. Rather, he means that the people in the city can be in God’s presence all the time without having to go to a temple. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the Lord God, the Ruler of All, and the Lamb are always present in the city” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 21:23

nor of the moon

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “nor does the city have need of the moon” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

her lamp {is} the Lamb

John is speaking as if the **Lamb** were literally a **lamp** that lit up the city. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “her light is the Lamb” or “its light is the Lamb” or “the light of that city is the Lamb” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 21:24

the nations will walk by the light of her

John is speaking as if the **nations** would literally know where to **walk** because they would see well by the **light** from the city. In this context, the word **walk** figuratively means how people live and behave, and so the word **light** represents good guidance about how to live and behave. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the people in the city will live in such a way as to guide the nations about how to live as God wishes” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

the nations

Some ancient manuscripts read **the nations**. ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “the nations that are saved.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.607)**)

the kings of the earth bring their glory into her

By **their glory**, John may mean by association symbols of royal power, such as crowns, scepters, and robes. He may be describing a situation like the one in [4:10](#), where he saw the 24 elders “lay their crowns before the throne” to acknowledge God as the Supreme Ruler. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the kings of the earth will come into the city and lay their royal crowns, scepters, and robes before God’s throne to acknowledge him as the Supreme Ruler” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 21:25

her gates will certainly not be shut

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “no one at all will shut her gates” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

her gates will certainly not be shut

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative verb **shut**. Alternate translation: “her gates will always be open” (See: **Double Negatives (p.490)**)

Revelation 21:26

they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations

The pronoun **they** seems to refer to people from the **nations**. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the people of the nations will bring their glory and honor” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations

John is likely referring to wealth, by association with the way wealth is stored in things that are considered to have **glory** and **honor**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. This could mean: (1) that the nations will send valuable gifts to God in the city as expressions of their devotion. Alternate translation: “they will bring valuable gifts from the nations” (2) that the nations will send tribute payments to God. Alternate translation: “they will bring tribute from the nations” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the glory and the honor

The terms **glory** and **honor** mean similar things. John is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “the splendor” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 21:27

everything unclean will certainly not enter into her and the one doing abomination and falsehood

It may be more natural to put the information about **the one doing abomination and falsehood** with the information about the **everything unclean**. Alternate translation: “everything unclean and the one doing abomination and falsehood will not at all enter into her” (See: **Information Structure (p.529)**)

the one doing abomination and falsehood

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **abomination** and **falsehood**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. Alternate translation: “anyone who does abominable things and tells lies” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

if not

This expression limits the meaning of **enter** to the people it introduces. Your language may have its own way of expressing this idea. Alternate translation: “but only” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

the ones having been written

John is referring to the names of people by association with the people themselves. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the ones whose names have been written” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the ones having been written

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, the context suggests that it was God. Alternate translation: “the ones whom God has written” or “the ones whose names God has written” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 22

Revelation 22 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

This chapter emphasizes that Jesus is coming soon.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Tree of life

There is probably an intended connection between the tree of life in the Garden of Eden and the tree of life mentioned in this chapter. The curse that began in Eden will end at this time.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Alpha and omega

These are the names of the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. The ULT spells out their names in English. This strategy can serve as a model for translators. Some translators, however, may decide to use the first and last letters in their own alphabet. That would be A and Z in English.

Revelation 22:1

he showed

The pronoun **he** refers to the angel who had one of the seven bowls, who began speaking to John in [21:9](#) and who was showing him the new Jerusalem. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the angel who had been showing me the city showed” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

from the throne of God and of the Lamb

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. That may help clarify that **God** and **the Lamb** do not share a single throne. Alternate translation: “from the throne of God and from the throne of the Lamb” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

Revelation 22:2

in the middle of its public square. And

This phrase could refer implicitly to: (1) where the river flowed. That is the interpretation that ULT and UST follow. (2) where the tree of life was. In that case this would be the beginning of a new sentence. Alternate translation: "In the middle of its public square and" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 22:3

the throne of God and of the Lamb

John is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. That may help clarify that **God** and **the Lamb** do not share a single throne. Alternate translation: "the throne of God and the throne of the Lamb" (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

Revelation 22:4

his face

John is using one part of God, his **face**, to represent all of God as his servants see him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “him” (See: **Synecdoche (p.605)**)

Revelation 22:5

to the ages of the ages

This expression refers to endless future time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “for all eternity” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 22:6

he said

The pronoun **he** refers to the same angel as in verse 1. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “the angel said” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

These words {are

The angel is using the term **words** to mean what he has been telling John by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “What I have been telling you is” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

trustworthy and true

The terms **trustworthy** and **true** mean similar things. The angel is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: “entirely trustworthy” (See: **Doublet (p.493)**)

Revelation 22:7

And behold

John assumes that his readers will understand that Jesus is speaking in this verse. You could say that explicitly if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "Then Jesus said, 'And behold'" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

the words of the prophecy of this book

Jesus is using the term **words** to mean what John has written in this **book**, using words, to describe the **prophecies** that God gave to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "what you have said in this book about the prophecies God gave you" (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 22:8

I fell down

This expression means that John lay down facing the ground. See how you translated the similar expression in [7:11](#).
Alternate translation: "I bowed down" (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 22:9

See not

The angel is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “See that you do not do that” (See: **Ellipsis (p.495)**)

See not

The angel is using the term **See** to mean by association that John should give careful attention to what he is doing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Watch out! Do not do that!” or “Be careful not to do that” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

of your brothers the prophets

The angel is using the term **brothers** figuratively to mean fellow prophets. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “of your fellow prophets” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

of your brothers the prophets

Although the term **brothers** is masculine, here the word has a generic sense that includes both men and women. If you wish to retain the figurative expression in your translation, you could word it in a way that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: “of your brothers and sisters the prophets” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.619)**)

the words of this book

The angel is using the term **words** to mean what John has said in **this book** by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “what you have said in this book” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

Revelation 22:10

Do not seal

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative verb **seal**. Alternate translation: "Leave open" (See: **Double Negatives** (p.490))

Do not seal

The angel is speaking as if John might literally **seal** his **book** closed once he has written it. The angel means that John should tell others what he has written in the book and not keep those things to himself. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "Widely proclaim" (See: **Metaphor** (p.544))

the words of the prophecy of this book

The angel is using the term **words** to mean what John has said in **this book** by using words to describe the **prophecy** that God gave him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "what you have said in this book about the prophecy God gave you" (See: **Metonymy** (p.550))

Revelation 22:11

Let the one being unrighteous still be unrighteous, and let the filthy {one} still be filthy, and let the righteous {one} still do righteousness, and let the holy {one} still be holy

If your language does not use third-person imperatives in this way, you make these statements in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “May the one being unrighteous still be unrighteous, and may the filthy one still be filthy, and may the righteous one still do righteousness, and may the holy one still be holy” or “The one being unrighteous should still be unrighteous, and the filthy one should still be filthy, and the righteous one should do righteousness, and the holy one should still be holy” (See: **Third-Person Imperatives (p.609)**)

Let the one being unrighteous still be unrighteous

In this verse, the angel is using a series of similar phrases in order to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. Try to translate each of these phrases in such a way as to show their similarity. You may also wish to summarize the idea behind the phrases beforehand, if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: “The time is so near that it is too late for people to change the way they are living. So let the one being unrighteous still be unrighteous” (See: **Litany (p.538)**)

the one being unrighteous & the filthy {one} & the righteous {one} & the holy {one}

These phrases do not refer to specific people. They refer to anyone who has the quality that they name. Express this in the way that would be most natural in your language. Alternate translation: “anyone who is unrighteous ... anyone who is filthy ... anyone who is righteous ... anyone who is holy” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.509)**)

the filthy {one} & the righteous {one} & the holy {one}

John is using the adjectives **filthy**, **righteous**, and **holy** as nouns to mean certain kinds of people. ULT adds **one** in each case to show that. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate these words with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: “the person who is filthy ... the person who is righteous ... the person who is holy” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

let the filthy {one} still be filthy

The angel is speaking as if someone who does wrong were literally **filthy** or dirty. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “let the person who is wicked still be wicked” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

righteousness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **righteousness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “what is right” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 22:12

Behold

John assumes that his readers will understand that Jesus begins speaking in this verse. He continues speaking through verse 16. You could indicate that explicitly if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "Then Jesus said, 'Behold'" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Revelation 22:13

the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end

These three phrases mean similar things. Jesus is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: “the very beginning and the very end” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end

Jesus is using three pairs of extremes, the **Alpha** and the **Omega**, the **first** and the **last**, and the **beginning** and the **end**, to mean those extremes and everything in between. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “the one who began everything and who will finish everything” (See: **Merism (p.542)**)

the Alpha and the Omega

See how you translated this in [21:6](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 22:14

the ones washing their robes

Jesus is speaking as if people who repent of their sins and start living in a way that pleases God are literally **washing their robes**. See how you translated the similar expression in [7:14](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

the ones washing their robes

Some ancient manuscripts read **the ones washing their robes**. ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “the ones doing his commandments.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.607)**)

their authority over the tree of life will be

If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning of this expression plainly. Alternate translation: “they will have the right to eat from the tree of life” (See: **Idiom (p.524)**)

Revelation 22:15

dogs

In this culture, people considered **dogs** to be dirty and bothersome animals. So this is not a positive statement, as it would be in some other cultures where dogs are cherished as household pets and as helpful workers and companions. It may be helpful to use an expression in your translation that will clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “dirty animals” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

dogs

Jesus is speaking as if wicked people were literally **dogs**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “wicked people” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

the sexually immoral

Jesus is using the adjective **sexual immoral** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: “people who are sexually immoral” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.552)**)

loving and doing

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **loving** tells in what way these people are **doing** falsehood. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use “and.” Alternate translation: “eagerly doing” (See: **Hendiadys (p.513)**)

falsehood

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **falsehood**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “what is false” or “what is wrong” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)

Revelation 22:16

to testify these things to you concerning the churches

Here the word **you** is plural. Alternate translation: “to testify to all of you in the churches about these things that concern you” (See: **Forms of You (p.502)**)

the root and the offspring of David

Jesus is speaking as if here were literally the **root** of a tree. He means that David came from him, just as a tree comes from its roots. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “both the source and the offspring of David” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

the bright morning star

Jesus is also speaking of himself as if he were the bright **star** that sometimes appears early in the **morning** and indicates that a new day is about to begin. Alternate translation: “the sign that God is beginning a new era” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

Revelation 22:17

the Bride

In keeping with the symbolism of his vision, John is speaking of the church as if it were literally the **Bride** of Jesus. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the church” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

say, “Come!” & let the one hearing say, “Come

In both cases, the implied “you” in the imperative **Come** is singular, so use a singular form if your language marks that distinction. If it does not, you could indicate the addressee in another way. The addressee could be: (1) Jesus, who says in verses 12 and 20, “I am coming quickly,” and to whom John says explicitly in v. 20, “Come, Lord Jesus!” Alternate translation: “say to Jesus, ‘Come!’ ... let the one hearing say to Jesus, ‘Come!’” (2) the **one thirsting**, whom John mentions in the next sentence. Alternate translation: “say to the one thirsting, ‘Come!’ ... let the one hearing say to the one thirsting, ‘Come!’” (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.505)**)

Come!” & Come

(See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.526)**)

let the one hearing say, “& the one thirsting, let him come. The one desiring, let him take

If your language does not use the third-person imperative in this way, you could state this in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “may the one hearing say ... may the one thirsting come ... may the one desiring take” or “the one hearing should say ... the one thirsting should come ... the one desiring should take” (See: **Third-Person Imperatives (p.609)**)

the one hearing & the one thirsting, & The one desiring

These phrases do not refer to specific people. They refer to anyone who has the quality that they name. Express this in the way that would be most natural in your language. Alternate translation: “anyone who hears ... anyone who thirsts ... anyone who desires” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.509)**)

And the one thirsting, let him come. The one desiring, let him take the water of life freely

In [21:6](#), God spoke as if he would literally give “water” to someone who was “thirsting.” He was using thirst to represent a person’s desire for everlasting life and he was using drinking life-giving water to represent that person receiving everlasting life. John is echoing the same image here. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Let the one who wants to have everlasting life come. Let the one who desires everlasting life receive it freely” (See: **Metaphor (p.544)**)

And the one thirsting, let him come. The one desiring, let him take the water of life freely

These two sentences mean basically the same thing. John is speaking in something like Hebrew poetry, which was based on this kind of repetition. It would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your

translation rather than combining them. However, if such repetition would not be natural in your language, you could connect the clauses with a word other than **and** in order to show that the second clause is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: “Let the one who is thirsting come, yes, let the one desiring take the water of life freely” or “Let the one who wants to have everlasting life come, yes, let the one who desires everlasting life receive it freely” (See: **Parallelism (p.562)**)

Revelation 22:18

I

The pronoun **I** refers to John. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: “I, John,” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.579)**)

hearing the words of the prophecy of this book: & to them

John is using the term **words** to mean what he has written about in **this book** by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the prophecy I have written about in this book ... to what I have written” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

written

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “that I have written about” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 22:19

the words of the book of this prophecy

John is using the term **words** to mean what he has written about in **this book** by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the prophecy I have written about in this book” (See: **Metonymy (p.550)**)

the tree of life

Some ancient manuscripts read **the tree of life**. ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “the Book of Life.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.607)**)

written

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “that I have written about” (See: **Active or Passive (p.452)**)

Revelation 22:20

The one testifying these {things

John assumes that his readers will understand that by **the one testifying** he means Jesus. You could say that explicitly if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "Jesus, the one who testifies these things," (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.457)**)

Amen

See how you translated the term **Amen** in [1:6](#). (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.486)**)

Revelation 22:21

The grace of the Lord Jesus {be} with the saints

John is ending the book of Revelation by asking God to bless the **saints**, that is, the people who belong to God. In your translation, use a form that speakers of your language would recognize as a blessing. Alternate translation: "May the Lord Jesus bless all of you who belong to God by giving you his grace" (See: **Blessings (p.474)**)

The grace of the Lord Jesus {be} with

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: "May the Lord Jesus be gracious to" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.450)**)



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Version 85

Abstract Nouns

Description

Abstract nouns are nouns that refer to attitudes, qualities, events, or situations. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as happiness, weight, unity, friendship, health, and reason. This is a translation issue because some languages may express a certain idea with an abstract noun, while others would need a different way to express it.

This page answers the question: *What are abstract nouns and how do I deal with them in my translation?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

Remember that nouns are words that refer to a person, place, thing, or idea. Abstract nouns are the nouns that refer to ideas. These can be attitudes, qualities, events, situations, or even relationships between those ideas. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as joy, peace, creation, goodness, contentment, justice, truth, freedom, vengeance, slowness, length, weight, and many, many more.

Some languages, such as Biblical Greek and English, use abstract nouns a lot. They provide a way of giving names to actions or qualities. With names, people who speak these languages can talk about the concepts as though they were things. For example, in languages that use abstract nouns, people can say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sin." But some languages do not use abstract nouns very much. In these languages, speakers may not have the two abstract nouns "forgiveness" and "sin," but they would express the same meaning in other ways. For example, they would express, "I believe that God is willing to forgive people after they have sinned," by using verb phrases instead of nouns for those ideas.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible that you translate from may use abstract nouns to express certain ideas. Your language might not use abstract nouns for some of those ideas. Instead, it might use phrases to express those ideas. Those phrases will use other kinds of words such as adjectives, verbs, or adverbs to express the meaning of the abstract noun. For example, "What is its **weight**?" could be expressed as "How much does it **weigh**?" or "How **heavy** is it?"

Examples From the Bible

From **childhood** you have known the sacred writings ... (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)

The abstract noun "childhood" refers to when someone was a child.

But **godliness** with **contentment** is great **gain**. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULT)

The abstract nouns "godliness" and "contentment" refer to being godly and content. The abstract noun "gain" refers to something that benefits or helps someone.

Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:9 ULT)

The abstract noun "salvation" here refers to being saved.

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **slowness** to be (2 Peter 3:9a ULT)

The abstract noun "slowness" refers to the lack of speed with which something is done.

He will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the **purposes** of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5b ULT)

The abstract noun "purposes" refers to the things that people want to do and the reasons they want to do them.

Translation Strategies

If an abstract noun would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun. Alternative translations are indented below the Scripture example.

... from **childhood** you have known the sacred writings ... (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)

Ever since **you were a child** you have known the sacred writings.

But **godliness** with **contentment** is great **gain**. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULT)

But **being godly** and **content** is very **beneficial**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **are godly** and **content**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **honor and obey God** and when we are **happy with what we have**.

Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:9 ULT)

Today the people in this house **have been saved** ... Today God **has saved** the people in this house ...

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **slowness** to be. (2 Peter 3:9a ULT)

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **moving slowly** to be.

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the **purposes** of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5b ULT)

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal **the things that people want to do and the reasons that they want to do them**.

"

Referenced in: [Revelation 1:1](#); [Revelation 1:2](#); [Revelation 1:4](#); [Revelation 1:6](#); [Revelation 1:9](#); [Revelation 2:19](#); [Revelation 3:10](#); [Revelation 4:9](#); [Revelation 4:11](#); [Revelation 5:12](#); [Revelation 5:13](#); [Revelation 6:4](#); [Revelation 6:9](#); [Revelation 7:10](#); [Revelation 7:14](#); [Revelation 9:6](#); [Revelation 11:15](#); [Revelation 12:10](#); [Revelation 12:11](#); [Revelation 12:17](#); [Revelation 13:8](#); [Revelation 13:10](#); [Revelation 14:7](#); [Revelation 15:5](#); [Revelation 15:8](#); [Revelation 16:9](#); [Revelation 16:10](#); [Revelation 16:15](#); [Revelation 17:1](#); [Revelation 17:8](#); [Revelation 17:9](#); [Revelation 17:11](#); [Revelation 17:12](#); [Revelation 17:17](#); [Revelation 17:18](#); [Revelation 18:10](#); [Revelation 18:20](#); [Revelation 18:21](#); [Revelation 19:1](#); [Revelation 19:10](#); [Revelation 19:11](#); [Revelation 20:4](#); [Revelation 21:27](#); [Revelation 22:11](#); [Revelation 22:15](#); [Revelation 22:21](#)

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: Revelation 1:3; Revelation 1:9; Revelation 1:13; Revelation 1:15; Revelation 2:10; Revelation 2:11; Revelation 2:13; Revelation 2:17; Revelation 2:27; Revelation 3:2; Revelation 3:5; Revelation 3:8; Revelation 3:18; Revelation 4:1; Revelation 4:4; Revelation 5:1; Revelation 5:4; Revelation 5:6; Revelation 5:9; Revelation 5:12; Revelation 6:2; Revelation 6:4; Revelation 6:8; Revelation 6:9; Revelation 6:11; Revelation 6:13; Revelation 6:14; Revelation 7:2; Revelation 7:4; Revelation 7:5; Revelation 7:8; Revelation 7:9; Revelation 7:13; Revelation 8:2; Revelation 8:3; Revelation 8:7; Revelation 8:8; Revelation 8:9; Revelation 8:12; Revelation 9:1; Revelation 9:2; Revelation 9:3; Revelation 9:4; Revelation 9:5; Revelation 9:7; Revelation 9:14; Revelation 9:15; Revelation 9:18; Revelation 9:20; Revelation 10:1; Revelation 10:2; Revelation 10:7; Revelation 10:8; Revelation 10:10; Revelation 11:1; Revelation 11:2; Revelation 11:3; Revelation 11:5; Revelation 11:8; Revelation 11:9; Revelation 11:13; Revelation 11:18; Revelation 11:19; Revelation 12:1; Revelation 12:2; Revelation 12:3; Revelation 12:5; Revelation 12:6; Revelation 12:8; Revelation 12:9; Revelation 12:10; Revelation 12:13; Revelation 12:14; Revelation 12:17; Revelation 13:3; Revelation 13:5; Revelation 13:7; Revelation 13:8; Revelation 13:10; Revelation 13:12; Revelation 13:14; Revelation 13:15; Revelation 14:1; Revelation 14:3; Revelation 14:4; Revelation 14:10; Revelation 14:15; Revelation 14:16; Revelation 14:20; Revelation 15:1; Revelation 15:4; Revelation 15:5; Revelation 15:6; Revelation 15:8; Revelation 16:8; Revelation 16:9; Revelation 16:10; Revelation 16:12; Revelation 16:16; Revelation 16:19; Revelation 17:2; Revelation 17:4; Revelation 17:5; Revelation 17:8; Revelation 17:14; Revelation 17:16; Revelation 17:17; Revelation 18:1; Revelation 18:2; Revelation 18:5; Revelation 18:8; Revelation 18:14; Revelation 18:16; Revelation 18:17; Revelation 18:19; Revelation 18:21; Revelation 18:22; Revelation 18:23; Revelation 18:24; Revelation 19:8; Revelation 19:9; Revelation 19:11; Revelation 19:12; Revelation 19:13; Revelation 19:14; Revelation 19:16; Revelation 19:17; Revelation 19:19; Revelation 19:20; Revelation 19:21; Revelation 20:3; Revelation 20:4; Revelation 20:5; Revelation 20:7; Revelation 20:9; Revelation 20:10; Revelation 20:11; Revelation 20:12; Revelation 20:13; Revelation 20:14; Revelation 20:15; Revelation 21:2; Revelation 21:8; Revelation 21:12; Revelation 21:19; Revelation 21:25; Revelation 21:27; Revelation 22:18; Revelation 22:19

Apostrophe

Description

An apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him. He does this to tell his listeners his message or feelings about that person or thing in a very strong way.

This page answers the question: *What is the figure of speech called an apostrophe?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use apostrophe, and readers could be confused by it. They may wonder who the speaker is talking to, or think that the speaker is crazy to talk to things or people who cannot hear.

Examples from the Bible

Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on you. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

King Saul was killed on Mount Gilboa, and David sang a sad song about it. By telling these mountains that he wanted them to have no dew or rain, he showed how sad he was.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to you. (Luke 13:34a ULT)

Jesus was expressing his feelings for the people of Jerusalem in front of his disciples and a group of Pharisees. By speaking directly to Jerusalem as though its people could hear him, Jesus showed how deeply he cared about them.

He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar, altar!** This is what Yahweh says, 'See, ... on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

The man of God spoke as if the altar could hear him, but he really wanted the king, who was standing there, to hear him.

Translation Strategies

If apostrophe would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. But if this way of speaking would be confusing to your people, let the speaker continue speaking to the people that are listening to him as he tells **them** his message or feelings about the people or thing that cannot hear him. See the example below.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar, altar!** This is what Yahweh says, 'See, ... on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

He said this about the altar: "This is what Yahweh says **about this altar**. 'See, ... they will burn people's bones on **it**.'"

Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on **you**. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

As for these mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on **them**.

"

Referenced in: [Revelation 6:16](#); [Revelation 18:10](#); [Revelation 18:14](#); [Revelation 18:22](#); [Revelation 18:23](#)

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: [Revelation 1:1](#); [Revelation 1:3](#); [Revelation 1:4](#); [Revelation 1:5](#); [Revelation 1:8](#); [Revelation 1:16](#); [Revelation 1:18](#); [Revelation 1:20](#); [Revelation 2 General Notes](#); [Revelation 2:1](#); [Revelation 2:2](#); [Revelation 2:7](#); [Revelation 2:24](#); [Revelation 2:25](#); [Revelation 3:3](#); [Revelation 3:5](#); [Revelation 3:8](#); [Revelation 3:11](#); [Revelation 3:20](#); [Revelation 5:8](#); [Revelation 5:11](#); [Revelation 6:6](#); [Revelation 6:9](#); [Revelation 6:10](#); [Revelation 6:14](#); [Revelation 7:2](#); [Revelation 8:1](#); [Revelation 8:7](#); [Revelation 8:13](#); [Revelation 9:10](#); [Revelation 9:12](#); [Revelation 10:3](#); [Revelation 10:4](#); [Revelation 10:6](#); [Revelation 11:2](#); [Revelation 11:4](#); [Revelation 11:8](#); [Revelation 11:10](#); [Revelation 11:14](#); [Revelation 12 General Notes](#); [Revelation 12:9](#); [Revelation 12:12](#); [Revelation 12:14](#); [Revelation 13 General Notes](#); [Revelation 13:5](#); [Revelation 13:8](#); [Revelation 13:14](#); [Revelation 13:17](#); [Revelation 13:18](#); [Revelation 14:5](#); [Revelation 14:18](#); [Revelation 15:2](#); [Revelation 16:6](#); [Revelation 16:10](#); [Revelation 16:15](#); [Revelation 16:19](#); [Revelation 16:20](#); [Revelation 17 General Notes](#); [Revelation 18:2](#); [Revelation 18:13](#); [Revelation 18:18](#); [Revelation 18:20](#); [Revelation 18:24](#); [Revelation 19:21](#);

Revelation 20:2; Revelation 20:9; Revelation 21:17; Revelation 22:2; Revelation 22:7; Revelation 22:12; Revelation 22:15; Revelation 22:20

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: [Revelation 19:8](#); [Revelation 20:5](#)

Biblical Distance

Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man’s hand.
- The **span** or handspan was the width of a man’s hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man’s forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **“long” cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as “furlong,” which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

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

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal\]\]](#)
Fractions (UTA PDF)

The metric values in the table below are close but not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact length from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Metric Measure
handbreadth	8 centimeters
span	23 centimeters
cubit	46 centimeters
“long” cubit	54 centimeters
stadia	185 meters

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as “.46 meters” or even as “46 centimeters,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a meter,” “45 centimeters,” or “50 centimeters.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as “about ten kilometers” from Jerusalem.

When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 25:10 below.

They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half. (Exodus 25:10 ULT)

- (1) Use the measurements given in the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half kubits**; its width will be **one kubit and a half**; and its height will be **one kubit and a half**."

- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement. For example, if you measure things using the standard meter length, you could translate it as below.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half cubits (one meter)**; its width will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**; and its height will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**."

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

The footnotes would look like:

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

^[1] two and a half cubits ^[2] one cubit and a half

”

Referenced in: [Revelation 14:20](#); [Revelation 21:16](#); [Revelation 21:17](#)

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: [Revelation 6:6](#)

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: [Revelation 6:6](#)

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: [Revelation 16:21](#)

Blessings

Description

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

This page answers the question: *What are blessings, and how can I translate them?*

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

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Poetry ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Add a verb if that is natural in your language.

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"

Referenced in: [Revelation 1:4](#); [Revelation 22:21](#)

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: [Revelation 11:5](#); [Revelation 13:8](#); [Revelation 14:5](#); [Revelation 16:2](#); [Revelation 17:17](#); [Revelation 18:23](#); [Revelation 20:4](#)

Connect — Exception Clauses

Exceptional Relationship

This page answers the question: *How can I translate exception clauses?*

Description

Exceptional relationship connectors exclude one or more items or people from a group.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

English indicates exceptional relationships by first describing a group (Part 1) and then stating what is not in that group by using words like “except,” “but not,” “other than,” “besides,” “unless,” “however ... not,” and “only” (Part 2). Some languages do not indicate in this way that one or more items or people are excluded from a group. Instead, they have other ways of doing this. In some languages this type of construction does not make sense because the exception in Part 2 seems to contradict the statement in Part 1. Translators need to understand who (or what) is in the group and who (or what) is excluded in order to be able to accurately communicate this in their language.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

God told Adam that he could eat from **any** tree in the garden **except** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (OBS Story 1 Frame 11)

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for there is **no one** to redeem it **besides** you, and I am after you. (Ruth 4:4b ULT)

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Not** a man escaped **except for** 400 young men, who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 ULT)

The man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” Jacob said, “I will **not** let you go **unless** you bless me.” (Genesis 32:26 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If the way that Exceptional Clauses are marked in the source language is also clear in your language, then translate the Exceptional Clauses in the same way.

- (1) Very often, the exception in Part 2 contradicts something that was negated in Part 1. In this case, the translator can phrase the same idea without the contradiction by deleting the negative and using a word like “**only**.”
- (2) Reverse the order of the clauses so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

Examples of Translation Strategy Applied

- (1) Very often, the exception in Part 2 contradicts something that was negated in Part 1. In this case, the translator can phrase the same idea without the contradiction by deleting the negative and using a word like “**only**.”

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Not a man escaped except for 400 young men**, who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 ULT)

- Part 1: (**Not** a man escaped)
- Part 2: (**except for** 400 young men)

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Only** 400 young men escaped; they rode on camels and fled.

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for there is **no one** to redeem it **besides** you, and I am after you. (Ruth 4:4 ULT)

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for **you are first in line to redeem it {only you can redeem it}**, and I am after you.

The man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." Jacob said, "I will **not** let you go **unless** you bless me." (Genesis 32:26 ULT)

The man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." Jacob said, "I will let you go **only if** you bless me."

(2) Reverse the order of the clauses, so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

God told Adam that he could eat from **any** tree in the garden **except** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (OBS Story 1 Frame 11)

God told Adam that he could **not** eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but he could eat from **any other** tree in the garden.

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Referenced in: [Revelation 2:17](#); [Revelation 14:3](#); [Revelation 19:12](#)

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: [Revelation 2:10](#); [Revelation 5:3](#)

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: [Revelation 5:4](#); [Revelation 5:5](#); [Revelation 11:10](#); [Revelation 14:13](#)

Copy or Borrow Words

Description

Sometimes the Bible includes things that are not part of your culture and for which your language may not have a word. The Bible also includes people and places for which you may not have names.

When that happens you can “borrow” the word from the Bible in a familiar language and use it in your translation in your own language. This means that you basically copy it from the other language. This page tells how to “borrow” words. (There are also other ways to translate words for things that are not in your language. See [Translate Unknowns](#).)

This page answers the question: *What does it mean to borrow words from another language and how can I do it?*

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

[Translate Unknowns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Examples From the Bible

Seeing one fig tree along the roadside, he went to it. (Matthew 21:19a ULT)

If there are no fig trees where your language is spoken, there might not be a name for this kind of tree in your language.

Above him were the **seraphim**; each one had six wings; with two each covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (Isaiah 6:2 ULT)

Your language might not have a name for this kind of creature.

The declaration of the word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of **Malachi**. (Malachi 1:1 ULT)

Malachi might not be a name that people who speak your language use.

Translation Strategies

There are several things to be aware of when borrowing words from another language.

- Different languages use different scripts, such as the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Devanagari, and Korean scripts. These scripts use different shapes to represent the letters in their alphabets.
- Languages that use the same script might pronounce the letters in that script differently. For example, when speaking German, people pronounce the letter “j” the same way that people pronounce the letter “y” when speaking English.
- Languages do not all have the same sounds or combinations of sounds. For example, many languages do not have the soft “th” sound in the English word “think,” and some languages cannot start a word with a combination of sounds like “st” as in “stop.”

There are several ways to borrow a word.

- (1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.
- (2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.
- (3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.

A man's name in Hebrew letters — זְפַנְיָהּ
 "Zephaniah" — The same name in Roman letters

(2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.

Zephaniah — This is a man's name.
 "Zephaniah" — The name as it is spelled in English, but you can pronounce it according to the rules of your language.

(3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Zephaniah — If your language does not have the "z," you could use "s." If your writing system does not use "ph" you could use "f." Depending on how you pronounce the "i" you could spell it with "i" or "ai" or "ay."
 "Sefania"
 "Sefanaia"
 "Sefanaya"

"

Referenced in: [Introduction to Revelation](#); [Revelation 1:6](#); [Revelation 1:18](#); [Revelation 3:14](#); [Revelation 6:8](#); [Revelation 9 General Notes](#); [Revelation 9:11](#); [Revelation 12:9](#); [Revelation 16:16](#); [Revelation 19 General Notes](#); [Revelation 21 General Notes](#); [Revelation 21:19](#); [Revelation 22:20](#)

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: [Revelation 9:4](#)

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 **unpunished**. (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: [Introduction to Revelation](#); [Revelation 1:17](#); [Revelation 2:3](#); [Revelation 2:11](#); [Revelation 2:13](#); [Revelation 2:24](#); [Revelation 3:4](#); [Revelation 3:5](#); [Revelation 3:8](#); [Revelation 3:11](#); [Revelation 4:8](#); [Revelation 6:6](#); [Revelation 7:3](#); [Revelation 7:16](#); [Revelation 14:5](#); [Revelation 18:14](#); [Revelation 21:25](#); [Revelation 22:10](#)

Doublet

Description

We are using the word “doublet” to refer to two words or phrases that are used together and either mean the same thing or mean very close to the same thing. Often they are joined with the word “and.” Unlike [Hendiadys](#), in which one of the words modifies the other, in a doublet the two words or phrases are equal and are used to emphasize or intensify the one idea that is expressed by the two words or phrases.

This page answers the question: *What are doublets and how can I translate them?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

A very similar issue is the repetition of the same word or phrase for emphasis, usually with no other words between them. Because these figures of speech are so similar and have the same effect, we will treat them here together.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages people do not use doublets. Or they may use doublets, but only in certain situations, so a doublet might not make sense in their language in some verses. People might think that the verse is describing two ideas or actions, when it is only describing one. In this case, translators may need to find some other way to express the meaning expressed by the doublet.

Examples From the Bible

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

The bolded words mean the same thing. Together they mean the people were spread out.

He attacked two men **more righteous** and **better** than himself. (1 Kings 2:32b ULT)

This means that they were “much more righteous” than he was.

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

This means that they had decided to lie, which is another way of saying that they intended to deceive people.

... like of a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

This means that he was like a lamb that did not have any defect—not even one.

Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, “**Master! Master!** We are perishing!” (Luke 8:24 ULT)

The repetition of “Master” means that the disciples called to Jesus urgently and continually.

Translation Strategies

If a doublet would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, consider these strategies.

- (1) Translate only one of the words or phrases.
- (2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words or phrases and add a word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”
- (3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate only one of the words.

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

"You have decided to prepare **false** things to say."

(2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words and add a word that intensifies it such as "very" or "great" or "many."

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

"He has one people **very spread out**."

(3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language's ways of doing that.

... like a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

- English can emphasize this with "any" and "at all."

"... like a lamb **without any blemish at all**."

Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, "**Master! Master!** We are perishing!" (Luke 8:24 ULT)

Then they approached {and} woke him up, **urgently shouting, "Master!**
We are perishing!"

"

Referenced in: Revelation 1:2; Revelation 1:7; Revelation 1:14; Revelation 1:18; Revelation 3:14; Revelation 3:17; Revelation 3:19; Revelation 4:11; Revelation 5:9; Revelation 6:11; Revelation 7:9; Revelation 9:15; Revelation 9:20; Revelation 10:11; Revelation 11:9; Revelation 12:2; Revelation 12:5; Revelation 13:7; Revelation 14:6; Revelation 15:1; Revelation 15:3; Revelation 16:2; Revelation 16:7; Revelation 17:13; Revelation 17:15; Revelation 17:16; Revelation 18:2; Revelation 18:9; Revelation 18:11; Revelation 18:13; Revelation 18:14; Revelation 18:15; Revelation 18:19; Revelation 19:2; Revelation 19:7; Revelation 19:11; Revelation 19:15; Revelation 20:2; Revelation 20:13; Revelation 20:14; Revelation 21:5; Revelation 21:10; Revelation 21:12; Revelation 21:26; Revelation 22:6

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: [Revelation 1:16](#); [Revelation 1:20](#); [Revelation 2:16](#); [Revelation 2:19](#); [Revelation 2:22](#); [Revelation 2:28](#); [Revelation 3:20](#); [Revelation 4:1](#); [Revelation 4:2](#); [Revelation 8:12](#); [Revelation 9:8](#); [Revelation 11:3](#); [Revelation 11:18](#); [Revelation 13:3](#); [Revelation 16:21](#); [Revelation 19:10](#); [Revelation 21:4](#); [Revelation 21:12](#); [Revelation 21:17](#); [Revelation 21:19](#); [Revelation 21:20](#); [Revelation 21:23](#); [Revelation 22:1](#); [Revelation 22:3](#); [Revelation 22:9](#)

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

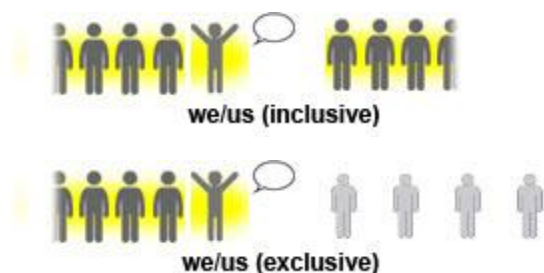
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also 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: [Revelation 1:5](#); [Revelation 12:10](#); [Revelation 19 General Notes](#); [Revelation 19:1](#); [Revelation 19:6](#)

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: [Revelation 1:1](#); [Revelation 1:4](#); [Revelation 2 General Notes](#); [Revelation 2:7](#); [Revelation 2:8](#); [Revelation 3:22](#); [Revelation 13:9](#); [Revelation 16:5](#); [Revelation 19:5](#)

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: [Revelation 22:16](#)

Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural

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. Some languages also have a dual form of “you” for when the word “you” refers to only two people. 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 dual or plural?*

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

[Forms of You \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Parts of Speech \(UTA PDF\)](#)

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. These languages all have 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 person. However, they do not show us whether it refers to only two people or more than two people. When the pronouns do not show us how many people the word “you” refers to, we need to look at the context to see how many people the speaker was speaking to.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators who speak a language that has distinct singular, dual, 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 how many people the speaker was addressing.

Examples From the Bible

Then **James and John**, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him, saying to him, “Teacher, we desire that you to do for us whatever we ask you.” 36 So he said to them, “What do **you** want me to do for **you**?” (Mark 10:35-36 ULT)

Jesus is asking the two, James and John, what they want him to do for them. If the target language has a dual form of “you,” use that. If the target language does not have a dual form, then the plural form would be appropriate.

Jesus sent out two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the village opposite us. As soon as **you** enter it, **you** will find a colt tied there, on which no one has yet sat. Untie it and bring it to me.” (Mark 11:1b-2 ULT)

The context makes it clear that Jesus is addressing two people. If the target language has a dual form of “you,” use that. If the target language does not have a dual form, then the plural form would be appropriate.

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are in the dispersion: Greetings. Consider it all joy, my brothers, when **you** experience various troubles. You know that the testing of **your** faith produces endurance. (James 1:1-3 ULT)

James wrote this letter to many people, so the word “you” refers to many people. If the target language has a plural form of “you,” it would be best to use it here.

Strategies for finding out how many people “you” refers to

- (1) Look at the translationNotes 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 who the speaker was talking to and who responded.

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

Forms of 'You' — Singular ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Revelation 11:12](#); [Revelation 12:14](#)

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: [Revelation 1:4](#); [Revelation 2 General Notes](#); [Revelation 2:2](#); [Revelation 2:10](#); [Revelation 2:13](#); [Revelation 2:23](#); [Revelation 2:24](#); [Revelation 2:25](#); [Revelation 18:6](#); [Revelation 18:20](#); [Revelation 22:17](#)

Fractions

Description

A fraction is a number that represents part of a whole. When an item is divided into several equal parts, a fraction refers to one or more of those parts.

For the drink offering, you must offer **a third** of a hin of wine. (Numbers 15:7a ULT)

A hin is a container of a set size which is used for measuring wine and other liquids. The people were to think about dividing a hin container into three equal parts, filling up only one of those parts and offering that amount.

... **a third** of the ships were destroyed. (Revelation 8:9b ULT)

There were many ships. If all those ships were divided into three equal groups of ships, one group of ships was destroyed.

Most fractions in English simply have the letters “th” added to the end of the number, such as fourth, sixth, ninth, tenth.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | ----- | ----- | | four | fourth | | ten | tenth | | one hundred | one hundredth | | one thousand | one thousandth |

Some fractions in English do not follow that pattern.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | ----- | ----- | | two | half | | three | third | | five | fifth |

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use fractions. They may simply talk about parts or groups, but they do not use fractions to tell how big a part is or how many parts are included in a group.

Examples From the Bible

Now to the **half-tribe** of Manasseh, Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the other **half**, Joshua gave a possession among their brothers across the Jordan on the west. (Joshua 22:7 ULT)

The tribe of Manasseh divided into two groups. The phrase “the half-tribe of Manasseh” refers one of those groups. The phrase “the other half” refers to the other group.

So the four angels who had been prepared for that hour, that day, that month, and that year, were released so that they would kill **a third** of mankind. (Revelation 9:15 ULT)

If all the people in the world were to be divided into three equal groups, then the number of people in one group would be killed.

You must also prepare **a fourth** of a hin of wine as the drink offering. (Numbers 15:5 ULT)

They were to imagine dividing a hin of wine into four equal parts and prepare the amount equal to one of them.

This page answers the question: *What are fractions and how can I translate them?*

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

Numbers ([UTA PDF](#))

Translation Strategies

If a fraction in your language would give the right meaning, consider using it. If not, you could consider these strategies.

- (1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.
- (2) For measurements such as for weight and length, use a unit that your people might know or the unit in the UST.
- (3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

Examples of These Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.

A third of the ocean became red like blood (Revelation 8:8 ULT)

It was like they **divided** the ocean **into three parts**, and **one part** of the ocean became blood.

Then you must offer with the bull a grain offering of **three-tenths** of an ephah of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9 ULT)

... then you must **divide** an ephah of fine flour **into ten parts** and **divide** a hin of oil **into two parts**. Then mix **three of those parts** of the flour with **one of the parts** of oil. Then you must offer that grain offering along with the bull.

- (2) For measurements, use the measurements that are given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

... **two-thirds of a shekel** ... (1 Samuel 13:21b ULT)

... **eight grams** of silver ... (1 Samuel 13:21b UST)

... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)

... **six and one-half liters** of finely ground flour mixed with **two liters** of olive oil. (Numbers 15:9b UST)

- (3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)

six quarts of fine flour mixed with **two quarts** of oil.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Biblical Money \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Revelation 6:8](#); [Revelation 8 General Notes](#); [Revelation 8:8](#); [Revelation 9:15](#); [Revelation 12:4](#)

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: [Revelation 1:3](#); [Revelation 2 General Notes](#); [Revelation 2:7](#); [Revelation 2:26](#); [Revelation 8:11](#); [Revelation 20:6](#); [Revelation 21:7](#); [Revelation 22:11](#); [Revelation 22:17](#)

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: [Revelation 11:5](#)

Hendiadys

Description

In a hendiadys, a speaker uses two words that mean different things and that are connected with “and.” These two words work together to express a single idea. Usually one of the words is the primary idea and the other word further describes the primary one.

... his own **kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

Though “kingdom” and “glory” are both nouns, “glory” actually tells what kind of kingdom it is: it is a **kingdom of glory** or **a glorious kingdom**.

Two phrases connected by “and” can also be a hendiadys when they refer to a single person, thing, or event.

while we look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

Titus 2:13 contains two hendiadyses. “The blessed hope” and “appearing of the glory” refer to the same thing and serve to strengthen the idea that the return of Jesus Christ is greatly anticipated and wonderful. Also, “our great God” and “Savior Jesus Christ” refer to one person, not two.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Often a hendiadys contains an abstract noun. Some languages may not have a noun with the same meaning.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that the second word is further describing the first one.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that only one person or thing is meant, not two.

Examples From the Bible

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

“A mouth” and “wisdom” are nouns, but in this figure of speech “wisdom” describes what comes from the mouth.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

“Willing” and “obedient” are adjectives, but “willing” describes “obedient.”

Translation Strategies

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

- (1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.
- (2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.
- (3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.
- (4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the

This page answers the question: *What is hendiadys and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

other.

(5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

For I will give you **wise words** ...

Walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own glorious kingdom**.

(2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

for I will give you **words of wisdom**.

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own kingdom of glory**.

(3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

If you are **willingly obedient** ...

(4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the other.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

The adjective "obedient" can be substituted with the verb "obey."

if you **obey willingly** ...

(4) and (5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

We look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

The noun "glory" can be changed to the adjective "glorious" to make it clear that Jesus' appearing is what we hope for. Also, "Jesus Christ" can be moved to the front of the phrase and "great God and Savior" put into a relative clause that describes the one person, Jesus Christ.

We look forward to receiving **what we are longing for, the blessed and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, who is our great God and Savior**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Doublet ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: Revelation 1:6; Revelation 1:14; Revelation 2:20; Revelation 2:26; Revelation 3:3; Revelation 3:19; Revelation 7:13; Revelation 12:5; Revelation 13:2; Revelation 14:10; Revelation 16:11; Revelation 16:18; Revelation 17:4; Revelation 17:5; Revelation 17:17; Revelation 19:16; Revelation 20:10; Revelation 21:8; Revelation 22:15

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 Revelation](#); [Revelation 1:1](#); [Revelation 1:11](#); [Revelation 2:6](#); [Revelation 2:13](#); [Revelation 2:14](#); [Revelation 2:15](#); [Revelation 2:20](#); [Revelation 3:12](#); [Revelation 7:5](#); [Revelation 7:6](#); [Revelation 7:7](#); [Revelation 7:8](#); [Revelation 9:14](#); [Revelation 12:9](#); [Revelation 14:1](#); [Revelation 14:8](#); [Revelation 16:12](#); [Revelation 16:16](#); [Revelation 17:5](#); [Revelation 19:11](#); [Revelation 20:8](#)

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: [Revelation 14:8](#); [Revelation 18:2](#); [Revelation 18:3](#); [Revelation 18:12](#); [Revelation 18:23](#); [Revelation 18:24](#); [Revelation 21:19](#)

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: [Introduction to Revelation](#); [Revelation 1:3](#); [Revelation 1:6](#); [Revelation 1:10](#); [Revelation 1:15](#); [Revelation 1:16](#); [Revelation 1:17](#); [Revelation 1:18](#); [Revelation 2:4](#); [Revelation 2:5](#); [Revelation 2:10](#); [Revelation 2:13](#); [Revelation 2:14](#); [Revelation 2:22](#); [Revelation 2:26](#); [Revelation 3:4](#); [Revelation 3:10](#); [Revelation 3:11](#); [Revelation 3:22](#); [Revelation 4:2](#); [Revelation 4:9](#); [Revelation 5:4](#); [Revelation 5:13](#); [Revelation 6:17](#); [Revelation 7:2](#); [Revelation 7:11](#); [Revelation 7:12](#); [Revelation 8:2](#); [Revelation 9:6](#); [Revelation 9:12](#); [Revelation 10:3](#); [Revelation 10:6](#); [Revelation 10:7](#); [Revelation 11:6](#); [Revelation 11:13](#); [Revelation 11:15](#); [Revelation 11:16](#); [Revelation 12:2](#); [Revelation 12:11](#); [Revelation 12:17](#); [Revelation 13:3](#); [Revelation 13:10](#); [Revelation 13:13](#); [Revelation 13:18](#); [Revelation 14:2](#); [Revelation 14:4](#); [Revelation 14:5](#); [Revelation 14:11](#); [Revelation 14:12](#); [Revelation 14:13](#); [Revelation 14:14](#); [Revelation 15:7](#); [Revelation 16:9](#); [Revelation 16:12](#); [Revelation 16:14](#); [Revelation 16:15](#); [Revelation 16:17](#); [Revelation 16:19](#); [Revelation 16:20](#); [Revelation 17:3](#); [Revelation 17:9](#); [Revelation 17:12](#); [Revelation 17:13](#); [Revelation 17:17](#); [Revelation 18 General Notes](#); [Revelation 18:5](#); [Revelation 18:7](#); [Revelation 18:8](#); [Revelation 18:10](#); [Revelation 18:14](#); [Revelation 18:17](#); [Revelation 18:22](#); [Revelation 18:24](#); [Revelation 19:3](#); [Revelation 19:5](#); [Revelation 19:6](#); [Revelation 19:7](#); [Revelation 20:10](#); [Revelation 20:11](#); [Revelation 21:10](#); [Revelation 21:27](#); [Revelation 22:5](#); [Revelation 22:8](#); [Revelation 22:14](#)

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: [Revelation 22:17](#)

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: [Revelation 3:3](#); [Revelation 3:8](#); [Revelation 5:11](#); [Revelation 6:10](#); [Revelation 9:16](#); [Revelation 20:2](#); [Revelation 21:22](#); [Revelation 21:27](#)

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: [Revelation 2:9](#)

Irregular Use of Tenses

Description

This page answers the question: *How do I translate tenses that are unexpected?*

Normally, languages indicate when an event happens by marking it as past, present, or future (or some subset of those categories) through using different verb tenses. But sometimes speakers use those verb tenses in other ways to draw special attention to what they are saying. This article will discuss three ways that this happens in the Bible.

Past For Future

In the Bible, sometimes the past tense is used to refer to things that will happen in the future. This is a figure of speech that is used in prophecy to show that the event will certainly happen. It is sometimes called the “predictive past” or “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.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

Speakers of languages that do not use the past tense in prophecy to refer to future events may think that these are events that have already happened.

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 far in the future, but he used the past tense when he said, “the Lord came.”

Present For Past

In the Bible, sometimes the present tense is used to refer to events that happened in the past. This is a figure of speech that makes these events more vivid or prominent for the reader. The effect can be to draw the reader into the story because these events are told as though they are happening now. The reader, however, knows that the events happened in the past. This is sometimes called the “historical present.”

Now the mother-in-law of Simon was lying down, being sick with a fever, and immediately they speak to him concerning her. (Mark 1:30 ULT)

In the example above, Mark had been narrating events that happened in the past, using the past tense. But when he came to the part about the disciples speaking to Jesus about Simon's mother-in-law, he changed from past tense to present tense.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

Speakers of languages that do not use the present tense to refer to past events may think that these events are happening now or that the Bible translation makes no sense.

Examples From the Bible

And Simon and the ones with him searched for him 37 and found him and say to him, "Everyone is seeking you." 38 And he says to them, "Let us go elsewhere, (Mark 1:36-38 ULT)

As in the above example, the historical present is often used to make direct speech stand out from the narrative.

And he enters into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbaths, having entered into the synagogue, he began to teach. (Mark 1:21 ULT)

As in the above example, the historical present sometimes serves to set the scene for a new set of events. By using the historical present in this way, the writer draws the reader into the scene, and then relates the events using the past tense.

Present For Future

In the Bible, sometimes the present tense is used for a future event. Usually, this is to communicate that the event will happen very soon. Also, like the predictive past, this can communicate that the event is sure to happen or that the speaker is fully committed to making the event happen. This is sometimes called the "imminent future."

And Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh: 'About the middle of the night I am going out in the midst of Egypt, (Exodus 11:4 ULT)

In the example above, Yahweh uses the present tense for something that he will do soon.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

Speakers of languages that do not use the present tense to refer to future events may think that these events are happening at the time of speaking or writing or that the Bible translation is confusing or wrong.

Examples From the Bible

For behold me, raising up the Chaldeans, that fierce and impetuous nation... (Habakkuk 1:6 ULT)

Therefore, remember from where you have fallen and repent and do the first works. But if not, I am coming to you and I will remove your lampstand from its place—if you do not repent. (Revelation 2:5 ULT)

In the examples above, God speaks of a future event as though he is doing it in the present. This is a way of emphasizing the certainty of the event.

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 present tense continues the sense of the predictive past, communicating future events that are sure to happen.

Translation Strategies

If the tense that is used in the Literal Translation 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) Use the past tense to refer to past events.
- (3) Use the tense that your language commonly uses to communicate the time of the event.

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**.

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 will deliver** Jericho and its king and its powerful soldiers into your hand."

And Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh: 'About the middle of the night **I am going out** in the midst of Egypt, (Exodus 11:4 ULT)

And Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh: 'About the middle of the night **I will go out** in the midst of Egypt,

- (2) Use the past tense to refer to past events.

And Simon and the ones with him searched for him and found him and **say** to him, "Everyone is seeking you." And he **says** to them, "Let us go elsewhere, (Mark 1:36-38 ULT)

And Simon and the ones with him searched for him and found him and **said** to him, "Everyone is seeking you." And he **said** to them, "Let us go elsewhere,

And he **enters** into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbaths, having entered into the synagogue, he began to teach. (Mark 1:21 ULT)

And he **entered** into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbaths, having entered into the synagogue, he began to teach.

- (3) Use the tense that your language commonly uses to communicate the time of the event.

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** Jericho and its king and its powerful soldiers into your hand."

Or:

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, **I am about to deliver** Jericho and its king and its powerful soldiers into your hand."

And Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh: 'About the middle of the night **I am going out** in the midst of Egypt, (Exodus 11:4 ULT)

And Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh: 'About the middle of the night **I will be going out** in the midst of Egypt,

Or:

And Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh: 'About the middle of the night **I shall certainly go out** in the midst of Egypt,

"

Referenced in: [Revelation 1:2](#); [Revelation 12:2](#); [Revelation 12:4](#)

Litany

Description

A litany is a figure of speech in which the various components of a thing are listed in a series of very similar statements. The speaker does this to indicate that what he is saying should be understood as comprehensive and without exceptions. In a sense, the speaker is describing an overwhelming situation by overwhelming his audience with an excessive series of statements.

This page answers the question: *What is the figure of speech called litany?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use litanies, and readers could be confused by them. They may wonder why the speaker seems to be saying the same thing over and over again.

Examples From the Bible

Though they dig into Sheol, there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to heaven, there I will bring them down. Though they hide on the top of Carmel, there I will search and take them. Though they are hidden from my sight in the bottom of the sea, there will I give orders to the serpent, and it will bite them. Though they go into captivity, driven by their enemies before them, there will I give orders to the sword, and it will kill them. (Amos 9:2-4 ULT)

In this passage Yahweh is telling the people of Israel that when he punishes them, none of them will escape.

But you should not have looked on the day of your brother, on the day of his misfortune. And you should not have rejoiced over the sons of Judah in the day of their perishing. And you should not have made your mouth great in a day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of my people in the day of their calamity. Yes, you! You should not have looked on his evil in the day of his calamity. And you women should not have looted his wealth in the day of his calamity. And you should not have stood at the crossroads to cut down his fugitives. And you should not have delivered up his survivors in a day of distress. (Obadiah 1:12-14)

In this passage Yahweh is telling the people of Edom that they should have helped the people of Judah when they were conquered by the Babylonians.

Translation Strategies

If the litany is understood as it is in the ULT, then translate the litany as it is. If it is not understood, then try one or more of the following strategies.

- (1) Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany.
- (2) You can put each sentence of the litany on a separate line. Also, if each sentence in the litany has two parts, you can format the litany so that the equivalent parts of each sentence line up. Use this or any other type of formatting that will show that each sentence is reinforcing the same meaning.
- (3) You can eliminate words like “and,” “but,” and “or” at the beginning of sentences so that it will be clearer that the component parts of the litany are all being listed in a row.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) combined with (3):

Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany;

You can eliminate words like “and,” “but,” and “or” at the beginning of sentences so that it will be clearer that the component parts of the litany are all being listed in a row.

You did nothing to help the Israelites when strangers carried away their wealth. They conquered all the cities of Judah, and they even plundered Jerusalem. And you were just as bad as those foreigners, because you did nothing to help:

You should not have looked on the day of your brother, on the day of his misfortune. You should not have rejoiced over the sons of Judah in the day of their perishing. You should not have made your mouth great in a day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of my people in the day of their calamity. Yes, you! You should not have looked on his evil in the day of his calamity. You women should not have looted his wealth in the day of his calamity. You should not have stood at the crossroads to cut down his fugitives. You should not have delivered up his survivors in a day of distress. (Obadiah 1:11-14)

In the above example, verse 11 provides the summary and meaning for the litany that follows in verses 12-14.

(1) combined with (2):

Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany;

You can put each sentence of the litany on a separate line. Also, if each sentence in the litany has two parts, you can format the litany so that the equivalent parts of each sentence line up. Use this or any other type of formatting that will show that each sentence is reinforcing the same meaning.

Not one of them will get away, not one of them will escape:

Though they dig into Sheol,	there my hand will take them.
Though they climb up to heaven,	there I will bring them down.
Though they hide on the top of Carmel,	there I will search and take them.
Though they are hidden from my sight in the bottom of the sea,	there will I give orders to the serpent, and it will bite them.
Though they go into captivity, driven by their enemies before them,	there will I give orders to the sword, and it will kill them.

(Amos 9:1b-4 ULT)

In the above example, the sentence before the litany explains its overall meaning. That sentence can be placed as an introduction. The second half of each sentence can be formatted in a descending staircase pattern as above, or lined up evenly like the first half of each sentence, or in another way. Use whatever format best shows that these sentences are all communicating the same truth, that it is not possible to escape from God.

”

Referenced in: [Revelation 18 General Notes](#); [Revelation 22:11](#)

Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit

Description

Some languages have ways of saying things that are natural for them but sound strange when translated into Other Languages. One of the reasons for this is that some languages say things explicitly that some Other Languages would leave as implicit information.

This page answers the question: *What can I do if some of the explicit information seems confusing, unnatural, or unnecessary in our language?*

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

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information ([UTA PDF](#))

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

If you translate all of the explicit information from the source language into the explicit information in the target language, it could sound foreign, unnatural, or perhaps even unintelligent if the target language would not make that information explicit. Instead, it is best to leave that kind of information implicit in the target language.

Examples from the Bible

And Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it and drew near to the door of the tower **to burn it with fire**. (Judges 9:52 ESV)

In Biblical Hebrew, it is normal to start most sentences with a conjunction such as “and” to show the connection between sentences. In English, it is not natural to do so, it is quite tiresome for the English reader, and it gives the impression that the author is uneducated. In English, it is best to leave the idea of connection between sentences implicit in most cases and not translate the conjunction explicitly.

In Biblical Hebrew, it is normal to say that something was burned with fire. In English, the idea of fire is included in the action of burning, and so it is unnatural to state both ideas explicitly. It is enough to say that something was burned and leave the idea of fire implicit.

But the centurion **answered and said**, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof” (Matthew 8:8a ULT)

In the biblical languages, it was normal to introduce direct speech with two verbs of speaking. One verb indicated the action, and the other introduced the words of the speaker. English speakers do not do this, so it is very unnatural and confusing to use two verbs. For the English speaker, the idea of speaking is included in the idea of answering. Using two verbs in English implies two separate speeches, rather than just one. So in English, it is better to use only one verb of speaking.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If the explicit information of the source language sounds natural in the target language, then translate it as explicit information.
- (2) If the explicit information does not sound natural in the target language or seems unnecessary or confusing, leave the explicit information implicit. Only do this if the reader can understand this information from the context. You can test this by asking the reader a question about the passage.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the explicit information of the source language sounds natural in the target language, then translate it as explicit information.

- There would be no change to the text using this strategy, so no examples are given here.

(2) If the explicit information does not sound natural in the target language or seems unnecessary or confusing, make the explicit information implicit. Only do this if the reader can understand this information from the context. You can test this by asking the reader a question about the passage.

And Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it and drew near to the door of the tower **to burn it with fire**. (Judges 9:52 ESV)

Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it, and he approached the door of the tower **to burn it**. (Or) ... **to set it on fire**.

In English, it is clear that the action of this verse follows the action of the previous verse without the use of the connector “and” at the beginning, so it was omitted. Also, the words “with fire” were left out, because this information is communicated implicitly by the word “burn.” An alternative translation for “to burn it” is “to set it on fire.” It is not natural in English to use both “burn” and “fire,” so the English translator should choose only one of them. You can test if the readers understood the implicit information by asking, “How would the door burn?” If they knew it was by fire, then they have understood the implicit information. Or, if you chose the second option, you could ask, “What happens to a door that is set on fire?” If the readers answer, “It burns,” then they have understood the implicit information.

But the centurion **answered and said**, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof” (Matthew 8:8a ULT)

The centurion **answered**, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof”

In English, the information that the centurion responded by speaking is included in the verb “answered,” so the verb “said” can be left implicit. You can test if the readers understood the implicit information by asking, “How did the centurion answer?” If they knew it was by speaking, then they have understood the implicit information.

He opened his mouth and taught them, saying, (Matthew 5:2 ULT)

He began to teach them, saying, (Or) He taught them, saying,

In English, it would be very strange to include the information that Jesus opened his mouth when he spoke. That information is included in the verbs “taught” and “saying,” so that phrase can be omitted and that information left implicit. However, “he opened his mouth” is an idiom that indicates the beginning of a speech, so that information may be included, or it may also be left implicit.

Next we recommend you learn about:

When to Keep Information Implicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Revelation 1:14](#); [Revelation 3:8](#); [Revelation 3:9](#); [Revelation 6:13](#); [Revelation 8:11](#); [Revelation 10:3](#); [Revelation 11:11](#); [Revelation 12:6](#); [Revelation 12:14](#); [Revelation 13:3](#); [Revelation 17:9](#); [Revelation 17:16](#); [Revelation 18:19](#); [Revelation 19:12](#); [Revelation 19:13](#); [Revelation 20:8](#); [Revelation 21:21](#)

Merism

Definition

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it. By referring to the extreme parts, the speaker intends to include also everything in between those parts.

"I am **the alpha and the omega**," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8 ULT)

I am **the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end**. (Revelation 22:13, ULT)

This page answers the question: *What does the word merism mean and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a merism that includes everything from the beginning to the end. It means eternal.

... I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth** ..., (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

Heaven and earth is a merism that includes everything that exists.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use merism. The readers of those languages may think that the phrase only applies to the items mentioned. They may not realize that it refers to those two things and everything in between.

Examples From the Bible

From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

This bolded phrase is a merism because it speaks of the east and the west and everywhere in between. It means "everywhere."

He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13)

The bolded phrase is merism because it speaks of old people and young people and everyone in between. It means "everyone."

Translation Strategies

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

- (1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.
- (2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything**.

From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

In all places, people should praise Yahweh's name.

(2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything, including both what is in heaven and what is on earth**.

He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13 ULT)

He will bless **all those** who honor him, regardless of whether they are **young or old**.

"

Referenced in: [Revelation 1:8](#); [Revelation 1:17](#); [Revelation 1:19](#); [Revelation 2:8](#); [Revelation 4:6](#); [Revelation 4:8](#); [Revelation 5:3](#); [Revelation 5:13](#); [Revelation 6:15](#); [Revelation 7:1](#); [Revelation 7:15](#); [Revelation 10:6](#); [Revelation 11:18](#); [Revelation 12:10](#); [Revelation 13:16](#); [Revelation 14:7](#); [Revelation 14:11](#); [Revelation 19:5](#); [Revelation 19:18](#); [Revelation 20:8](#); [Revelation 20:10](#); [Revelation 20:12](#); [Revelation 21:6](#); [Revelation 22:13](#)

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: [Introduction to Revelation](#); [Revelation 1:5](#); [Revelation 1:6](#); [Revelation 1:7](#); [Revelation 1:8](#); [Revelation 1:9](#); [Revelation 1:18](#); [Revelation 2 General Notes](#); [Revelation 2:5](#); [Revelation 2:6](#); [Revelation 2:7](#); [Revelation 2:9](#); [Revelation 2:10](#); [Revelation 2:11](#); [Revelation 2:13](#); [Revelation 2:14](#); [Revelation 2:15](#); [Revelation 2:16](#); [Revelation 2:23](#); [Revelation 2:24](#); [Revelation 2:25](#); [Revelation 2:27](#); [Revelation 2:28](#); [Revelation 3:1](#); [Revelation 3:2](#); [Revelation 3:3](#); [Revelation 3:4](#); [Revelation 3:5](#); [Revelation 3:7](#); [Revelation 3:8](#); [Revelation 3:9](#); [Revelation 3:11](#); [Revelation 3:12](#); [Revelation 3:15](#); [Revelation 3:16](#); [Revelation 3:17](#); [Revelation 3:18](#); [Revelation 3:20](#); [Revelation 3:21](#); [Revelation 4:1](#); [Revelation 4:6](#); [Revelation 5:5](#); [Revelation 5:9](#); [Revelation 6:11](#); [Revelation 7:1](#); [Revelation 7:4](#); [Revelation 7:14](#); [Revelation 7:16](#); [Revelation 7:17](#); [Revelation 8:12](#); [Revelation 9:9](#); [Revelation 9:13](#); [Revelation 10:1](#); [Revelation 10:4](#); [Revelation 11:2](#); [Revelation 11:4](#); [Revelation 11:5](#); [Revelation 11:6](#); [Revelation 11:16](#); [Revelation 11:18](#); [Revelation 12:10](#); [Revelation 12:16](#); [Revelation 12:17](#); [Revelation 13:12](#); [Revelation 13:13](#); [Revelation 13:14](#); [Revelation 13:16](#); [Revelation 14:3](#); [Revelation 14:4](#); [Revelation 14:8](#); [Revelation 14:10](#); [Revelation 15:3](#); [Revelation 15:4](#); [Revelation 16 General Notes](#); [Revelation 16:8](#); [Revelation 16:15](#); [Revelation 16:19](#); [Revelation 17 General Notes](#); [Revelation 17:2](#); [Revelation 17:10](#); [Revelation 17:16](#); [Revelation 17:17](#); [Revelation 18:2](#); [Revelation 18:3](#); [Revelation 18:5](#); [Revelation 18:6](#); [Revelation 18:7](#); [Revelation 18:9](#); [Revelation 18:14](#); [Revelation 18:16](#); [Revelation 18:21](#); [Revelation 18:23](#); [Revelation 19:5](#); [Revelation 19:10](#); [Revelation 19:12](#); [Revelation 19:18](#); [Revelation 19:20](#); [Revelation 20 General Notes](#); [Revelation 20:8](#); [Revelation 20:9](#); [Revelation 20:12](#); [Revelation 21 General Notes](#); [Revelation 21:6](#); [Revelation 21:9](#); [Revelation 21:12](#); [Revelation 21:22](#); [Revelation 21:23](#); [Revelation 21:24](#); [Revelation 22:9](#); [Revelation 22:10](#); [Revelation 22:11](#); [Revelation 22:13](#); [Revelation 22:14](#); [Revelation 22:15](#); [Revelation 22:16](#); [Revelation 22:17](#)

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: [Introduction to Revelation](#); [Revelation 1:2](#); [Revelation 1:4](#); [Revelation 1:7](#); [Revelation 1:9](#); [Revelation 1:10](#); [Revelation 1:12](#); [Revelation 2 General Notes](#); [Revelation 2:3](#); [Revelation 2:7](#); [Revelation 2:11](#); [Revelation 2:13](#); [Revelation 2:14](#); [Revelation 2:22](#); [Revelation 3:1](#); [Revelation 3:4](#); [Revelation 3:5](#); [Revelation 3:6](#); [Revelation 3:8](#); [Revelation 3:22](#); [Revelation 5:8](#); [Revelation 5:9](#); [Revelation 5:10](#); [Revelation 6:4](#); [Revelation 6:8](#); [Revelation 6:9](#); [Revelation 6:10](#); [Revelation 6:16](#); [Revelation 6:17](#); [Revelation 7:10](#); [Revelation 7:16](#); [Revelation 7:17](#); [Revelation 8:4](#); [Revelation 8:5](#); [Revelation 8:11](#); [Revelation 8:12](#); [Revelation 9:13](#); [Revelation 9:17](#); [Revelation 10:1](#); [Revelation 10:11](#); [Revelation 11:9](#); [Revelation 11:13](#); [Revelation 11:18](#); [Revelation 11:19](#); [Revelation 12:5](#); [Revelation 12:8](#); [Revelation 12:9](#); [Revelation 12:10](#); [Revelation 12:11](#); [Revelation 12:14](#); [Revelation 13:2](#); [Revelation 13:3](#); [Revelation 13:5](#); [Revelation 13:6](#); [Revelation 13:7](#); [Revelation 13:9](#); [Revelation 13:10](#); [Revelation 13:15](#); [Revelation 14:3](#); [Revelation 14:5](#); [Revelation 14:7](#); [Revelation 14:11](#); [Revelation 14:13](#); [Revelation 14:20](#); [Revelation 15:1](#); [Revelation 15:4](#); [Revelation 15:5](#); [Revelation 15:6](#); [Revelation 15:7](#); [Revelation 16 General Notes](#); [Revelation 16:1](#); [Revelation 16:3](#); [Revelation 16:6](#); [Revelation 16:9](#); [Revelation 16:17](#); [Revelation 16:19](#); [Revelation 17:1](#); [Revelation 17:4](#); [Revelation 17:15](#); [Revelation 17:17](#); [Revelation 17:18](#); [Revelation 18:4](#); [Revelation 18:7](#); [Revelation 18:9](#); [Revelation 18:10](#); [Revelation 18:12](#); [Revelation 18:14](#); [Revelation 18:15](#); [Revelation 18:18](#); [Revelation 18:20](#); [Revelation 19:2](#); [Revelation 19:3](#); [Revelation 19:9](#); [Revelation 19:10](#); [Revelation 19:11](#); [Revelation 19:12](#); [Revelation 19:15](#); [Revelation 19:17](#); [Revelation 20:4](#); [Revelation 20:11](#); [Revelation 20:15](#); [Revelation 21:5](#); [Revelation 21:24](#); [Revelation 21:26](#); [Revelation 21:27](#); [Revelation 22:6](#); [Revelation 22:7](#); [Revelation 22:9](#); [Revelation 22:10](#); [Revelation 22:18](#); [Revelation 22:19](#)

Nominal Adjectives

Description

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

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

The adjective “rich” comes before the word “man” and describes “man.”

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

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

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

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

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

This page answers the question: *How do I translate adjectives that act like nouns?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

 Blessed are **people who are meek**.

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Referenced in: [Revelation 1:5](#); [Revelation 2:2](#); [Revelation 2:13](#); [Revelation 3:4](#); [Revelation 3:7](#); [Revelation 3:17](#); [Revelation 6:15](#); [Revelation 10:2](#); [Revelation 11:18](#); [Revelation 12:5](#); [Revelation 12:13](#); [Revelation 13:16](#); [Revelation 14:13](#); [Revelation 14:14](#); [Revelation 16 General Notes](#); [Revelation 16:2](#); [Revelation 16:5](#); [Revelation 17:10](#); [Revelation 17:11](#); [Revelation 18:14](#); [Revelation 19:3](#); [Revelation 19:5](#); [Revelation 19:18](#); [Revelation 19:20](#); [Revelation 20:5](#); [Revelation 20:12](#); [Revelation 20:13](#); [Revelation 21:4](#); [Revelation 21:8](#); [Revelation 22:11](#); [Revelation 22:15](#)

Numbers

Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words ("five") or as numerals ("5"). Some numbers are very large, such as "two hundred" (200), "twenty-two thousand" (22,000), or "one hundred million" (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

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

Translate Unknowns ([UTA PDF](#))

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word "about" shows that it is not an exact number.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

Examples From the Bible

When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands**. (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Write numbers using numerals.
- (2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
- (3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.
- (4) Combine words for large numbers.
- (5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

(1) Write numbers using numerals.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents), ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord® Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord® Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years.

He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died.
(Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

Next we recommend you learn about:

Ordinal Numbers ([UTA PDF](#))

Fractions ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Revelation 5:11](#); [Revelation 7:4](#); [Revelation 7:5](#); [Revelation 9:16](#); [Revelation 14:1](#)

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: [Revelation 5:2](#)

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: [Revelation 2:11](#); [Revelation 6 General Notes](#); [Revelation 6:3](#); [Revelation 8 General Notes](#); [Revelation 8:1](#); [Revelation 8:7](#); [Revelation 9:1](#); [Revelation 9:12](#); [Revelation 9:13](#); [Revelation 9:14](#); [Revelation 11:15](#); [Revelation 16](#)

[General Notes](#); [Revelation 16:2](#); [Revelation 17:11](#); [Revelation 20:5](#); [Revelation 20:6](#); [Revelation 20:14](#); [Revelation 21:1](#); [Revelation 21:4](#); [Revelation 21:8](#); [Revelation 21:19](#); [Revelation 21:20](#)

Parallelism

Description

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

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

This page answers the question: *What is parallelism?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "**doublet**" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and raises it above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULT)

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

Yahweh sees everything a person does
and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The first phrase and the second phrase mean the same thing. There are three ideas that are the same between these two phrases. "Sees" corresponds to "watches," "everything...does" corresponds to "all the paths...takes," and "a person" corresponds to "he."

Praise Yahweh, all you nations;
exalt him, all you peoples! (Psalm 117:1 ULT)

Both parts of this verse tell people everywhere to praise Yahweh. The words 'Praise' and 'exalt' mean the same thing. The words 'Yahweh' and 'him' refer to the same person. The terms 'all you nations' and 'all you peoples' refer to the same people.

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people,
and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2b ULT)

The two parts of this verse say that Yahweh has a serious disagreement with his people, Israel. These are not two different disagreements or two different groups of people.

Translation Strategies

For most kinds of parallelism, it is good to translate both of the clauses or phrases. For synonymous parallelism, it is good to translate both clauses if people in your language understand that the purpose of saying something twice is to strengthen a single idea. But if your language does not use parallelism in this way, then consider using one of the following translation strategies.

- (1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.
- (2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as "truly" or "certainly."
- (3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like "very," "completely," or "all."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

Delilah expressed this idea twice to emphasize that she was very upset.

Until now you have deceived me with your lies.
Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The phrase "all the paths he takes" is a metaphor for "all he does."

Yahweh pays attention to everything a person does.
For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2 ULT)

This parallelism describes one serious disagreement that Yahweh had with one group of people. If this is unclear, the phrases can be combined:

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, Israel.

(2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”

Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

Yahweh truly sees everything a person does.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet
(Psalm 8:6 ULT)

You have certainly made him to rule over everything that you have created.

(3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely” or “all.”

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

All you have done is lie to me.

Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

Yahweh sees absolutely everything that a person does.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Personification ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Revelation 1:18](#); [Revelation 3:7](#); [Revelation 5:13](#); [Revelation 6:9](#); [Revelation 7:1](#); [Revelation 9:6](#); [Revelation 10:7](#); [Revelation 11:2](#); [Revelation 11:5](#); [Revelation 13:4](#); [Revelation 13:16](#); [Revelation 17:6](#); [Revelation 18:2](#); [Revelation 18:6](#); [Revelation 18:14](#); [Revelation 19:18](#); [Revelation 20:4](#); [Revelation 20:11](#); [Revelation 21:3](#); [Revelation 21:6](#); [Revelation 21:11](#); [Revelation 22:13](#); [Revelation 22:17](#)

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: [Revelation 9:6](#); [Revelation 11:11](#); [Revelation 11:18](#); [Revelation 12:12](#); [Revelation 12:16](#); [Revelation 14:8](#); [Revelation 14:13](#); [Revelation 16:7](#); [Revelation 16:8](#); [Revelation 16:20](#); [Revelation 19:10](#); [Revelation 20:6](#); [Revelation 20:9](#); [Revelation 20:11](#); [Revelation 20:13](#); [Revelation 21:1](#); [Revelation 21:4](#)

Poetry

Description

Poetry is one of the ways that people use the words and sounds of their language to make their speech and writing more beautiful and to express strong emotion. Through poetry, people can communicate deeper emotion than they can through simple non-poetic forms. Poetry gives more weight and elegance to statements of truth, such as proverbs, and is also easier to remember than ordinary speech.

This page answers the question: *What is poetry and how do I translate it into my language?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

In poetry we commonly find:

- many figures of speech such as [Apostrophe](#)
- arrangements of clauses into particular patterns such as:
 - parallel lines (See [Parallelism](#))
 - acrostics (beginning lines with successive letters of the alphabet)
 - chiasms (in which the first line relates to the last line, the second to the next-to-last line, etc.):

You should not give what is holy to the dogs,
and should not throw your pearls in front of the pigs.
Otherwise they will trample them under their feet,
and having turned, they might tear you to pieces. (Matt 7:6 ULT)

- repetition of some or all of a line:

Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. (Psalm 148:2-3 ULT)

- lines of similar length:

Listen to my call to you,
Yahweh; think about my groanings.
Listen to the sound of my call, my King and my God,
for it is to you that I pray. (Psalm 5:1-2 ULT)

- the same sound used at the end or at the beginning of two or more lines:

"Twinkle, twinkle little **star**. How I wonder what you **are**." (from an English rhyme)

- the same sound repeated many times:

"Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater" (from an English rhyme)

- The same root word used as both a verb and as a noun:

Your old men will **dream dreams** (Joel 2:28 ULT)

Yahweh,...**light lightning** and scatter them (Psalm 144:5-6 ULT)

We also find:

- old words and expressions
- dramatic imagery
- different use of grammar — including:
 - incomplete sentences
 - lack of connective words

Some places to look for poetry in your language

Songs, particularly old songs or songs used in children's games

Religious ceremony or chants of priests or witch doctors

Prayers, blessings, and curses

Old legends

Elegant or fancy speech

Elegant or fancy speech is similar to poetry in that it uses beautiful language, but it does not use all of the language's features of poetry, and it does not use them as much as poetry does. Popular speakers in the language often use elegant speech, and this is probably the easiest source of text to study to find out what makes speech elegant in your language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

- Different languages use poetry for different things. If a poetic form would not communicate the same meaning in your language, you may need to write it without the poetry.
- Different languages use different poetic devices. A poetic device that conveys elegance or emotion in a biblical language may be confusing or misunderstood in another language.
- In some languages, using poetry for a particular part of the Bible would make it much more powerful.

Examples From the Bible

The Bible uses poetry for songs, teaching, and prophecy. Almost all of the books of the Old Testament have poetry in them and many of the books are completely made up of poetry.

... for you saw my affliction; you knew the distress of my soul. (Psalm 31:7b ULT)

This example of [Parallelism](#) has two lines that mean the same thing.

Yahweh, judge the nations; vindicate me, Yahweh, because I am righteous and innocent, Most High. (Psalm 7:8 ULT)

This example of parallelism shows the contrast between what David wants God to do to him and what he wants God to do to the unrighteous nations. (See [Parallelism](#).)

Keep your servant also from arrogant sins; let them not rule over me. (Psalm 19:13a ULT)

This example of personification speaks of sins as if they could rule over a person. (See [Personification](#).)

Oh, give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good,
for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Oh, give thanks to the God of gods,

for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
(Psalm 136:1-3 ULT)

This example repeats the phrases “give thanks” and “his covenant faithfulness endures forever.”

Translation Strategies

If the style of poetry that is used in the source text would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other ways of translating it.

- (1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry.
- (2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.
- (3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

If you use poetry it may be more beautiful.

If you use ordinary speech it may be more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of mockers. But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2 ULT)

The following are examples of how people might translate Psalm 1:1-2.

- (1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry. (The style in this example has words that sound similar at the end of each line.)

“Happy is the person not encouraged **to sin**, Disrespect for God he will not **begin**, To those who laugh at God he is **no kin**. God is his constant **delight**, He does what God says **is right**, He thinks of it all day **and night**.”

- (2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.

This is the kind of person who is truly blessed: the one who does not follow the advice of wicked people nor stop along the road to speak with sinners nor join the gathering of those who mock God. Rather, he takes great joy in Yahweh’s law, and he meditates on it day and night.

- (3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

The people who do not listen to the advice of bad people are really happy. They do not spend time with people who continually do evil things or join with those who do not respect God. Instead, they love to obey Yahweh’s law, and they think about it all the time.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Symbolic Language \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Revelation 6:2](#); [Revelation 8:6](#); [Revelation 14:2](#); [Revelation 17:6](#); [Revelation 18:6](#); [Revelation 18:20](#); [Revelation 21:3](#)

Politeness

Description

This page answers the question: *How do I translate politeness into my language?*

People say certain things, or say things in a certain way, in order to communicate that they respect the people to whom they are speaking. We can refer to this as speaking politely. The ways of speaking politely are generally agreed on by those who share a culture. People also use polite ways of speaking to avoid offending others. This can be especially important if the person being addressed has an influential or powerful position.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

Every language has ways to communicate politeness to other speakers of that language, but different languages do not communicate politeness in the same ways. A phrase that is polite in one language may be offensive in another language, or it may simply be confusing. Translators need to recognize politeness in the Bible and communicate the same polite meaning using the appropriate form of politeness in the target language.

Examples From the Bible

■ **do not trouble yourself** (Luke 7:6 ULT)

The centurion sent friends to give Jesus this polite message that Jesus should not come to his house.

■ **I ask you, have me excused** (Luke 14:18 ULT)

In this culture, this was a polite formula for declining a social invitation.

■ **May I find favor in your eyes, my lord**, since you have comforted me, and since you have spoken to the heart of **your female servant**. (Ruth 2:13 ULT)

Ruth uses several phrases of politeness as she talks to Boaz. **May I find favor in your eyes** is an idiomatic phrase that communicates that Boaz is in a high position, **my lord** is an honorific form of address, and she refers to herself humbly as **your female servant** even though she is not actually one of his servants.

■ **Please** let a **little** water be brought... Let me also bring a **bit** of bread (Genesis 18:4-5 ULT)

Abraham describes his generosity as something small in order to be polite. This was a way to communicate to his guests that they were not imposing on him at all. Abraham also uses a word translated as "please" to make his request more polite.

■ Then he brought him outside and said, "**Please** look at the heavens and count the stars..." (Genesis 15:5)

In the above example, God is speaking to Abram, inviting him to look at the stars. He also uses the word translated as "please." God has no need to be polite, but this communicates respect for Abram.

Honorifics

A specific category of politeness is the way that people address other people who are important, powerful, or worthy of honor in other ways. We can refer to this form of politeness as using honorific language. Honorific language can be in the form of special titles or, in some languages, special forms of the words used.

■ to the **most excellent** Governor Felix (Acts 23:26 ULT)

The expression **most excellent** was an honorific title by which people addressed Roman government officials.

■ **O king, live forever!** (Daniel 5:10 ULT)

This was the polite and respectful way to address the king before saying anything else to him.

Politeness under other categories

People often use language that is non-standard or figurative to communicate politeness. In these cases, there will be a Translation Note under the category of the figure of speech rather than under the category of politeness. The Note will discuss the issue of the figurative speech and then also mention that this is being used to be polite. For example, the following verses will have Translation Notes under the categories given rather than under politeness.

Metaphor

■ Men, **brothers and fathers**, hear my defense to you now. (Acts 22:1 ULT)

Paul is using the word **brothers** to refer to his fellow Israelites. He is using the word **fathers** to refer either to Jewish leaders who may be present or to Jewish men who are older than he is. In both cases he is speaking respectfully.

Idiom

■ **I beg of you**, about whom is the prophet saying this...? (Acts 8:34 ULT)

The Ethiopian official is using an idiomatic expression as a polite way to introduce a request.

Symbolic action

■ **And having fallen down**, they worshiped him (Matt 2:11 ULT)

The act of kneeling down before someone showed deep respect for the person.

Speaking of oneself in the third person

■ please do not pass by **your servant**. (Gen 18:3 ULT)

Abraham refers to himself as **your servant** here in order to show respect to his guests.

Euphemism

■ And having said this, **he fell asleep**. (Acts 7:60 ULT)

Luke is describing the death of Stephen when he says **he fell asleep**. He is using this polite way of referring to something unpleasant to avoid offending his readers.

Other Uses of the Imperative

■ **You pray to the Lord for me**, so that nothing of which you have spoken may come upon me. (Acts 8:24 ULT)

The verb **pray** is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command.

Rhetorical question

| **Lord, are you not concerned that my sister has left me alone to serve?** (Luke 10:40 ULT)

Martha is complaining that Jesus is allowing Mary to sit listening to him when there is so much work to do. But Martha respects Jesus, so she uses the question form to make her complaint more polite.

Translation Strategies

If the phrase used in the ULT would be natural and be a polite expression in your language, consider using it. If not, use the strategy below.

(1) Use a phrase that would be both natural and polite in your language for this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a phrase that would be both natural and polite in your language for this situation.

| **do not trouble yourself** (Luke 7:6 ULT)

I do not want you to go out of your way

or

Please do not bother

| **I ask you, have me excused** (Luke 14:18 ULT)

Please accept my apology for not being able to attend

| **May I find favor in your eyes, my lord,** since you have comforted me, and since you have spoken to the heart of **your female servant**. (Ruth 2:13 ULT)

You are too kind to me, good sir; you have comforted me and you have spoken to my heart **even though I am not worthy of it.**

| Please let **a little** water be brought... Let me also bring **a bit** of bread (Genesis 18:4-5 ULT)

I have **plenty** of water... I also have **plenty** of food

| **"Please** look at the heavens and count the stars..." (Genesis 15:5)

"Look up at the heavens, **if you will**, and count the stars..."

| **O king, live forever!** (Daniel 5:10 ULT)

Your majesty, **I wish you well!**

| **I beg of you**, about whom is the prophet saying this...? (Acts 8:34 ULT)

Please tell me, about whom is the prophet saying this...?

| **You pray to the Lord for me**, so that nothing of which you have spoken may come upon me. (Acts 8:24 ULT)

Please pray to the Lord for me so that nothing of which you have spoken may come upon me.

or

I ask you to pray to the Lord for me so that nothing of which you have spoken may come upon me.

| **Lord, are you not concerned that my sister has left me alone to serve?** (Luke 10:40 ULT)

Lord, it seems as if you do not care that my sister has left me alone to serve.

"

Referenced in: [Revelation 7:14](#); [Revelation 11:8](#); [Revelation 14:13](#)

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: Revelation 1:1; Revelation 1:9; Revelation 2:7; Revelation 2:13; Revelation 2:26; Revelation 3:10; Revelation 3:14; Revelation 4:5; Revelation 9:9; Revelation 10:7; Revelation 13:3; Revelation 13:12; Revelation 14:12; Revelation 15:3; Revelation 16:5; Revelation 18:14; Revelation 19:10; Revelation 20:4

Pronouns — When to Use Them

Description

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

This page answers the question: *How do I decide whether or not to use a pronoun?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

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

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

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

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

Again **Jesus** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **Jesus** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath.

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

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

This may be translated as:

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

"

Referenced in: [Revelation 1:5](#); [Revelation 1:6](#); [Revelation 1:7](#); [Revelation 2:16](#); [Revelation 2:24](#); [Revelation 2:27](#); [Revelation 3:9](#); [Revelation 3:19](#); [Revelation 4:11](#); [Revelation 5:7](#); [Revelation 6:3](#); [Revelation 6:4](#); [Revelation 8:1](#);

[Revelation 8:5](#); [Revelation 9:5](#); [Revelation 10:11](#); [Revelation 11:12](#); [Revelation 12:6](#); [Revelation 12:8](#); [Revelation 13:16](#); [Revelation 14:3](#); [Revelation 15:3](#); [Revelation 16:4](#); [Revelation 16:5](#); [Revelation 16:10](#); [Revelation 16:15](#); [Revelation 16:16](#); [Revelation 18 General Notes](#); [Revelation 18:2](#); [Revelation 19:9](#); [Revelation 20:4](#); [Revelation 20:10](#); [Revelation 21 General Notes](#); [Revelation 21:15](#); [Revelation 21:26](#); [Revelation 22:1](#); [Revelation 22:6](#); [Revelation 22:18](#)

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: [Revelation 1:8](#); [Revelation 1:11](#)

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: [Revelation 1:5](#); [Revelation 1:7](#); [Revelation 2:27](#); [Revelation 7:17](#); [Revelation 18:9](#); [Revelation 18:20](#)

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: [Revelation 2 General Notes](#); [Revelation 2:1](#); [Revelation 2:8](#); [Revelation 2:24](#); [Revelation 2:25](#); [Revelation 3:17](#); [Revelation 14:13](#); [Revelation 18:7](#); [Revelation 19:9](#)

Reduplication

This is a placeholder for an article to be written about reduplication in the biblical text, such as infinitive-absolute + indicative or other repeated words.

This page answers the question: *What is reduplication?*

Description

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Examples From the Bible

Begin, possess, to possess his land (Deut 2:31 ULT)

Translation Strategies

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

"

Referenced in: [Revelation 8:13](#); [Revelation 18:10](#)

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?

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Referenced in: [Revelation 6:10](#); [Revelation 6:17](#); [Revelation 7:13](#); [Revelation 13:4](#); [Revelation 15:4](#); [Revelation 17:7](#); [Revelation 18:18](#)

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: [Revelation 1:10](#); [Revelation 1:13](#); [Revelation 1:14](#); [Revelation 1:15](#); [Revelation 1:16](#); [Revelation 1:17](#); [Revelation 2:18](#); [Revelation 2:27](#); [Revelation 3:3](#); [Revelation 4:1](#); [Revelation 6 General Notes](#); [Revelation 6:1](#); [Revelation 6:12](#); [Revelation 6:13](#); [Revelation 6:14](#); [Revelation 9 General Notes](#); [Revelation 9:2](#); [Revelation 9:3](#); [Revelation 9:5](#); [Revelation 9:8](#); [Revelation 9:9](#); [Revelation 10 General Notes](#); [Revelation 10:1](#); [Revelation 10:3](#); [Revelation 11:1](#); [Revelation 11:8](#); [Revelation 12:15](#); [Revelation 13 General Notes](#); [Revelation 13:11](#); [Revelation 14:2](#); [Revelation 15:2](#); [Revelation 16:3](#); [Revelation 16:13](#); [Revelation 16:15](#); [Revelation 18:21](#); [Revelation 19:6](#); [Revelation 20:8](#); [Revelation 21:2](#); [Revelation 21:11](#); [Revelation 21:18](#); [Revelation 21:21](#)

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.

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Referenced in: [Revelation 1:17](#); [Revelation 3:4](#); [Revelation 3:9](#); [Revelation 4:10](#); [Revelation 5:8](#); [Revelation 5:14](#); [Revelation 7:9](#); [Revelation 10:5](#); [Revelation 11:3](#); [Revelation 11:9](#); [Revelation 11:10](#); [Revelation 18:19](#); [Revelation 19:4](#); [Revelation 19:10](#)

Symbolic Language

Description

Symbolic language in speech and writing is the use of symbols to represent other things, other events, etc. In the Bible it occurs most in prophecy and poetry, especially in visions and dreams about things that will happen in the future. Though people may not immediately know the meaning of a symbol, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.

This page answers the question: *What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?*

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

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

■ Eat this scroll; then go speak to the house of Israel. (Ezekiel 3:1 ULT)

This was in a dream. Eating the scroll is a symbol of Ezekiel reading and understanding well what was written on the scroll, and accepting these words from God into himself.

Purposes of Symbolism

- One purpose of symbolism is to help people understand the importance or severity of an event by putting it in other, very dramatic terms.
- Another purpose of symbolism is to tell some people about something while hiding the true meaning from others who do not understand the symbolism.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

People who read the Bible today may find it hard to recognize that the language is symbolic, and they may not know what the symbol stands for.

Translation Principles

- When symbolic language is used, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.
- It is also important not to explain the symbol more than the original speaker or writer did, since he may not have wanted everyone living then to be able to understand it easily.

Examples From the Bible

■ After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

The meaning of the bolded symbols is explained in Daniel 7:23-24 as shown below. The animals represent kingdoms, iron teeth represent a powerful army, and the horns represent powerful leaders.

■ This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.' (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

■ I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me, and as I turned I saw **seven golden lampstands**. In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a son of man ... He had **seven stars** in his right hand and **a sword with two sharp edges** was coming out of his mouth. As for the hidden meaning about the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven

golden lampstands: **The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches**, and **the seven lampstands are the seven churches**. (Revelation 1:12-13a, 16a, 20 ULT)

This passage explains the meaning of the seven lampstands and the seven stars. The two-edged sword represents God's word and judgment.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.
- (2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.

This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.' (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

- (2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

After this I saw in my dream at night a fourth animal, ¹ terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had large iron teeth; ² it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had ten horns. ³

The footnotes would look like:

[¹] The animal is a symbol for a kingdom. [²] The iron teeth is a symbol for the kingdom's powerful army. [³] The horns are a symbol of powerful kings.

"

Referenced in: [Revelation 1:4](#); [Revelation 1:16](#); [Revelation 2:12](#); [Revelation 4:5](#); [Revelation 4:9](#); [Revelation 5:14](#); [Revelation 11:4](#); [Revelation 19:15](#)

Symbolic Prophecy

Description

This page answers the question: *What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?*

Symbolic prophecy is a type of message that God gave to a prophet so that the prophet would tell others. These messages use images and symbols to show what God will do in the future.

The main books that have these prophecies are Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation. Shorter examples of symbolic prophecy are also found in other Scriptures, such as in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

The Bible tells both how God gave each message and what the message was. When God gave the messages, he often did so in miraculous ways such as in dreams and visions. (See [Dream](#) and [Vision](#) for help translating “dreams” and “visions.”) When prophets saw these dreams and visions, they often saw images and symbols about God and heaven. Some of these images included a throne, golden lamp stands, a powerful man with white hair and white clothes, and eyes like fire and legs like bronze. Some of these images were seen by more than one prophet.

The prophecies about the world also contain images and symbols. For example, in some of the prophecies, strong animals represent kingdoms, horns represent kings or kingdoms, a dragon or serpent represents the devil, the sea represents the nations, and weeks represent longer periods of time. Some of these images were also seen by more than one prophet.

The prophecies tell about the evil in this world, how God will judge the world and punish sin, and how God will establish his righteous kingdom in the new world he is creating. They also tell about things that will happen concerning heaven and hell.

Much of prophecy in the Bible is presented as poetry. In some cultures people assume that if something is said in poetry, then it might not be true or very important. However, the prophecies in the Bible are true and very important, whether they are presented in poetic forms or non-poetic forms.

Sometimes the past tense is used in these books for events that happened in the past. However, sometimes the past tense is used for events that would happen in the future. There are two reasons for this. When prophets told about things that they saw in a dream or vision, they often used the past tense because their dream was in the past. The other reason for using the past tense to refer to future events was to emphasize that those events would certainly happen. The events were so certain to happen, it was as if they had already happened. We call this second use of the past tense “the predictive past.” (See [Predictive Past](#).)

Some of these things happened after the prophets told about them, and some of them will happen at the end of this world.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some of the images are hard to understand because we have never seen things like them before.
- Descriptions of things that we have never seen or that do not exist in this world are hard to translate.
- In places where God or the prophet used the past tense, readers may have difficulty knowing whether he was talking about something that had already happened or something that would happen later.

Translation Principles

- Translate the images in the text. Do not try to interpret them and translate their meaning.
- When an image appears in more than one place in the Bible, and it is described in the same way, try to translate it the same way in all those places.
- If either poetic forms or non-poetic forms would imply to your readers that the prophecy is not true or is unimportant, use a form that would not imply those things.

- Sometimes it is difficult to understand in what order the events described in the various prophecies happen. Simply write them as they appear in each prophecy.
- Translate tense in a way that the readers can understand what the speaker meant. If readers would not understand the predictive past, it is acceptable to use the future tense.
- Some of the prophecies were fulfilled after the prophets wrote about them. Some of them have not been fulfilled yet. Do not clarify in the prophecy when these prophecies were fulfilled or how they were fulfilled.

Examples From the Bible

The following passages describe powerful beings that Ezekiel, Daniel, and John saw. Images mentioned in these visions include hair that is white as wool, a voice like many waters, a golden belt, and legs or feet like polished bronze. Though the prophets saw various details, it would be good to translate the details that are the same in the same way. The bolded phrases in the passage from Revelation also occur in the passages from Daniel and Ezekiel.

In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a son of man, wearing a robe that reached down to his feet and he wore a golden sash across his chest. **His head and hair were as white as wool**—as white as snow—and his eyes were like a flame of fire. **His feet were like polished bronze**, like bronze that had been refined in a furnace, and **his voice was like the sound of many rushing waters**. He had seven stars in his right hand, and a sword with two sharp edges was coming out of his mouth. His face was shining like the sun at its strongest. (Revelation 1:13-16 ULT)

As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow, and **the hair of his head was like pure wool**. (Daniel 7:9 ULT)

I looked up and saw a man dressed in linen, with a belt around his waist made of pure gold from Uphaz. His body was like topaz, his face was like lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and **his feet were like polished bronze**, and the sound of his words was like the sound of a great crowd. (Daniel 10:5-6 ULT)

Behold! The glory of the God of Israel came from the east; **his voice was like the sound of many waters**, and the earth shone with his glory! (Ezekiel 43:2 ULT)

The following passage shows the use of the past tense to refer to past events. The bolded verbs refer to past events.

The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, that he **saw** concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. (Isaiah 1:1 ULT)

Hear, heavens, and give ear, earth; for Yahweh **has spoken**: (Isaiah 1:2a ULT)

“**I have nourished** and **brought up** children, but they **have rebelled** against me.” (Isaiah 1:2b ULT)

The following passage shows the future tense and different uses of the past tense. The bolded verbs are examples of the predictive past, where the past tense is used to show that the events certainly will happen.

The gloom will be dispelled from her who was in anguish. In an earlier time he humiliated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the later time he will make it glorious, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness **have seen** a great light; those who have lived in the land of the shadow of death, the light **has shone** on them. (Isaiah 9:1-2 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- If the prophecy uses the past tense to talk about the future and this would be misunderstood in your language, use the strategies in [Predictive Past](#).

- If the images in the prophecy are of things that are unknown in your culture, use the strategies in [Translate Unknowns](#).

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Referenced in: [Introduction to Revelation](#); [Revelation 4 General Notes](#); [Revelation 6 General Notes](#); [Revelation 9 General Notes](#); [Revelation 17 General Notes](#)

Synecdoche

Description

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole thing, or uses the whole to refer to a part.

■ **My soul** magnifies the Lord. (Luke 1:46b ULT)

Mary was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said “my soul,” which means the inner, emotional part of herself, to refer to her whole self.

■ So **the Pharisees** said to him, “Look, why are they doing that which is not lawful?” (Mark 2:24a ULT)

The Pharisees who were standing there did not all say the same words at the same time. Instead, it is more likely that one man representing the group said those words.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some readers may not recognize the synecdoche and thus misunderstand the words as a literal statement.
- Some readers may realize that they are not to understand the words literally, but they may not know what the meaning is.

Example From the Bible

■ Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

“My hands” is a synecdoche for the whole person because clearly the arms and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved in the person’s accomplishments. The hands are chosen to represent the person because they are the parts of the body most directly involved in the work.

Translation Strategies

If the synecdoche would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

■ “**My soul** magnifies the Lord.” (Luke 1:46b ULT)

■ “**I** magnify the Lord.”

So **the Pharisees** said to him ... (Mark 2:24a ULT)

■ **A representative of the Pharisees** said to him ...

Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

■ I looked on all the deeds that **I** had accomplished

This page answers the question: *What is a synecdoche, and how can I translate such a thing into my language?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

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: [Revelation 1:7](#); [Revelation 2:10](#); [Revelation 3:9](#); [Revelation 6:7](#); [Revelation 6:8](#); [Revelation 7:1](#); [Revelation 9:13](#); [Revelation 9:20](#); [Revelation 16:19](#); [Revelation 19:2](#); [Revelation 21:4](#); [Revelation 22:4](#)

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: [Revelation 1:8](#); [Revelation 5:14](#); [Revelation 8:7](#); [Revelation 8:13](#); [Revelation 11:17](#); [Revelation 14:5](#); [Revelation 15:3](#); [Revelation 16:5](#); [Revelation 18:2](#); [Revelation 21:3](#); [Revelation 21:24](#); [Revelation 22:14](#); [Revelation 22:19](#)

Third-Person Imperatives

Description

This page answers the question: *How do I translate third-person imperatives into my language?*

The languages of the Bible have verb forms that can give commands, instructions or other directive speech in the third person. In other words, these directives address “he,” “she,” “it,” or “they” rather than “you.”

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

Many languages, including English, do not have these verb forms and so they must communicate this kind of directive speech in other ways. In English, we normally represent these third-person imperatives by putting “let” before the subject or verb. This is actually one of the translation strategies, since English does not have third-person imperatives.

Examples From the Bible

■ **Let your kingdom come, let your will be done** as in heaven also on earth. (Matthew 6:9 ULT)

In this prayer, Jesus uses two third-person imperatives. The first one tells God’s kingdom to come, and the second one tells God’s will to be done. Of course, a kingdom and a will cannot hear Jesus, so Jesus is using these verb forms to communicate to God that Jesus desires that these things happen.

■ **Let no one deceive himself.** If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, **let him become a “fool,”** that he may become wise. (1 Corinthians 3:18 ULT)

In this verse, Paul uses third-person imperatives to give a warning and an instruction. It may be that using this third-person form was more polite than if he had used second-person imperatives.

■ But because of immorality, **let each man have** his own wife, and **let each woman have** her own husband. (1 Corinthians 7:2 ULT)

Here again Paul uses two third-person imperatives to instruct the Corinthian church. Since he had just recommended a celibate life in the previous verse, these imperatives have the sense of giving advice rather than command.

■ Then God said, “**Let there be light.**” And there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

The Biblical Hebrew verb form used here is equivalent to the third-person imperative in Greek. Here, God commands in the third person that light come into existence, so it does.

■ **...let him do to me** just as {is} good in his eyes. (2 Samuel 15:26 ULT)

David uses the third-person form to express his willingness for God to do to him whatever God wants to do.

Translation Strategies

If your language has third-person imperative forms and would use them in the way that the biblical languages do, then please use them. If not, then consider these strategies.

- (1) Use a form that your language has that indicates that this is the will or wish of the speaker.
- (2) If appropriate, use a second-person imperative.
- (3) Use an explicit reference to the function of the imperative.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a form that your language has that indicates that this is the will or wish of the speaker.

Let your kingdom come, let your will be done as in heaven also on earth. (Matthew 6:9 ULT)

(Since English does not have third-person imperatives, it follows this strategy and uses “let” to indicate that this is the will or wish of the speaker.)

May your kingdom come, may your will be done as in heaven also on earth.

Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, let him become a “fool,” that he may become wise. (1 Corinthians 3:18 ULT)

(Since English does not have third-person imperatives, it follows this strategy and uses “let” to indicate that this is the will or wish of the speaker.)

No one should deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, he should become a “fool,” that he may become wise.

...let him do to me just as {is} good in his eyes. (2 Samuel 15:26 ULT)

(Since English does not have third-person imperatives, it follows this strategy and uses “let” to indicate that this is the will or wish of the speaker.)

...he may do to me just as {is} good in his eyes. (2 Samuel 15:26 ULT)

(2) If appropriate, use a second-person imperative.

Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, let him become a “fool,” that he may become wise. (1 Corinthians 3:18 ULT)

Do not deceive yourselves. If you think you are wise in this age, then become a “fool,” that you may become wise.

Then God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

Then God said, “Light, come into being.” And there was light.

...let him do to me just as {is} good in his eyes. (2 Samuel 15:26 ULT)

...Yahweh, do to me just as {is} good in your eyes.

(3) Use an explicit reference to the function of the imperative.

Let your kingdom come, let your will be done as in heaven also on earth. (Matthew 6:9 ULT)

We pray that your kingdom come, we pray that your will be done as in heaven also on earth.

Then God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

Then God said, “I command light to be.” And there was light.

But because of immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. (1 Corinthians 7:2 ULT)

But because of immorality, I advise each man to have his own wife, and I advise each woman to have her own husband.

...let him do to me just as {is} good in his eyes. (2 Samuel 15:26 ULT)

...he has my permission to do to me just as {is} good in his eyes.

See also [Imperatives – Other Uses](#)

"

Referenced in: [Revelation 2 General Notes](#); [Revelation 13:9](#); [Revelation 13:18](#); [Revelation 22:11](#); [Revelation 22:17](#)

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: [Revelation 1:13](#); [Revelation 1:14](#); [Revelation 2:14](#); [Revelation 3:20](#); [Revelation 4:3](#); [Revelation 6:5](#); [Revelation 6:12](#); [Revelation 6:13](#); [Revelation 6:15](#); [Revelation 8:11](#); [Revelation 9:3](#); [Revelation 9:9](#); [Revelation 9:10](#); [Revelation 9:11](#); [Revelation 9:17](#); [Revelation 12:3](#); [Revelation 12:5](#); [Revelation 12:9](#); [Revelation 13 General Notes](#); [Revelation 13:2](#); [Revelation 14:14](#); [Revelation 14:19](#); [Revelation 14:20](#); [Revelation 15:6](#); [Revelation 17:4](#); [Revelation 18:12](#); [Revelation 18:13](#); [Revelation 18:16](#); [Revelation 18:17](#); [Revelation 18:21](#); [Revelation 19:18](#); [Revelation 21:11](#)

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.”)

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Referenced in: [Revelation 1:6](#); [Revelation 2:18](#); [Revelation 2:28](#); [Revelation 3:5](#); [Revelation 3:21](#); [Revelation 14:1](#)

Verse Bridges

Description

In some cases, you will see in the unfoldingWord® Simplified Text (UST) that two or more verse numbers are combined, such as 17-18. This is called a verse bridge. This means that the information in the verses was rearranged so that the story or message could be more easily understood.

This page answers the question: *Why are some verse numbers combined in the UST, such as "3-5" or "17-18"?*

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

Structure of the Bible ([UTA PDF](#))

29 These were the clans of the Horites: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, and Anah, 30 Dishon, Ezer, Dishan: these are clans of the Horites, according to their clan lists in the land of Seir. (Genesis 36:29-30 ULT)

29-30 The people groups who were descendants of Hor lived in Seir land. The names of the people groups are Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. (Genesis 36:29-30 UST)

In the ULT text, verses 29 and 30 are separate, and the information about the people living in Seir is at the end of verse 30. In the UST text, the verses are joined, and the information about them living in Seir is at the beginning. For many languages, this is a more logical order of information.

Examples From the Bible

Where the UST has a verse bridge, the ULT will have separate verses.

⁴⁻⁵ Yahweh our God will bless you in the land that he is giving to you. If you obey Yahweh our God and obey all the commandments that I am giving to you today, there will not be any poor people among you. (Deuteronomy 15:4-5 UST)

⁴ However, there should be no poor among you (for Yahweh will surely bless you in the land that he gives you as an inheritance to possess), ⁵ if only you diligently listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, to keep all these commandments that I am commanding you today. (Deuteronomy 15:4-5 ULT)

¹⁶⁻¹⁷ But Yahweh said to him, "I will not permit you to eat the fruit of the tree that will enable you to know what actions are good to do and what actions are evil to do. If you eat any fruit from that tree, on the day you eat it you will surely die. But I will permit you to eat the fruit of any of the other trees in the park." (Genesis 2:16-17 UST)

¹⁶ Yahweh God commanded the man, saying, "From every tree in the garden you may freely eat. ¹⁷ But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat, for on the day that you eat from it, you will surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17 ULT)

Translation Strategies

Order the information in a way that will be clear to your readers. If the order of information is clear as it is in the ULT, then use that order. But if the order is confusing or gives the wrong meaning, then change the order so that it is more clear.

(1) If you put information from one verse before information from an earlier verse, then combine the verses and put a hyphen between the two verse numbers.

See how to mark verses in [translationStudio](#).

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If information from one verse is put before information from an earlier verse, then combine the verses and put the verse numbers before the first verse with a hyphen between them.

2 You must select three cities for yourself in the middle of your land that Yahweh your God is giving you to possess. 3 You must build a road and divide the borders of your land into three parts, the land that Yahweh your God is causing you to inherit, so that everyone who kills another person may flee there. (Deuteronomy 19:2-3 ULT)

2-3 You must divide into three parts the land that he is giving to you. Then select a city in each part. You must make good roads in order that people can get to those cities easily. Someone who kills another person can escape to one of those cities to be safe. (Deuteronomy 19:2-3 UST)

Next we recommend you learn about:

Chapter and Verse Numbers ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Revelation 1:5](#)

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: [Revelation 6:11](#); [Revelation 9 General Notes](#); [Revelation 9:4](#); [Revelation 11:13](#); [Revelation 12:10](#); [Revelation 13:13](#); [Revelation 14:4](#); [Revelation 16:2](#); [Revelation 16:8](#); [Revelation 16:18](#); [Revelation 16:21](#); [Revelation 18:13](#); [Revelation 19:10](#); [Revelation 21:3](#); [Revelation 21:7](#); [Revelation 22:9](#)

When to Keep Information Implicit

Description

Sometimes it is better not to state assumed knowledge or implicit information explicitly. This page gives some direction about when not to do this.

This page answers the question: *When should I not make implicit information explicit?*

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

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information ([UTA PDF](#))
Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Translation Principles

- If a speaker or author intentionally left something unclear, do not try to make it more clear.
- If the original audience did not understand what the speaker meant, do not make it so clear that your readers would find it strange that the original audience did not understand.
- If you need to explicitly state some assumed knowledge or implicit information, try to do it in a way that does not make your readers think that the original audience needed to be told those things.
- Do not make implicit information explicit if it confuses the message or leads the reader to forget what the main point is.
- Do not make assumed knowledge or implicit information explicit if your readers already understand it.

Examples From the Bible

From the eater came forth food; and from the strong one came forth sweetness. (Judges 14:14 ULT)

This was a riddle. Samson purposely said this in a way that it would be hard for his enemies to know what it meant. Do not make it clear that the eater and the strong thing was a lion and that the sweet thing to eat was honey.

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

Some possible implicit information here is that the disciples should beware of the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. But Jesus' disciples did not understand this. They thought that Jesus was talking about real yeast and bread. So it would not be appropriate to state explicitly that the word "yeast" here refers to false teaching. The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant until they heard what Jesus said in Matthew 16:11.

"How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he was not telling them to beware of yeast in bread, but to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matthew 16:11-12 ULT)

Only after Jesus explained that he was not talking about bread did they realize that he was talking about the false teaching of the Pharisees. Therefore, it would be wrong to explicitly state the implicit information in Matthew 16:6.

Translation Strategies

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies applied.

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Referenced in: [Revelation 7:9](#); [Revelation 11:7](#); [Revelation 17:1](#)



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 85

angel, archangel

Definition:

An angel is a powerful spirit being whom God created. Angels exist to serve God by doing whatever he tells them to do. The term “archangel” refers to the angel who rules or leads all the other angels.

- The word “angel” literally means “messenger.”
- The term “archangel” literally means “chief messenger.” The only angel referred to in the Bible as an “archangel” is Michael.
- In the Bible, angels gave messages to people from God. These messages included instructions about what God wanted the people to do.
- Angels also told people about events that were going to happen in the future or events that had already happened.
- Angels have God’s authority as his representatives and sometimes in the Bible they spoke as if God himself was speaking.
- Other ways that angels serve God are by protecting and strengthening people.
- A special phrase, “angel of Yahweh,” has more than one possible meaning: (1) It may mean “angel who represents Yahweh” or “messenger who serves Yahweh.” (2) It may refer to Yahweh himself, who looked like an angel as he talked to a person. Either one of these meanings would explain the angel’s use of “I” as if Yahweh himself was talking.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “angel” could include “messenger from God” or “God’s heavenly servant” or “God’s spirit messenger.”
- The term “archangel” could be translated as “chief angel” or “head ruling angel” or “leader of the angels.”
- Also consider how these terms are translated in a national language or another local language.
- The phrase “angel of Yahweh” should be translated using the words for “angel” and “Yahweh.” This will allow for different interpretations of that phrase. Possible translations could include “angel from Yahweh” or “angel sent by Yahweh” or “Yahweh, who looked like an angel.”

(See also: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: [chief](#), [head](#), [messenger](#), [Michael](#), [ruler](#), [servant](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 24:16
- Acts 10:3-6
- Acts 12:23
- Colossians 2:18-19
- Genesis 48:16
- Luke 2:13
- Mark 8:38
- Matthew 13:50
- Revelation 1:20
- Zechariah 1:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:12** God placed large, powerful **angels** at the entrance to the garden to keep anyone from eating the fruit of the tree of life.
- **22:3** The **angel** responded to Zechariah, "I was sent by God to bring you this good news."
- **23:6** Suddenly, a shining **angel** appeared to them (the shepherds), and they were terrified. The **angel** said, "Do not be afraid, because I have some good news for you."
- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with **angels** praising God.
- **25:8** Then **angels** came and took care of Jesus.
- **38:12** Jesus was very troubled and his sweat was like drops of blood. God sent an **angel** to strengthen him.
- **38:15** "I could ask the Father for an army of **angels** to defend me."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0047, H0430, H4397, H4398, H8136, G00320, G07430, G24650

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Referenced in: [Introduction to Revelation](#)

eternity, everlasting, eternal, forever

Definition:

The terms “everlasting” and “eternal” have very similar meanings and refer to something that will always exist or that lasts forever.

- The term “eternity” refers to a state of being that has no beginning or end. It can also refer to life that never ends.
- After this present life on earth, humans will spend eternity either in heaven with God or in hell apart from God.
- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” are used in the New Testament to refer to living forever with God in heaven.

The term “forever” refers to never-ending time.

- The phrase “forever and ever” has the idea of time that never ends and expresses what eternity or eternal life is like. It emphasizes that something will always happen or exist. It refers to time that never ends.
- God said that David’s throne would last “forever.” This is referred to the fact that David’s descendant Jesus will reign as king forever.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “eternal” or “everlasting” could include “unending” or “never stopping” or “always continuing.”
- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” could also be translated as “life that never ends” or “life that continues without stopping” or “the raising up of our bodies to live forever.”
- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “eternity” could include “existing outside of time” or “unending life” or “life in heaven.”
- Also consider how this word is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))
- “Forever” could also be translated by “always” or “never ending.”
- The phrase “will last forever” could also be translated as “always exist” or “will never stop” or “will always continue.”
- The emphatic phrase “forever and ever” could also be translated as “for always and always” or “not ever ending” or “which never, ever ends.”
- David’s throne lasting forever could be translated as “David’s descendant will reign forever” or “a descendant of David will always be reigning.”

(See also: [David](#), [reign](#), [life](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 17:8
- Genesis 48:4
- Exodus 15:17
- 2 Samuel 3:28-30
- 1 Kings 2:32-33
- Job 4:20-21
- Psalms 21:4
- Isaiah 9:6-7
- Isaiah 40:27-28
- Daniel 7:18

- Luke 18:18
- Acts 13:46
- Romans 5:21
- Hebrews 6:19-20
- Hebrews 10:11-14
- 1 John 1:2
- 1 John 5:12
- Revelation 1:4-6
- Revelation 22:3-5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:1** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit **eternal life**?"
- **28:1** One day, a rich young ruler came up to Jesus and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to have **eternal life**?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only One who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have **eternal life**, obey God's laws."
- **28:10** Jesus answered, "Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or property for my name's sake, will receive 100 times more and will also receive **eternal life**."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3117, H4481, H5331, H5703, H5705, H5769, H5865, H5957, H6924, G01260, G01650, G01660, G13360

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Referenced in: [Revelation 20 General Notes](#); [Revelation 21 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

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Referenced in: [Revelation 20 General Notes](#)

godly, godliness, ungodly, godless, ungodliness, godlessness

Definition:

The term “godly” is used to describe a person who acts in a way that honors God and shows what God is like. “Godliness” is the character quality of honoring God by doing his will.

- A person who has godly character will show the fruits of the Holy Spirit, such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and self control.
- The quality of godliness shows that a person has the Holy Spirit and is obeying him.

The terms “ungodly” and “godless” describe people who are in rebellion against God. Living in an evil way, without thought of God, is called “ungodliness” or “godlessness.”

- The meanings of these words are very similar. However, “godless” and “godlessness” may describe a more extreme condition in which people or nations do not even acknowledge God or his right to rule them.
- God pronounces judgment and wrath on ungodly people, on everyone who rejects him and his ways.

Translation Suggestions:

- The phrase “the godly” could be translated as “godly people” or “people who obey God.” (See: [nominaladj](#))
- The adjective “godly” could be translated as “obedient to God” or “righteous” or “pleasing to God.”
- The phrase “in a godly manner” could be translated as “in a way that obeys God” or “with actions and words that please God.”
- Ways to translate “godliness” could include “acting in a way that pleases God” or “obeying God” or “living in a righteous manner.”
- Depending on the context, the term “ungodly” could be translated as “displeasing to God” or “immoral” or “disobeying God.”
- The terms “godless” and “godlessness” literally mean that the people are “without God” or “having no thought of God” or “acting in a way that does not acknowledge God.”
- Other ways to translate “ungodliness” or “godlessness” could be “wickedness” or “evil” or “rebellion against God”.

(See also [evil](#), [honor](#), obey, [righteous](#))

Bible References:

- Job 27:10
- Proverbs 11:9
- Acts 3:12
- 1 Timothy 1:9-11
- 1 Timothy 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:12
- Hebrews 12:14-17
- Hebrews 11:7
- 1 Peter 4:18
- Jude 1:16

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H1100, H2623, H5760, H7563, G05160, G07630, G07640, G07650, G21240, G21500, G21520, G21530, G23160, G23170

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Referenced in: [Revelation 11 General Notes](#)

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

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Referenced in: [Revelation 19 General Notes](#)

hell, lake of fire

Definition:

Hell is the final place of unending pain and suffering where God will punish everyone who rebels against him and rejects his plan of saving them through Jesus' sacrifice. It is also referred to as the "lake of fire."

- Hell is described as a place of fire and severe suffering.
- Satan and the evil spirits who follow him will be thrown into hell for eternal punishment.
- People who do not believe in Jesus' sacrifice for their sin and do not trust in him to save them, will be punished forever in hell.

Translation Suggestions:

- These terms should probably be translated differently since they occur in different contexts.
- Some languages cannot use "lake" in the phrase "lake of fire" because it refers to water.
- The term "hell" could be translated as "place of suffering" or "final place of darkness and pain."
- The term "lake of fire" could also be translated as "sea of fire" or "huge fire (of suffering)" or "field of fire."

(See also: [heaven](#), death, [Hades](#), [abyss](#))

Bible References:

- James 3:6
- Luke 12:5
- Mark 9:42-44
- Matthew 5:21-22
- Matthew 5:29
- Matthew 10:28-31
- Matthew 23:33
- Matthew 25:41-43
- Revelation 20:15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **50:14** He (God) will throw them into **hell**, where they will weep and grind their teeth in anguish forever. A fire that never goes out will continually burn them, and worms will never stop eating them.
- **50:15** He will throw Satan into **hell** where he will burn forever, along with everyone who chose to follow him rather than to obey God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7585, G00860, G04390, G04400, G10670, G30410, G44420, G44430, G44470, G44480, G50200, G53940, G54570

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Referenced in: [Revelation 20 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: [Revelation 11 General Notes](#); [Revelation 20 General Notes](#)

prostrate, bow down, worship

Definition:

To “prostrate” oneself means to lie flat on the ground, usually in submission to a person of authority such as a king or some other powerful person. This same term can also mean to “worship,” referring to the actions of honoring, praising, and obeying God.

- This term often means literally “bow down” or “prostrate oneself” to humbly honor someone.
- We worship God when we serve and honor him, by praising him and obeying him.
- When the Israelites worshiped God, it often included sacrificing an animal on an altar.
- This term can be used both of people who worship Yahweh as the One True God and others who worship false gods.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “worship” could be translated as “bow down to” or “honor and serve” or “honor and obey.”
- In some contexts, it could also be translated as “humbly praise” or “give honor and praise.”

(See also: [bow](#), [fear](#), [sacrifice](#), [praise](#), [honor](#))

Bible References:

- Colossians 2:18-19
- Deuteronomy 29:18
- Exodus 3:11-12
- Luke 4:7
- Matthew 2:2
- Matthew 2:8

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, “I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not **worship** other gods.”
- **14:2** The Canaanites did not **worship** or obey God. They **worshiped** false gods and did many evil things.
- **17:6** David wanted to build a temple where all the Israelites could **worship** God and offer him sacrifices.
- **18:12** All of the kings and most of the people of the kingdom of Israel **worshiped** idols.
- **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.’”
- **26:2** On the Sabbath, he (Jesus) went to the place of **worship**.
- **47:1** There they met a woman named Lydia who was a merchant. She loved and **worshiped** 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: H5457, H5647, H6087, H7812, G13910, G14790, G21510, G23180, G23230, G23560, G30000, G35110, G43520, G43530, G45730, G45740, G45760

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Referenced in: [Revelation 4 General Notes](#)

wrath, fury

Definition:

Wrath is an intense anger that is sometimes long-lasting. The Bible describes both people and God as experiencing intense anger. When speaking about God's "wrath," make sure the word or phrase used to translate this term does not refer to a sinful fit of rage (which might be true of a human person).

- In the Bible, "wrath" often refers to God's righteous judgment of sin and punishment of people who rebel against him.
- The "wrath of God" can also refer to his judgment and punishment for sin.
- God's wrath is the righteous penalty for those who do not repent of their sin.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways this term could be translated include "intense anger" or "righteous judgment" or "anger."
- God's wrath is just and holy. When talking about God's wrath, make sure the word or phrase used to translate this term does not refer to a sinful human rage.

(See also: [judge](#), [sin](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10
- 1 Timothy 2:8-10
- Luke 3:7
- Luke 21:23
- Matthew 3:7
- Revelation 14:10
- Romans 1:18
- Romans 5:9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0639, H2197, H2528, H2534, H2740, H3707, H3708, H5678, H7107, H7109, H7110, H7265, H7267, G23720, G37090, G39490, G39500

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Referenced in: [Revelation 16 General Notes](#)

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